



# Teaching Matters

Teaching and Learning Centre

Issue 10, January 2003

## What we do

The Teaching and Learning Centre supports individuals and departments wishing to develop the quality of teaching and learning in the School. In practical terms, the TLC:

- Co-ordinate an in-house programme of events and the initial teaching induction for both full-time and part-time staff.
- Offer one-to-one educational consultations tailored to particular needs and interests, including teaching observation.
- Alert staff to external events, providing funding as appropriate.
- Support departmental development, following internal and external teaching quality assessment exercises.
- Keep the School up-to-date on developments in teaching and learning in HE nationally and internationally – through departmental links, the Teaching Matters news sheet, and our website.
- Work with the Centre for Learning Technology to aid the integration and use of technology into the main teaching and learning activities of the LSE.
- Co-ordinate student study support across the School including advising students with disabilities and providing dyslexia support.

## New Year, New Name

Following an APRC Review last year, the Teaching and Learning Development Office has shortened its name to the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC for short). As well as being less of a mouthful than the previous name, the acronym gives a feel for our approach (we hope!) to both staff and students.

The Disability Support function is now fully integrated into TLC. Last term, TLC also added a new element to the study support, in the form of one-to-one quantitative subjects study support. This is currently being delivered by David Balmer and Tony Whelan on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in H417. Uptake was steady through the first term. We anticipate seeing more MSc students later in the year as they get started on their dissertations. Posters around the School advertise the service – but please do alert your students to it if it is something you feel would be useful to them. The key contact is Sue Haines ([s.haines@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.haines@lse.ac.uk)) who arranges the student appointments.

## Broadening the LSE Assessment Mix

TLC has recently prepared a short “guidance note” on assessment at the LSE and circulated copies to all conveners. This summarises current assessment practice across the School, outlines the wider range of assessment methods those designing new courses or revising existing courses might wish to consider, gives an assessment of their relative strengths and weaknesses, and gives other examples and suggestions. A number of departments have already been in touch with TLC for further discussion on issues raised by the paper. Further copies are available to colleagues on request (email: [l.barnett@lse.ac.uk](mailto:l.barnett@lse.ac.uk)). The document will be available on the Teaching and Learning website at: <http://teaching.lse.ac.uk/intpub.html> where there are already two other documents on assessment: (1) a snap shot of assessment methods on all School courses (undertaken from an analysis of LSE Calendar course descriptors, 2001) and (2) examples of marking criteria and essay/dissertation feedback sheets used in various departments.

## Teaching and Learning Centre contacts:

### Dr Liz Barnett

Director, TLC  
room H417c, email: [l.barnett@lse.ac.uk](mailto:l.barnett@lse.ac.uk), ext. 6623

### Jean Jameson

Dyslexia Support Tutor and Adviser to Students with Disabilities  
room H417a, email: [j.m.jameson@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.jameson@lse.ac.uk), ext. 6034

### Dr Peter Levin

Educational Developer (student support) and Consultant in Teaching Methods  
room H417b, email: [p.levin@lse.ac.uk](mailto:p.levin@lse.ac.uk), ext. 7346  
<http://learning.lse.ac.uk>

### Dr Kate Exley

Visiting Adviser for Occasional Teachers /  
Teacher Accreditation Programme, email: [k.a.exley@lse.ac.uk](mailto:k.a.exley@lse.ac.uk)

### Rebecca Trumble

Administrator, TLC  
room H417, email: [r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk), ext. 6624

### Sue Haines

Adviser to Students with Disabilities Administrator, and  
key contact for one-to-one study support bookings  
room H417, email: [s.haines@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.haines@lse.ac.uk), ext. 7767

### Steve Ryan

Director, Centre for Learning Technology  
room H417c, email: [s.ryan@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.ryan@lse.ac.uk), ext 6008  
<http://teaching.lse.ac.uk/tech/>

For further details see the TLC website:

<http://teaching.lse.ac.uk>

## Teaching Development

### External accreditation for the LSE Teacher Accreditation Programme

On 28 January, an Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) accreditation team visited TLC to consider the LSE "Teacher Accreditation Programme". ILT has agreed to accredit the programme, on two conditions:

- 1) That they see a sample of completed portfolios of work, duly assessed by both internal and external examiners
- 2) That TLC clarifies how programme participants can "upgrade" from the "associate level" programme to the "full" programme.

We should be in a position to meet both these conditions by July of this year. Thereafter, participants who successfully complete the programme will receive an LSE Teaching Certificate, which is externally recognised (in the UK). Five PhD students who are also occasional teachers joined the programme last year and are well on their way to completion. They provided TLC with excellent insight both into what is possible and how to deliver the programme. Several others have joined this year, and TLC is now keen to promote the programme to both part time and full time faculty. Contact Liz Barnett for further details.

### Teaching Prizes for occasional teachers

Last summer, the TLC established a Teaching Prize scheme for the hourly paid teachers who support much of the School's undergraduate class teaching. Departments were asked to nominate teachers, based on the judgements of students and tutors. Our congratulations to the following prize winners:

|            |                |                         |
|------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Stephanie  | Beltrando      | Language Centre         |
| George     | Bitsakakis     | IIM                     |
| Max        | Bruche         | Accounting & Finance    |
| Shenaz     | Bunglawala     | Government              |
| Kevin      | Burchell       | Geography & Environment |
| David      | Cartwright     | Mathematics             |
| Chrisoulla | Constantinou   | Accounting & Finance    |
| Oliver     | Curry          | Government              |
| Mike       | Elsby          | Economics               |
| Tatiana    | Flessas        | Law                     |
| Roman      | Frigg          | Philosophy              |
| David      | Grummitt       | International History   |
| Gregor     | Hopf           | Economic History        |
| Brandon    | Horwitz        | Statistics              |
| Fabrizio   | Iacone         | Economics               |
| Diego      | Jimenez-Huerta | Statistics              |
| Helen      | Kambouri       | International Relations |
| Greg       | Kaplan         | Statistics              |
| Jon        | Lunn           | DESTIN                  |
| Mirca      | Madianou       | Social Psychology       |
| Kamran     | Malik          | Accounting & Finance    |
| David      | Manlow         | Sociology               |
| Harinder   | Mann           | Information Systems     |
| Kirsty     | McNay          | Social Policy           |

|            |               |                         |
|------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Mao        | Mollona       | Anthropology            |
| Jorge      | Mordcovich    | Language Centre         |
| Costanza   | Musu          | International Relations |
| Eva-Maria  | Nag           | Government              |
| Ginka      | Nikova-Toegel | Industrial Relations    |
| Jakob      | Ohrgaard      | International Relations |
| Freyan     | Panthaki      | Accounting & Finance    |
| Dimitra    | Petropoulou   | Economics               |
| Bruce      | Picking       | Accounting & Finance    |
| Stephanie  | Roberts       | Law                     |
| Kwok Tong  | Soo           | Economics               |
| Karen      | Throsby       | Gender Institute        |
| Alessandro | Volcic        | Government              |

A number of these prize winners contributed to this autumn's round of introductory workshops for new occasional teachers.

Some departments felt that what was on offer by way of "prize money" (£100, plus a certificate of thanks, signed by the Director) from TLC was insufficient recognition of the value they place on their occasional teachers, and have either added to the number of prizes they chose to award, and/or increased the amount.

The Government Department has already decided its prize winners for the current year. These are:

Stuart Astill and Daniel Linsker

### The MIT OpenCourseWare initiative

Many people may be aware of the MIT Open CourseWare Initiative (OCW), which was launched last year. The idea behind the initiative is (by 2007) to make virtually all MIT course materials that are used in the teaching of undergraduate and graduate subjects available on the web, free of charge, to any user anywhere in the world. The project (which is being funded to the tune of \$7-10million per year in the development phase) is still at the pilot stage, but has already launched several materials, some of which may be of interest to the School. These include materials for courses in anthropology, economics, history, philosophy, media, mathematics, political science and management. The media course includes a full set of "streamed" video lectures. See <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html>.

If you want to find out more about the project contact Steve Ryan, Centre for Learning Technology ([s.ryan@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.ryan@lse.ac.uk))

### Teaching creatively: a student view

The following piece was presented to USSC by **Manuel Bueno** earlier this year. It was agreed by the committee that it warranted wider circulation, and TLC is happy to include it in this issue of Teaching Matters.

"I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to express student views here.

I will keep this as short as possible. Although I do not have any particular proposal, I would like to raise the issue of how courses are taught.

The main problem I see can be summarized as the lack of creativity. It is ironic that having the best professors in Europe and the world, some subjects are taught as a bible. I can only speak thoroughly about economics, that is what I am studying. I have heard similar opinions from people ranging from IR to Mathematics. Maybe only subjects such as Sociology or Anthropology can be spared from this criticism. I get the feeling sometimes that we are not in higher education, but in a programming centre. That is very sad indeed, because people here are brilliant, some of them really intelligent and sensitive. If we boost creativity, we empower critical thought of basic assumptions. That is the difference between a good university and a great university.

I understand that time is scarce, and that there is a tight schedule. But how can we not have time to show a glimpse of the extreme complexity of the subjects we are studying? Just a glimpse, a spark, of what we are talking here would be enough. Beyond books and theories. For we talk about men and women.

Sometimes we are taught to forget all of this for the sake of an argument that goes on and on, until we can no longer distinguish the limits between theory and reality. By doing this we put barriers to our freedom. Then we - professors and students - are not learning any more, we just repeat ourselves in a litany that cannot be understood.

How should we boost creativity? I am sure most of you - being here for decades already - have better ideas than I do. To break the monochromy I suggest giving some surprise lectures, instead of what was planned. These lectures should try to prove wrong what was taught and at the same time open our eyes to the beauty of the particular course. This last point is very important as some undergraduates see what they are doing now as a way to be rich in the future, and not as a path to have a broader view of the world.

The second proposal is to make less functional and more personal the relationship between student and professor. I know this is difficult because in some courses we are thousands. But again sometimes I think that with some professors I will never understand why they are considered so brilliant in their subjects, because they won't try to amaze us, to surprise us, they won't try to make us sit restless on our seats. They won't be accessible. They just won't try to impress us. It is a pity: a lot of people can lecture some basic course, but not everyone would have what it takes to try to plant the seed of a different original thought that might contradict what is being taught.

Creativity is the key to building truly free men and women. That is what higher education is about. That is why I chose the LSE.

Thank you."

If any staff or students wish to respond to Manuel Bueno's paper, or have suggestions for increasing creativity, please send in your suggestions for the next issue of Teaching Matters.

### On-line class registers

Last term, one department piloted a new on-line class register system for undergraduate students. Results of the

pilot were very promising and it has been decided that the system should go School-wide with effect from the Lent Term. The on-line system gets rid of the rather laborious paper-based system of keeping class registers, writing student reports, and then transferring all that data accurately into individual student files. The system will operate through the LSEforYou website, accessible from the School's homepage, using your standard LSE username and password. The system contains three screens:

**Class teachers** will be able to call up each class and be presented with a photographic and name list of the students in that class each week. They can then mark the register (present, absent, absent with reason) and note any class work handed in, along with the mark. If a student is marked absent for two consecutive classes, an automatic email will be sent out alerting the personal tutor and student. Class teachers will be able to add open-ended comments on each student throughout the term, rather than simply at the end of term. Teachers can go back to previous sessions, if needs be, to alter records.

**Personal tutors** will be able to call up a photographic and name list of their tutees, and with this will get the full set of class teachers' records on their class performance, across the different courses they are registered for. Personal tutors will also be able to add their own comments at any time.

**Students** will be able to see their personal records, as written by class teachers and personal tutors, at any time. As such, if they note any inaccuracies, they will be able to talk these over with the appropriate person, who may then change them.

The new system should have a number of benefits:

- Class registers should be more accurate and up-to-date, as data from the course registration process can feed direct into class registers on the day the class is due to take place.
- Occasional teachers and other class teachers will no longer need to complete the various letters concerning student non-attendance at sessions, as this becomes automatic.
- Personal tutors will be able to check on the progress of any of their tutees at any time, quickly and easily.
- Departmental Managers and Departmental Tutors will be able to see the detailed student records for all students in their department at any time.

This project is being run by Student Services, within the Academic Registrar's Division, with support from the Business Systems and Services Division. For any queries on how to use the system, please contact Irena Rach on ext: 7146 ([i.rach@lse.ac.uk](mailto:i.rach@lse.ac.uk))

### Improvements to teaching rooms

Over the Christmas break a further twenty rooms were equipped with data projection facilities and all other smaller rooms with large screen TV and video systems. From January 2003 all teaching rooms will therefore have some form of video and data projection system available.

## The practice of using datasets in learning and teaching in higher education

By Luis Martinez, Data Librarian

In February 2000, JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) funded a project to investigate the use of datasets in teaching and to find the barriers faced by teachers and learners. The British Library of Political and Economic Science, Edinburgh University Data Library, the UK Data Archive and MIMAS worked together in conducting a teacher survey and also focused upon seven examples of datasets used in teaching.

Some of the recommendations after the final report were:

- Promotion of subject-based statistical literacy for students, with support for academic staff who intend to incorporate real data into their courses.
- Development of quality teaching materials for major datasets.
- Improvement in usability of datasets from national data services.
- Coordinated promotion of national services.
- Development of data services at universities to support staff and students.

There have been some improvements over time, so we can find some datasets specifically prepared for teaching and learning purposes. An example of these:

- **Casweb** (<http://census.ac.uk/casweb/>): on-line access to 1991 UK Census data. Access to these important statistics was hindered by general technical obstacles. However, these access restraints have now been overcome through use of Java and Web technology and have resulted in a new on-line interface.
- **TimeWeb** (<http://timeweb.mimas.ac.uk/>): containing the OECD Main Economic Indicators database contains statistics relating to national accounts, economic prices, employment and economies worldwide. There's also an on-line learning materials section containing tutorials, which teach data-handling skills. These include: where to find, analyse and evaluate data.

These are just a couple of examples, but there is a wide variety of data that you could be using for learning and teaching. If you want to find out more please contact Luis Martinez ext: 6130, email: [l.martinez@lse.ac.uk](mailto:l.martinez@lse.ac.uk)

## Funding for teaching development projects

There are now various funds available for teaching development projects. The Centre for Learning Technology has project funding for the next two years to support the development of new projects using communications and information technology for teaching within departments. "Priority" areas are: support for very large courses, serving undergraduate students and MSc core courses/programmes. Bids are considered by the CLT Steering Group that meets several times each year. Contact Steve Ryan for further details ([s.ryan@lse.ac.uk](mailto:s.ryan@lse.ac.uk)). There are also funds available for projects associated with meeting the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, and for other non-

technology focused projects. Contact Liz Barnett for more on these.

## Quality Assurance

### The on-line student feedback survey

By Simeon Underwood,  
Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office

In Citizen Kane there is a scene in which Kane stands in front of a mirror, which creates multiple reflections of Kane standing in front of a mirror. Academic quality assurance sometimes feels like that too. This summer we carried out an exercise to gather student views on how we gather student views. The context is simple. It has been obvious for some time that the questionnaire we use for the School survey of student opinion on courses is cumbersome. The move this year to an on-line version of the survey has given us unarguable evidence that many students are frustrated and/or bored by it. The purpose of the exercise was to gather student views on what we might leave out.

We decided to do the exercise by means of focus groups (as opposed to, for example, questionnaire), and we commissioned an external consultancy firm -- highly recommended; details on request -- to do it for us.

In some ways the most impressive part of the exercise was the very high level of constructive engagement with what might on the face of it seem a circular and minor exercise. Students are and want to be seen as sophisticated analysts of how we gather their views. They were quick to see what they called the "rhetoric" of how we do the School survey and how we did this particular exercise.

There were some very clear and consistent messages from the focus groups. For example:

- Where students were in a position to make the comparison, they much prefer the on-line version of the survey to the previous paper based version. It saves class time, promotes greater reflectiveness, and is 'the way of the future'.
- Yes, our suspicion was right: the survey is too long. But their analysis is slightly subtler. What they seem to want is a visibly shorter questionnaire that at the same time allows them the necessary depth for elaboration as required.
- They also want survey results published in some limited form: as the report says, "This was regarded as the ultimate proof that LSE truly cares about student opinion in improving teaching quality".

Although the exercise was closely focused on the survey and questionnaire, it also cast some interesting reflections on other matters. One of the most startling and provocative insights concerns student attitudes to lectures and classes. Students, it reports, feel what it calls a "sense of resignation" as to their ability to affect lecture content and presentation (though there are some exceptions to this rule). Instead, the class is perceived as being the only real opportunity to have a quality, first-hand teaching experience. In their survey feedback, they therefore focus more on the latter, on the principle that there is a chance that it may make a difference. The report also links this to the emergence of teaching materials and support as a



priority issue in teaching quality. Is this analysis right, or is it a view of the LSE as seen in a distorting mirror?

## Assessment

### Student self-assessment: just a thought

By Dr Liz Barnett, Director, TLC

I was recently running a central study skills session on essay writing. One of the things I stress is writing with the reader in mind, and with an understanding of the assessment criteria – i.e. what is it that academic staff are looking for in your essay. I made an off the cuff suggestion at the end of the session that when students submit their work, they might consider adding a cover note, in which they say what grade they think they are likely to get, with a short explanation of why, along with a question as to whether they have it about right, and if not, what they need to understand about writing in that particular discipline. After the event, I thought about the idea further. Are there any staff out there who already do this? I can see it being a useful way of helping students to learn about writing within their discipline area. It might cut down marking time, and improve the value of the feedback to students. The only slight hesitation I have is whether the student self-assessment mark might unduly influence the tutor mark (in much the same way that a first marker's mark is known to influence the second marker, where "double blind" marking is not adhered to). Any thoughts, or comments? email: Liz Barnett [l.barnett@lse.ac.uk](mailto:l.barnett@lse.ac.uk). Thanks.

### New plagiarism service

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) recently launched a new national service to support universities and colleges in their endeavours to prevent and detect plagiarism. This service, based at Northumbria University, seeks to promote good practice by providing on-line access to guidance on policies, procedures, and student learning in the area of plagiarism, advice on prevention of plagiarism and access to a central detection facility. The service is on-line, at: [www.jiscpas.ac.uk](http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk). A direct link is available in the News section of the Teaching and Learning website: <http://teaching.lse.ac.uk/>.

The detection service is supported by iParadigms, a leading US supplier of plagiarism detection products. iParadigms also run <http://turnitin.com/>, which gives a simple graphical view of any paper submitted to the site showing those elements which appear "novel" and those which correspond rather more closely to work already submitted to the site and/or available through the various essay banks and other web sources. LSE has registered to use the site, and anyone interested in considering its use is welcome to contact Liz Barnett about it in the first instance. The detection service is not yet available (they are grappling with some tricky copyright problems over submission of student work). However, they hope to go live any day.

We already have two courses that plan to experiment with the service this term. Several students have expressed interest in checking their own work, and at a recent study skills session on essay writing a student from the US commented that in his university, all students were expected to put their work through turnitin.com prior to submission.

## Student Support

### Improving students' writing

Following on from the plagiarism site noted above, much of the site is devoted to helping students deal with the formal conventions of academic writings. TLC now run several sessions in the central study support programme on essay and dissertation writing, and much of the one-to-one support is focused on writing. Information about the support available can be accessed through the student support website: <http://learning.lse.ac.uk/>. There are also some useful external websites that students might find helpful. These include the Purdue University on-line writing lab (OWL): <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> and the Harvard Writing Centre: [www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/)

### Disability equality at LSE

#### Induction/welcome Day

As part of the ongoing work to improve provision for students with disabilities/dyslexia following the introduction of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, which came into effect in the education sector last September 2002, the disability team (Jean Jameson and Sue Haines) contacted all those students who had indicated a disability or dyslexia on their UCAS form before enrolment and invited them to a pre-session.

The first induction/welcome day for students with disabilities was held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October and was well attended. About forty new students gathered in Café Pepe to meet each other, the disability team and other key staff. There was an opportunity to sign up for an early tour of the library and join the society for students with disabilities, Lunch was provided, with entertainment by Steve Day, a deaf comedian.

#### Individual student support agreement (ISSA)

The induction day was also the first opportunity for students to begin negotiating an ISSA (Individual Student Support Agreement) with the Advisor to Students with Disabilities/Dyslexia.

Forty examples were sent for comment/agreement to the relevant departments. Following the department responses and further discussion about 70 students now have an ISSA. This system will be reviewed at the end of the year. Your comments and feedback about their usefulness would be very welcome.

#### Resources and aids

Four ergonomic chairs to provide specific support for students with back problems, have been purchased: two are in library study rooms, one is in the rest room for students with disabilities and one is in the Disability Office and can be loaned out for exams etc.

Over the next year, the School, along with other HEIs, has to anticipate the needs of people with disabilities, including hearing impairment. The RNID has surveyed the school and is advising us on what hearing induction loops or infra red systems are required. As a first step, a quantity of 'Ezeeloop' portable systems have been purchased. These

will be positioned around the school at reception counters, together with the signs advertising the system. Do contact AV or the Disability Office if you know you will need a system for any event or meeting.

### **HEFCE funding available for 'improving provision for disabled students'**

There are funds available for departments who decide to run projects that seek to improve the learning experience of students with disabilities by developing a fully inclusive curriculum. Contact Jean Jameson or Liz Barnett for further information and discussion.

### **SENDA mock trial**

A team of lawyers, Bond Pearce, staged a mock trial based on a fictional claim by a dyslexic student that he had been discriminated against at an institution similar to LSE. Despite efforts by Ray Richardson to defend the School, the case went in favour of David Ashton, as the aggrieved student. The grounds were, firstly, training about dyslexia had not been mandatory, so the tutor did not have the requisite skills or knowledge and, secondly, it was ruled we did not have a sufficiently robust system of recording and referring students for appropriate advice. Hopefully, the School Action Plan, to be produced by the Disability Equality Working Group, will help address these shortcomings.

### **New School policy on disability**

Council has approved a revised School policy: [www.lse.ac.uk/resources/disabilityStatement/schoolPolicy.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/disabilityStatement/schoolPolicy.htm)

Each department and section of the School is working on an action plan to implement the changes to systems, services and procedures required by SENDA and the new School policy.

We are running a series of events on disability issues in the central programme throughout this year. Any department interested in more local, tailored sessions is welcome to contact us to set up a session.

For any further information, contact Jean Jameson ext: 6034 or Sue Haines ext:7767.

## **Academic Staff Development**

### **Survey on the training and support needs of contract research staff**

This year LSE will participate in a national survey of the training and support needs, working terms and conditions and work experiences of contract research staff. The survey is an initiative supported by HEFCE, and run by the Institute of Learning and Research Technology at the University of Bristol. The survey is confidential to participating institutions, and enables us to benchmark our own practice against those other institutions. TLC is taking responsibility for organising the in-house version of the survey, consulting with relevant groups across the School, disseminating the results internally and identifying possible follow-up actions. For further details of previous surveys, see the CROS website: <http://www.cros.ac.uk/>. For

information on when and how the survey will be run at the LSE, contact Rebecca Trumble ([r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk)).

## **Staff development in departments**

The Teaching and Learning Centre offers a range of staff development opportunities centrally, as does the Staff Development Unit, IT Services, the Library and the Language Centre. There are also a number of opportunities for development work to take place within academic departments. The following are some examples of the kinds of staff development that work best at departmental level. Contact Liz Barnett if you would like funding or other support to promote them.

**Away-days on specific topics or issues:** Each year a number of departments arrange to go "off-site" to have a half day or full day working together on a particular issue. For example, in the run up to QAA reviews, several departments took time out to have a detailed look at their own teaching provision. Others have used such days to review specific programmes (e.g. all undergraduate courses; PhD systems and provision etc). The TLC is happy to provide financial support for such away-days, advice on venues, and suggestions on programming and facilitating away-days. A handy local venue is the Royal College of Surgeons, which has comfortable conference facilities and provides good quality refreshments!

**Highlighting good practice through departmental meetings:** Departmental meetings can provide a useful forum for disseminating new ideas and developments. This can be achieved both through circulation of papers and short presentations. One or two departments have used departmental meetings in this way to present outcomes of teaching development projects

**Developing new courses, programmes, systems, approaches, procedures, processes:** In many cases staff development happens alongside educational development. Contact us for details of funding opportunities, and for the tailored support you may find useful to assist the implementation of new ideas. Where such developments are crystallised into funded projects, you are usually expected to write up something of your experience, noting what worked and what didn't. This is often an important development activity in itself.

### **Having a "useful documents" area on your departmental public folders or a departmental website:**

A number of departments now share ideas on teaching through making useful materials available to each other through public folders and the web. This is a good way of avoiding recreating wheels that others have already developed. It is often worth checking out the public folders of other departments too! Those of us working at the centre (in particular TLC and TQARO) are always actively looking out for good examples that others might like to adapt and develop – be it guides on how to write dissertations, departmental handbooks, marking advice and assessment criteria or other such developments.

**Peer observation:** Some departments operate peer observation schemes, encouraging colleagues to observe and give feedback to each other. This can focus on providing feedback to the person being observed, as well as providing an opportunity for the observer to see whether

there is anything he/she can learn from how a colleague approaches teaching. Peer observation can be extended to include sharing of course materials, and approaches to running tutorials or other meetings with students. Peer observation is particularly valuable for new staff, occasional teachers, and within the context of course or programme review.

**Team teaching:** An alternative to peer observation is team teaching, which again offers the possibility of cross-fertilisation of ideas on both content and process. The “development” impact of team teaching can be increased through brief follow up meetings to discuss approaches.

**Follow-up discussion following student feedback surveys:** Research evidence suggests that simply receiving student feedback has a very limited impact on practice. However, where student feedback is discussed with others, there is much more likelihood that it then leads to constructive changes in practice. This can form a useful part of appraisal and mentor meetings, and of support for occasional teachers.

**Assessment moderation exercises:** A common major concern of new full-time faculty and occasional teachers is whether they are marking to School “standards”. Often double marking of formally assessed work also shows up divergence in grading between staff. Whilst the implementation of written assessment criteria can help to ameliorate this situation, a more effective solution is for departments or course or programme teams to undertake occasional assessment moderation exercises. Here, a number of people mark a few pieces of student work and then compare and discuss variations in marks and in the kind of feedback they would give to the students. This can lead to fruitful discussion on assessment criteria, assessment methods, and differing views on the aims of courses and programmes.

**Departmental briefing, training and on-going support for occasional teachers:** Several departments now run special briefing sessions for occasional teachers, often including course specific briefings with written guidance on course content and process. Some include assessment moderation exercises as part of this; others include teaching observation and feedback. A couple of departments are starting to build teaching resource collections for specific courses giving occasional teachers an array of specific ideas on how to teach particular concepts and ideas.

**Mentoring:** All new academic staff should have an academic mentor, who can be an invaluable source of advice and development support. Several mentors already make use of many of the other development methods mentioned here to support their mentees. Some particularly useful development activities in this context include meeting to discuss the outcomes of student feedback, and student results.

**One-to-one consultation:** Mentoring often comes to an end when people have passed through Major Review. However, the benefits from one-to-one consultations with colleagues continue. Much of this can of course happen informally, but at times, it may be worth looking at more formal ways of encouraging cross-fertilisation of ideas not only on the content of teaching, but on approach.

**Appraisal:** Related to the above, appraisal is one opportunity for departmentally-based one-to-one consultations. In recent months, the TLC has started to receive many more of the “Training and Development Needs” forms from academic staff appraisals. We have then been able to organise a variety of specially targeted training and support activities for individuals. Sometimes this involves sending people on external training, other times it might involve one or more internal meetings.

**Undertaking course and programme reviews:** A number of departments have recently undertaken detailed course and programme reviews. These can have an important developmental component, especially where review teams look beyond the course or programme (e.g. comparing it with what happens in similar courses in competitor institutions; inviting in an external to give a different perspective on content and/or methods; rethinking the approach to course design).

**Researching practice:** Internal research and development projects (for example analysing how different groups of students perform on given courses, or how changes in teaching impact on student learning) can be an important part of development. Individuals or departments interested in researching their practice are encouraged to contact the TLC, as there may be funding possibilities available.

**Reading journals, books, web links, Teaching Matters etc:** There is an increasing body of reading materials available on a wide range of higher education issues. Staff are welcome to contact the TLC to borrow books, videos and other materials. There are now Subject Networks focused on teaching matters, which can be accessed via the Learning and Teaching Support Network site: [www.ltsn.ac.uk/](http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/), as well as the generic website which is currently highlighting matters including assessment, supporting part-time teachers, widening access, and e-learning. The School library has a number of books on higher education matters (mainly at: LA/LB class marks), as well as access to materials via SOSIG and EASI. The Institute of Education (a short walk away, in Bedford Way) has a vast range of books and journals, including many of the discipline-specific education journals such as Teaching Philosophy, Teaching Economics, and Mathematics Education. Some departments designate one or more colleagues as responsible for keeping a watching brief on, for example, the LTSN website, or a given journal, and for highlighting relevant materials to colleagues. TLC also keeps a watch out for relevant materials and is happy to assist in searching for literature on specific matters.

Anyone interested in taking any of these ideas forward or exploring other options for staff development at the departmental level may wish to borrow: Blackmore, P. Gibbs, G. and Shrivs, **Supporting staff development within departments** OCSLD 1999, or contact Liz Barnett [l.barnett@lse.ac.uk](mailto:l.barnett@lse.ac.uk)

## **Forthcoming LSE Teaching and Learning Centre workshops**

There are a number of TLC workshops coming up in the Lent and Summer Terms, of which a selection is listed below. Further details can be found in the TLC Academic Staff Development Programme or on the TLC website, <http://teaching.lse.ac.uk>. If you would like further

information, or to book a place on a session please contact Rebecca Trumble in the TLC, email: [r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk), ext: 6624.

- Lecturing: a practice session  
Wednesday 5 February 2003, 2pm – 5pm
- Leading a Discussion: a practice session  
Wednesday 12 February 2003, 1pm – 3.45pm  
Wednesday 12 February 2003, 2pm – 5pm
- LSE Teacher Accreditation Programme: programme briefing  
Thursday 13 February 2003, 12.30pm – 2.30pm
- Advanced Voice Training  
Monday 24 February 2003, 10am – 1pm
- Voice Training for Speakers of English as a Second Language  
Monday 24 February 2003, 2.30pm – 5.30pm
- Conference Presentations: a practice session  
Tuesday 18 March 2003, 2pm – 5.30pm
- Advanced Voice Training  
Tuesday 18 March 2003, 10am – 5.15pm
- Getting Grant Funding  
Thursday 20 March 2003, 2pm – 4pm
- Join the ILT: individual entry route  
Monday 24 March 2003, 2pm – 5pm or  
Tuesday 25 March 2003, 2pm – 5pm
- Self-Marketing: promoting yourself effectively on paper and in person  
Wednesday 11 June 2003, 2pm – 4pm
- Supervising PhD Students  
Thursday 26 June 2003, 9.45am – 5pm
- Contacts: building influential working relationships  
Wednesday 2 July 2003, 2pm – 4pm

#### Learning technology workshops

- On-line Feedback and Assessment  
Wednesday 26 February 2003, 2pm – 4pm
- Using a range of Digital Media for Teaching  
Monday 17 March 2003, 12.15pm – 1.45pm
- Taking your WebCT course further – building on your initial implementation  
Friday 11 April 2003, 12.15 – 1.45pm
- Lunchtime showcases  
Monday 12 May 2003, 1pm – 2pm  
Monday 19 May 2003, 1pm – 2pm  
Wednesday 28 May 2003, 1pm – 2pm  
Monday 2 June 2003, 1pm – 2pm
- WebCT Review  
Wednesday 4 June 2003, 12.15pm – 2pm

#### Disability equality workshops

- Accessibility issues  
Thursday 27 February 2003, 1pm – 2pm
- Rethinking Teaching and Learning with Regard to SENDA  
Wednesday 19 March 2003, 2pm – 5pm
- SENDA progress and quiz  
Thursday 20 March 2003, 1pm – 2pm

#### External events/workshops

The TLC may fund members of academic staff interested in following external training courses (please check IN ADVANCE if funding is available). Some that may be of interest are: -

- The Learning and Teaching Support Network's (LTSN) third Business Education Support Team (BEST) conference, '**Creativity and Innovation in Academic Practice**'. The conference is aimed at both the experienced teacher and the novice in Business, Management and Accountancy. It will provide a good platform for raising debate, sharing approaches to academic practice and encouraging excellence in current teaching practice.  
Date: 9 – 11 April 2003  
Venue: Brighton

#### Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development courses:

- 'Working with international students', 21 February 2003, London, Regents College.
- 'Plagiarism', 5 May 2003, Oxford, Oxford Brookes University, Headington Hill Hall.
- 'Student assessment: lightening the load, increasing the learning', 13 May 2003, London, Friends House.
- 'Gender issues in HE', 10 June 2003, London, Friends House.

If you would like to attend a workshop please contact Rebecca Trumble in the TLC, email: [r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.trumble@lse.ac.uk), ext: 6624.

#### Next issue of Teaching Matters

The next issue of Teaching Matters is scheduled for the start of the summer term. Anyone with suggestions for items, or who wishes to write a piece for publication in Teaching Matters is invited to contact Rebecca Trumble as soon as possible. TLC will also be producing a "Special Issue" of interesting practices that have emerged from this year's TLAC reviews in Government, Law, DESTIN, European Institute, Media and International Relations.