

**Alison Jackson** offers a personal perspective on how her role contributed to ESCalate's work in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum improvement and staff development for teacher educators. She then tells us about how she has developed this role in her work with TEAN. ►

## Responding to the needs of the teaching community

I joined St Martin's College in 2005 after responding to an advertisement which asked for a lecturer to contribute to ESCalate's work in support and advice on pedagogy, curriculum enhancement and staff development in relation to teacher education. In those days, ESCalate was not as easily found on Google as it is now and I well remember the other candidates at the interview asking me if I knew what ESCalate was all about; I certainly found out over the next four years! St Martin's, I learned, had been responsible for the initial teacher education element of ESCalate's work plan since 2003. Its work programmes each year responded to the needs of the teacher education community and the priorities of the Higher Education Academy. Newly arrived from teaching in school, and clutching my higher degrees in education in my hand, I set about deciphering the meanings of lists of acronyms and learning the delights of Birmingham New Street station, as I waited for the train for Bristol en route for meetings with the ESCalate team.

Between 2005 and 2009 a team dedicated to Initial Teacher

Education – myself, Sue Bloxham, Sam Twiselton and a team of administrative support – ensured that ESCalate at St Martin's, and then ESCalate at the University of Cumbria when the college gained university status in 2007, flourished. The ITE conference held every May became well established as a key forum for teacher educators to get together to discuss and share thoughts and inspirations concerning their research and practice. A range of seminars and workshops on varied topics – extended from the original brief to include such things as Problem-Based Learning, assessment, teaching as a Masters level profession, reflection, creativity, Every Child Matters – all contributed to the growing reputation of ESCalate at Cumbria. Our philosophy of being there for teacher educators as they fulfil their demanding role is based on the desire to foster collaborative working in a supportive, non-threatening way and to promote high quality research and scholarly opportunities to raise the profile of teacher education. Colleagues from across the four nations of the UK, as well the University of Cumbria





The ESCalate ITE conference held every May became well established as a key forum for teacher educators to get together to discuss and share thoughts and inspirations concerning their research and practice.



itself, have benefited from this work.

Since September 2009 we are no longer ESCalate Cumbria but have formed a new identity with TEAN, the Teacher Education Advancement Network, which is founded on the rigorous principles (outlined above) that we established with ESCalate. The conference continues under our new name and we are delighted to be sponsored by ESCalate for this. We have also run a series of workshops for New Teacher Educators.

Congratulations to ESCalate on its first 10 years and TEAN looks forward to further collaboration with the subject centre as it embarks upon its new decade.



Alison Jackson  
TEAN,  
University of Cumbria

Alison Jackson is Director of the Teacher Education Advancement Network based at the University of Cumbria. Her background is in secondary education and her research interests are: Initial Teacher Education, school leadership, school culture, teacher identity, teacher professionalism, teaching as a Masters level profession.