

TLDO

Teaching and Learning
Development Office
LSE

LSE Teaching Matters Issue 1, April 1999

The Teaching and Learning Development Office

What do we do?

- Support individuals and departments on teaching related issues
- Link people to teaching initiatives nationally and internationally, and work with them to develop teaching initiatives locally
- Co-ordinate the central academic staff development programme and organise training and support on teaching for part time and full time teaching staff
- Co-ordinate student study support across the School

Who are we?

Teaching and Learning Development
Officer: Liz Barnett email:
l.barnett@lse.ac.uk phone: 6623

Teaching and Learning Development
Administrator: Jo Price: email
j.price@lse.ac.uk phone: 6624

Where are we?

50 Lincoln's Inn Field (next door to the Old
Curiosity Shop)

On-line information

A more comprehensive version of this news sheet is in the public folders, and includes Web links. See: Public Folders/All Public Folders/Admin/Personnel/Training & Development/Teaching and Learning Development Office/Teaching Matters 1 on-line version

Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of Teaching Matters, produced by the Teaching and Learning Development Office. The aim of this news sheet is to highlight developments in teaching and learning both within the School and externally, and to provide a discussion forum for staff on teaching matters. We welcome comment on this first issue, and contributions to future issues. An alternative version has been produced to be read on-line – with direct links to email contacts and web sites.

Teaching Initiatives in the School

Mock assessment for Maths

The Departments of Mathematics and Statistics will be undergoing Subject Review in November of this year. As part of the preparation, the Mathematics Department invited Professor Peter Rowlinson, of the University of Stirling, to conduct a "Mock Review. During his Review, Professor Rowlinson spoke to members of the Department, to students in the Department, and also to some of the many other people in the School who provide a service to our students.

It was a salutary experience to be sat down in front of a document and asked "In the minutes of ..., the point was raised that ..., and it was noted that the Department would What have you done about it since?". Professor Rowlinson made many useful suggestions for improvement, as well as providing a valuable insight

into some of the many ways that the LSE looks unusual to an outside eye. He was also eager to point out a number of areas in which he was greatly impressed by our provisions.

I would recommend other Units faced with Subject Review to consider getting a friendly (but not too friendly) colleague to visit the Department well ahead of the Real Thing.

Graham Brightwell, Quality Officer,
Mathematics

Do you like the rooms you teach in?

Each year, Craig Hickson, the Teaching Room Resources Manager, surveys staff views on the quality of teaching facilities. The survey has led to several changes. There is now a bid in to APRC to help streamline arrangements for staff who wish to use computers in lectures and seminars. Contact Craig for further details: ext 6382.

Excellent teachers

Since 1996, the Appointments Committee has awarded prizes of £500 to up to four people each year at Major Review, for "outstanding teaching performance". This year, two awards have been made, to Dr Catherine Campbell (Dept of Social Psychology) and Dr Jo Beall (Dept of Social Policy).

A national scheme to promote teaching excellence is due to be launched in the next few months - with a prize of £5000 for the first year.

Promoting the appropriate use of technology in teaching

APRC is interested in exploring ways of making appropriate use of technology in teaching. It has established the Learning and Teaching Technology Group, a working group which includes staff from academic departments, IT Services, the Library, and central administration. To date, the group has prepared a project proposal to pilot test Web and CD-based course delivery approaches for a Master's course in Computer Information Security, and for a Certificate in Teaching Development, aimed at part time and full time teaching staff. The project will be

funded by the HEFCE Continuing Vocational Education Fund, and outcomes will be well publicised across the School. The group is now looking at ways of carrying forward developments in other parts of the School. Anyone interested in looking at examples of technology in teaching in the School is encouraged to check out the following PowerPoint presentation, which includes hyperlinks to a variety of internal and external sources: [outlook://Public Folders/All Public Folders/Admin/Personnel/Training & Development/Teaching & Learning Development Office/~its.ppt](mailto:outlook://Public%20Folders/All%20Public%20Folders/Admin/Personnel/Training%20&%20Development/Teaching%20&%20Learning%20Development%20Office/~its.ppt)

On-line student feedback

This session, the Teaching Quality Assurance Office has piloted **on-line student course feedback** on courses with Philosophy, Government, Mathematics and Statistics. The project is in its infancy, but has the potential to reduce the massive paper-based student feedback exercise, not to mention reducing the mammoth task of data processing. We will be looking closely at security issues as well as response rates. For further information contact Dr Eamon Wright (Teaching Quality Assurance Office) e.wright@lse.ac.uk

Videos of teaching

The Teaching and Learning Development Office has a small selection of videos on various aspects of teaching, which staff may like to borrow for a fixed period.

Following up suggestions from a number of established staff, we are also exploring the idea of videoing some of the most outstanding teachers in the School, and asking them to give some insight into preparation and the teaching process. If anyone has suggestions of people we should include, please contact Liz Barnett. The video would then be available for use in the School, for teaching induction events, and for independent viewing by interested staff.

Student support issues

Student Induction and orientation

Academic Board (17.3.99) welcomed developments to improve the LSE student experience through changes to registration and induction. The Board papers include notes on best practice for departments.

Student study support

Along with developments in the induction period, the Teaching and Learning Development Office is developing a more co-ordinated approach to student study support. Next year, there will be a range of student study skills sessions through the year for different student groups, along with a web site, and link up between the student support work of IT Services, the Library, Language Centre, and the Careers Service.

New director for the Language Centre

Nick Byrne (ext 7043) has recently joined the School as Director of the Language Centre. Nick is keen to move forward on English Language provision and aims to work on a collaborative basis with departments to ensure that those students with English language difficulties get the support they need. Nick is also exploring the wide range of IT-supported language development projects operating across the country, with a view to increasing student access to language learning in the School.

Students supporting students

Law students recently reported a need to develop self-help or peer support for first years struggling to cope with the demands of their studies. International Relations already has a model which others might like to consider. Each year, a number of second and third year students volunteer to be "student hosts" to the in-coming first year group - acting as informal contacts to give tips on how to approach work and life at the LSE, plus insider information on selecting options. To help the process along, the department invites the student hosts to come along to the parties at the start of term, and publicises their names in

the departmental undergraduate handbook, along with information about the options that they have taken

Adviser to Disabled Students

Dr. Sheila Newman (ext 7849) has recently been appointed as the School's Adviser to Students with Disabilities. The post involves advising on aspects of policy affecting students with disabilities, and on ways of assessing and overcoming any problems encountered through disability. External funding opportunities are being explored to find ways of developing the support provided to different groups.

Dyslexia video

One of the more "hidden" disabilities some students have to cope with is dyslexia. The Teaching and Learning Development Office is working with the Adviser to Disabled Students to adapt a recent video on Dyslexia in HE to the LSE situation. For further information, contact Liz Barnett.

External developments – including funding opportunities for teaching development

HEFCE Teaching Development Funds

HEFCE is allocating £24million to support the development and enhancement of learning and teaching in HE in 1999/2000. Part of this will be available to departments who go through the QAA Subject Review (Teaching Quality Assessment as was). Staff in Mathematics, Statistics, Social Psychology, Government, International Relations, European Institute, Philosophy, Economics and Industrial Relations may want to consider development projects – calls for applications tend to arrive about one year after the review.

Details of many of the current projects are available on the Web url:

<http://www.ncteam.ac.uk/fdtl/>

The on-line version of this paper highlights projects of potential interest to departments, along with Web links.

Subject benchmarking

A major new development related to teaching quality assessment is subject benchmarking. The benchmarking standards exercise, which is moving along rapidly, involves coming up with a nationally agreed framework for "learning outcomes" for undergraduate degrees. Some have equated this with the development of "national HE curricula". However, the intention is to have something rather more flexible, but where there are certain agreed "minimum standards". History and Law have recently gone through the process, and the results should be made public in the very near future. The next set of subject areas to be tackled includes Geography and Business Studies, soon to be followed by several other social science disciplines.

Staff development options

Funding for external courses

Limited funds are available from the Teaching and Learning Development Office to support staff wishing to undertake training externally.

Central events

The Teaching and Learning Centre is offering a small selection of workshops for staff. Below is a listing of the events. For further details, contact Jo Price ext 6624 or email j.price@lse.ac.uk

26 May: **Leading a discussion**
7 June **Academic Appraisal Training**
10/11 June **Introduction to teaching and learning**
16 June **Practice conference presentations**
23 June **Practice lecturing**
1 July **Speaking to large audiences: voice training for academics**
5 July: **Voice training for English as a second language speakers**

Staff Learning Centre

Staff Development and IT Services have joined forces to establish a Staff Learning Centre. The Centre (open to all staff) will have its opening launch on May 20, which is also National, Learning at Work Day. The Centre will have a wide range of multimedia and multiple media learning packs, and will include a section on

teaching and learning matters. The Centre will be located in S167. Contact Chris Connelley ext. 6256 or Sam Thornton ext 7735 for further details.

Observing teaching

One of the most useful approaches academics have found in helping to develop their teaching expertise is to have constructive feedback from peers, and from seeing themselves on video. The Government Department already has a peer observation scheme in place, and Liz Barnett has been working with Mathematics and Statistics combining observation and video recording of lectures to give staff feedback on their teaching. A paper on teaching observation is being circulated to departments, giving departments guidelines for establishing their own systems.

LSE Teaching Development Programme

A consultation document on Teaching Development has been circulated to Convenors. The proposals include making observation of teaching a standard part of teaching induction in the School, and recommend that we have internal provision for enabling people to gain a "transferable" qualification in Teaching and Learning in HE, which is particularly geared to teaching in the social sciences. For further information, contact Liz Barnett.

Training for part time teachers

This year, over 90 occasional teachers (mainly postgraduate students) have attended two-day introductory workshops on teaching and learning. Feedback from participants has been very encouraging, with 93% rating the workshop as excellent/very good. Feedback comments included:

"This should be compulsory!"
"The workshop helped me re-think critically about my teaching"
"It was useful to share ideas and experiences with other teaching assistants"

The last introductory workshop this year is in June. Contact us for details.