



Teaching Matters

Teaching and Learning Development Office

Issue 3, May 2000

WHAT WE DO

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

- 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 consultancy tailored to your particular needs and interests, including teaching observation.
- Alert staff to external events, providing funding as appropriate.
- Support departments facing internal and external teaching quality assessment.
- 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.
- Co-ordinate student study support across the School.

For further details, see the TLDO website:
<http://teaching.lse.ac.uk>

Contact

Liz Barnett (Teaching and Learning Development Officer), room H417c
email: l.barnett@lse.ac.uk; ext. 6623 or

Jill Ramsay (Teaching and Learning Development Administrator), room H417
email: j.ramsay@lse.ac.uk; ext. 6624.

Teaching "socials"

The Teaching and Learning Development Office is arranging two receptions towards the end of this term - one for part-time teachers, the other for full-time staff who have joined the School in the past two years. We will be sending out invitations shortly, following up on all those who have attended TLDO events in the past two years. We hope people will take this opportunity of meeting up with colleagues across the School - plus hope it will be a productive occasion for providing feedback to the TLDO on what we should be planning for the future.

EVENTS

The following events are planned for this term. For further details contact Jill Ramsay.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 6 June | On-line student feedback questionnaire Speakers: Ron Riley (MIS) Paul Gee (IT Services) Jane Galbraith (Statistics) Time: 12.50 - 1.50pm Venue: S221 |
| 9 June | Quality Assurance Agency (QAA): the "new" Subject Review procedures Speaker: Liz Barnett Time: 12.50 - 1.50pm Venue: S221 |
| 12 June | HeadLine project Speaker: John Paschoud Time: 12.50 - 1.50pm Venue: S221 |
| 23 June | Study skills and key skills at LSE Speaker: Liz Barnett Time: 2.00 - 5.00pm |
| 30 June | ILT membership session (lunchtime briefing, plus afternoon session for those wishing to apply for ILT membership) Speaker: Liz Barnett Time: 12.50 - 3.00pm Venue: Graham Wallas Room |

Part-time teachers

Two introductory workshops are scheduled this term:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 20/21 June | Specifically for part-time teachers in Government |
| 4/5 July | Open to any new part-time teachers starting to teach in October |

Further sessions, along with the Deans' Induction, will be scheduled for the start of next session.

New Lecturer Induction

Sessions are planned for 19 - 22 September.

TEACHING PRIZES

This year, the Promotions and Review Committee awarded four Teaching Prizes to staff going through Major Review:

Dr Jan Van Den Heuvel, *Mathematics*;
Dr Simon Hix, *Government/ European Institute*;
Dr Sandra Jovchelovitch, *Social Psychology* and
Dr Matthew Mulford, *Government/ Methodology Institute*.

Prizes are awarded for "outstanding teaching performance above and beyond that required to pass Major Review". The TLDO is in the process of putting together proposals to extend the principle of rewarding teaching excellence beyond the Major Review stage.

Nationally, the newly formed Institute for Learning and Teaching has just announced a HEFCE-funded National Teaching Fellowship scheme for outstanding teachers. Each year, 20 fellowships will be offered to outstanding teachers nominated by their institutions. The awards, worth £50,000 involve the nominees in submitting project proposals aimed at enhancing teaching in their discipline/institution.

GOOD PRACTICE NOTES

There have recently been external reviews (Quality Assurance Agency: QAA) of three departments and internal reviews (Teaching Quality Assurance Committee: TQAC) of a further four departments. The QAA reports will eventually be available on the Web, whilst TQAC reports will pass through the committee system. There are several "good practice" notes worth highlighting from the reviews. A small selection are included below.

Marking Criteria

Social Psychology has recently designed detailed marking criteria for each type of assessment, to improve on internal marking procedures and provide clearer guidance to students. Copies of the marking criteria are included in the departmental handbooks for undergraduates and postgraduates.

Diagnosing MSc Language and Learning difficulties

Postgraduates in Social Psychology complete a diagnostic assignment early in their first term, which is used to identify study skills problems and language difficulties. Any problems identified can then be followed through - for example, with the department-specific support provided by the Language Centre (contact Nick Byrne for details), via the study skills support in the department and from the Teaching and Learning Development Office (contact Liz Barnett for details).

Departmental self-evaluation

Industrial Relations has just been through a TQAC review, and is preparing for a QAA review. The TQAC "convenor statement" provided a succinct analysis of the distinctive features of teaching in the department, and ended up with a brief but insightful "SWOT" analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), along with an outline of options for future development, and associated resource implications. The document format is quite distinctive from that required by QAA, but clearly points out the key issues the department is already addressing and needs to address to improve quality of provision.

Building the connections between interdepartmental degrees

Anthropology and DESTIN have an interdepartmental degree, the MSc in Anthropology and Development. The Anthropology convenor's TQAC report noted "teething problems" with this course in its first year, which were addressed by appointing a co-ordinator within the department to liaise with his opposite number in DESTIN. The co-ordinator has introduced an additional seminar to connect the two components of the degree - a move much appreciated by students attending the TQAC review.

Part-time teacher handbooks

International Relations is making increasing use of occasional teachers on its undergraduate courses. As well as making use of the central introductory courses, it has developed a handbook for occasional teachers, and put an early monitoring system in place to ensure that any teaching quality problems can be addressed. Several other departments are evolving practice in this area - contact the TLDO for further details.

Raising the profile of Language Learning at LSE

Turn out by students for the Language Centre TQAC was impressive - particularly given that the review was held on the last day of term. Students praised the quality of teaching, both in modern foreign languages and in English for academic purposes. Many students described the importance they place on developing additional language skills both for their studies and their future careers. They were particularly keen to point out that their language courses have an important substantive element relevant to their other studies in the social sciences - a feature sometimes overlooked by tutors when advising students on degree options "outside the department".

FUNDING TEACHING DEVELOPMENT

With the proviso that the School agrees a Learning and Teaching Strategy by 31 May, HEFCE is providing teaching quality enhancement funding for specified projects over the next three years. Funds for 1999/2000 have already been allocated to a range of development activities, including a central study skills programme, a small number of existing departmental teaching development projects and an investigative project into ways of supporting and rewarding teaching excellence across the School. For the following two years, it is suggested that the fund (around £45,000 per annum) continues to focus on supporting innovative developments at departmental level, along with recognising and building on teaching excellence. Staff who have particular development projects in mind, or who wish to know more about opportunities in this area should contact the TLDO.

QAA DEVELOPMENTS

The School is currently preparing for Subject Reviews, under the "old" QAA system, for Politics (combining Government, International Relations, DESTIN and the European Institute), Economics, Philosophy and Business and Management (combining Industrial Relations and the Interdisciplinary Institute of Management). QAA support in the School is being strengthened through the appointment of a new senior member of staff in the Academic Registrar's department, due to start in August. Three additional members of staff have also agreed to become "institutional facilitators" - who sit in on the QAA visits and act as a crucial "voice" for the School and departments during these events. The three are: Mr Nigel Rogers, Centre for Economic Performance; Dr Janet Stockdale, Social Psychology and Dr Edgar Whitley, Information Systems.

We have also been deluged with a seemingly endless barrage of "consultation documents" concerning the "new" QAA system. Many people may now be familiar with various elements of the new system. The aptly named "SAD" (self assessment document) will be replaced with a "SED" (self evaluation document). This will refer to "programme specification" documents, which set programme learning outcomes against national subject benchmark statements and against a national qualifications framework. The "evaluation of educational provision" will need to take into account the QAA Code of Practice, which sets out guidelines and prescriptions on many procedures (including programme and course approval, external examining and assessment). The focus of review will be more on "outcome" than "process" - with close scrutiny of assessment outcomes and student transcripts. Subject level reviews, past audit reports, and scrutiny of institutional procedures for assuring standards and quality of provision will be used by QAA to develop a profile of each institution. An internal seminar on the new system is planned for 9 June - all staff welcome. When the QAA deliberations are completed, further briefings will be arranged. Basic information on the new system is available via the Teaching and Learning Development Office web site: <http://teaching.lse.ac.uk/qa.html>

TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING

There have been recent presentations in the School on both internal and external developments looking at the use of technology in teaching. Internally, staff in Information Systems, and the TLDO are experimenting with a web-based "virtual learning environment", WebCT. In a trial MSc module in Information Systems, students are able to revisit videoed lectures, view audio PowerPoint presentations, engage in on-line discussions (moderated by course tutors), submit assessments, email staff and students on their course, and access all relevant text and web-based materials within a secure and carefully monitored environment. The experiment is being evaluated - with a PhD student working on the project. Feedback to date indicates that students enjoy the flexibility the on-line component provides - despite the fact that they are all based at LSE. Down the line, the intention is to offer the module both within a traditional institution-based

programme, and as a "stand alone" continuing professional education module to those working in the information security sector interested in updating their knowledge and skills.

THE INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING (ILT)

ILT, the newly formed professional association for teachers in Higher Education, has started recruiting members. Pending decisions on a School-wide response to the ILT, the Teaching and Learning Development Office will fund applications for full-time academic staff, covering the initial processing fee (£25) and the first year's membership fee (£75). Until September 2001, people with three or more years of experience in teaching in higher education can join the ILT via its "fast track" route. Application forms and details are on the ILT web: <http://www.ilt.ac.uk/>. There will be a lunchtime briefing session on ILT for anyone interested on 30 June. Contact the TLDO for details.

In subsequent years, and for staff with less than three years HE experience, membership will require submission of a teaching portfolio or completion of a programme on teaching and learning in HE accredited by ILT. In addition, ILT is working on different categories of membership, and should shortly announce proposals for membership appropriate to part-time teachers (in the LSE context, many of these are PhD students with teaching responsibilities). The "portfolio" route is not yet finalised, but the TLDO has developed a prototype portfolio document which staff may wish to consider. We hope to put forward the LSE Teacher Accreditation Programme for ILT accreditation during the next academic session.

LSE STAFF MENTORING SCHEME by Chris Connelley, Staff Training and Development Manager

At LSE, as part of a broad cluster of initiatives arising out of the recent Investors in People diagnostic, we have just started a six-month pilot programme designed to introduce and assess the impact and utility of mentoring for support staff.

Working in partnership with the prestigious National Mentoring Consortium, we invited a broad base of School staff to apply to join the scheme and now have twelve mentor/mentee pairs working their way through the contracted six two-hour monthly sessions.

Pilot programme participants come from a wide variety of work areas, and are representative of the diversity of staff working at the School.

All programme participants have been involved in induction, awareness and training activities, with mandatory half-day sessions for both mentees and mentors. Mentors were also offered the option of attending three additional workshops on counselling skills, coaching skills and dealing with potentially difficult situations.

Feedback from the training events and initial mentoring sessions is hugely positive with plans to extend the scheme during 2000/2001 subject to final evaluation. Our aim is to generate sufficient trained mentors over the next year to offer new members of support staff the option of a staff mentor on arrival as part of a comprehensive induction package from the School. The model may also be appropriate for academic staff, and this will be considered during next session.

We will provide an update on the scheme in the next issue of Teaching Matters but meanwhile feel free to contact Chris Connelley on ext. 6256 or email for more details.

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' TEAMWORK SKILLS: JOIN THIS LSE INNOVATION!

by Peter Levin

Here and there in the School, for some years, teachers have been getting their students to carry out group projects as part of their studies. They have been examined on these, gaining a share of a collective mark as well as (or instead of) an individual mark for their contribution. In general students seem to have appreciated this opportunity to sample a departure from the 'individual achievement' culture of British universities, although they have sometimes found it frustrating to have to work with other people whose ideas and approach differed from their own.

This year two departments have tried something different. MSc students in Information Systems (Analysis, Design and Management of Information Systems) and Social Policy (Social Policy and Planning in Developing Countries) have been offered 'teamwork tutoring', to help them work effectively together on team projects and deal constructively with the interpersonal problems that arise.

The teamwork tutors, Peter Levin and Ivan Kent, make use of a variety of techniques, including 'interactive lectures', workshops, self-appraisal questionnaires, one-to-one tutorials on request, and reflective reports and feedback/debriefing sessions to help students identify what they have learned from the experience. A short reading list and guidance notes on various issues are posted on a dedicated website.

The scheme is still at the pilot stage, but the reaction of students and teachers has been very positive, and the two departments have asked to take part in the scheme again next year. It is evident that good teamwork produces good learning as well as a good 'product'. And far from adding to teachers' workload, it reduces it because the teamwork tutors are there to work with students on any interpersonal problems and assess reflective reports.

So far as we know, this is an LSE innovation. And not only is it clearly worthwhile in its own right: in the current climate, with the QAA pushing 'key skills' for

all it's worth, it is something that will gain credit in teaching quality assessments.

We expect that funds will be available next year to extend the scheme to other courses. If you already give your students group projects – issue-oriented or investigative, or case-studies of some kind – or are interested in doing so, or would simply like to learn more, please contact Peter Levin (ext. 7346, email: p.levin@lse.ac.uk) for a preliminary chat. The website for SPPDC students can be visited at <http://www.synergesis.clara.net/SA452/intro.html>.

Incorporate a teamwork session in your programme for new students!

Note to convenors and departmental tutors:

A 90-minute or 2-hour session of doing things together in groups is a brilliant way of helping new students to get to know others from different countries or ethnic groups and begin to build up an atmosphere of mutual support. We can provide an 'ice-breaker' session for any department, with the content tailored to your subject. To discuss, please contact Peter Levin.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Teaching Matters will be produced for the beginning of Michaelmas Term. If there is anything you would like to see included, please contact Jill Ramsay ext. 6624; email j.ramsay@lse.ac.uk, no later than 20 September.