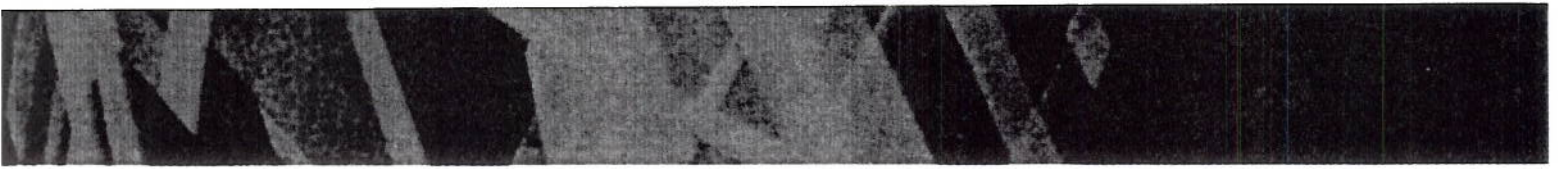# Strand 1

Pedagogy and Design:

The Relationship Between Educational Theory & Research and Networked Learning Practice

Introduction

- With the recent national initiatives around lifelong learning, particularly the National Grid for Learning, we are seeing in the United Kingdom the opening up of a broad consultation around educational change in which we can begin to draw on the experiences of the many networked learning pilot programmes scattered across various sectors of education and training.

Within the conference this particular strand is designed to focus on the challenges that rapid infrastructural changes bring to principled and research-based innovation in education. Looking back, as **Mason**'s overview paper in this strand does, over developments in the application of ICT's to learning delivery during the last ten years, we are reminded that harnessing change in the best interest of learners requires a matching acceleration in pace (and resourcing) of educational research effort.

One pressing practical issue is that of scaling up from successful innovative project to mainstream educational activity, an issue raised in this strand in contributions which discuss design issues for networked learning environments, particularly **Alexander**'s paper and a workshop in the twenty-first century university.

Behind the current enthusiasm for lifelong learning lies a shift in educational values towards self-managed and contextualised models of learning. There are urgent research questions here about how these styles of learning can be best be developed and supported in on-line and remote working, and how far such models are generaliseable across different educational contexts; questions which require much detailed investigation of specific learning contexts. Several papers in this strand offer such close studies, tracking innovative projects from design to reception, and relating specific models of learning to networked learning activities within the context of undergraduate education (**Pink, Rimmershaw**), adult learning (**Toynton**) and professional development (**Levy**).

Finally, the shift in learning and teaching methods implies a corresponding shift in research and evaluation techniques, particularly towards embedding research and evaluation into the course development cycle. We hope that this strand may help to focus attention on methods and resources, and on opportunities for collaboration, in the researching and planning of the next generation of networked learning experiences.