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Family portrait: a profile of educational developers around the world

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ABSTRACT

Educational development (also called academic or faculty development) has been described as fragmented, disconnected, and a ‘family of strangers,’ due mostly to the different academic backgrounds of its members. In this paper, the authors report on a survey of over 1000 educational developers from 38 countries on six continents. To help the field gain a clearer picture of itself at the international level, the authors provide a profile of developers’ demography, institutional locations, academic backgrounds, and current roles, and discuss the implications for educational development as a field and developers as a community.

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Training a lens on educational developers

Who are we as educational developers? How do we compare cross-culturally, whether internationally or across disciplines? Viewed globally, how disparate or diverse are we – a ‘truly eclectic group of professionals’ (McDonald & Stockley, 2008, p. 214) or a ‘family of strangers’ (Harland & Staniforth, 2008) in terms of our training, teaching, research, or work profile?

This international study of educational developers runs parallel to studies focused on the national profiles or pathways of developers, including, among others, research that emerged from Australia (Fraser, 1999, 2001; Fraser & Ryan, 2012), Canada (Wilcox, 1998), the UK (Gosling, 1996, 2001; Kahn, 2004; Kahn & Baume, 2003), the USA (Beach, Sorcinelli, Austin, & Rivard, 2014; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006), as well as comparative studies (McDonald & Stockley, 2010). It also derives, in part, from persistent questions about the role and location of developers and the relationship between these roles and our various disciplinary trainings, approaches, and methods. Chism, Gosling, and Sorcinelli (2010), for instance, argue the persistent ‘international concern about the status and identity of educational developers’ results from the lack of consensus on ‘professional preparation [...or] any common pathway to the profession’ (p. 249). In their review of articles that attempt to categorize educational development, Lee and McWilliam (2008, p. 68) acknowledge this lack

of consensus, describing the field as ‘fragmented, contradictory, disconnected, overlapping, heterogeneous, and tension-filled,’ but also arguing that this ‘profound and unremitting contradiction’ is simultaneously ‘not resolvable as a problem of professional practice’ and ‘the lived condition within which the work is carried out on a daily basis’ (p. 75).

Coupled with the diversity of disciplinary training and experiences developers bring to educational development, the role itself is defined in various distinct ways that invite ongoing discussion: Do we, as developers, occupy roles as academic faculty members (Bath & Smith, 2004), as professional staff, or administrators (Fraser & Ling, 2014)? Or are we instead hybrids in a marginal or liminal space (Green & Little, 2013; Little & Green, 2012; Manathunga, 2007), ‘third space’ professionals outside the binary of academic/manager (Whitchurch, 2013), or even ‘para-academics’ (Fulton, 2002) whose roles have been ‘unbundled’ into discrete segments (Macfarlane, 2011)? Further, when we say we are educational, academic, or faculty developers, do we mean the same basic types of work under similar conditions, or is there yet more international variety to complicate our self-definition?

In this study, we examine these questions from an international perspective, having discovered more about where developers come from (geographically, institutionally, and disciplinarily), how they perceive their roles, the types of teaching and research they undertake as part of those roles, and whether and how this varies across and between nations. This article seeks to help us as a field gain a clearer picture, to fill in some of the contours and add some colour – a fresh portrait of this ‘family of strangers’ that perhaps is not so strange after all.

Method

As part of a larger investigation of developers’ differing epistemologies, we created an anonymous online survey both to elicit this epistemological information and to understand the context of developers’ responses. The survey included questions that form the basis of this paper: We asked about respondents’ demographic data, institutional context, current role, engagement with research and teaching, and academic background.

Reaching educational developers around the world is not straightforward. To gain as wide an audience as possible, we emailed an invitation to participate and a link to our survey to the contact people for each of the member organizations of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) – a group of (at that time) 23 national or international educational development organizations. Many of those individuals forwarded the message to their networks, and some networks allowed us to write directly to the membership (Denmark, UK, USA) through a network listserv; if we received no response, we contacted other colleagues in those countries and asked them to forward the message to their networks. In addition, we made contact with developers in countries without ICED member networks (France, Chile, Hungary, China) and asked them to forward the invitation. The survey remained open from 23 January to 28 February 2014, and 1156 developers in 38 different countries on all six inhabited continents consented to answer at least part of the survey. Of these respondents, 958 completed the entire survey, which we estimated would take about eight minutes.

This study offers a snapshot of educational developers around the world as reported by the developers themselves. In this paper, we first explain the limitations of the survey, then present the data and discussion in four discrete sections: demographic data, institutional data, role data, and disciplinary data.

Limitations

The primary caveat with the data to be presented here relates to the membership information collected by the ICED member organizations themselves – and directly affects our ability to report response rates. Each member organization has its own particular purview or remit, and, as we have discovered, few if any have detailed information on the composition of their membership. As a result, we are unable to determine what percentage of individual members within a given network are educational developers as opposed to, say, higher education researchers, academic leaders whose area includes support for student learning, or academics in general who are interested in educational development, but not directly engaged in that work.

As one example, SEDA – the UK developers' organization – supplied an anonymized membership list totalling 363 (R. Grimmitt, personal communication, 28 November 2014). However, 94 of these are institutional members, where multiple individuals have access to SEDA's resources, so the total number of active SEDA 'users' is not discernible. In addition, 12 institutional members and 34 individual members are based outside the UK, so for the purposes of our survey, they would be recorded under their current locations, not the UK. Our solicitation message to the SEDA email listserv, meanwhile, was received by 967 individual subscribers, of whom many may also be outside the UK, since listserv membership is not restricted to registered SEDA members.

Without accurate membership data, we cannot report response rates at the national level, and can only surmise the extent to which countries appear over- or underrepresented by drawing comparisons with other national-level studies or organizations' published data to see whether our respondents appear similar. Where this is not possible – because, for instance, the local ICED member organization does not publish this information – then we ask readers to use their local knowledge of their national or regional organizations to gauge how comfortable they are extrapolating from the data.

We are also conscious of how language can influence respondents. In English-speaking countries alone, no common term describes our work. We used the term 'educational development' in the initial communication and survey since it is used by ICED; however, this in itself may have led to a degree of self-selection among potential respondents. In addition, since the survey is international and terminology varies in the fields of both educational development and higher education, there may be issues of interpretation and of translation. Where possible, we used our knowledge of other languages to ensure that we captured entries appropriately when coding text responses. (One respondent answered in German, two in French.) The wording of individual questions, too, is always prone to response bias. As much as possible, we tried to pose neutral-sounding questions, although we appreciate that factors such as social desirability may have led some respondents to self-report inaccurately. Even so, we do not anticipate that this would be any greater than in the comparable surveys of national networks referenced earlier.

Demographic data

Demographic data are summarized in Figure 1, showing continental location, gender, and age bracket for all respondents to the nearest percentage point. We asked respondents to provide their location rather than their nationality, since we see many examples of educational

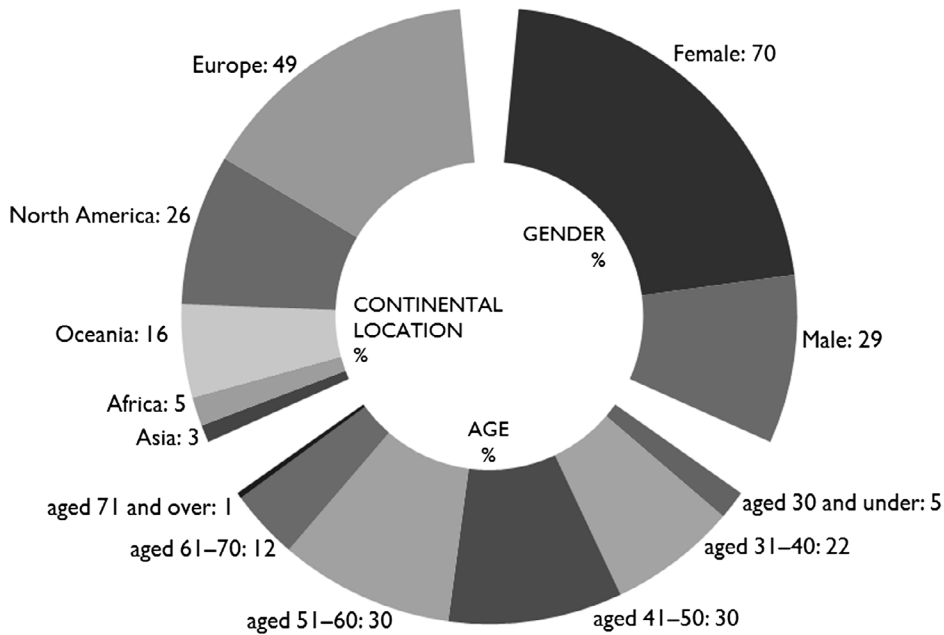


Figure 1. Demographic data: Continental location, gender, and age (nearest percentage point; $n = 956$, 959, and 959 respectively).

developers who have emigrated from their home countries. Respondents were based in 38 different countries on all six inhabited continents (see Table 1; note that South American developers constitute less than 1% of respondents, and so are not represented in the figure). For those who listed multiple locations, we recorded only the first country they provided for the sake of consistency.

Developers in Europe make up almost half of the respondents (49.4%), followed by North America (26%), Oceania (16%), Africa (4.8%), Asia (3.3%), and finally South America (0.3%). The data therefore clearly skew European, although we cannot tell to what extent this is representative of the number of developers around the world, as discussed in the previous section.

For country comparisons in subsequent sections of this paper, we take only those countries for which we have at least 25 respondents; in alphabetical order, these are Australia, Belgium (for most questions), Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States. While the highest numbers of respondents come from the UK (146), USA (146), and Australia (104), these countries are actually underrepresented, given how large the educational developer organizations are in each location, even when factoring in that membership numbers may include a mix of higher education researchers, senior administrators, and educational developers. In 2014, for instance, the US-based POD Network in Higher Education had around 1000 members (H. Holmgren, personal communication, 7 March 2015) and the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia had around 900 members (A. Goody, personal communication, 23 November 2014).

Table 1. Country location of respondents.

Country	Number	Percentage	Country	Number	Percentage
Australia	104	10.9	Japan	9	0.9
Austria	3	0.3	Morocco	1	0.1
Bangladesh	1	0.1	The Netherlands	3	0.3
Belgium	27	2.8	New Zealand	48	5.0
Canada	102	10.7	Norway	1	0.1
Chile	3	0.3	Pakistan	1	0.1
China	2	0.2	Papua New Guinea	1	0.1
Croatia	4	0.4	Romania	2	0.2
Denmark	28	2.9	Saudi Arabia	1	0.1
Estonia	4	0.4	Singapore	1	0.1
Ethiopia	1	0.1	South Africa	43	4.5
Finland	65	6.8	Spain	7	0.7
France	33	3.5	Swaziland	1	0.1
Germany	85	8.9	Sweden	25	2.6
Hong Kong	2	0.2	Switzerland	23	2.4
Hungary	1	0.1	Thailand	2	0.2
Iceland	2	0.2	United Kingdom	146	15.3
India	10	1.0	United States	146	15.3
Ireland	13	1.4	Vietnam	4	0.4
			Other ('Europe')	1	0.1
			Total	956	100.0

Of our respondents, 70.4% identified as female, 29.3% male, and 0.3% other, proportions similar to those found in national studies, such as in the US, where 73% of developers were female, 26.4% male (Beach et al., 2014). Women constituted the majority in all countries with 25 or more respondents, the lowest share of female developers being in France (58%), the highest South Africa (79%). When comparing gender with the broad academic field of respondents' highest degrees, we see that the highest representation of male respondents studied in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) disciplines. However, the percentage of men is still low even in this largely male-dominated field: male respondents comprise only 35.7% of developers from STEM.

Over half the respondents were in their fifties or forties (a combined 60.4%), while one fifth were in their thirties (21.6%). Here, we do see national differences, as shown in Figure 2. Belgium, for instance, has the youngest developer profile, with 51.9% in their thirties and only 3.7% in their fifties. In contrast, only 9.3% of South African developers are in their thirties, while 51.2% are in their fifties. An interesting question for another study would be whether the varying national age profiles reflect shifts in educational development agendas in each country and the extent to which age profiles correspond with developers who 'migrated' from other academic fields. The age profiles also provide data for succession planning and strategic recruitment of new developers as colleagues prepare to retire.

Institutional data

Almost nine out of ten respondents in the survey (86%) work at publicly funded universities and colleges, with 9.6% at private institutions and 3% not affiliated with any specific institution at all. Figures for public and private institutions are not surprising, since many countries have only (or primarily) nationally funded institutions. Public universities employ at least 85% of respondents in all but one of the countries with more than 25 respondents; the exception is the USA, where the figure is just 61% public, compared with 37% of respondents

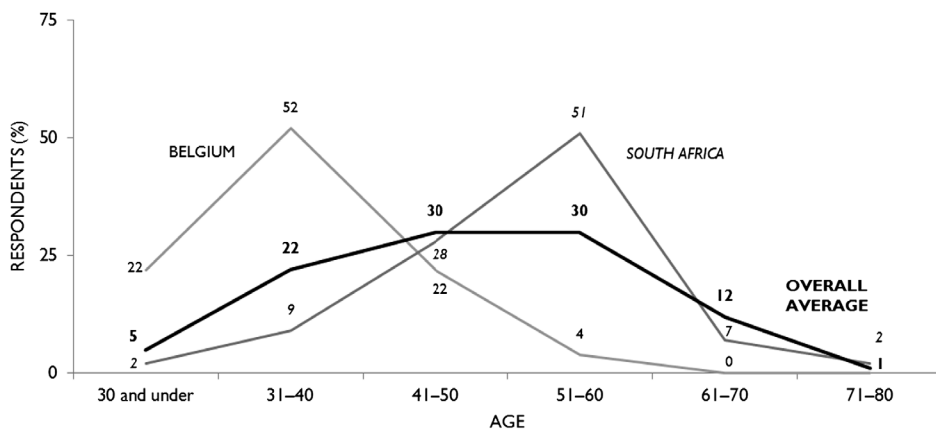


Figure 2. Age of respondents: Overall average ($n = 959$) and country variability (nearest percentage point).

Table 2. Number of students.

	Number	Percentage
10,000 and under	312	28.2
10,001–20,000	278	25.2
20,001–30,000	212	19.2
Over 30,000	267	24.2
Not applicable	35	3.2
Total	1104	100.0

at private institutions. The next largest percentage of individuals at private institutions is Belgium, at 11.1%, revealing the extent to which the US's public/private divide differs from other nations in the survey. The highest proportion of unaffiliated respondents was New Zealand, at 6.3%. These figures can help us understand the role of developers broadly within institutional contexts when we consider that universities dependent on government funding 'are more directly influenced by national policy, which in turn influences educational development practice' (Chism et al., 2010, p. 247), growth, and support – as in, for example, national contexts where educational developers are involved in quality assurance or mandatory programmes for university teachers.

The student populations of developers' institutions also vary greatly (see Table 2). Dividing those populations into bands of 10,000, we find around a quarter of respondents in each band, with a slight lead for institutions of 10,000 students or under (28.2%), and a dip for the 20,001–30,000 range (19.2%). At the national level, more than half the respondents from both Denmark and Sweden work at institutions with over 30,000 students (67.9 and 56.0% respectively).

Promotion criteria for 'regular' academics also provide an insight into the institutional cultures in which our respondents operate. Exactly half our respondents work at institutions where they perceive research as the clear priority for promotion, with another 18.6% in locations where research is given a slight priority over teaching – the area that developers most commonly support (see Figure 3). Teaching is given a slight or clear priority in promotions criteria at the institutions of only 15.4% of respondents.

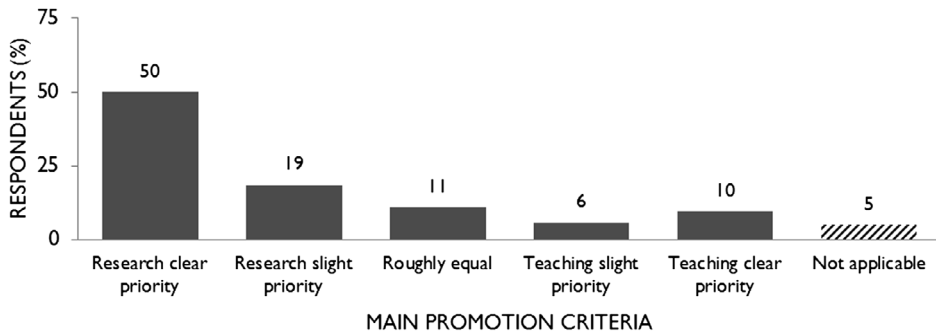


Figure 3. Main promotion criteria ($n = 1101$; nearest percentage point).

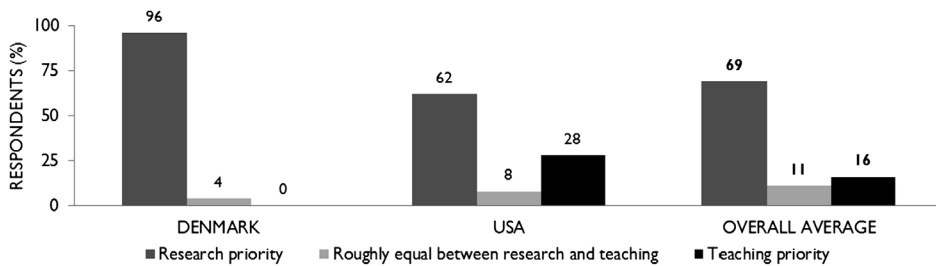


Figure 4. Main promotion criteria: Overall average ($n = 1101$) and country variability (nearest percentage point).

The teaching–research divide becomes sharper when viewed at the national level for countries with 25 or more respondents to the survey. In Denmark, for instance, a full 78.6% of respondents say research takes a clear priority in their institutions and another 17.9% say a slight priority, meaning that in total 96.4% of Danish educational developers work at institutions where teaching is less valued for promotion. At the far end of the scale, but still leaning toward research, respondents in the USA report that teaching takes a priority for promotion in 28.1% of institutions, compared with 62.3% emphasizing research (see Figure 4). One possible caveat about these findings might be that the survey topic – educational developers’ academic backgrounds – may have appealed more to developers at research-focused institutions.

Role data

In this study, we were particularly interested in understanding educational developers’ roles in two ways: first, whether their role as a developer was primarily administrative, academic, both, or other; and second, within that role, whether they were still teaching and/or researching, since these are the typical activities of the ‘regular’ academics with whom developers work. Given conversations about the current state of academic roles in higher education, such as their increasing fragmentation (Harland & Staniforth, 2008; Macfarlane, 2011; Rowland, 2002) or their shifting boundaries (Henkel, 2007; Whitchurch, 2013), we were interested in discovering how developers *perceive* their roles, keeping in mind Whitchurch’s

(2013, p. 4) reminder that ‘binary perceptions [of roles as either academic or non-academic/managerial] tend not to take account of the ways in which individuals interpret their given roles as defined, for instance, in a job description or specification.’ That is, individuals with academic credentials and experience but who are on a ‘non-academic contract’ may still interpret their role as academic. Below we discuss both how developers perceive their roles (primarily academic, primarily administrative, or both) and how their interpretations of these roles map onto the balance and types of teaching and research they undertake.

Though there is some variation, developers are fairly evenly divided into three categories. The largest group of developers describe their role as an academic (or faculty) role (37.2%). Next most common are those in administrative (or managerial) roles (29.3%), closely followed by those whose roles are both academic and administrative (29.0%), as shown in Figure 5. Other primary roles (such as independent consultant) comprised less than 2% of respondents each and will not be discussed further here.

For nations with 25 or more respondents, we again see variability in developers’ roles (Figure 5). At the extremes, New Zealand has the highest proportion of developers who are academics (58.3%), Belgium the highest proportion of managers (55.6%), and South Africa the highest combined academic/administrative roles (46.5%). Belgian respondents were least likely to have completed terminal degrees (as will be discussed later), so it is less surprising to find that fewer have academic roles. Also, unsurprisingly, developers with higher degrees were more likely to be in academic roles, at 43% of people with a doctorate or higher, compared with 29% of developers with at least a master’s but not a doctorate, and just 17% of those with a highest qualification below a master’s.

The highest proportion of developers in academic roles appears at institutions in which teaching and research were rated roughly equally for promotion (43.7%). At institutions where research was the main promotion criterion, developers were more likely to be in academic positions (39.7%); where teaching took priority, they were slightly more likely to be in combined academic and administrative roles (38.3%).

Teaching as part of the developer role

Developers were asked to tell us what kinds of teaching, if any, they perform as part of their roles, based on the students they teach – undergraduate, (post)graduate, or academics and

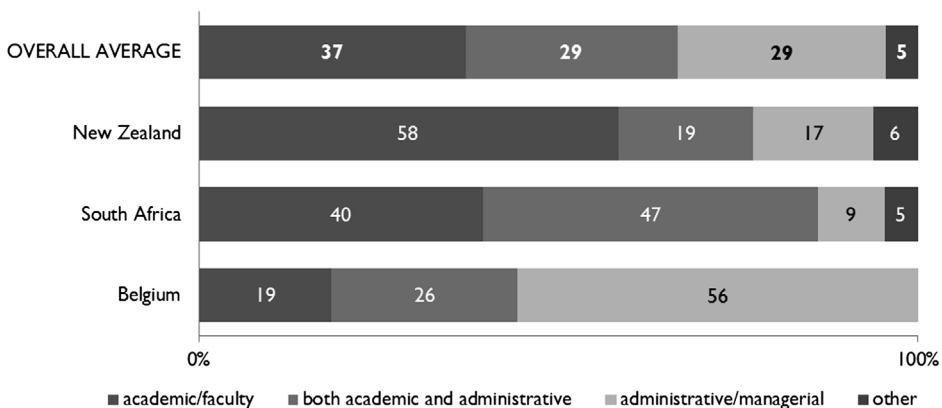


Figure 5. Primary role: Overall average ($n = 974$) and country variability (nearest percentage point).

teaching assistants (TAs). Anecdotally, developers often mention that interest in teaching and learning brought them into the field, but little research has focused on the types of teaching developers do apart from their primary work with academics or TAs. Of 945 responses to these three questions, 95.6% have some form of teaching among their responsibilities, with only 43 individuals not teaching at all. For countries with 25 or more respondents for these questions, the percentage of developers who teach varies from a low of 88% in Canada to a full 100% in Sweden; Canada is anomalous here, its figure for teaching being 5% lower than any other country with 25 or more respondents.

Regardless of their primary role, developers were most likely to be teaching academics and/or TAs, with an overall average of 78.7%. This figure comprises 72.4% of developers in academic roles, 82% in combined academic/administrative roles, and 84.5% in administrative roles.

Greater role differences appear when it comes to teaching on degree programmes. A much smaller percentage – overall 36.6% – of developers teaches at the (post)graduate level; by role, this translates as 48.7% of developers in academic positions, 39.2% in combined academic/administrative positions, and just 20% of administrative developers, so there is a marked drop for administrators who teach at this level. Lower still, on average just under one third of developers (32.9%) teach undergraduates. This group entails 45.7% of developers in academic roles, 36.0% in combined academic/administrative roles, and just 15.8% in purely administrative roles – a wider spread of results.

Again, we see national differences among countries with at least 25 respondents (Figure 6). Sweden has the highest proportion of developers teaching academics and TAs (96%), New Zealand is highest for (post)graduates (53.2%), and France for undergraduates (46.9%). Meanwhile the lowest proportions are France for academics and TAs (62.5%), Canada for (post)graduates (20%), and the UK for undergraduates (14.9%). Developers in all countries are most likely to be teaching academics and TAs, while in all but four countries (Canada, Finland, Germany, and the USA), more developers teach (post)graduates than undergraduates.

A future article will examine the relationship between these components more fully. Our preliminary observation from these data is that, while three-quarters of developers teach academics or TAs, few teach undergraduates or (post)graduate students within degree programmes, and of those smaller percentages, even fewer of those developers are

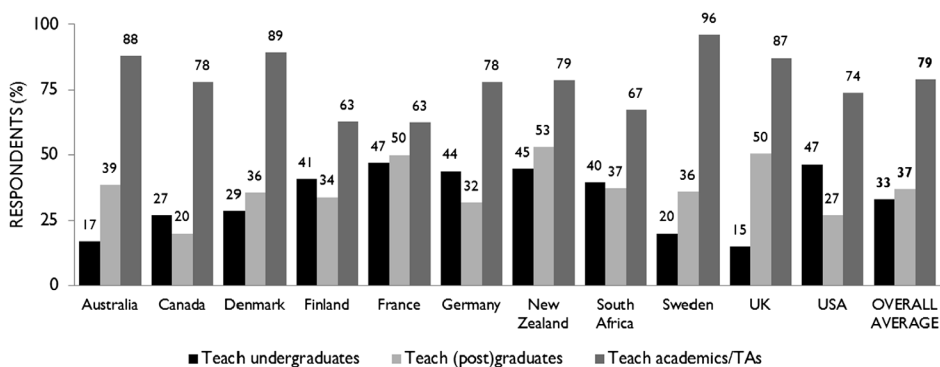


Figure 6. Teaching activity: Overall average ($n = 945$) and country variability (nearest percentage point). Note: Insufficient Belgian respondents (24) for this question.

in administrative or combined academic/administrative roles, suggesting that educational developers positioned in, or aligned with, administrative roles are less likely to be teaching alongside academic colleagues or to be working in classes with traditionally aged students.

Our original hypothesis was that variation in types of teaching might relate to the time respondents have been in educational development positions, in that long-standing developers are more likely to have greater administrative duties and thus might be less likely to be teaching. This turns out not to be entirely true. Figure 7 reveals a drop in teaching undergraduates among developers who have been in their roles for over ten years (from around 40 to 20%), although curiously the most experienced developers have a higher showing among undergraduates (31.2%). Only one in five new developers teaches (post) graduate students, but this figure quickly increases and hovers in the 35–40% range once individuals have been in educational development for at least two years. Teaching academics and TAs produces a gentle arc ranging from 71 to 82%.

Developers as researchers

As we have already seen, the majority of developers work in institutions where research is the main criterion for promotion. To gauge the extent to which developers mirror the work of ‘regular’ academics, we asked respondents whether they conduct research as part of their educational development roles; through additional questions, we were able glean who was conducting research even if it was not officially in their job descriptions. While 55.1% of respondents conducted research as part of their role, an additional 27.2% do so outside their role, meaning that altogether 82.3% of developers are research-active.

Countries with 25 or more respondents again vary greatly from one another, both in terms of those conducting research contractually and the proportion doing so in addition to their required duties (see Figure 8). Developers in Denmark are the most research-active, both overall (96.3%) and as part of their role (75%), while those in France conduct the least research among this group (62.5 and 37.5% respectively). Swedish respondents in contrast are almost as likely to be conducting research outside their formal roles (40%) as within their roles (44%).

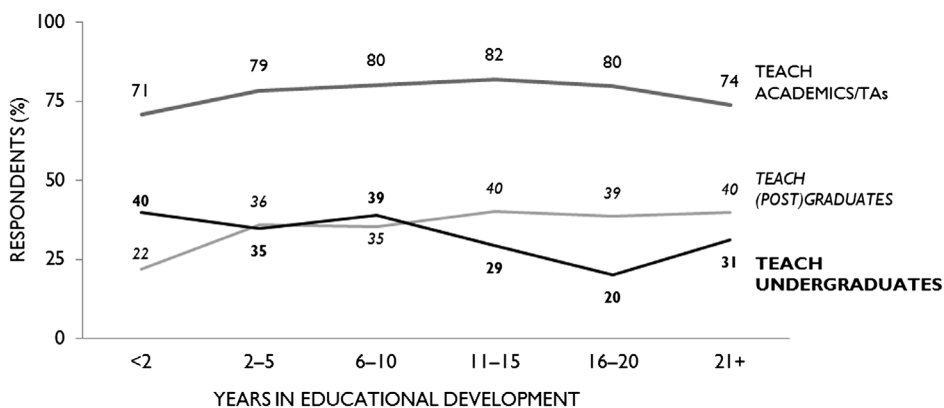


Figure 7. Teaching engagement and years in educational development ($n = 945$; nearest percentage point).

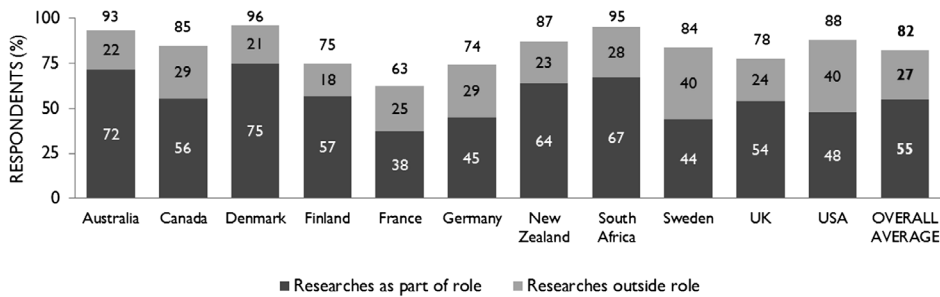


Figure 8. Research activity: Overall average ($n = 939$) and country variability (nearest percentage point). Note: Insufficient Belgian respondents (24) for this question.

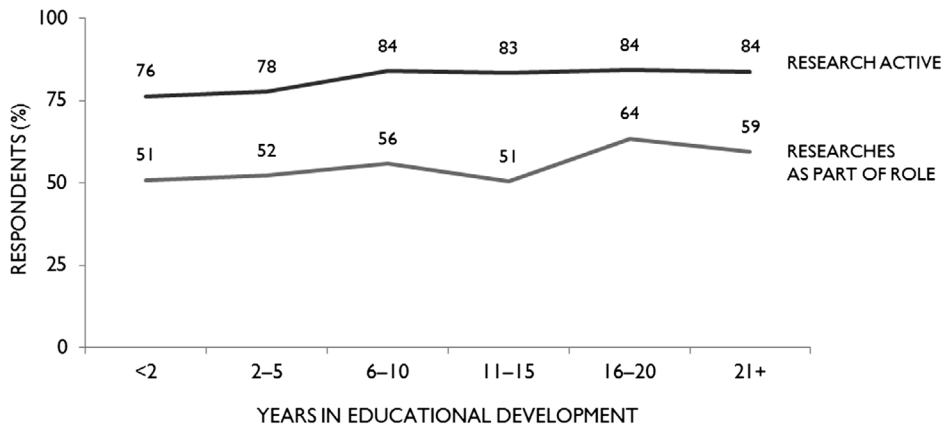


Figure 9. Research engagement and years in educational development ($n = 936$; nearest percentage point).

To parallel information above on teaching activity, we also examined the extent to which research engagement may shift over time as an educational developer (Figure 9). Here we see that overall, developers are a little less research active in their first five years as developers, but that from six years' experience onwards, the percentage conducting research is remarkably consistent. Similarly, the percentages of developers for whom research is included in their job descriptions are fairly consistent for people in the first 15 years in educational development. Research is most likely to be included in the job descriptions of developers in the 16–20-year range, least likely in their first two years or in the 11–15-year bracket.

Data on discipline and academic degree

In a previous study of developers, we were struck by the extent to which our interviewees referenced their prior disciplines or made comments that, when explored further, were based on tacit disciplinary assumptions to explain their approaches to educational development (Little & Green, 2012) – one of the observations that prompted this project. As a result, we asked respondents to provide the discipline of their *highest* degree (not necessarily their most recent qualification), since, like others, we hypothesize that individuals are more likely to have become ensconced in that discipline's ways of thinking and practising than

in subjects studied at a lower level. Poole (2009, p. 56), for instance, observes that after years as a developer, he still sees the world ‘through the eyes of a psychologist,’ his original discipline, and Gunn (2009, p. 177) remarks that ‘Identification with a discipline is powerful for many, even when it is clear that there is no intellectual cohesion agreed by all or even the majority of the members of a discipline.’ Like Rowland (2002), we imagine these varied disciplinary identities within educational development are one of the virtues of a hybrid field that requires us to work with academic colleagues from all subject areas – ‘an opportunity to bring the different disciplines into a critical relationship as they each contest the nature of the knowledge with which they deal’ (Rowland, 2002, p. 62).

Respondents were asked to place their highest degree within a particular disciplinary cluster or broad field, for which we provided examples (see Table 3). Those who listed more than one discipline from different broad fields (for instance, engineering and history) were coded as ‘transdisciplinary.’

By far the largest broad field, with just over a third of respondents, is ‘professional fields,’ which may not be surprising given that this cluster includes education. (Note that – despite the examples in the survey, as shown in Table 3 – a smaller group of respondents described education as a social science and are therefore represented in that category.) Humanities and social sciences are almost equal in second place at about a fifth of respondents each, followed by STEM disciplines with just under a sixth. Developers from transdisciplinary backgrounds, health sciences, and fine arts each constitute less than 5% of respondents in the survey.

There are, however, national differences in prior fields for those countries with 25 or more respondents. Denmark, for instance, has no respondents whose highest degrees are in professional fields, whereas these fields make up over half the Australian respondents in the survey; almost half the French respondents are from STEM fields, compared with under 10% in New Zealand; one third of Belgian developers cite social sciences, compared with just 14% in South Africa. Figure 10 illustrates this variability.

Also notable from these data on the broad fields of developers’ highest degrees is that two-thirds of respondents (66%) have migrated to educational development from other broad fields. Examining respondents’ individual disciplines provides a clearer picture of the extent of this disciplinary migration. Developers’ highest degrees are in 89 different disciplines, from ‘adult and professional education’ to ‘zoology.’ Table 4 shows those disciplines with 10 or more respondents. Respondents entered their own disciplines to allow for national and linguistic differences, and we grouped those into meaningful categories with input from colleagues trained in different areas. By far the largest group has studied education (241 individuals; 23.2%) – almost five times larger than the next four disciplines,

Table 3. Broad field of highest degree (with examples).

	Number	Percentage
Professional fields (e.g. business, education, law)	354	34.1
Humanities (e.g. philosophy, literature)	212	20.4
Social sciences (e.g. anthropology, psychology)	207	19.9
STEM (sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics)	164	15.8
Transdisciplinary	47	4.5
Health sciences (e.g. medicine, nursing, speech pathology)	37	3.6
Fine arts (e.g. graphic design, music)	16	1.5
Other	2	0.2
Total	1039	100.0

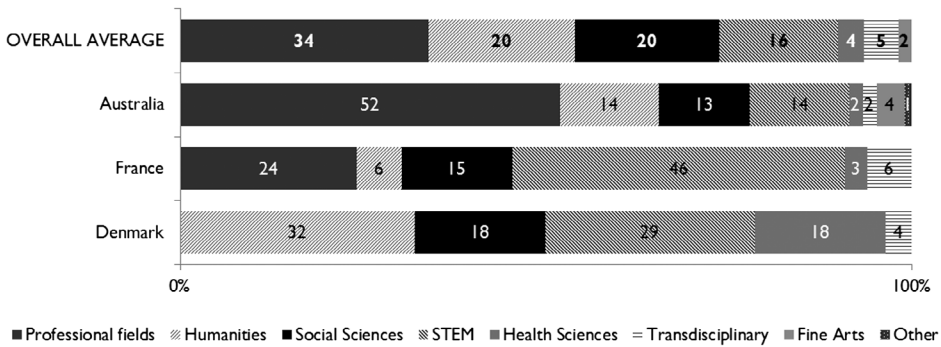


Figure 10. Broad field of highest degree: Overall average ($n = 1039$) and country variability (nearest percentage point).

Table 4. Most common disciplines of highest degree ($n = 1039$).

Discipline (n)	
<i>More than 20 respondents</i>	
Education (241)	
Transdisciplinary (57)	
Psychology & cognitive science (53)	
Higher education (51)	
Literature (51)	
Linguistics (34)	
Educational technology & distance education (33)	
Philology/cultural studies (30)	
Business & management (26)	
Adult & professional education (22)	
History (22)	
Interdisciplinary (22)	
Sociology (21)	
<i>Between 10–19 respondents</i>	
Biology (18)	
Computer science (18)	
Geography & earth/planetary sciences (18)	
Political science (14)	
Educational psychology (13)	
Communication & media (12)	
Information studies/library studies (12)	
Mathematics (12)	
Physics (12)	
Chemistry (11)	
Educational leadership & management (10)	
Engineering (10)	
Religious studies (10)	
<i>Fewer than 10 respondents each</i>	
Further disciplines (206)	

which are close to one another in number (transdisciplinary, psychology and cognitive science, higher education, and literature). Respondents who listed two or more disciplines within the same disciplinary broad field (e.g. biology and biochemistry) were categorized as ‘interdisciplinary’, to differentiate them from their field-crossing ‘transdisciplinary’ peers. In a later paper, we will explore whether developers maintain their links with their prior disciplines (either in teaching or in research) and the extent to which their disciplinary training influences their work as developers.

Because education systems vary around the world, respondents were able to specify their highest qualification in an open text box in the survey, after which we investigated the level of each qualification to be able to group them together. The majority of respondents (58.6%) held a doctorate or above (‘habilitation’), while the next highest degree level, at 37.2%, was a master’s (or a post-master’s qualification below the level of a doctorate; see Figure 11). For countries with 25 or more respondents, we find that the percentage of developers with doctorates or above is highest in the USA (82%), Sweden (76%), and France (70%). Only in Belgium were there substantially more respondents with master’s or post-master’s qualifications than doctorates (89% vs. 11%). Figure 11 shows how the Belgian respondents are

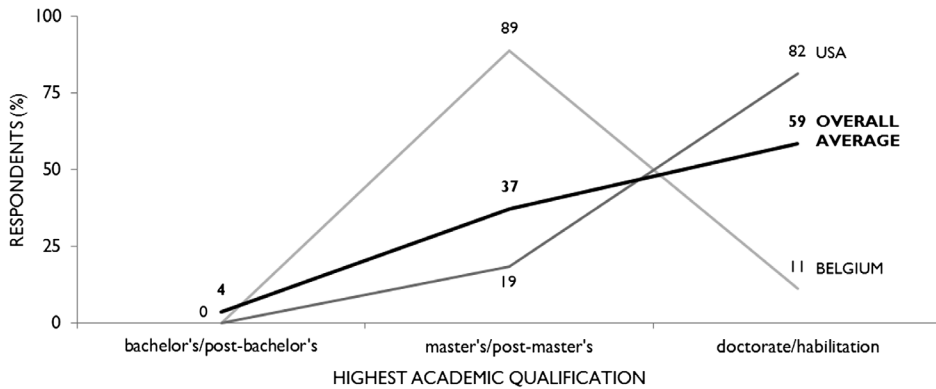


Figure 11. Highest qualifications: Overall average ($n = 1045$) and country variability (nearest percentage point).

out of kilter with other countries. What we are unable to tell from the data is whether this reflects the true spread of academic qualifications in Belgium or is simply more reflective of the younger age profile of the Belgian respondents to this survey.

The family portrait

In this paper, we have provided a snapshot of educational developers around the world to help us grasp who makes up this ‘family of strangers’ (Harland & Staniforth, 2008) and how differently, or similarly, we operate in our institutional and national contexts. From our data-set, we wish to highlight a few findings that bring our academic community into sharper focus and provide evidence to complement developers’ observations.

- We are majority female (70.4%) and mostly in our 40s and 50s (60.4%).
- Most of our workplaces are public institutions (86%) and most value research over teaching (68.6%).
- Our employment status is divided almost equally three ways between academic, administrative, and combined academic/administrative roles, with slightly more of us on academic appointments (37.2%).
- Almost all of us teach (95.6%), although only just over a third of us teaches (post) graduates and under a third teaches undergraduates – the two groups of students that our clientele teaches.
- Four-fifths of us (82.3%) conduct research, although it is only contractually required of just over a half.
- More than half of us (58.6%) hold a doctorate or higher, and for two-thirds of us, our highest qualification is *not* in education.
- Despite the previous point, developers’ highest qualifications are still most likely to be in professional fields (including education) (34.1%).

Having established this broad ‘family portrait’ of educational developers around the world, our next task with these data is to zoom in and examine close-up the questions of epistemologies, disciplinary differences, identity, credibility, and values – the issues that

sparked our study initially. Knowing who we are en masse now allows us to tease apart particular characteristics and idiosyncrasies, to explore possible effects of the 'self-invention and re-invention' (Baume & Kahn, 2004, p. 187) endemic to the field, and to enrich our understanding of the educational development community worldwide. In this way, we hope next to discover what makes this eclectic and heterogeneous family of strangers tick.

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Disclosure statement

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