Management of Services to Students

Alan Tait

Introduction

This chapter engages with the management issues in open and distance learning (ODL) and concentrates on those relating to the delivery of services to students. The chapter attempts, following Paul (1990) and Rumble (1992), to identify those which are specific to the ODL context rather than addressing management issues in general. The chapter also attempts to do this in a practical rather than abstract way. To begin with, there are a number of issues which deserve particular attention. These are:

- Distance education represents substantially an industrialised process of teaching and learning, and support to students is conceived within the framework of a service industry (Sewart, 1993).

- Support to students is often delivered within a decentralised, distributed or franchised model, and accordingly many of the core activities like tutoring and counselling are 'invisible' to those with management responsibilities.

- There are specific issues with regard to the ways in which support services as a sector of activity relate to others within an ODL institution, conventionally divided into course production, operations and administration.

- In ODL as well as elsewhere in education, there is rapid change and at present considerable confusion about the relative status of students, clients and customers, which makes management problematic (Tait, 2000).

The Service Industry

Education and business have grown up separately over the centuries in most countries, with different purposes and ethics. Over the past 20 years, however, there has been in many countries a deliberate move by governments to diminish the autonomy of education as an activity which exists for its own sake, and to bend it more closely to serving the purposes, generally economic, of the state. Going along with this has been the widespread imposition of a changed attitude to the status of the staff in education, for the most part by bringing in accountability as against professional autonomy. This has been accompanied to a significant extent by related attempts to change the status of students more closely to that of customer. Much of ODL has also developed a separate, but in complex ways related, ethos of student-centredness, which has grown up alongside the inclusive access policies which have empathised with those excluded from more conservative and less student-centred institutions. All this bears on the core managerial question of 'what are we doing in this organisation?'. The weight of this question revolves around whether the success of our students is a primary or secondary purpose. However, in many sectors of education and training where ODL is used, it is accepted that successful and satisfied students represent primary institutional goals, even within the conflicting value systems in relation to 'customer care' of having to fail students who do not meet required

standards. Within an industrialised teaching and learning system, it has now been widely accepted that there needs to be a service industry approach to student support in achieving this primary objective (Sweet, 1993). What does this mean for management of services to students?

Essentially it means a very complex balance between the systems necessarily developed in order to achieve reliability and consistency, along with the capacity to relate to the individual and group in such a way that learners feel recognised in their particularity. There is on one hand a necessary bureaucratic framework which tells students what they can have, and on the other hand a commitment to giving students in various ways what they want. The balance, it hardly needs saying, is difficult to achieve. The success of student services in ODL is built not just on the second of these, although some colleagues seem to think from the best motives that this can be the case. It is also crucially built on the systemic development of services that demand complex routines. In their turn they necessitate management of a kind to which educational institutions have not hitherto, to any great extent, been accustomed, and to which there is an understandable resistance. If those systems, however, are delivered without real understanding of what students need (and this in part grows out of listening to them), without flexibility or transparency, and without a commitment to their success, then student support will remain only a bureaucratic service in the worst sense of the word. This represents the axis on which the rest of this chapter in many ways turns.

The Invisibility of Service

Where tutoring and student guidance and counselling are delivered on a decentralised basis this creates the significant issue of 'invisibility' of service. The same can apply to small units like study centres, from where administrative services are also delivered. While this might be worrying enough in itself, it is compounded by the fact that a significant proportion of services to students are delivered precisely where management and quality assurance activities find it difficult to operate. While there is no magic wand to wave, there are a number of elements that contribute to the construction and maintenance of good practice which is invisible to the headquarters of the organisation. These include focuses on staff and systems.

Management of Staff

With regard to staff management, the following elements are identified as important:

- appointment of staff;
- creation and maintenance of job descriptions;
- the induction and initial training process;
- mentoring;
- supervision and appraisal;
- teamwork;
- continuing training;
- value driven management.

Appointment of Staff

Different institutions and organisations will have their own approaches to the appointment of staff. Modern management demands that equal opportunities approaches are taken in order both to contribute to equity in any particular context, but equally to ensure that the best appointment is made to the job. For the appointment, it is necessary to construct a job description which makes clear what is to be done, and a person specification which makes clear the essential and desirable qualifications, experience and skills. The job description should include a passage on the values associated with the job, i.e. the approach to engaging with students that the institution wants to see in place. The candidates may undertake tasks which are based on the job specification e.g. making a presentation to students or tutors, doing some correspondence teaching in advance, or doing an in-tray exercise.

Creation and Maintenance of Job Descriptions

Each person should work to a job description which is current, and which can remind them of their core tasks and responsibilities. While there may seem to be a labour-intensive and bureaucratic element to this, it is surely better in the context of supervision to revise job descriptions annually so that they remain relevant, than to begin to ignore them because they are felt to be useless. Job descriptions should be simply and clearly written, with active verbs, e.g. manage staff in study centres; advise students on choice of courses etc.

Induction and Initial Training Process

Induction and training represent key ways in which the practice and values of the institution can be inculcated in the individuals who come to work for it. This is especially important in contexts where other educational systems from which candidates will naturally present themselves have very different values etc. from the ODL systems that they are coming to join. Induction and initial training can then follow on from the job description used at recruitment.

There is no doubt in distributed systems it is more difficult to provide such training than in a campus-based or one location organisation. While some induction is needed immediately in all cases, this can be provided on paper or through computer-mediated communication (CMC), while more interactive forms of induction can be staggered at least to some extent in order to bring new colleagues together if at all possible. The induction and initial training should be as much about values and mission as about immediate tasks in hand.

Mentoring

The allocation of a mentor for the first year or so of appointment for a new member of staff can substantially assist both in supporting that new colleague in his or her work in a non-threatening way through a peer, and also support the institutional agenda of establishing the values which underpin interaction with students or tutors. Mentoring, in other words, supplements the line management relationship (where it is termed so). It can be particularly effective as the values are seen to come from a peer and thus to be accepted by one's immediate colleagues, and do not seem only an imposition from 'management' (cf. Morgan & Smit, 2001; Panda & Jena, 2001).

Selection and initial training of the mentor are thus essential elements in this approach if it is to be adopted. Key elements in training of mentors should include exercises to:

- develop listening skills;
- allow analysis of boundaries, e.g. which issues the mentee should be encouraged to discuss with his or her line manager;
- to allow discussion of the issues around confidentiality.

Supervision and Appraisal

Effective supervision of staff represents perhaps the core condition for the delivery over time of services to students of a quality desired by the institution, however defined. For many staff in education, if not in other contexts such as training and human resource development (HRD), such practices may still be foreign, since the staff inherit elements of a long tradition of being free spirits, accountable only to their subjects and to their peers. This conflicts in many educational contexts with both scale and complexity of what needs to be done, and also with the widespread interest of the government. Further, ODL using industrialized methods with new divisions of labour in all but the smallest of institutions reinforces the need to develop new approaches to management in general and to the supervision of staff in particular

A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches make up the optimum mix for this demanding situation. Along with the bottom-up approaches which induction and mentoring bring, it can be suggested that those with managerial responsibilities have three key approaches:

- commitment;
- trust;
- conversation.

By the first of these is meant that managers should themselves demonstrate commitment by showing interest all the time in what is happening. If, however, managers are always out of the office engaged with 'more important' activities, this will negatively impact on those they manage. Further, they will firstly not know what is going on, and secondly will demonstrate their contempt for the core tasks to their staff.

The second core component is the notion of trust. Here it is intended that within appropriate accountability and supervision, there should grow out of the managerial style a perceptible understanding by those who provide services to students that they are trusted to do so. In the ODL context this means above all that staff are trusted to work effectively and in accordance with the values of the organisation when they are working 'invisibly'. This should grow naturally out of effective appointment, induction and initial training.

By the term 'conversation' is meant that managers should spend time listening to as well as talking to their staff over the delivery of services to students. Much can be learned of a qualitative nature both about the kinds of services which students are using, about shortfalls in services, and about what is additionally needed. Regular attention through conversational management to the delivery of service can make a substantial contribution to both the building of and, importantly, the maintenance of quality. To achieve this, managers need to be there.

Cultural specifics will determine in any one organisation how these or other managerial approaches need to be applied. The managers and staff sit down together, say once per

year, in order to review achievements against historical objectives, revise objectives for the next year, and identify training needs. The revision of the job description can be undertaken in this context.

Teamwork

Large scale organisations in many contexts have over recent years moved away from extended hierarchies and watertight job designs towards teams where tasks are managed more cooperatively and flexibly. As ODL in most contexts is a more industrialised form of teaching and learning, this development is of particular interest, no less so in the delivery of services to students.

The creation of teams across traditional boundaries of teachers or academics and clerical/ administrative colleagues can do much both to improve and maintain services to students and to build on the values which the organisation wants to drive the work. This supports the objective of establishing quality in work which is 'invisible' much of the time. These teams can, for example, review the management of the admissions process, the quality of study centre accommodation, or the time-tabling of face-to-face elements of provision, in which all parties have an interest. Leadership in teams can move across hierarchies within education.

There will also be a need to participate in teams outside those concerned immediately with services for students, and which are based more widely within the institution as a whole. This is particularly true for senior staff. As the section below on value-driven management argues more fully, it is essential that the knowledge and values that drive the work of supporting students are represented elsewhere within the organisation. It is also conversely the case that those supporting students need to understand, through working in teams, the values and constraints that govern the work of those writing courses or who are responsible for regulatory compliance of one sort or another.

Continuing Training

It would be paradoxical if a book in the field of management of ODL were not to endorse the importance of continuing training and development, and the rationale for HRD as a contribution to organisational success does not need to be further rehearsed here (Robinson, 1998). It is, however, worth identifying some of the priorities for training and development after the induction period. The issues can be addressed in a number of ways. Training and development can be conceived to be:

- for remedial purposes for the immediate job;
- as preparation to meet change and future organisational needs;
- for individual development.

The first area, that of training for remedial purposes, is likely to be of the most clearly functional nature, e.g. providing IT skills where these are lacking, or induction to ODL. It will be particularly important where an institution or organisation is first going into ODL, as new skills will need to be introduced, such as management of student databases for ODL, the writing of course materials, or the creation of Web-bases. Important decisions need to be made, depending on the local context, as to whether training should be brought in for these purposes or developed in-house.

Responsibility for training must, of course, have home(s) in the organisation. Development of such a training function can represent a compromise between the alternatives of in-house and external provision. In-house training may be arranged for those that need to be met on a continual basis, while in smaller-scale cases, the training will have to be brought in. Points to be made to any outside training organisation or individual training include:

- Has the outside training adequately studied the needs of your specific organisation and of ODL?
- Will the training package be tailored or adapted to your needs rather than be an off-the-shelf programme which will have redundant or inappropriate elements?
- Is there space after the event or course for the outside training provider to discuss results of evaluations and other evidence of outcomes?

The second area, preparation to meet change and future organisational needs, is more developmental. In our specific context of supporting students, developmental training might look at:

- demographic trends over the next 10 years;
- historical evidence about recruitment and student success, which can be analysed in terms of its future trends and what activities might be undertaken as a response;
- management exercises in the context of, say, expansion. What would need to be done of an incremental or a qualitatively new nature?
- analysis of perceived competition, and resultant activities;
- implications of new technologies;
- international conference attendance and study tours in order to assess developments elsewhere.

In many of these activities it is very worthwhile to involve students as an element in the mix of participants.

The third element of training relates to that which is primarily for individual development rather than being based on an assessment of the organisation's needs. This can include support in terms of fees and time for further study, or the learning of new languages. The extent to which support for training should be restricted to that which seems related to the support of students will vary from one context to another, and there is legitimate variety of view as to the extent to which such training contributes to staff retention or their departure for new opportunities. However, it is worth saying that there is an increasingly influential view that any learning undertaken by employees benefits their organisation in some broad ways.

Value-driven Management

Lastly in this section on staff management, comes the issue of value driven management (Paul, 1990). What is identified here is that management is not solely a technocratic activity, and in the context of ODL and of supporting students is unlikely to be related only to profitability. The institutional values as they relate to the importance of education

and training for the development of people within a regional, national and increasingly international context should underpin all managerial activity.

The support of students in ODL will therefore need value-driven management which is founded on the importance of, not disinterest in, the success of students. This core belief, if acted upon by senior managers, will have a good chance of illuminating the work of all those supporting students, leading to students being treated seriously, with respect, and with care. Such values will inform many aspects of the work, e.g. transparency, i.e. the importance of systems and regulations being framed in ways that students can readily understand; and timeliness, i.e. the recognition that students are entitled to responses which come within an agreed period.

A supporting core value lies in demonstrating understanding of the ways in which educational goals are integrally connected with administrative competence, and overall represents a core managerial achievement.

A further and related core value lies in the ways in which the knowledge that tutors and students have is accorded status and respect. These categories of participants, from the periphery, if you like, in many ODL systems, are marginalised in many societies from a historical point of view in relation to their status as well as geographic location. But the knowledge they have is important knowledge for the institution or organisation, and represents a necessary and integral element alongside those of managers and teachers or academics. Those managing services to students may encounter attitudinal difficulties in espousing and operationalising such values.

Finally, services to students should embody the values of specificity, by which is meant a commitment to the individual and to the locality. Services to students are predicated on the recognition that particular students have specific needs arising out of their local circumstances and, therefore, student-centred values need to be promoted by those staff who serve students.

All these values have further to be represented in other domains of the institution or organisation. The core values that are developed in the management of student services are, in the very nature of things, unlikely to be universally shared across the organisation. The strategic planning at organisational level should contribute to the sharing of values throughout. Those managing support to students will have, as an important element in their role, the representation of the values which underpin their activities to other parts of the institution, as well as to the colleagues whose activities they direct.

Management of Systems

The management of systems, while it has followed the management of staff in this chapter, is no less in fact no less important. Indeed it stands as a foundation without which ODL of any scale at all cannot be managed. Attitudes of academic snobbery towards those who design and manage systems which support students is entirely misplaced, not least from a practical point of view. The systems which will admit and register a student, ensure the delivery of teaching materials or provide access and troubleshooting to the Web, which allocate tutors to students, accurately and speedily record changes of address, record future course choice, manage historically the accumulation of credit and notification of awards, chart and communicate dates of examinations, manage assessment scores, and so on: all these contribute as much to

student progress and success as anything else that the institution does. The development of such systems relies on teamwork: those with responsibility for teaching and learning must work as colleagues alongside those with responsibility for the development and management of systems.

While this calls for professional management where the 'academy', i.e. the educationalists, are equals, not masters, those who come from administrative or managerial backgrounds have also to change their perspectives. They have to develop a framework of attitude that takes the 'academy' seriously, and they have to engage with the ideas about education and training that colleagues from that background bring. These shifts in attitude can be all the more difficult to manage in dual-mode institutions, where the institution may be dominated by more conventional delivery of teaching and learning, and thus the different needs of ODL are difficult to establish.

The design and management of systems for ODL is a huge topic which deserves a volume of its own. Within the scope of this chapter, however, the following elements can be identified as particularly important for notice:

- systems tailored to available technologies;
- record-keeping and data management;
- communications maps;
- complaints procedures;
- audit and inspection.

Tailoring Systems to Technologies

Key decisions in selecting and using technologies to support services to students lie firstly in whether they are for internal organisational use only, or are to be accessed by students. In organisations dealing within anything more than a handful of students, computerised data management is essential. However, the step-change for a centre-periphery organisation, as many ODL institutions are, lies in the capacity to network computers across a range of locations and their proper maintenance. What this reveals is that technologies have the potential not just to speed up what we do, but to change what we do and how we do it. As new technologies are introduced and facilitate new developments, the following questions become pertinent and need to be responded to:

- Can we deliver existing services more effectively? What are our criteria and measures?
- Can we deliver new services?
- Do we need different categories of staff for new services?
- Do we need staff in different places for new services?
- Are there implications for change in management activities and structures?
- How much technical support do we need in using new technologies?
- How do we construct a budget for the new services?
- How do we evaluate new developments, including cost-effectiveness measures?

Record Keeping and Data Management

There are a number of key points which can be briefly made about this complex area. They are made in the knowledge that the ways in which data is collected and manipulated is going to vary from the services for students in one institution to another in radical ways that make comprehensive discussion difficult.

Data Capture

Careful thought needs to be given to what data is wanted by the institution. There are a range of interest groups or stakeholders who will need to be consulted. These include:

- the admissions and guidance systems;
- the teaching materials delivery system;
- the tutorial system;
- the assessment system;
- evaluators and institutional researchers;
- strategic planning system;
- marketing;
- outside bodies, e.g. government departments.

These functions will exist in some form in all ODL systems, and nothing will be more frustrating or damaging to effectiveness or teamwork than to find that essential data needed by one or other function has not been collected. There will certainly be discussions about how much data can reasonably be collected from students or clients at the point of entry or during study. It will be more facilitating if data are collected, analysed and results communicated by one unit.

Data Manipulation

Obvious though it seems, in systems of more than micro size students will need a unique identifier, in other words a number or sequence of letters and numbers. This identifier means that the institution will never (or almost never!) confuse one student with another. A further dimension that is essential for almost all systems is the historical one. However data is collected, there need to be ways of using it historically so that you can ask, for example, which courses the student has taken, how much credit has been gained, or when a student is due for an award.

Communication Mapping and Management

The complexity of the division of labour in ODL organisations means that effective communication is essential. Mapping and management refer to activities which first of all make clear who should talk to whom about what (the mapping); management refers to the operation of systems that build in actual communication, which actually takes place. It also refers to the culture and attitudes that prevail. Most importantly, it means that while customer and service relationships exist between departments, the status of knowledge is one of equals.

There are a number of areas of particular concern within which such concepts can be more concretely understood. These include the following.

Course Production and Course Presentation Communications

In second generation ODL there have been particular difficulties in many systems over the communications between those responsible for producing courses and those responsible for delivering them in the field. The worst scenario is that which occurs when the design and production stage has been all but completed before thought is given as to how students will study e.g. how will materials be delivered, how students will be admitted or selected, who will tutor the students, how practical experience where necessary can be incorporated, how examinations can be held etc. In third generation ODL, where information communications technologies (ICT) provide the essential media, there may be more integration between production and presentation in the actual running of the course.

Centre-periphery Communications

From the perspective of communications management perhaps the most important element in any ODL organisation that has a centre-periphery structure concerns the ways in which the two elements communicate. The culture in which this is done is as important as the actual activity. In many systems, the culture has grown up that the centre has high status and the periphery – meaning tutors, and staff in regional offices or in study centres – has low status.

There are elements of this which are very difficult to impact upon. Nonetheless the well-managed organisation will at least recognise that the knowledge which is developed in the periphery is essential to the organisation as a whole – it is useful knowledge. In particular, it draws on knowledge which is much harder to identify at the centre, namely that which is drawn from the public at large about perceptions of the institution; from students and from tutors. Within dual-mode institutions, this can be especially hard if ODL is already seen as an inferior activity within the mainstream.

Thus, systems need to be developed which draw upon knowledge developed in the periphery. These conventionally are based on meetings at the centre, to which staff from regional centres and study centres, and sometimes students, are invited. Colleagues from peripheral posts can be used as chair-people. Occasional meetings can be held in regional offices or study centres, and ways should be found of involving students on major committees.

Where possible, meetings by telephone- or video-conference can be very helpful in diminishing time for travel. They can be especially important for minor meetings, or as elements within a schedule of meetings which take place half on a face-to-face basis and half through one of these technologies.

An enormous amount of communication within the organisation and to the external world now takes place by e-mail and CMC. Through its social dimension, CMC allows discussion across a range of locations in ways that resolve issues of time and place in revolutionary ways. In many cases, it offers a medium which is strong on discussion rather than decision making, where often it seems still to be felt that face-to-face meeting is imperative. There seems to be a kind of hierarchy developing within management where e-mail, CMC, video- and telephone-conferencing and simple telephone calls are conceived as being in ascending order, with face-to-face meeting remaining not only a

desirable element, but the most desirable element where particularly difficult, important or sensitive issues have to be resolved.

Where all or some of these approaches are well managed through achieving the optimum fit of a particular set of circumstances, the term 'distributed organisation' rather than 'centre-periphery organisation' becomes more appropriate, and is certainly preferable. As is clear, it suggests a flexible if complex set of arrangements across more than one location, rather than a structure based on a headquarters and outpost mentality.

Institution-tutor and Institution-student Communications

Particular difficulties arise in the ways in which the organisation relates to tutors where they are part-time and distributed, and to students.

These are based around geography: the tutors and students are simply not in the building. They arise also around status, with the knowledge that tutors and students are all too often seen as subordinate to those who work full-time for the organisation. However, it has been argued here that the knowledge deriving from one category or another of participant in the overall ODL enterprise should not be seen as subordinate. While tutors and students represent only one element within understanding across the institution as a whole, their contribution should be seen as integral and necessary. This can be very galling for those who perceive their status within the organisation as threatened by having to listen, sometimes to criticism, to those they perceive as 'junior'. However, the knowledge that is represented in tutors and students about the success or otherwise of what is happening within the organisation is very important in its development and improvement. All, including the most senior, have something to learn.

Academic-administrative Communications

Communications about student services can also be diminished by attitudes which derived from former traditions within education about the subservient role of administrators vis-à-vis academics to teachers. As with tutors and students, it represents a false understanding of who has relevant and useful knowledge. In the context of ODL, where in more than micro-systems elements of industrialisation are likely to be present, it also represents a particularly damaging diminishment of a range of functions which can be termed administrative, and which are of core and integral importance in the delivery of services to students.

The most effective way of changing both the practice and its supporting culture in an organisation where this sort of separatism is present to a greater or lesser degree, is to move towards teamwork rather than the more traditional committee structure. In the latter, those with administrative responsibilities have been seen as servicing rather than participating in discussions and decisions. Their participation is likely to be more assured where they are members of such meetings rather than servants of it.

Communications Through Time

As well as spanning the organisation in terms of horizontal and vertical structures, in terms of geography as well as categories of staff, communications have to be mapped and managed across time. It is clearly good practice to have a record of major issues discussed and decisions taken at any meeting. It is essential that the record of the last

meeting is referred to in order to check on who agreed to do what. Further, there need to be indices of decisions taken on a cross-organisational basis, so that when considering an issue it is possible to check quickly when it was previously discussed and what has been done about it.

Complaints Procedures

Complaints from students create both systemic and cultural issues for education in general. For ODL, there is the particular issue of how easy it is for students learning at a distance to make their complaints, and the impact on their progress or conversely dropout, if channels are not created (Fage & Mayes, 1997). Thus the first element in any ODL system is that students know how to complain. The second element is that the institution must have procedures for acknowledgement timescales within which answers will be given, and authority must be developed in order that redress can as easily as possible be made when necessary. At the same time, there must be channels to senior authority, perhaps an ombudsperson in a big system, for students who do not gain satisfaction and still feel aggrieved. Systems for logging complaints transparently must be set up, and management must ensure that student complaints are not swept under the carpet but addressed in a competent way. A central log for all complaints may be advisable so that an overall institutional perspective on what students are complaining about can be gained. While there are of course unjustified complaints, the culture should be that complaints are treated seriously, as the students who make them.

Audit and Inspection

There is no space in this chapter to address fully the issues of quality assurance for student services in distance education, under which audit and inspection can be broadly located (Tait, 1997). However, the terms denote both the regular internal cycles of audit and review which need to be undertaken to assure that service standards are being met, as well as the increasingly familiar process of external inspection from government agencies in many countries to assure that public resource is being effectively used. Services to students delivered out of sight in distance education may present particular difficulties for quality assurance activity. These can, however, be addressed through well-planned activity, gathering information from students and tutors, as well as ensuring that standards, for example of timeliness in services, process in teaching, facilities in study centres etc. are met.

Conclusion

For both the staff and systems dimensions of student services, managerial persistence over time is essential, in order to diminish the tendency which appears to be universal for systems overall to atrophy, and for familiarity to engender a relaxation of standards and a loss of commitment and concentration. At the same time, systems have to be developed which do not hamper the organisation by their cumbersomeness, either in terms of paperwork, meetings, or a bullying insensitivity to the needs of staff themselves, all of which where the balance is wrong will negatively affect the very achievement that they are intended to support. They will also diminish the potential for the fulfilment of key quality indicators such as respect for students or timeliness of response. The development and running of managerial processes to support the delivery of services to students in ODL, where there is a high degree of invisibility, is no easy

12

task. Clearly, there will be a range of differences in how these elements are developed and applied in different educational sectors with different histories and cultures. The distinctions between single- and dual-mode institutions are particularly significant, and the revolution which new technologies brings difficult to foresee with any precision. This is especially the case where the call-centre model of customer care begins to impact on large-scale ODL organisations, and where information and advice is increasingly given to students on the Web. However, the commonalities of delivering student services in distributed ODL systems will tend to drive at least some commonalities of practice around the world, which make discussion of this nature worthwhile.

References

Fage, J., & Mayes, R. (1997). Monitoring learners progress. In R. Mills & A. Tait (Eds.), *Supporting the learner in open and distance learning* (pp. 206-221). London: Pitman.

Morgan, C., & Smit, A. (2001). Mentoring in open and distance learning. In F. Lockwood & A. Gooley (Eds.), *Innovation in open and distance learning* (pp. 160-171). London: Kogan Page.

Panda, S., & Jena, T. (2001). Changing the pattern: Towards flexible learning, learner support and mentoring. In F. Lockwood & A. Gooley (Eds.), *Innovation in open and distance learning* (pp. 172-178). London: Kogan Page.

Paul, R. (1990). *Open learning and open management: Leadership and integrity in distance education.* London: Kogan Page.

Robinson, B. (1998). A strategic perspective on staff development for open and distance learning. In C. Latchem & F. Lockwood (Eds.), *Staff development in open and flexible learning,* (pp. 33-44). London: Routledge.

Rumble, G. (1992). *The management of distance learning systems.* UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris.

Sewart, D. (1993). Student support systems in distance education. *Open Learning*, *8*(3), pp. 3-12.

Sweet, R. (1993). Perspectives on distance education--Student support services: Toward more responsive systems. *Report of a Symposium on Student Support Services in Distance Education, Delhi.* Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning.

Tait, A. (Ed.) (1997). *Perspectives on distance education--Quality assurance in higher education: Selected case studies.* Vancouver: Commonwealth of Learning.

Tait, A. (2000). Planning student support in open and distance learning. *Open Learning*, *15*(3), pp. 287-99.