

# *Learning Partnerships*



*- the art of handling ambiguity -*

## **Volume I (1 - 384)**

**Submitted by Patrick Meaney to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, October 2008**

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

Signed:

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## **Acknowledgements**

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*Above all, my love goes to my family for their love and support throughout.*

## Abstract

This intrinsic case study is about people who worked in partnerships. Each of the partnerships emerged from relationships formed between the business, education, government and community sectors. A principle aim of the cross-sector partnerships was to enhance learning opportunities, integral to which was the incorporation of ICT. The study explores through interweaving narratives, some of the key interrelationships that emerged from the evolving partnerships as they strived to accomplish their aims.

The partnerships represented a rich and complex context for dynamic and strategic change occurring, not only in the evolving partnerships, but also in the systems they intended to consolidate and optimise. Furthermore, such complexity pervaded ideological notions of instability and discontinuity arising from difference that may be implicit or explicit in open, distributed complex systems.

The metaphor of hypertext serves to both retain textural qualities of organisation and address key problematics associated with visualisation and representation and also as a means to reflect upon the study by encouraging improvisatory processes akin to those experienced by the participants. In this respect, hypertext is not used to simply challenge artificial boundaries, linearities and determinisms but rather, prompt the construction of meanings further to those partially represented. It also serves to maintain a clearer relationship between those contexts within which research has been, or becomes situated.

The thesis largely rests on its representational form in terms of its self-sufficiency to portray, convey, express, evoke, engage and inform. Ambiguity forms a fundamental facet of the thesis. In addition to those that rest within the texts, graphic illustrations are used to provide narratives in different forms whereby, readers are not bound by the same inadequacies or constraints in drawing meaning about the subject from text alone. By taking the view of the artist, the illustrations provide a flexibility that overcomes some of the dimensional limitations of the thesis and further emphasises its connectionist, constructivist and aesthetic undertones. The links between components and nuanced meanings emphasises the interdependencies in terms that transcend the representational form of discursive language. The case is thus, synthesised in the following illustration:



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## Contents

### **VOLUME I (1 - 384)..... I**


---

Abstract .....	iii
Contents .....	iv
Figures TOC .....	ix
Figures in Comment Fields.....	xii
List of Accompanying Material .....	xiii
Definitions .....	xv
<b>Navigation .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Influences on structure .....	1
Possible openings unfold?.....	2
Channels and Paths.....	3
Embellishments and constraints .....	7

### **ACTIVITY SECTION ..... 10**

---

<b>If Then Why Not Later?.....</b>	<b>11</b>
The ghost in the machine .....	11
Understanding an EBLO .....	12
Me, Them and It .....	25
Partnership activity contexts .....	32
Rain in a bucket.....	32
Another brick in the wall? .....	33
Look left, look right and left again.....	35
Look in but look out.....	37
Looking forwards (with hindsight) .....	41

<b>Project Outlines - Weigh in.....</b>	<b>44</b>
Fuel in the tank .....	44
Me them and it .....	47
A few tangibles .....	48
General frameworks and relationships.....	53
Rural Communities Project (RCP) .....	56
Computer Redistribution Scheme (CRS).....	64
Steering Groups (strategic/operational).....	65
So What? .....	67
Questions, Issues and More .....	70
Anticipated Outcomes .....	72
Focus, focus, focus .....	72
Bridging the gap.....	72
<b>SCENARIOS</b> 	<b>76</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Scenario 1 Stakeholders and Beneficiaries?.....</b>	<b>77</b>
Who? .....	77
Scene setting .....	77
Commentaries .....	81
Reflection-on-Action.....	90
Like a bridge over troubled waters.....	95
<b>Scenario 2 Youth and Community? .....</b>	<b>98</b>
Prince or pauper? .....	98
Handbooks manuals and guides .....	99
But is it cricket? .....	110

---

<b>Scenario 3</b>	<b>Land of Milk and Honey?</b>	<b>113</b>
	Heaps of IT	113
	Computer redistribution schemes	114
	Handling principles - an ethical dilemma or just a technicality?	118
	... and incidentally	124
	Responses	125
	Discussion of the Issues	133
	Brake failure!	138
	Recontextualising action	140
<b>Scenario 4</b>	<b>Tops and Tales?</b>	<b>141</b>
	Intro - Order in the ranks	141
	Shifting sands – policy context	142
	Interim Reports	147
	LLP/ICT Report	155
	SWOT's it all about then	178
	Micro/macro/meta ... research of research	190
<b>Scenario 5</b>	<b>Off the Beaten Track?</b>	<b>193</b>
	Room for a view	193
	Hats and umbrellas	194
	Cloaks and daggers	195
	Changing rooms	196
	Stepping stones and building blocks	199

**RESEARCH SECTION**  ... 208

**Prelude** ..... 209

    Negotiating terms ..... 213

**Terms and Conditions** ..... 218

    Conditions ..... 219

    Building relationships ..... 221

    Red herrings and blind alleys? ..... 227

    Ethics in context ..... 232

    Into the blender ..... 241

**reading the small print** ..... 243

    Finding a line of sight ..... 243

    Seeing is believing? ..... 244

    Problems with issues? ..... 253

    Remodelling models ..... 259

    Trends and trajectories ..... 263

    Different ways of seeing ..... 267

    Creating resolving or highlighting issues? ..... 274

**One in the Eye** ..... 276

    Finding the light switch ..... 276

    Ways of seeing ..... 284


    Finding representational form, somewhere ... ..... 286

    Getting a fix ..... 295

    Detail into vision - action into action ..... 314

    Concept mapping - Routes, maps and guides ..... 320

    Out of this world? ..... 332

<b>Fat Patches</b> .....	<b>342</b>
<b>Starters orders</b> .....	<b>343</b>
<b>Wave power</b> .....	<b>348</b>
<b>LOP sided?</b> .....	<b>350</b>
<b>Bound to bind the unfettered?</b> .....	<b>351</b>
<b>Into the thick of it</b> .....	<b>354</b>
<b>Patching the Whole?</b> .....	<b>362</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>  .....	<b>369</b>
<hr/>	
<b>In Search of the Lost Chord?</b> .....	<b>370</b>
<b>Jigsaw poiesis</b> .....	<b>370</b>
<b>Play it again Sam?</b> .....	<b>370</b>
<b>Cases and other baggage</b> .....	<b>375</b>
<b>Quest shuns an answer?</b> .....	<b>376</b>
<b>I Think I've Found the Lost Chord</b> ... ..	<b>377</b>
<b>Further unfolding</b> .....	<b>381</b>
<b>Epilogue</b> .....	<b>384</b>
<b>The Question?</b> .....	<b>384</b>
<b>VOLUME II (385 - 573)</b> .....	<b>385</b>
<hr/>	
<b>Comments</b> .....	<b>386</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>539</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>559</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Read Me Files (navigating electronic documents)</b> .....	<b>560</b>
<b>Appendix 2 Fig 18 Layers and Strands</b> .....	<b>562</b>



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## Figures TOC

<i>Fig. 1</i>	<i>Fat Patches Applied</i> .....	9
<i>Fig. 2</i>	<i>Participant Action</i> .....	10
<i>Fig. 3</i>	<i>Autopoiesis</i> .....	45
<i>Fig. 4</i>	<i>Project Development Map</i> .....	49
<i>Fig. 5</i>	<i>Network of interrelated Organisations and Projects</i> .....	52
<i>Fig. 6</i>	<i>Scenario / Project links</i> .....	52
<i>Fig. 7</i>	<i>Generic Project Rationale</i> .....	54
<i>Fig. 8</i>	<i>Action in action</i> .....	55
<i>Fig. 9</i>	<i>Action focus</i> .....	55
<i>Fig. 10</i>	<i>Rural Community Project Map</i> .....	63
<i>Fig. 11</i>	<i>Organisational relationships</i> .....	67
<i>Fig. 12</i>	<i>Project ‘ownership’</i> .....	68
<i>Fig. 13</i>	<i>Stakeholder interests</i> .....	69
<i>Fig. 14</i>	<i>Stakeholder/Beneficiary links</i> .....	69
<i>Fig. 15</i>	<i>Project Timelines</i> .....	70
<i>Fig. 16</i>	<i>RCP Timeline (Phases of development)</i> .....	71
<i>Fig. 17</i>	<i>Project / Scenario links</i> .....	75
<i>Fig. 18</i>	<i>RCP Project rationale</i> .....	78
<i>Fig. 19</i>	<i>Stakeholders and beneficiaries</i> .....	99
<i>Fig. 20</i>	<i>Providers and recipients making sense of opportunity</i> .....	100
<i>Fig. 21</i>	<i>Swings and balances (allies and butterflies)</i> .....	102
<i>Fig. 22</i>	<i>CRS Timeline</i> .....	116
<i>Fig. 23</i>	<i>Organisation/Project Network</i> .....	117
<i>Fig. 24</i>	<i>Computer allocations</i> .....	123
<i>Fig. 25</i>	<i>A rational model of the strategic process (Mintzberg 1990)</i> .....	179
<i>Fig. 26</i>	<i>The duality of participation and reification</i> .....	192
<i>Fig. 27</i>	<i>Building blocks 1</i> .....	200

---

<i>Fig. 28</i>	<i>FCA-P</i> .....	202
<i>Fig. 29</i>	<i>OAR-I</i> .....	204
<i>Fig. 30</i>	<i>Technological perspectives</i> .....	205
<i>Fig. 31</i>	<i>K-OSorKnot</i> .....	206
<i>Fig. 32</i>	<i>Research Action</i> .....	208
<i>Fig. 33</i>	<i>Research rationales</i> .....	219
<i>Fig. 34</i>	<i>Genesis of a research opportunity</i> .....	222
<i>Fig. 35</i>	<i>Terms of Reference</i> .....	223
<i>Fig. 36</i>	<i>EBG-C</i> .....	224
<i>Fig. 37</i>	<i>Organisational models</i> .....	225
<i>Fig. 38</i>	<i>Research Model (LOP/ICT)</i> .....	226
<i>Fig. 39</i>	<i>Ethical principles</i> .....	228
<i>Fig. 40</i>	<i>Ethical relationships</i> .....	229
<i>Fig. 41</i>	<i>Ethical action in practice</i> .....	230
<i>Fig. 42</i>	<i>Ethical uncertainties</i> .....	230
<i>Fig. 43</i>	<i>Towards a synthesis?</i> .....	242
<i>Fig. 44</i>	<i>D&amp;L Representation of historical moments</i> .....	248
<i>Fig. 45</i>	<i>Evolving assumptions</i> .....	253
<i>Fig. 46</i>	<i>Uncertainty - locating the issue?</i> .....	254
<i>Fig. 47</i>	<i>Spying Games?</i> .....	256
<i>Fig. 48</i>	<i>Uncertainty - the issue located?</i> .....	258
<i>Fig. 49</i>	<i>Research Action in Action</i> .....	260
<i>Fig. 50</i>	<i>Disturbance in Action</i> .....	261
<i>Fig. 51</i>	<i>Handling uncertainty and difference</i> .....	262
<i>Fig. 52</i>	<i>Generic Research Practice</i> .....	263
<i>Fig. 53</i>	<i>Bunnell (Spiral)</i> .....	265
<i>Fig. 54</i>	<i>Wenger (Duality)</i> .....	266
<i>Fig. 55</i>	<i>(CATM)R model</i> .....	268
<i>Fig. 56</i>	<i>CATM animation 1</i> .....	269

---

Fig. 57	CATMR network.....	270
Fig. 58	Linked rings 1.....	272
Fig. 59	Animated linked rings 1.....	273
Fig. 60	Animated Linked rings 2.....	273
Fig. 61	Interdependent interlinked rings (animation).....	274
Fig. 62	Basic formula.....	286
Fig. 63	'Participant'.....	291
Fig. 64	Facets of observation.....	293
Fig. 65	Research Model (very early).....	298
Fig. 66	Net example 1.....	308
Fig. 67	Net example 2.....	309
Fig. 68	Meaning in the Making?.....	312
Fig. 69	Hatch (Org 1).....	317
Fig. 70	Hatch (Fig 3.3) Organisational networks.....	317
Fig. 71	Layered construction of a network.....	321
Fig. 72	Participation Concept Map 1.....	322
Fig. 73	Participation Concept Map 2.....	324
Fig. 74	Stakeholders and Beneficiaries.....	325
Fig. 75	Provider & Recipient.....	325
Fig. 76	Participation Concept Map 3.....	326
Fig. 77	Partnership Concept Map (terms).....	328
Fig. 78	Partnership Concept Map (sets).....	329
Fig. 79	Partnership Concept Map.....	330
Fig. 80	Lines of Influence (Sectors).....	331
Fig. 81	Local learning agendas.....	331
Fig. 82	A/B/C relationships.....	333
Fig. 83	Lines of Influence.....	334
Fig. 84	Node detail.....	336
Fig. 85	Worlds apart?.....	337

---

<i>Fig. 86</i>	<i>3 Bees (snapshot)</i> .....	338
<i>Fig. 87</i>	<i>Kosko's 'Fat Patches'</i> .....	342
<i>Fig. 88</i>	<i>Research Model (LOP/EBG)</i> .....	345
<i>Fig. 89</i>	<i>Linked Rings</i> .....	383

### **Figures in Comment Fields**

<i>C1.</i>	<i>Early pentagon model</i> .....	417
<i>C2.</i>	<i>Wenger's 'Types of boundary encounter'</i> .....	469
<i>C3.</i>	<i>Computer allocations</i> .....	471
<i>C4.</i>	<i>'Participation concept Map 2'</i> .....	479
<i>C5.</i>	<i>Stakeholder and Beneficiaries</i> .....	480
<i>C6.</i>	<i>Arnheim 1974, Fig 1, p10</i> .....	500
<i>C7.</i>	<i>Arnheim 1974, Fig 29</i> .....	500
<i>C8.</i>	<i>Net example 1</i> .....	515
<i>C9.</i>	<i>Net example 2</i> .....	515
<i>C10.</i>	<i>Organisations as Social Practice (OT Model)</i> .....	518
<i>C11.</i>	<i>Organisations as Symbolic Constructions (OT Model)</i> .....	518
<i>C12.</i>	<i>Organisations as Social Systems (OT Model)</i> .....	519
<i>C13.</i>	<i>Negotiated Order (OT Model)</i> .....	519
<i>C14.</i>	<i>Hatch - Culture Dynamics Model (1997; 363)</i> .....	520
<i>C15.</i>	<i>Reed (Fig 4.2) Trends &amp; trajectories</i> .....	521
<i>C16.</i>	<i>Arnheim - diagrammatic potential</i> .....	522

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## List of Accompanying Material

### *MEDIA*

The thesis is available in two forms - the printed (.pdf) version offers one arrangement or construct, the .doc version on the enclosed computer disk provide further permutations through the use of active hyperlinks and other navigational devices. The printed (.pdf) version of the study is presented in two volumes to overcome some of the limitations of printed text and to help the reader maintain momentum when exploring the narratives. For example,

- **Volume I** represents the main body of the thesis and serves to provide a way of conceptualising and finding some form for contextualised experience in action.
- **Volume II** provides fundamental and important details that have been embedded in the narratives in Volume I by using ‘comment fields’<sup>[PM1]</sup>, and which in printed format, constitute ‘end-notes’. Specifically, ‘comments’ should be read alongside Volume I to facilitate cross-referencing and embellishing and thickening the overall description of the case study. Some comments emphasise the hyper-textual and holistic nature of the entire case and/or provide a second reading to, or a retrospective account for the narrative within which they occur. Comments were a device that on one hand provided a means of encapsulating particular details without impacting the pace and flow of the main narrative. Comments allowed the incorporation of data, sometimes in its raw state, as additional or retrospective insights and as another layer of analysis. Not only does the use of comments in this way emphasise the problem of what should be brought to the fore, for what purpose and on whose behalf, it also raises doubt about temporal and ideological dimensions. (refer [reading the small print](#) and [One in the Eye](#)). In electronic (.doc) form, the entire Volume II becomes superfluous because the comments ‘pop up’ when the cursor is rolled over the highlighted text or comment reference.

Details for navigating these are provided in the ‘Read Me’ file in [Appendix 1](#).

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## ***CD-ROM Media***

### ***Animation Files***

Some of the figures illustrated in the thesis are animations or interactive models.

These include:

Linked Rings.swf (Sequence - Flash animation format)

CATM animation.mov (QuickTime animation)

Node detail.3dmf (Quickdraw 3D file format)

Multiball Worlds.3dmf (Quickdraw 3D file format)

3 Bees (Projector file format)

The 'Read Me' file supplied on the CD-ROM provides an outline on how to access these file types and how to play and/or interact with those illustrations.

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## Definitions

### *Glossary*

<b>AAL</b>	Anywhere Anytime Learning
<b>ADSL</b>	Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line
<b>BCS</b>	British Computer Society
<b>Becta</b>	British Education Communication technology Agency
<b>BESA</b>	British Education Suppliers Association
<b>CAD</b>	Computer Aided Design
<b>CCI</b>	Chamber of Commerce & Industry
<b>CD</b>	Compact Disk
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CfBT</b>	Careers for British Teachers (an EBLO)
<b>CIP</b>	Community ICT Project
<b>Connexions</b>	Careers Service Organisation (an EBLO)
<b>CoP</b>	Community of Practice
<b>CRS</b>	Computer Recycling Scheme
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>CSV</b>	Community Service Volunteers
<b>CTC</b>	City Technology College
<b>DEFRA</b>	Department for Farming and Rural Affairs
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>DETR</b>	Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions
<b>DfEE</b>	Department for Education and Employment
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills
<b>DOS</b>	Disk Operating System
<b>DTI</b>	Department for Trade and Industry
<b>DVD</b>	Digital Versatile Disk or Digital Video Disk
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language
<b>EBL</b>	Education Business Links
<b>EBLO</b>	Education Business Links Organisation
<b>EBP</b>	Education Business Partnership (an EBLO)
<b>EDP</b>	Education Development Plan
<b>EDSI</b>	Education Superhighways Initiative
<b>ESA</b>	Education Support Assistant
<b>ESG</b>	Education Support Grant

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<b>fdisk</b>	Command line utility to provide partitioning functions
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>Gb</b>	gigabyte
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>gHz</b>	giga-Hertz
<b>GOSE</b>	Government Office South East
<b>HDD</b>	Hard Disk Drive
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institutes
<b>HT</b>	Headteacher
<b>HTML</b>	Hyper Text Mark-up Language
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technology
<b>IIP</b>	Investors in People
<b>ILS</b>	Integrated Learning System
<b>ILT</b>	Interactive Learning Technologies
<b>ISDN</b>	Integrated Services Digital Network
<b>ISP</b>	Internet Service Provider
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>IT4All</b>	Information Technology for All
<b>KS</b>	Key Stage
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>LAG</b>	Local Action Group
<b>LAN</b>	Local Area Network
<b>LCD</b>	Liquid Crystal Display
<b>LDA</b>	Learning Development Agency
<b>LDA</b>	Local Development Agency
<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Authority
<b>LLL</b>	Life Long Learning
<b>LLP</b>	Lifelong Learning Partnership (an EBLO)
<b>LLSC</b>	Local Learning & Skills Council
<b>LSA</b>	Learner Support Assistant
<b>LSC</b>	Learning & Skills Council
<b>Menap</b>	UK Charity for people with a learning disability and their families
<b>mHz</b>	mega-Hertz
<b>MIDI</b>	Musical Instrument Digital Interface
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System



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<b>MUSE</b>	Microtechnology Unit for Secondary Education
<b>NCET</b>	National Council for Educational Technology
<b>NGfL</b>	National Grid for Learning
<b>NIACE</b>	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
<b>NLCB</b>	National Lottery Charities Board
<b>NOF</b>	New Opportunities Fund
<b>NT</b>	Brand of Operating System by Microsoft
<b>NVQ</b>	National Vocational Qualification
<b>Ofsted</b>	Office for Standards in Education
<b>OS</b>	Operating System
<b>OSE</b>	Open Source in Education
<b>PAR</b>	Participatory Action Research
<b>PC</b>	Personal Computer
<b>PCT</b>	Personal Construct Theory
<b>QCA</b>	Qualifications & Curriculum Authority
<b>RAID</b>	Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks
<b>RAM</b>	Random Access Memory
<b>RAS</b>	Random Access Server
<b>RCP</b>	Rural Communities Project
<b>RDA</b>	Regional Development Agency
<b>ROM</b>	Read Only Memory
<b>SATRO</b>	Science and Technology Regional Organisation
<b>SBS</b>	Small Business Service
<b>SEEDA</b>	South East Development Agency
<b>SETNET</b>	Science Engineering Technology and Maths Network
<b>SETPoint</b>	Local branch for the Science Technology Engineering & Maths
<b>SME</b>	Small to Medium Enterprise
<b>SNA</b>	Social Network Analysis
<b>Tb</b>	Terabyte
<b>TEC</b>	Training and Enterprise Council
<b>TTA</b>	Teacher Training Agency
<b>TTF</b>	Targets Task Force
<b>TUPE</b>	Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations
<b>TVEI</b>	Technology Vocational Educational Initiative
<b>Ufi</b>	University for Industry
<b>VCN</b>	Virtual College Network

<b>VCR</b>	Video Cassette Recorder
<b>VSO</b>	Voluntary Sector Organisation
<b>WAN</b>	Wide Area Network
<b>WBL</b>	Work Based Learning
<b>WIMP</b>	Windows Icons Menu Pointer
<b>WPL</b>	Work Place Learning
<b>WRL</b>	Work Related Learning
<b>WTS</b>	Windows Terminal Server (Microsoft)
<b>WWW</b>	Worldwide Web
<b>Y&amp;C</b>	Youth & Community
<b>Y2K</b>	Year 2000

### **Referencing for citations**

Quotes from literature conform to Harvard system (Author, date; page reference)

The nature of the research study (cross-sector / multi-organisational partnerships) meant that contributors to observed action may have been from organisations from the Business (B), Government (G), Education (E) sectors. Therefore, statements by participants that are quoted in the text are indexed according to the following classification:

B	Business organisation (private sector)
G	Government organisation (public sector)
E	Education organisation (public sector)
C	Charity (private or third sector)
EBLO	Education Business Link Organisation
School	School

Some organisations may have been associated with more than one sector according to their constitution and clients, e.g. BE = Independent (private) business predominantly working in/with education.

Anonymity for each contributing organisation is upheld by numerical coding (e.g. B7 or G2). Exceptions include: the college, the LSC, the LEA or LA, an EBLO.

The organisation code is suffixed by the role of the person being quoted (e.g. School 7/Headteacher; B3/Senior Manager; BE2/CEO)

Further coding may apply in those instances where there might be more than one contributor within an organisation (e.g. Tutor/1, Tutor/2; Teacher/1, Teacher/2). This number does not signify status.

Examples of full coding might include: B3/Senior Manager/2; B2/CEO; School 5/Teacher/3; EBLO/Tutor/4