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The Newsletter of The Association
of Sandwich Education & Training

Volume Three Number Two November 1986

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Comment

Since the previous issue of the Newsletter there have been significant, though not startling, developments in the world of Sandwich education. Chief amongst these was the conference in September, reported elsewhere in this issue, which was given over entirely to the question of the assessment of students' performance while on Sandwich placement, and the part which that assessment should play in the overall classification of the academic awards. It is clear that much serious attention is now being given to this matter and that is all to the good. That conference attracted one of the largest gatherings of academics ever to assemble on the Sandwich theme, and the conference was, of course, organised primarily for the educational institutions offering Sandwich courses. One wonders whether such a conference for the industrial partners in the Sandwich enterprise would have met with a similar response.

The MSC project on sponsorship, also reported in this issue, indicated that only a tenth of Sandwich students are works-sponsored. Yet all, with few exceptions are given paid work-experience by industry. Why, then, is industry so reluctant to take them from the start? This is a question that needs to be addressed urgently. One thing is certain. Without the whole-hearted cooperation and support of employers the Sandwich principle cannot succeed.

Contributions to the Newsletter from its readers of items of interest and details of coming events to do with Sandwich education are always welcome, particularly news of successful cooperative ventures. Please send your contributions to the Editor at the address given above.

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Delegates at the ASET/CNAA Conference on the Assessment of Students on Sandwich Placement

The Assessment of Students on Placement

This seminar, sponsored by CNAA and held at the Royal Institute of British Architects on 23 September 1986, was attended by over 270 members of the sandwich course community.

Dr. Edwin Kerr, opened the seminar by describing the increased attention being given to the placement period by DES and NAB. He said that issues such as integration, quality and precisely what was learned were being more thoroughly investigated. The assessment of students on placement will focus attention on these issues as well as on methods of assessment, and how it should be recognised. He hoped that this large gathering would develop some momentum and lead to improvements in Sandwich education.

Before discipline-based seminar groups discussed the issues, five quite distinct models were presented for consideration. These covered specific examples in Business Studies, Physics and Mechanical Engineering, one was task-based, one dependent on pre-defining objectives and one was concerned with identifying and recognising competen-

cies; one counted 25% of one final year paper another counted 25% of the final degree score in contributing to the degree, whilst another led to a separate, institutional certificate. A contribution from those with experience in the YTS was most thought provoking.

With this variety as a basis the six discussion groups came up with a range of suggestions. In summary all groups gave an unequivocal 'yes' to the question 'should academic credit be given for performance on placement?' There were serious differences between groups as to whether this assessment should affect the degree or contribute towards some separate certification. Many problems were identified in arriving at some mark or fine grade to describe performance and so it may be that the YTS-developed ideas might find most support.

Closing the seminar Dr. Kerr suggested quite strongly that ASET, together with the Polytechnics and Universities Committees on Sandwich Course, should be the vehicles for progressing this debate and that employer input was vital at the next state.

Altogether it was an interesting day but one should be wary about some of the resource implications.



Dr. Edwin Kerr
The new Chairman of ASET

ASET Welcomes A New Chairman

It is with pleasure that we announce the appointment of Dr. Edwin Kerr as Chairman of ASET in succession to Mr. Alan Daniels, who continues to serve as Chairman of the executive committee of ASET. Dr. Kerr, who is currently President of the World Council and Assembly on Cooperative Education has recently retired from the post of Chief Officer of the CNAA, in which he served with distinction, but he still remains a member of a number of its

Boards. Dr. Kerr has long been a strong supporter of Sandwich education and ASET is fortunate to have so distinguished an academic as its chairman.

Assessing Supervised Work Experience

A CNAA funded project on 'Assessing Supervised Work Experience' is currently being undertaken at Ealing College of Higher Education. A survey is being carried out of business sandwich courses to categorise assessment practice of work-based experience. In addition it is intended that selected courses will be used to develop alternative assessment strategies.

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