



Minutes of NW Seminar, Berlin 2011

12 – 13 January 2011

Minutes: Rachel Beddow

In attendance: Lejf Moos (EERA President), Ian Grosvenor (EERA Secretary General), Marit Honerod Hoveid (EERA Networks' Representative on Council), Maria Pacheco Figueiredo (EERA Networks' Representative Shadowing) Fiona Hallett (Emerging Researchers' Group), Angelika Wegscheider (EERA Office), Rachel Beddow (EERA Office) Maureen Killeavy (NW 1), Ludger Deitmer (NW2), Michael Gessler (NW2), Nienke Nieveen (NW 3), Mark Hadfield (NW 5), Mart Laanpere (NW6), Yvonne Leeman (NW 7), Venka Simovska (NW 8), Martin Goy (NW 9), Samuel Gento (NW 11), Peter Meyer (NW 12), Paul Smeyers (NW 13), Rune Kvalsund (NW 14) Philip Masson (NW 15), Dennis Beach (NW 19), John Willumsen (NW 20), Jani Ursin (NW 22), Birgit Pepin (NW 24), John L'Anson (NW 25), Brian Hudson (NW 27)

1 Announcements

1.1 President's Notice on current problem's facing educational researchers

EERA President Lejf Moos opened meeting with discussion of current funding problems facing educational research. He outlined the Council's activities to express concerns at a European level- one email has already been sent to EU Commission, and more will follow. He asked Network Convenors to participate in this project through mailings etc. to raise concern and awareness among researchers

1.2 New Network in attendance: Network 8: Research on Health Education

Ian Grosvenor introduced Venka Simovska, link convenor of the new network, Network 8: Research on Health Education

2 Evaluation of Session Data

Following a short introductory exercise, the seminar divided into groups to identify and discuss issues arising from the evaluation of ECER 2010 Session Return Slips.

The following issues were identified and discussed:

2.1 Standard of Presentations/Post Presentation Discussion

It was felt that attendance at sessions was closely related to the time of day at which it was scheduled, and the alternative possibilities of a short programme with a large number of parallel sessions was weighed up against a longer programme with fewer parallel sessions. No agreement was reached on this matter, although further analysis of the statistics to prove/disprove the suggested correlation between session time and attendance was requested.

Certain convenors felt that the sessions were too short for adequate discussion; others felt that the discussion section needed further structure. It was suggested that presenters should be asked to submit discussion questions at the point of submission or in the end of the

presentation, in the last slide. This might be added as an extra section on the submission form or put in place of 'expected outcomes'. Some networks already ask chairs to prepare questions, such as NW14.

The lack of handouts was considered problematic, particularly with regards to language barriers, although there was a general disinclination towards making this mandatory. It was stressed, however, that there was general satisfaction with the quality of the conference.

2.2 Encouraging Returns of Session Slips

A general frustration was felt at the failure of some chairs to hand in their session return slips. A proposal to make the link convenors responsible for this was considered to be impractical. Ian Grosvenor said that at ECER 2011 a book would be put in each room along with the specific programme for the room. Convenors asked to have access to session return info/info on which chairs returned their slips. Angelika Wegscheider said that this could be done by sending out the xl spread sheet summarising the information.

2.3 Increasing the profile of round tables and joint sessions

Recalling that joint sessions were well-evaluated last year, it was suggested that all networks should be encouraged to create inter-network sessions. It was noted, however, that cross-network collaboration is on the decrease and that measures should be taken to facilitate such work.

Convenors were asked if they had approached another network about cross network collaboration for ECER2011, but none had. Some networks felt that doing so was difficult prior to the submission of papers, while others said they actively invited joint sessions by sending out a pre-decided theme to those on the network mailing list.

If networks notice submissions suitable for joint sessions, then papers submitted to one network could be included twice in the programme under two different networks, and sessions could be merged at the point of programming. Convenors wishing to do this should contact the convenor of the second network, and contact the EERA office, who will assist in the programme planning and assign reviewers from the second network.

If networks formulate a topic which could be addressed by another network also and invite joint network submissions then they should arrange this with the second network and contact the EERA office, which will help with reviewing and programme planning. In the case of joint sessions a convenor from each of the two networks will be assigned as reviewer.

A collaborative round table on a more general theme was proposed.

It was felt that collaborations could be planned at the Network Seminar. Fiona Hallett proposed that the network seminar should be held next year in Spring. The suggestion was seconded and approved, although it was noted that we would have to avoid a time clash with NERA. Extra time will be set aside at the meeting to discuss collaborative work.

2.4 Acceptance/ Rejection Rate – variation between networks

Marit Honerød Hoveid suggested a standardised rate of 20% rejection. There was general uneasiness at the arbitrariness of this and a strong rejection of targets in general. It was suggested that networks are too varied to have general level of rejection and acceptance. By way of counter argument, Ian Grosvenor noted that the perceived 'softness' of educational research supports those who cut funding to educational research projects and faculties. It was argued that prestige-raising should become a conscious strategy undertaken by the network, although it was noted that there might be difference in quality/prestige between networks. It was argued that subsequent publications in reputable journals would be a more valid indicator of repute than rejection rates.

A conflict of interest was identified between the desire to facilitate young researchers and the desire to encourage academic excellence. If funding is going down, it was noted, then EERA may need to step up its efforts to build capacity of younger researchers who will no longer be supported elsewhere.

It was noted that in the current system papers might be rejected due to the paper's irrelevance to the networks selected, rather than the poor quality of the proposal. Descriptors need to be strong and clear to avoid this happening.

2.5 Submission deadline

It was discussed that this was too close to the turn of the year. As of next year the deadline for application will be Feb 1. It was agreed that having the same day every year will make it easier to be aware of ecer's deadline.

2.6 Conference theme

It was felt that the theme is often irrelevant to the networks and that it might dissuade applications from those who were unaware that unrelated submissions could be submitted. This may need to be stressed more in the future. Ian Grosvenor pointed out that NW17 sent out ideas on how to relate the network to the conference theme to subscribers of their network mailing list.

3 ECER Programme Planning

3.1 Main conference

Angelika Wegscheider reminded convenors:

- The main conference will last 3.5 days and will begin prior to the end of the Early Researchers' Conference.
- There will be two convenors' meeting during the conference: strictly for link convenors only. Co-convenors are welcome at the reception on Wednesday evening.
- Video Interviews with networks Link convenors will be scheduled at ECER 2011 for all those convenors who have not yet been interviewed for the website. These have been viewed 1400 times so far.
- All 14 sessions should be used during programme planning before resorting to parallel sessions to avoid busy/quiet times.
- Symposia should be timetabled from the end of the conference backwards, beginning with the two final sessions
- There should be 3 papers per session.

3.2 Programme Planning in Conftool

Following the decision of certain networks to use Conftool for 2010 programme planning, volunteers from other networks were invited. Networks 10, 9, 27, 13, 3, 19, 1, 15, 24, 6 and 2 will do this. Other networks will be introduced for ECER 2012.

3.3 Enhancing network display on website

Convenors were asked to decide whether or not to enhance network descriptors and keywords on main page. An almost unanimous vote in favour of this was returned. It was felt that keywords would be better than a short description.

Angelika Wegscheider called for those networks who had not sent in their keywords yet to do so.

3.4 The Early Researchers' and Main Conference

Fiona Hallett reported on the on-going project of reducing the gap between the Early Researchers' and Main Conference. Convenors were invited to represent their network at the Open Network Session. Funding is available for network representatives who come on Monday to take part in this.

Mentors (Early Researchers' equivalent of the Main Conference Chair) were called for. Link convenors were asked to consider volunteering for this.

3.5 Council-invited sessions

President Lejf Moos introduced the new event category, Council-invited sessions. These will be linked to the conference theme and will be reviewed by the council. This is a means of increasing council participation in the conference and giving new members a chance to represent their country. Timetabling of these sessions has not yet been decided. Convenors were in favour of this initiative.

3.6 ECER 2011

Gernot Goldenbaum (head of ECER 2011 LOC) introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the local organizing committee's progress so far.

4 Descriptors of Presentation Format

4.1 Format Descriptors

Following requests from networks, link convenors were invited to compare EERA format descriptors with those from other conferences. It was noted that EERA descriptors only gave formal requirements (length, time etc.) and little information on the objectives or possible content of presentation. Marit Honerod Hoveid and Maria Pacheco Figueiredo will prepare a draft for an enhancement of the descriptors that we currently use.

One group of convenors created a possible matrix – see appendix 1. General agreement that this or something similar should be circulated around link convenors.

However, it was generally felt that while the general feeling was that guidelines were good, absolute prescription would prevent the freedom and full achievement of networks.

5 Presentation Formats: General suggestions and comments

Following the discussion of descriptors, convenors gave general feedback on the problems or achievements of different formats.

5.1 Roundtables

Some convenors felt that round tables were problematic because they take space away from symposia. Discussion of whether the roundtable criteria of several countries should be removed- it was felt that this prevents deep probing of question at hand. As a counter argument it was noted that the objective of EERA is to create a European research space. As no decision was reached the format will remain as it is.

5.2 Workshop

Should workshop be renamed research workshop? There was no consensus response to this. It was felt by some that a tools workshop was inappropriate at a research conference. On the other hand, a focus on methodology alone was too narrow. It was suggested that workshops should have a practical focus, and that some of the methodological questions might be better

suited to symposia. It was generally felt that research topics, rather than methodological questions, were better suited to a workshop.

5.3 'Panel' Discussions

In recent years some networks have offered special opening sessions called 'panel discussions'. It was asked whether these are needed per network, or if they could they run at a higher level. Panel discussion was seen by some as too similar to the roundtable format. At present this is not a ECER format and it was decided not to have it as a "submittable" format. Reduction of formats was raised but no decision was made.

5.4 Posters

Should posters be made more interactive? There was strong support for giving posters time slots in the programme rather than scheduling them for the lunch break. If the posters were upgraded in this way then perhaps there would be fewer problems with moving papers to poster slots. Fiona Hallett noted that this was how the Early Researchers' Conference dealt with posters, and that this had been successful. It was suggested that posters should be grouped by network and indicated as such. This conversation will be reopened next year. A work group will be set to enhance the poster session, including Maria Figueiredo, Martin Goy and someone from the ERG.

Some convenors requested the capacity to turn papers into posters or from main conference to early researchers' conference. It was pointed out that if we are trying to encourage those in the early stages of their career to attend it might be helpful to change from paper to poster. It was noted that other educational associations do allow this and this often leads to good discussions. An alternative suggestion was allowing presenters to choose several types of presentation format and allowing the convenor to select from this shortlist.

Marit Honerød Hoveid suggested that we should not take responsibility from the authors, and that this might waste time. Furthermore, it was pointed out that EERA has an Emerging Researchers Conference to support emerging researchers - this does not need to be done through the poster session. Also, it was felt that the poster session would have to be developed as a format before this should be introduced. Leading on from this discussion, convenors also asked about the possibility of making other format changes. No decision was reached on this.

5.5 Paper sessions

It was suggested that these should be finished research as paper session audiences expect finished conclusions. It has been suggested that these should be finished research as paper session audiences expect finished conclusions. However, there are different kinds of research framings and ECER will have openings for presentations in all phases of a research process. For some work in progress a workshop or a poster might be a more fitting format.

6 Network Histories and Futures

Marit Honerød Hoveid opened the second day of the meeting with the theme, 'Network Histories and Futures'.

She noted that the network seminar is connected with the history and identity of networks, and that the network structure should be admired for the way in which it grew organically.

6.1 Network Histories

Martin Lawn's archive history of EERA from the archive was discussed. EERA is now moving towards a written history. Ian Grosvenor apologised for Martin Lawn's absence (due to illness).

It was noted that while some networks have been very active in their response to the call for network histories, others have not responded to emails. It was stressed that such histories are important for the future of educational research.

Ian Grosvenor noted that NW 17's history was now underway. He stressed the importance of the network histories to the development of the networks.

The establishment of a visual archive was discussed, and the new Flickr page was mentioned.

Data is now also being collected on EERA's activities today, in particular its research impact. Trying to assess the paper publications that emerge as a result of the conference.

It was noted that Martin Lawn's report will be sent around shortly. There will be some digitalisation of key documents relating to the archive.

6.2 Presentation of Network 7 History

Yvonne Leeman presented her network history paper, which she wrote with Gharzala Bhatti. The paper will be published in a forthcoming edition of EERJ.

She discussed the difficulties of producing the historical overview and stressed the importance of keywords in structuring a network history. She described how she had asked convenors why they decided to join the network, why they decided to become a convenor, and why they stayed within the network. She described in her history paper the long-standing tension in network 7 between strong focus and European context, and noted down the ways they tried to counter-act that. Suggested that convenors might meet during the conference to plan and develop their histories.

6.3 Group Discussion

Participants were divided into groups to discuss the developing of network histories. They were asked to consider six key questions. The answers are collated below.

6.3.1 What is a Network?

People working together with different levels of involvement who present and exchange ideas around a common theme. They use a shared discourse, shared understanding and common language. Another group termed this a 'community of practise'. It was suggested that it might be increasingly possible to look at convenors in the same way, as a consequence of the network convenors' meetings.

Individual network exists always as part of EERA. They are always in a position of exchanging with, and differentiating themselves from, other networks.

Networks are defined by their desire to cross transnational boundaries

There is little hierarchy within a network and it is not market based. Networks offer a type of academic space that does not exist elsewhere

'Network' is not as rigidly defined as a special interest group, and should be communicative and interactive.

Some networks have a research agenda, but this varies from network to network. For Philosophy of Education, for example, there is not necessarily any common methodology. Other networks felt that the network descriptors constitute a research agenda. It was noted that acceptance and rejection criteria might be based on the content of the contribution, as well as the quality.

Networks must balance two competing dimensions: the strategic dimension – building careers of network members – and the altruistic dimension – developing ideas and general conceptual frameworks. It was noted that although researchers are committed to the latter the needs of the former also need to be respected.

6.3.2 What should be included in a network history?

The network's organising principles, and how these principles were developed through debates and contestations. Networks should chart the 'key moments' in their evolution.

Networks should explain their negotiation of the common European context: how have they tried to include countries from across Europe and how they have explored European space? What has been their contribution to the 'europeanisation' of educational research?

Discussion of how developments of EERA triggered development of networks and how crucial developments outside of EERA might also have incited network development.

Images should be included: they are central in communicating an ethos or perception of events and distill lengthy descriptions.

They should include a historical contextualisation of the disciplines central to the network theme, referencing conceptual and technical developments in the field.

Possible ways of collating information were discussed. Angelika Wegscheider mentioned that the section network history already exists in the network report/descriptors but normally remains blank. Convenors were asked to suggest questions that they felt would trigger a response. It was also noted that the summary of the network business meeting in the network reports might be one good source of information when researching histories. Ian Grosvenor suggested that questions on conceptual issues should be circulated within networks prior to the conference and discussed at the network business meeting.

The following questions were not addressed specifically:

- What would you take as a good/healthy definition of a knowledge community represented in your Network.
- Why is it important to have this knowledge of academic engagement?
- What stops a network to develop as a community of researchers?
- How do we frame it in a format that can be accessed and updated easily?

In their place the following question was discussed:

6.3.3 Does each network need a history, and is it possible?

This varied between groups, but it was generally felt that most networks had something which could be added. Furthermore, It was noted that histories are needed to help new researchers to orientate themselves within the network, to help foster a sense of belonging, and to help council make wise strategic decisions.

Concerns were raised that the histories marked an over-politicisation of EERA work. Lejf Moos responded: histories are not intended to produce hard facts on citation etc., but rather to record concepts and ideas. He remarked that network histories could also offer a good indicator of the state of the art. He reported that this element is currently lacking on council, and is vital at the current political moment.

The feasibility of writing network histories was questioned. Some participants asked whether convenors were at the right critical distance from the information involved to write the histories. It was suggested that emerging researchers might explore the theoretical structure of a network from a meta-perspective – perhaps conceptualising politically, organizationally etc. Might a Postdoc or PhD student be commissioned to consider the association from a self-reflective perspective?

7 Open Section

Open issues were invited for discussion.

7.1 Sports Pedagogy

This is a possible new network which has now satisfied the basic categories for acceptance. Convenors were asked for their thoughts on the proposal.

It was felt that the network name was restrictive, and it was suggested that physical education also be included in the title. The word pedagogy was also felt to be too restrictive. It was suggested that this might have been chosen because it was closer to the term education in the original language of the proposers, rather than because they wanted to use the English term 'pedagogy'. It was felt that there were clear links to other networks, NW 27 in particular, but that the current title restricts the possibilities for collaborative work. In response, Ian Grosvenor drew attention to the final paragraph of the proposal, which includes physical education in its remit.

Move to vote: Consensus vote in favour of the new network but agreement that the naming needs to be reconsidered.

Possible alternative titles put forward were 'Physical education and Sports Pedagogy' and 'Research on Sports Pedagogy', although it was felt that the latter alternative was superfluous given the context.

7.2 Procedure for accepting a new network

It was announced that from now on proposals for new networks will be emailed to convenors prior to convenors seminar and discussed at the seminar

It was suggested that applicant networks could organize a symposium under the umbrella of another network, or as a council invited symposium.

The three year probation period for new networks was felt to be excessive. It was argued that if networks were not performing successfully they would close themselves down. Furthermore, Council can monitor networks and move to close them down if this was deemed necessary. As such, probation was removed from new network procedure.

7.3 Individual Membership

A proposal to introduce individual membership was sent round prior to the meeting by Martin Goy on behalf of Tjeerd Plomp (NW 9), as was the reply by Marit HH and Ian Grosvenor. Tjeerd Plomp believes that community identity would be improved through individual membership. It was agreed at the NW9 Business Meeting that this should be presented to the convenors. Marit and Ian, in reply, noted the difficulty of any such change within the constitutional framework.

Martin Goy presented his proposal and invited comment. Marit Honerød Hoveid noted the pressure on the office that would be caused by creating and maintaining individual

membership and membership lists. Angelika Wegscheider noted the burden that would fall on the network convenors who would share the task of maintaining membership.

Moving forward, several alternatives to complete membership were put forward it was recommended that network membership should be discussed at network business meetings but will not be taken to the level of council discussion. Lejf Moos stated that Council will not involve itself in deciding whether individual networks will have members. It was suggested that mailing list system should be developed to allow participants to notify the convenors that they wish to be more involved in network activity. Perhaps online systems – Researchgate for example- might be used to develop communication between network participants.

7.4 No-shows

The possibility of a blacklist for no-show presenters was put forward for discussion. Angelika Wegscheider reported that it is difficult to collate reliable info on why people did not attend, or to decide whether or not the reason is permissible. It was further remarked that blacklisting is logistically difficult to maintain – those blacklisted could resubmit as co-author, for example. It was felt that a blacklist was unnecessary and that rather an ethical appeal should be included in the acceptance email.

Regarding post conference follow-up of no-show presenters, it was suggested that an email sent by the link convenor might be more effective in attaining information and in preventing repeated no-shows. However, Angelika Wegscheider noted the legal difficulty in disseminating participant contact data.

Regarding later changes, convenors asked for an online xl sheet showing late changes to the programme. There will also be updated information in the book in each room.

7.5 Network Business Meetings

It was stressed that the agenda for business meetings should be sent out prior to the conference and delegates should be motivated to participate. It was suggested that a notifier was needed in the programme to underline that network meetings are open to all. EERA Office noted, however, that this was already included.

There were calls to change the title of the meeting to 'network meeting' and this will be introduced for ECER 2011.

7.6 Developing poster sessions

Due to time limitations, this was postponed to a later date. Martin Goy, Maria Figueiredo and someone from ERG will form a working group.

8 WERA

President Lejf Moos invited people to join WERA research groups. He noted that although no funding was available to support this, there are facilities available and those that participate have the opportunity to present at future events.