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1. CONTEXT FOR THE APPLICATION (Approximately 300 words)

Please provide a context for your application. This should consist of an introductory statement about your contribution to learning and teaching to date. Examples of the information you might include are; the subject you teach, the type of learning and teaching activities you are involved in, how many learners are involved, your particular learning and teaching interests and an outline of your overall teaching philosophy?

I joined the School of English at Queen's in 1992 having previously taught at the Universities of Liverpool and Nottingham. My broad subject area is English Language and Linguistics, but within that I teach and research extensively in Stylistics and in English Language Pedagogy. The former area is a branch of language study which has a strong emphasis on creativity in language use and which has special relevance for the teaching of English to (and by) non-native speakers. I detail my experience in this area later in the application.

Over the years, I have developed a strong international profile in the teaching of English Language at all levels. My continued zeal for my subject area has of course been a mainstay in this process, and even after all these years 'in the job', student evaluation questionnaires constantly affirm my enthusiasm and devotion to my specialist area. However, my teaching activity extends across a number of important professional arenas and recognised pedagogical practices. For instance, during my time at the University of Liverpool I was heavily involved in the 'Language in the National Curriculum' initiative which followed in the wake of various Government reports into the teaching of English language in schools. This activity followed me to Northern Ireland where I have continued my work in teacher education by running seminars and one-day conferences, and by delivering invited keynote addresses at professional gatherings. In parallel with this, my international profile in language teaching has flourished through a series of major and continuing commitments with staff in numerous Universities around the world (detailed later in the application). And finally, my learning and teaching portfolio is supplemented by my published output, which includes books and articles related to the theory and practice of English Language teaching.

This is the first application of this kind that I have made and it has been prompted by my colleagues in the School of English (and in other institutions) and by my former and current undergraduate and postgraduate students. It is largely in response to their encouragement that I make this application.

2. DISCUSSION

You should illustrate your discussion throughout with reference to specific learning and teaching activities and draw on relevant research, scholarship and professional practice. You should also provide examples of the influence of student feedback on your learning and teaching practice.

(a) Promoting and enhancing the learners' experience (approximately 1,400 words)

Please discuss how you stimulate and inspire your students to learn, taking account of the diversity of learning needs.

Perhaps the main stimulus to my teaching is my desire that students see the relevance and importance of the subject matter delivered. Indeed, the most gratifying response in terms of student feedback (re-iterated across the now many thousands of module questionnaires I have collected over the years) is when attention is drawn to the relevance of my subject to 'everyday life'. This is often embodied in comments where the student explicitly signals the links between what is covered on the module and their experience of the language practices (especially in advertising, print and broadcast media) with which they come into contact on a daily basis. English Language study, it is true, is an area which *should* lend itself inherently to this criterion of 'everyday relevance' but I have seen many a presentation or lecture which makes theory and analysis unnecessarily turgid or which renders opaque the connection between academic language study and the discourse practices of everyday social life.

I have always had teaching commitments at all four Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels and in spite of being a Director of Research I currently convene three UG modules as well as the Masters Degree in English Language and Linguistics. I also contribute a number of 'guest spots' to other modules in the School of English. Given that the main modules will be referred to later, I detail them here:

ENL 1001	Introduction to English Language (330 students at Stage 1)
ENL 2002	Language and Power (140 students at Stage 2)
ENL 3008	Stylistics (40 students at Stage 3)
M.A. in English:	Half modules on: Functional Linguistics; Ways of Analysing Texts; Language and the Law; The Discourse of Humour

Naturally, these different teaching duties require radically different methodologies and over the years I have tailored my pedagogical approach to suit the levels and abilities of the students involved. For example, my Year One practice, in response to the number of students involved, requires a mixed formula, where a more formal lecture, outlining the key concepts and theories, is followed by a seminar where practical activities are based around the theories developed in the lecture. This balance of lecture and seminar is crucial at this level because it facilitates the transfer between theoretical knowledge and analytic skill, a synthesis which is especially productive in areas like the study of dialect, register and child language acquisition.

My stage 3 module (ENL3008) is delivered, by contrast, through a workshop-based formula which involves a more interactive pattern of participation. This is normally structured through a series of varying practical tasks that are based on that week's central theme – some of these activities are even conducted outside the main seminar room to avoid 'cross-fertilisation' among the groups. The workshop concludes with a report-back session when the various subgroups bring back and present, depending on the topic, their feedback, responses or findings to the group as a whole (and see further below).

My Stage 2 module, Language and Power, works on a slightly different pattern again and to some extent marks a transition between the methodologies of Stage 1 and Stage 3 teaching. In this instance, my teaching partner on this module and I have written a course textbook which will be published by Routledge in 2009 (and see further below). The book matches the structure of the module, approaching

the subject from four main vantage points: introducing the twelve key areas of study, surveying the main concepts and developments in each area, working through a set of practical exercises and activities, and offering a series of edited key readings by twelve of the best known figures in this field of research. This four-way pattern is mirrored in the teaching materials of the course and in the on-line resources which accompany it.

Please outline the way you develop, organise and present your learning and teaching resources.

I employ a variety of teaching structures, drawing on lecture, seminar, tutorial and workshop formats where appropriate (see above). Students are of course encouraged to use QoL / QSiS resources where both the core teaching materials and additional reading and practical work can be found. My approach is also 'multimodal' insofar as extensive use is made of video, stills, music, captions and written text. Whereas in the past this approach would in the classroom have warranted clumsy *in situ* shifts between VCR materials and overhead slides, contemporary IT facilities, such as PowerPoint, greatly enable this multimodal approach to teaching and learning. It makes for a stimulating learning experience because students are able to see multiple text-types unfold in the course of single presentation. Indeed, most of the key topics in language study are well-served by these multi-media resources. An introduction to the concept of *metaphor* for instance (as on ENL3008, week 6) is accompanied by a range of illustrations, which progress in sequence through a sample from poetry, a piece of political caricature, a fragment from a recorded sports commentary, and concluding with a broadcast advertisement. This progression helps underscore the prevalence of figurative language like metaphor in a host of media environments.

A particular feature of my presentational style, and one that is consciously woven into my learning and teaching resources, is the use of verbal humour. I accept that many lecturers have a keen sense of humour and that this quality is valued in a teaching environment. However, I mean something rather more specific in this instance, where for example a humorous video clip might be usefully inserted into a developing (and perhaps challenging) theoretical survey. The main issue is that the humour sequence is not an unconnected departure from the flow of the session but is instead quite naturally tied in with the ongoing subject of the lecture. For instance, in the course of my lecture on Language and the Law (ENL2002, week 5) the famous Marx brothers sketch 'The Contract' is shown, because it highlights in an entertaining way the *reductio ad absurdum* nature of many legal contracts. Similarly, a lecture on Attitudes to Accent Variation (ENL1001, week 2) makes use of Heineken's famous 'elocution lesson' advertisement, while a lecture on the pragmatics of verbal irony and sarcasm (ENL3008, week 11) naturally incorporates a clip from *Father Ted* featuring Father Jessop, the 'most sarcastic priest in Ireland'.

The use of such humour material helps extend, often in a usefully mnemonic way, the theoretical concepts and categories presented in the lecture. The sociologist Erving Goffman has observed that humour in interaction leads to a 'break in frame' and that it changes the 'footing' of a particular interaction. I use this strategy quite consciously in my teaching (with humour material positioned around twenty minutes into a lecture, and again in last ten minutes) in order to temporarily break frame. In addition to proving a popular teaching and learning strategy, I have found that it offers the student an intellectual 'mini-break' – without of course straying in any way from the central thematic concern of the lecture itself.

Please discuss how you assess your students and how you know this to be appropriate. Tell us about any changes you plan to make in your assessment practices in the future and why you believe this will be better.

In keeping with the variety of approaches discussed above, my assessment procedures vary across the different platforms of UG and taught PG provision. For instance, as a consequence of the new four-module first year in Humanities, we were able this academic year to deliver for the first time a fully-fledged module on English Language. Assessment for this required that a range of student skills be covered; namely, their understanding of the core concepts in the discipline as well as their ability to analyse different types of texts. To this effect, I designed an assessment template for the core concepts through an essay writing task, while the analytic part of the course involved an exam based on texts that were unseen by the students. This challenged students across a range of knowledge and skills and our results were excellent, with a new kind of student, skilled in the theory and analysis of English language, now emerging into our second year intake. That said, I am nevertheless always receptive to new assessment methods and so a new development for the forthcoming academic year, suggested to me by other tutors on the course, will see the introduction of a *language diary*. This will require students to keep a record of all their significant encounters with English language – be it through accent, dialect, register or through print and broadcast media - and this ongoing activity will make for an significant part of their personal development plan.

My assessed methods on other modules are similarly innovative. For instance, on my ENL2002 module, I have recently introduced a multiple choice test which is a half-hour test of the students' understanding of twenty of the key concepts covered on the module. I initially came across the idea during my external examining experience and while it may seem an oddly mathematical assessment technique in a Humanities context, it has proved a great success on the module. Although only counting for 20%, the test covers the content of the entire module and this has had an interesting knock-on effect in terms of student performance. The bulk of the module is assessed by extended essay and whereas in the past students have tended in their essay to 'zone in' on one aspect of the course only (say a topic like the discourse of racism), the multiple choice test has tended to widen their focus and participation across the whole module. As a result, we (and the External Examiner) have found that the quality of essay writing is markedly improved because the test encourages full engagement with all of the concepts on the course, not just the localised ones used in the particular topic that informs the essay.

(b) Supporting colleagues and influencing support for student learning (650 words)

Please discuss how you contribute to the development of colleagues within your School to promote learning and teaching.

We have been lucky in the School of English to secure the help of a number of experienced post-doctoral teachers in English Language and Linguistics and the input of these colleagues has been invaluable in the successful delivery of the new Stage 1 module (see above). Importantly, with an enrolment of around 340, twenty five weekly seminar groups are needed and this requires a substantial team of tutors. In our case, we had a group of seven tutors, including Doctoral students.

Clearly, not all colleagues share the same teaching experience and it is understandable that there are as many teaching styles as there are teachers. My own approach as mentor to these colleagues is to help them flourish by first finding, and then supporting, a method that works for them and their students. This is achieved by regular contact throughout the module. In addition to two preliminary tutors' meetings, we have fortnightly meetings once the module begins, and less experienced teachers are able to work through any issues they want to raise in this supportive environment. It also enables the team as a whole, irrespective of experience, to learn and develop (see above). For instance, the two more experienced members of the team on ENL2002 benefitted from a Doctoral TA's suggestion to develop a

grid charting student preferences in essay topics. As a result, we have since been able to monitor more closely the areas that were not reflected in essay topics as much as they might be. As convenor of these modules, I also write a final report on the module and this, again, is collaborative and is based on a module review meeting.

Please discuss how you contribute to institutional initiatives to facilitate learning and teaching.

A key and palpable aspect of my teaching has been in student retention, which is of course a major concern to the University. As the numbers enrolled reveal (see above), we have been building a solid core of students who are working in English Language (as opposed to English Literature). We have been able therefore to keep these students in the School of English by widening the diet of modules available to them. It is worth pointing out that the enrolment for Stage 2 module 2002, when I first inherited it in 1993, was 14. In the interim, this module alone has seen a ten-fold increase in enrolment.

If you are involved in any regional/national/international initiatives, please discuss your contribution to them.

As noted earlier, this aspect of my teaching and learning experience has been at the forefront of my academic activity for many years, with the delivery of lectures, workshops and short courses in many countries around the world. For instance, I recently ran a one-week course for both teachers and students on the teaching of English Language at the University of Lyon in France, and this month will deliver a series of workshops at the University of Sao Paolo. I have visited China twice over the last two years, again delivering materials on English language pedagogy. Other lecturing and teaching engagements have led to workshops and short courses in around twenty countries, including locations in Africa, South America and the Middle East. For services to English language teaching in the respective institutions, I was awarded Certificates by both the Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador in Venezuela and the Universidade Pontifícia do Rio de Janeiro in Brasil. Numerous addresses directed specifically at teachers and educational advisors also deserve mention here, as in my talks to the Advisers for English in various of the Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards, along with similar lectures in Great Britain including a Keynote Address to the National Association of Teachers of English (Wales). All of this activity has drawn on my own skills as a teacher of English language, and on some of my specific publications in the relevant areas (see further below).

(c) Ongoing professional development (650 words)

Please discuss the ways in which you undertake professional development.

Since beginning my academic career in 1984, I have participated in numerous in-house training courses to do with teaching and learning, both here at Queen's and at my previous employing institutions (see above). My most recent training has been largely to do with the use of presentational material, notably the use of IT technologies like PowerPoint and more recently, the AppleMac 'Keynote' programme.

In addition to the Queen's and other courses, I regularly participate in an association called PedSIG, which is an affiliate of the Poetics and Linguistics Association, a professional body with which I have been involved for many years. This is a Special Interest Group (hence 'SIG') which regularly reviews the practice of teaching and learning about Stylistics (see above) as well as considering

language-teaching issues generally. An international group, we meet at the beginning of the annual PALA conference, with our next gathering scheduled for Holland in July of this year. Significantly, a number of publications have come from the members of this group, of which the following is a good illustration of the sorts of professional materials we have been developing in language teaching for both non-native and non-native speakers: Simpson, Paul (2007) "Non-standard Grammar in the Teaching of Language and Style". *Literature and Stylistics for Language Learners. Theory and Practice*. Eds G. Watson and S. Zyngier. London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp.140-154.

Please discuss how you use these professional development activities to review and enhance your learning and teaching practice.

(Please see above, and sections 2(a) and 2(b)).

Please provide evidence of how this has led to improvements for your students.

My current teaching strategy is informed in great part by multimodal and cross-media presentation (see above) and these packages, including varied and tailored assessment methods, have proved highly successful in terms of student reception, recruitment and performance. At the risk of sounding immodest, but echoing the information provided earlier, my student questionnaires constantly affirm the resourcefulness of my teaching and the wide variety of methods used. This extends to the use of my international experience, where responses to certain designs in text by people from other cultures may be very different – our domestic students are sometimes very surprised to learn how such materials would be approached differently in other countries. Throughout my teaching career, various and successive External Examiners have, through their formal reports, affirmed the content and delivery of all my modules (as noted above). By the same token, and as hinted at earlier, I have also been able to draw on my own extensive experience as an External Examiner - I have held positions on 12 taught courses, including degree programmes at the Universities of Lancaster, Nottingham, Birmingham, Strathclyde, Sheffield and London. Watching what my peers do on their courses at these institutions has made for a very enlightening point of comparison, and I have certainly not been afraid to import some of their practices to Queen's.

Please provide some examples of how you review and reflect on your teaching to improve your practice, including your use of student feedback.

Although my student feedback is, as I have rather shamelessly stated above, overwhelming positive, I am never averse to receiving and reacting to constructive feedback. I constantly update and amend my courses in the light of students' suggestions. I cite but a few examples here, but my ENL3008 students reported some years ago, through questionnaires, that they preferred to do two essays rather than the traditional single essay required for a year 3 module. To them a single essay was, to quote one questionnaire, like 'putting all their academic eggs in one basket', while it was felt that two essays allowed greater coverage and less risk of putting too much store by a single performance. In the light of this feedback, I immediately instigated the two essay system on the module. Similarly, a response in some questionnaires relating to timetabling and coverage on the same module, was that the students felt that too much was covered without enough time devoted to each topic. Since receiving that feedback, I have since reduced the number of topics covered on the course while simultaneously devoting more time (through an additional half hour slot) to those topics that are covered. It is anticipated that some further 'levelling' will be carried out on this module next year.