



# REFLECTIONS

December 2009

## About *Reflections*

Welcome to the ninth issue of *Reflections*, the newsletter which focuses on teaching, learning and assessment in Queen's and more generally in higher education. *Reflections* is published once a semester by the Centre for Educational Development and provides a forum for discussing learning and teaching initiatives in Queen's. We aim to balance articles from the various support units within Queen's with contributions from academic staff and guest writers.

We lead with an article by Professor Ellen Douglas-Cowie, the new Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students. Professor Douglas-Cowie sets out her proposals for education at Queen's over the next few years and invites comment.

We also feature profiles of the 2009 Queen's Teaching Awards winners – there were eleven winners this year, which is a record. The winners will be presented with their awards by Professor Douglas-Cowie at a lunch event in the Great Hall on 28 January 2010.

An account of a recent Guest Speaker Series event led by Dr Paul Kleiman focuses on assessing creative practice, and articles from the Schools of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and Education highlight innovative approaches to teaching in those subject areas. Staff from CED and CES provide updates on the latest initiatives in their areas, including work with students on highlighting assessment and feedback practices and e-learning news.

## Contributing to the next *Reflections*

We would very much welcome contributions for our next issue of *Reflections* to be published in Spring 2010. Contributions can take several forms:

- \* **Articles** on an aspect of teaching and learning or student support (generally 500–1,000 words);
- \* **Shorter 'newsflash' items**, e.g. reporting on a recent event or advertising a new venture or up-coming event (100–200 words);
- \* **Brief synopses** of recent interesting articles on teaching and learning from the educational literature (100–200 words);
- \* **Responses** to previous articles or to recent developments in H.E.

Contributions can be submitted via e-mail to Linda Carey, (l.carey@qub.ac.uk), Centre for Educational Development.

**Linda Carey**  
Editor of *Reflections*

## Capturing the Spirit of Education

Professor Ellen Douglas-Cowie,  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education  
and Students

Sometimes audits and form-filling and regulations make us forget what teaching and learning are truly all about. It is too easy to let the word 'education' become synonymous with 'grind', and to lose sight of the privilege and the responsibility that we have – to let the next generation realise its potential. I want you to take a few minutes away from the routine and think with me about what it means to educate in a 21st century university and what it means in the particular context of Queen's.

Recently the Vice-Chancellor asked me to give a presentation to the senior managers of the University on the 'academic student experience'. I like the phrase for two reasons. First, it puts learning right at the heart of the student experience. Don't get me wrong: learning takes place as part of a wider social experience, and that is very important, but learning is what university is centrally about. And second, it signals that the person is at the centre of what we are doing as educators.

The Vice-Chancellor also asked me to think about the 'academic student experience' in the context of Queen's as an aspiring top 100 global university. So here is what I said (broadly speaking) to the Deans, Heads of School and Directors.



So far as I am concerned, the starting point is to capture what the 'academic student experience' that we aim for means in human terms.

The spirit I want to capture is a very dynamic one. It means: inviting students to raise their sights in a high energy, high achieving society; engaging students in a way of thinking that prizes intellectual enquiry, flexibility and creativity; and giving students the experience to be confident and effective citizens and employees in an international world. Looking at our website, the image that captured it best was on the front page of the School of Music and Sonic Arts website. It shows students engaged in learning, and it radiates ambition, enthusiasm, curiosity and confidence.

That combination is at the centre of my ambitions for Queen's. It leads me to four propositions. First, we should ensure that we attract students of as high academic ability as possible. Secondly, we should immerse students in an atmosphere where research is valued and pervasive, and ensure that we link education and research in productive ways to the benefit of the student's learning instead of keeping



them apart in divisive ways. Thirdly, we should ensure that the learning experience is culturally diverse, equipping students for the global workplace of the 21st century. And finally, we should recognise that education is dependent on good two-way communication and that staff need to engage positively with students and vice versa to realise the potential of all students.

These proposals are based on informal evidence. We should of course check systematically that they will lead to the type of student experience that I have talked about and I would welcome your comments and input. I will set out some of my reasoning and evidence below, addressing each of the propositions above and saying a few words about practical steps to make the propositions a reality.

I know that my first proposition will not appeal to everyone. Some people think it is elitist. In an ideal world, that might be so. But in reality, it is taken for granted that HE institutions have different missions. Some have it as part of their mission to attract students with high academic ability, and allow them to reach their full potential. The question is whether there will be an institution like that in Northern Ireland. So long as Northern Ireland does not have that kind of institution, it will be faced with the familiar problem that too many of the ablest students leave. Reversing that benefits the whole community. Queen's has taken the decision that it will try to attract and provide for students with high academic ability. As someone who was born, bred, and educated here, it is a decision that I welcome wholeheartedly.

There is a direct connection between aiming to attract students with high academic ability and broadening recruitment. Students with the right level of ability may come from anywhere, and if we want to create a community of high-achieving students, we have to recognise that incomers have an important role to play. It is part of the same outlook that selection based on class has no place. Queen's has a record of drawing students from an unusually wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. It is right and proper to insist that that should continue.

The immediate conclusion is that we need to be much more competitive in the way we approach recruiting students. We need to be more proactive in our engagement with school pupils from early in secondary school and with teachers and parents in our local community. We also need to widen our appeal beyond Northern Ireland. The past few years have seen rapid development in these areas. The Domestic Recruitment Team (which did not exist three years ago) has formed good relationships with schools and pupils and is on a constant circuit of local schools. In the past year it has been targeting GB and ROI schools with success, attending, for example, all GB main UCAS fairs, giving presentations to individually targeted GB schools and working with individual subject areas to promote new and exciting niche degree pathways beyond Northern Ireland (e.g. the success of the new Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) degree in attracting students of high academic calibre came from the joint and integrated efforts of the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy and the University Domestic Recruitment Team to promote this degree locally, in ROI and in GB). Competition

this year from GB students and ROI students for places in Medicine has raised standards even higher in an already competitive subject area at Queen's: for the first time this year there are some 40 GB or ROI students studying Medicine on either the standard entry route or the graduate entry route.

My second proposition is that we should immerse our students in a research atmosphere. This is a hallmark of highly ranked Universities, and it is easy to see why. I believe that prospective students are excited by innovative research and researchers are seen as role models, that a research-led curriculum engages students, that a research-led style of delivery (one focused on enquiry, creativity, independent thought and engagement rather than passive learning) produces effective citizens and employees fit for ideas, that a research focus can draw through the most able students to postgraduate study, that research can be the basis for enhanced staff-student engagement (through project/dissertation work), and that staff enthusiasm is heightened when delivering a research-led curriculum.

Experience suggests that students at Queen's don't fully understand how research might fit with their learning and benefit them. We need to work at explaining why a research atmosphere works for them, not against them. I am sure that many academic staff in this University would have no problem agreeing with me that research should underpin teaching. Indeed many of you undoubtedly use your research to underpin your teaching. But somehow in the language we use, in the way we plan, in the way we come across to students, we tend to separate research and teaching into two unrelated camps. That does not serve students well, and it leads to an unnatural and unproductive division which students do not understand. The division leads to the commonly held assumption that research-active staff are not interested in teaching.

I am pleased to say that in this last year, we have started to move away from that mould. The PVC for Research and Postgraduate Students and I are working together to ensure that we integrate the research and education agendas. Directors of Education, through a newly established DE Forum, are engaging with how to integrate the agendas, and in my visits to School Management Boards, we have had some useful discussions on the topic. At the Senior Management Retreat, we heard from two very different schools – Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and Nursing and Midwifery – about how they were embedding research in the curriculum and in their approach to learning in ways that enhanced the academic student experience. And I am sure their practice is mirrored elsewhere. This year research-active staff were the recipients of Teaching Awards. I am currently chairing a working group on the PGCHET, and among other things, we are discussing research-led teaching and MA teaching.

My third proposition is that we need to ensure that the learning experience of our students is culturally diverse. That is the norm in highly rated universities. It reflects the modern world in which national boundaries are porous and the workplace is global. Queen's is far at the extreme of local



predominance. A culturally diverse learning experience prepares students to have a cultural width and experience and understanding that will equip them to work in the global workplace of the 21st century.

We can build this into the learning experience in several ways. Attracting students from diverse backgrounds to Queen's will bring an international outlook to the classroom – helping students to engage with what and how people from other parts of the world think. But also sending students out to learn in other cultures is another way of ensuring that the learning experience is culturally diverse. Ensuring that the curriculum, where relevant, has an international coverage and breadth is also key.

At Queen's we are really starting to engage with this issue. GB & ROI and international recruitment efforts are being stepped up across the University. We have a new Postgraduate and International Centre being developed. This October I attended three dinners (one for new international students, one for new GB students and one for new ROI students) which were a glimpse into a new emerging cultural context at Queen's.

But I would question whether cultural diversity as an important context for learning has become an embedded part of our mindset. We have opportunities to send our students to study abroad at other campuses, but the take-up is poor. The numbers we send out on ERASMUS programmes, for example, are low. Our admissions turn-around times for international students are slow. And we do not have a 7 day week student culture that is attractive to non NI students.

My final proposition is about communication and understanding between staff and students. We can have all the components of a good academic student experience, but we need positive engagement between the people involved for students to realise their full potential. This works when there is a genuine two-way commitment: ownership and responsibility on the part of the students, receptiveness on the part of academic staff.

We have processes in place that ensure formal engagement: induction programmes, PDP, SSCs. We have built new social spaces (The New Library, new cafés) where informal contact can take place. But positive engagement needs to be expressed as much more than a legal minimum.

The DE Forum and the Supporting Student Attainment Sub-Group have recently been exploring how we can engage better. We have discussed, for example, the role of societies. We have started to explore in focus groups with students how well we understand where each other is coming from in terms of expectations (especially in Year 1 and especially around the issue of feedback in which we score poorly on the NSS). We need to understand what exactly is the gap in understanding between staff and students in the transition between school and university and we need to engage to close it.

Some people may say I am an idealist and we can never create the type of student experience I am painting. Staff are too busy with preparing their next REF return, students are more interested in partying, the administrative red tape destroys enthusiasm, teaching doesn't count. Of course we can dwell on all the negatives. And, yes, there are practical problems that we have to find practical ways of dealing with.

But when I look at the engagement on the faces on the Music and Sonic Arts website, or meet the confident students and staff who won Entrepreneurial University of the Year for us, or listen to the new Head of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering relate with enthusiasm to the senior managers how he engages sixth formers through his work on green chemistry, or watch the DEs and the new Student President engage with each other on what feedback means, or see staff and students talking in the new Library café, or read the citations for this year's recipients of teaching awards, or listen to some of our students who made presentations at this year's conference for Careers Teachers, I know that the experience I envisage is already developing in Queen's. Our challenge is to make it the norm.

# 'Stumbling with Confidence'

A report of a CED Guest Speaker Series workshop facilitated by Dr Paul Kleiman

**Creativity, and creative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment need to be at the heart of higher education if the vision of the 'knowledge society' is to be realised. This was one of the main messages of a recent presentation and workshop titled 'Stumbling with Confidence: assessing creative practice' presented by Dr. Paul Kleiman.**

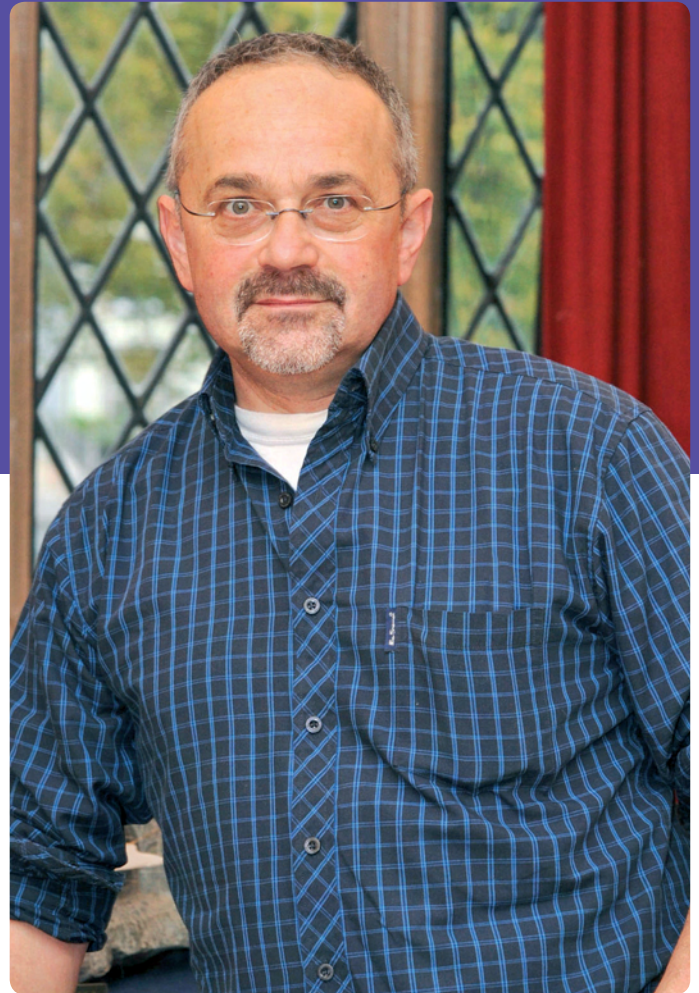
Paul, who is Deputy Director of PALATINE, the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Dance, Drama and Music which is based at Lancaster University, had been invited by the Centre for Educational Development to lead one of their Guest Speaker series of events.

Paul's main area of research is creativity, particularly in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. After a successful career as a designer and director in the theatre, he joined the small team of founding academics and practitioners that created and established the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) and, in particular, its unique, interdisciplinary curriculum and its innovative approaches to assessment.

More recently Paul has been a special adviser to the Creativity and Critical Thinking Project led by five leading liberal arts colleges in the USA, and he is a consultant on assessment at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts.

In a presentation that ranged from Plato and Aristotle to Pete Doherty and Amy Winehouse, and from conceptions of learning and teaching to notions of chaos and complexity, Dr. Kleiman argued that whilst higher education is full of highly creative people, many of the systems, processes and regulatory frameworks that have become integral to higher education are antithetical to creative endeavour.

His own research into conceptions of creativity amongst university lecturers revealed a large degree of frustration at the actual or perceived constraints. There were, however, also many instances of creative approaches to pedagogic problems and challenges, but these often occurred despite rather than because of the risk-averse educational environments in which university teachers found themselves working.



Dr. Kleiman was keen to stress that creativity resides in all people, in all subjects, and in all fields of endeavour. He pointed out that though we often refer to the 'creative arts', we never refer to the 'creative sciences' despite the fact that there is a lot of arts activity that is not creative, and a great deal of scientific activity that is!

The way we think about and approach creativity is not only culturally situated but also socially constructed, and Dr. Kleiman illustrated this with the various models of creativity developed by leading creativity researchers such as Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi and Teresa Amabile, as well as models developed through his own research.

In relation to assessing creative practice, Dr. Kleiman talked about the negotiated approach to assessment that he developed at LIPA in order to meet the challenges of a curriculum that was underpinned by ideas about interdisciplinary collaboration and creative processes and production. He said it was vital that students "became agents in their own assessment rather than objects of our assessment", and that we could be far more creative (and smarter) in our approaches to assessment whilst still fulfilling the requirements of validity and reliability.

Dr. Kleiman's presentation engendered a great deal of lively discussion and, as he warned at the start, provoked a number of interesting and challenging questions for colleagues at Queen's to consider.

# Arts in Health



by Dr Jenny Elliott, Dr Sue Morison, Lorna Hastings

Photographs by Colin Cairns, Director of Patient Services, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

**Arts in Health is globally a fast growing field and Northern Ireland has an international reputation for being innovators in the development and embedding of a vibrant, meaningful Arts culture and artistic practice across a diverse range of healthcare settings throughout the province.**

This article reflects on a unique partnership project that took place earlier this year funded by the Centre for Excellence in Interprofessional Education (CEIPE), Queen's University and supported by Arts Care (NI). The project derives from an Arts in Health Special Study module developed by CEIPE for Queen's medical students which is now in its fifth year. A group of QUB students from Film Studies, Medicine and Social Work, worked together between January and May 2009 using a participatory model of arts engagement with a group of individuals who live daily with the challenges of mental illness and who attend Ravenhill Adult Education Centre, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The aim of the project was to facilitate a lively interactive creative and performing arts-based education programme that provided a democratic platform through which participating students and members of Ravenhill Day Centre could creatively explore experiences of mental health and illness. The project specifically focused on offering participants an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between film, media and health thus developing a better understanding of the challenges and issues around mental health.

The weekly workshops took place at the Arts Care Studio, Knockbracken Healthcare Park and were facilitated by Arts Care artist Helen Shields, composer Brendan Popplestone and choreographer Jenny Elliott. Through a series of visual art, music, dance and film-making workshops, participants reflected on and explored issues such as the marginalization and the stigmatization of people with mental illness. Through the many elements of art-making the students also shared and explored the specific challenges to their own mental health as they manage university life.

Both the students and the members of Ravenhill Day Centre wanted to create a series of art-based texts through which to publicly disseminate their experience of working together. These texts took the form of a dance work, a large silk print depicting illness and well-being, a music cd and a

short documentary film. The project culminated in a public dance performance and screening of the film 'Shades of Mental Health' at Queen's Film Theatre, on 5 June 2009. The short evaluative film was created by two final year film study students from the School of Languages, Literature and Performing Arts, Fionnuala O'Boyle and Gerard Dillon. The film captured the different aspects of the project experience and the participants' response to exploring mental health through the varying art forms across the six-week period. Students from all the disciplines benefited from involvement in the project in the following ways:

- A better understanding of the role and potential benefits of the Arts in healthcare
- A meaningful and clearer understanding of the issues and challenges of mental health and well-being
- A better understanding of each other's roles and potential positive collaboration within future professional engagements in relation to health and well-being
- Development of creative skills as a learning tool that could be used within a group or individual learning situation.

*"I was very frightened of people with mental health problems... I dreaded meeting them in a clinical situation as a medical student. However, since taking part in this project with the members of Ravenhill, I feel completely different. Working on the project has brought a new understanding for me of what mental health illness is. These are just normal people and taking part in the project has removed that fear I had of them." (Medical Student)*

*"... I can't believe we have had the opportunity to gain first hand experience of making a film about mental health within a healthcare environment." (Film Media Student)*

*"I am very aware of how I look and people stare at me and call me names in the street. Dancing with the students and them treating me like normal and seeing myself in the film... on the big screen made me realise that I am beautiful." (Member of Ravenhill Day Centre).*

This innovative project was developed by Dr Jenny Elliott, dancer-in-residence, Knockbracken Healthcare Park. The programme will be offered this year again.



# DEGREEPLUS

by Deirdre Deery, Careers, Employability and Skills

**The launch of the new Employability and Skills policy in Autumn 2008 demonstrated how Queen's would play a leading role in providing the talents and intellectual resources that drive and sustain a modern knowledge based economy by producing highly skilled graduates and postgraduates.**

Within Employability and Skills, the Degree Plus initiative is a key development that provides a flexible framework whereby students may gain accreditation for activities that contribute to their personal and professional development.

## Student View

**Since the commencement of this academic year over 500 students have registered for Degree Plus and student feedback is very positive with students stating:**

*"I really liked the innovative idea of gaining official recognition for experiences outside your degree at Queen's. What attracted me to Degree Plus was that you can personalise your own award and work at your own pace. I hope to acquire skills and knowledge that will stand me in good stead after life at university."*

*"The wide range of activities from which you can choose means that you are able to find a path where you can explore things that interest you, develop new skills and have fun, all at the same time."*

*"The routes available to achieve Degree Plus have allowed me to combine a variety of extra curricular experiences to gain the award. I have been elected to the Students' Union council this year, have become active in a number of university societies and am working to gain the ECDL qualification."*

## Breadth of Activities

The breadth of activities undertaken by students provides an insight into how the programme enables students to personalise their experience. Students may be involved in activities both on and off campus including:

- Career related programmes
- Clubs and societies
- Courses outside of the degree requirements
- Creative involvement including music/drama/arts
- Entrepreneurial activities
- Part-time work
- Internships
- International opportunities
- Student representation
- Sport
- Volunteering

From internships in the US to engineering related vacation experiences in Dubai, volunteering with local community groups and participation in *Students in Free Enterprise* (SIFE), all experiences count. One student commented...

*"Through Degree Plus, what I do in university and at home adds to my university experience. I work part-time, I am involved in the mountaineering club at Queen's and I have attended a number of career related workshops to help with my degree. Through participation in Queen's my pathway to Degree Plus is easily achievable and going great."*

The overriding message is that through engagement with Degree Plus students have access to a system which allows all their extra curricular activities to be recognised. It encourages and promotes engagement and involvement in a range of opportunities offered both on and off campus and is a positive way of developing their employability skills and making their experiences work for them.

## Added Value

The value to the individual cannot be overestimated, but within the wider university context Degree Plus contributes positively to students' engagement, progression and attainment as the following quote from a student exemplifies...

*"My internship has not only given me invaluable experience of a graduate workplace but also relevant experience to improve any job applications I will complete in future.*

*"Due to my incredible and valuable experience with Project Children US internship I wish to attain more experience before I graduate, particularly through IAESTE to further develop my skills. The experience of living and working abroad has intensified my desire to seek work internationally. I feel the most significant impact of my internship is my increased confidence, ambition regarding my career plans and the desire to aim high for what I want in my working life."*

The 'new look' marketing campaign, featuring students who participated in the programme last year, with the added strap line 'give me some credit' has also proved extremely successful and this brand image is also being applied to the website.

Staff interested in finding out if activities within their School but not within the curriculum could be accredited may contact Deirdre Deery for further information: email: [d.deery@qub.ac.uk](mailto:d.deery@qub.ac.uk), Tel: 9097 2823 or visit the website <http://www.qub.ac.uk/degreeplus>



# Making Feedback Effective

The roles played by assessment and feedback in the education process cannot be underestimated: both have a critical impact on what students consider important, on how they approach their work and on how they regard themselves.

by Linda Ryles, Centre for Educational Development



**Feedback is often ignored, poorly utilised and consequently undervalued by students. Some staff assume that providing high quality feedback to large numbers of students will inevitably lead to increased workload. It is, however, possible to create an environment in which useful, timely feedback is routinely given and valued by students.**

**So how can you encourage your students to engage more fully with the process? How can you give more timely feedback?**

Across the sector, a lot of assessment and feedback themed work has been done in Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and in Higher Education Academy Subject Centres.

The following tips have been distilled from these and other sources and attempt to address the guidelines for good practice that accompany Principle 3 of the University's Assessment Policy: *'Appropriate and timely feedback is provided to students on assessed work in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement'*.

**To stimulate student engagement, you could consider:**

- Aligning student expectations with your own by identifying all channels of feedback and when these might be used
- Showing examples of feedback given to previous students, discussing the meaning of these and how they might be used to improve their performance
- Requiring students to self-assess their own work before submission, using the same criteria as yours, perhaps as a cover sheet attached to an essay
- Asking students to complete a cover sheet for assignments which includes a question on how they have used feedback from previous work

**If you would like to be involved in the Enhancement Academy project, or are interested in exploring alternative approaches to assessment and feedback, please contact Linda Ryles on extension 6605 or email: [l.ryles@qub.ac.uk](mailto:l.ryles@qub.ac.uk)**

- Encouraging students to engage with your feedback by asking them to answer questions such as: *"The part of the feedback that puzzled me most was..."* or *"I need some more advice on..."*
- Providing a space for discussion around assessment activities and feedback – perhaps by scheduling time in tutorials or using online spaces which enable students to discuss common difficulties or successes and share feedback on their work

**To make the process more efficient and effective, you could consider:**

- Giving some generic feedback as soon as a general picture emerges of the quality of all assignments, either in class or perhaps by posting comments on a message-board
- Providing a class-wide report on assignments including common mistakes and a model answer instead of annotating every script: the class report can form the basis of a face-to-face class debriefing session and discussion around the task
- Using comment banks which can help to make provision of more detailed feedback less time-intensive
- Using new technologies: feedback can be dictated to a digital recorder and made available electronically
- Focusing formative feedback where it can do most good: feedback on draft assignments may motivate students more than feedback on final work that is returned at the start of the next semester

In an effort to support Schools to achieve the aims of the Assessment Policy (downloadable from Queen's Online), the University is participating in an institutional Enhancement Academy project, supported by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Professor Brenda Smith, a Senior HEA Advisor with significant expertise in this area, has been appointed as a Critical Friend to the Queen's team and the project also aims to bring other external expertise to bear. An action plan agreed by staff, student representatives and the Centre for Educational Development is based on the following three goals:

- Develop a shared (staff and students) understanding of feedback
- Work on improving the quality of feedback to students
- Raise the profile of the importance of feedback

Implementation is overseen by the Supporting Student Attainment Sub-Group, chaired by Professor Ellen Douglas-Cowie and in tandem with an awareness-raising campaign in partnership with the Students' Union and staff development activity, a range of resources has been uploaded onto the Centre for Educational Development's web pages and disseminated to Directors of Education via their SharePoint site.

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# Teaching Awards 2009

## Sustained Excellence



**Karen King, Sustained Excellence:** This award is made to a highly dedicated teacher and reflective practitioner from the Institute of Agri-Food and Land Use. Over the course of more than 20 years in teaching and academic management within Queen's, Dr King has placed the student at the centre of all she does. She effectively uses active and interactive learning methods to promote student engagement and benefit the learning of all her students. She employs a wide range of assessment methods and takes care to ensure that the students understand what is expected from them. Her achievements are evidenced by significant improvements in student attainment and attendance, and very positive comments from students, colleagues and external examiners.



**Paul Simpson, Sustained Excellence:** This award goes to a teacher whose enthusiasm for his subject, English language and linguistics, is transferred to his students. Prof. Simpson's multi-modal approach, which incorporates video, stills, music, captions and written text, is used effectively to provide a stimulating learning experience for his students. His use of humour, combined with a creative use of resources, has become a highly effective teaching strategy. He is using innovative assessment methodologies, is open to trying new approaches to improve student achievement and is highly responsive to student feedback.



**Piers Hellawell, Sustained Excellence:** This award is made to a skilled communicator and inspiring teacher of Composition within the School of Music and Sonic Arts. Prof. Hellawell is providing an enriching learning experience for his students and has developed innovative teaching strategies to communicate difficult concepts. He is interested in the learning journey of each of his students and provides them with opportunities to develop skills which not only prepare career composers, but are transferable to other careers in music. He provides timely and constructive feedback to students, which effectively supports his students' assessment for learning.

## Excellence in Teaching First-Year Students

**Emma Reisz, Catherine Clinton, James Davis and Eric Morier-Genoud, Excellence in Teaching First-Year**

**Students:** This award goes to a team from the School of History and Anthropology, which has made innovative use of group assessment techniques to deal successfully with difficulties experienced by large numbers of students in their first-year programme. The changes made by the team also effectively contribute to students' development of a number of transferable skills, as well as discipline-specific skills. The team is using a wide range of well-organised learning resources and assessment activities to develop and assess a range of skills – all of which has led to enhanced student engagement with, and understanding of historical methods and approaches.



This was the 11th year of the QUB Teaching Awards scheme and the panel received the largest number of applications to date. Twenty-two applications were received by the closing date and fourteen applicants were shortlisted on the basis of the information provided within the written applications and invited to make a presentation on their work to the panel. Following the presentations, the panel agreed that eleven Teaching Awards should be presented. Awards were made across all four categories and details of the Award recipients and their citations are given below.

## Rising Star



**Paul Corthorn, Rising Star:** This award is made to a thoughtful practitioner from the School of History and Anthropology who is committed to helping students develop into independent learners. In line with his teaching philosophy, Dr Corthorn uses a number of innovative approaches, including role-play, drafting /re-drafting of essays and student-led tutorials to assist his students to develop their employability skills. He has a particular interest in helping students adjust smoothly to the transition from school to university. Through attendance at CPD courses and through personal reflection, he has developed an understanding of the importance of providing effective feedback to students and practises assessment for learning, incorporating a number of innovative assessment methods into his practice.



**Anna Newell, Rising Star:** This award is made to a highly original and reflective teacher who has used her creativity to develop a diverse range of learning opportunities for students within the Creative and Performing Arts subject areas and beyond her discipline. Ms Newell has developed innovative ways of giving meaningful feedback to students through a portfolio of assessment approaches, which incorporates practical, written and oral reflections on their learning journey. Recognising and tackling the difficult issue of assessing creative practice in a University setting, she has drawn upon pedagogical literature, personal reflection and feedback from students, colleagues and external examiners to tailor her assessment scheme.



**Noel Purdy, Rising Star:** This award is made to a highly motivated and enthusiastic teacher educator from Stranmillis University College, who is not only reflective in his own work, but also helps student teachers develop their reflective skills. In his work in post-primary teaching on the BEd programme, Dr Purdy has developed effective pedagogical strategies to allow discussion of sensitive subjects in a safe environment. He uses assessment techniques to empower learners and his approaches to assessment for learning include peer assessment, students' involvement in writing the mark scheme, integrating small-scale research into assignments and using podcasting to give efficient general formative feedback. The results of his carefully planned and thought-out innovations are evidenced in very high student evaluations and positive feedback from colleagues.



**Marise Heyns, Excellence in Teaching First-Year Students:** This award goes to a committed teacher of Anatomy, whose careful re-design of the structure and assessment of a Level 1 anatomy module encourages the development of autonomous and deep learners who are professional in their approach. Recognising a particular difficulty experienced by a number of students undertaking dissection of cadavers in this module, Dr Heyns has successfully and sensitively incorporated strategies to address the issue and facilitate a more active approach to learning for all students. She has also successfully realigned the learning outcomes with the assessment to promote deep, reflective learning.

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# Teaching Awards 2009

## Excellence in Teaching First-Year Students continued



**Linda Price, Jayne Bassett and Eimear Gallagher, Excellence in Teaching First-Year Students:** This award goes to a team for excellence in teaching first year students. The team, from the School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering and the Centre for Educational Development recognised the importance of the first year experience in determining students' future success and retention. They have undertaken a process of embedding Personal Development Planning and personal tutoring initiatives in the first year, which facilitates reflective learning. Through undertaking reflection, planning, doing and reviewing, students are equipped to develop as critical and autonomous learners. The success of the initiative has convinced colleagues within their discipline of its value and has enabled the model to be rolled out to the wider teaching team.



**Karen King, Brian Green and Nicola McAteer, Excellence in Teaching First-Year Students:** This award goes to a team from the Institute of Agri-Food and Land Use who have carefully organised their teaching to provide a well-structured and supportive programme for their first year students, while also preparing them for the later years of their degree. The learning experience is not only stimulating and relevant to the real world, but builds confidence and provides their students with a sense of identity and belonging. The team members make effective use of resources to provide active and interactive learning, incorporating new technologies as appropriate. They use a range of assessment methods to promote student learning, which is kept under review to ensure relevancy to the learning outcomes.

## Learning Support



**Kevin Campbell and Paul Morris, Learning Support:** This award is given to two technical staff working in the Clinical Education Centre of the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Mr Campbell and Mr Morris have provided effective and innovative learning experiences for the students through their development of interactive on-line training materials, a number of which have been widely disseminated to health professionals in universities and Department of Health facilities in N Ireland, the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The most recent of these is an e-book – an intuitive and flexible on-line resource which is easily updateable to take account of new developments in the discipline. The recipients have given careful consideration to student and teacher needs and feedback in their design of the technology.

# Incorporating visual reflection into teacher education programmes: an example from Essential Skills

by Shelley Tracey, School of Education



The Essential Skills programme, based in the School of Education, offers professional qualifications for adult literacy and numeracy practitioners. The programme embraces a broad notion of literacy and numeracy as more than simply the abilities to read, write and carry out basic arithmetical operations: they include the capacity and the confidence to function in a range of contexts, such as the home and workplace, social and political realms and the world of technology. The Essential Skills programme also acknowledges the prominence of images in our society and their evolving relationship with text, supporting the view of Elkins (2002) and Metros & Woolsey (2006) that visual literacy should be incorporated into all learning programmes in higher education to acknowledge the visual aspects of culture and learning.

Extended conceptualisations of literacy and numeracy raise questions about appropriate forms of assessing learning. As is commonplace in teacher education, reflection and reflective practice are the foundations of the Essential Skills programme. The traditional method of assessing reflection in teacher education is through writing, in the form of learning journals and evaluations of lessons. While these methods are used in Essential Skills, the notion of reflection has been extended to incorporate the use of creative forms such as storytelling, collage, and the use of visual and digital images. This enhanced understanding of reflection builds on Leitch and Day's call (2000, pp. 186–187) for *“the development of more complex models of reflection, related to purpose, which take greater cognisance of existing knowledge from other disciplines, particularly those aspects of psychology concerned with cognitive processes including problem-finding, insight, wisdom, creativity”*.

During course sessions on the Essential Skills programme, students as individuals and in groups use arts-based and digital methods to explore ideas and reflect on their learning. These methods

include responding to visual stimuli such as posters and art postcards, and creating their own images and conceptualisations of learning through collage-making, creative writing, mind-mapping, and the development of image-based resources for their teaching.

The Essential Skills qualifications take the form of separate two-year part-time programmes for literacy and numeracy teachers. On the first year of each course, the first assignment requires students to create an interactive group exhibition to represent their understanding of literacy or numeracy.

Students use a range of approaches to explore the themes of their exhibitions, incorporating both visual and text-based responses. They generate a range of creative artefacts, including diagrams, posters, creative writing, films, dance and mime. Their responses to this assignment acknowledge it as *“a great learning activity”*, and that *“it allows for imagination, creativity and collaboration with peers”* as well as supporting the development of *“good ideas for learners”*.

The diverse responses to the assignment indicate that it enhances students' capacities to perceive literacy and numeracy as multiple and complex forms of meaning-making. The second element of the assignment requires students to write a reflection on the process of designing and participating in an exhibition. One noted: *“Images were used in my reflection on the group project and I felt that they did help when writing up my reflection. I used them to enhance the presentation and to ‘jog my memory’ of the presentation.”*

In 2008/2009, students on both years of the programme were offered the opportunity to use visual forms of reflection in a further two assignments: their reflective learning journals and their teaching practice portfolios. This article presents a snapshot of student responses to this opportunity. It draws on two papers which elaborate on these responses, one focusing on arts-based (Tracey, in press) and the other on digital aspects of reflection (Mullan & Tracey, in press).

Examples of student assignments which incorporate visual aspects are available on the Essential Skills website at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/edu/eskills>

## Students' visual reflections in their assignments may be divided into six categories:

### 1. The use of existing images

Some students presented existing images, such as waterfalls and rivers, to symbolise aspects of their learning on the courses.

### 2. The use of photographs

Students presented photographs of various aspects of their practice, such as the resources they had created, the contexts in which they were teaching, or examples of learning activities, following appropriate procedures for obtaining permission where learners might be included in the images. One student commented that the use of *"photos and images of my practice provided the opportunity to show others the nature of my teaching and the range of learners"*.

### 3. Still images created for assignments

The images in two-dimensional form included drawings and cartoons. A three-dimensional example was the Snakes and Ladder game in the image, which was included in the final reflection in the student's teaching practice portfolio. This student used the game to synthesise and reflect on her barriers to learning as well as her support systems.

### 4. Images which incorporate both text and image: acrostic poetry and collage

These images included acrostic poetry and collage. Acrostic poems consist of a word written vertically, with each successive line of the poem starting with the first letter of the word. While this is primarily a form of creative writing, it incorporates aspects of visual design which appear to engage learners. Students indicated that learners of all levels enjoyed creating acrostic poems.

While there are different forms of collage-making, the collages presented in the assignments took the form of words and images from magazines and newspapers arranged on paper to explore an idea or theme connected with literacy and learning. One student used collage in another assignment, a practitioner research project, in which she presented her findings in the form of a collage.

### 5. Incorporation of images into PowerPoint presentations

In the place of the usual written reflection on learning which constitutes the last entry in the reflective learning journal assignment, two students submitted PowerPoint presentations focusing on the theme of reflection, and juxtaposing image and text.

### 6. Moving images: creating films with Windows MovieMaker

Windows MovieMaker is an accessible, cost-free form of software which allows the user to manipulate still images and video, add text and sound and create short films. Students learnt how to use MovieMaker in class, and several presented films in the place of written reflections to capture

their learning from the course and their teaching practice. The following comment demonstrates the capacity for film to support reflection: *"I find self-reflection quite difficult. I find it hard to express myself through words – I can't seem to be able to state how I feel using only language. Being able to use [Windows] Moviemaker greatly enhanced my ability to reflect not only on what I had learned but also on what my learners had learned. To say all I wanted to, using only words, would have required me to write page after page! Using Moviemaker allowed me to address the many intricacies of my reflection in a fuller and more interesting format"*.

Traditional teacher education programmes lack criteria for assessing visual reflections. The Essential Skills students' use of visual forms of reflection in their assignments has allowed us to identify and explore some key questions to inform the development of these criteria. One of these questions is whether visual responses may be assessed in the same way as their verbal counterparts. Elkins maintains that images should not be analysed in the same manner as written forms of communication, rejecting notions of visual literacy as the capacity *"to identify images and to parse them according to the ways they refer to the world"* (Elkins, 2002, p. 137). A language for assessing visual reflection needs to be developed, taking into account opportunities for students to explore the application of their learning about the use of images to their practice as literacy and numeracy teachers.

Students' visual reflections varied in terms of the extent to which the visual aspects were peripheral or core to their work. Tracey (in press) proposes a continuum for the role of arts-based methods in literacy: *"At the peripheral end [of the continuum] is the use of images such as photographs and pre-existing images to illustrate and support the content of text. In the middle of the continuum are the arts-based methods which are used to generate and play with ideas, such as collage and acrostic poetry. At the end of the continuum are deliberative uses of methods to synthesise, represent and communicate ideas, such as films and other works of art"*. Students might be asked to place their visual reflections along this continuum and to engage in self-assessment, reflecting on the extent to which the making of images has impacted on their understanding of literacy, numeracy and learning.

## References

- Elkins, J. (2002). *Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Leitch, R. & Day, C. (2000). Action research and reflective practice: towards a holistic view, *Educational Action Research*, 8, 1, pp. 179-193.
- Metros, S.E. & Woolsey, K. (2006). Visual literacy: an institutional imperative *EDUCAUSE Review*, Vol. 41, no. 3 (May/June 2006): 80-8.
- Mullan, J. & Tracey, S. (In press). Supporting collaborative learning and reflective practice in teacher training through e-learning, REPORT for Result No. 3, Course material, Leonardo da Vinci transfer of innovation project, EVETE 2, Empowerment of Vocational Education and Training by Improving the E-learning Competences of Teachers and Trainers, Project No. LLP-LDV-TOI-2007-LT-0007. Queen's University Belfast.
- Tracey, S. (in press) Crossing thresholds and expanding conceptual spaces: using arts-based methods to extend teachers' perceptions of literacy, *LEARNing Landscapes, Literacy: Multiple Perspectives and Practices*, Autumn 2009

# Using Queen's new e-Learning Templates

## What are the e-Learning Templates?

e-Learning at Queen's largely occurs as blended learning, where it is integrated with traditional media and methods depending on course content, level and students. The platform to deliver this content is primarily through Queen's Online where resources are uploaded to make them available to students.

To supplement this further and allow for more interactive and engaging content to be created easily, Information Services has developed a series of e-learning templates for staff to use.

These templates allow a variety of media such as text, images, video and maps to be combined with different question types and sortable lists, thus allowing simple learning activities to be created and provided online. Although they are not sophisticated in tracking use or providing detailed feedback to students, they are quick and easy to produce. The templates add an extra dimension to the variety of online resources which can be created and made available to students.

## How am I likely to use them with students?

The templates are very flexible and can be combined together in different ways to create a series of web pages with the information and resources. The staff who have already made use of them have presented worked examples to problems for students to review, as a supplement to face to face tutorials. Other possible uses include:

- Presenting Case Studies with sample answers
- Providing information through video and having related tasks
- Providing galleries of images for discussion and reflection
- Incorporating and supporting an existing online activity with supplementary questions and information
- Providing tutorials to explain how to complete tasks
- Use of basic question types for formative assessment.

## What are their advantages?

The e-learning templates allow resources to be combined and presented online as a single learning activity or resource. Some of their main benefits for staff and students are that they:

- Allow greater interactivity than just uploading resources into Queen's Online

by Bob Wylie, Centre for Educational Development

- Are easy to use with minimal instruction and without having any technical expertise
- Provide a way to assemble discrete resources into a more complete online learning activity
- Can help to develop students' independent study skills
- Can encourage greater engagement with the learning material and allow it to be more flexible.

## How do I get access to them?

The e-learning templates are available through the University's content management system for the web. If you would like further information about getting access to them, help getting started or advice on what resources would be suitable to deliver, contact Bob Wylie (bob.wylie@qub.ac.uk) or Gill Kelly (g.m.kelly@qub.ac.uk) of the Centre for Educational Development.

## Recently Completed Examples

*Developing Numeracy Skills for Nursing*, Tim Crawford, Learning Development Officer. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/elearning/qubonly/NumeracySkillsforDrugCalculations>

*An Introduction to Bending Moment Calculations*, Dr John McKinley, School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/elearning/public/bendingmoments/>

*Video tutorials on how to use Delicious, a social bookmarking website*, Centre for Educational Development. <http://www.qub.ac.uk/elearning/public/delicious>

The screenshot shows a web page titled 'An introduction to bending moment calculations' from Queen's University Belfast. The page has a navigation bar with the university logo, a search bar, and links for 'Accessibility' and 'Skip navigation'. Below the navigation bar, there's a 'Topics' sidebar with links for 'Example case 1', 'Example case 2', 'Example case 3', and 'Feedback'. The main content area is titled 'An introduction to bending moment calculations' and includes a 'General approach' section. This section explains that calculating shear forces and bending moments is a common requirement in civil and structural engineering, and it outlines a four-step process: 1. Calculate reactions at supports, 2. Imagine cutting the beam and draw a free body diagram, 3. Calculate force and moment at the imaginary cut, and 4. Check the calculation by doing the same on the other section. Below this, it mentions that the process relies on equilibrium, compatibility, and Newton's third law. A specific example, 'Case 1: simply supported beam with a point load', is shown with a diagram of a beam AC of length 5.0m (3.0m from A to B, 2.0m from B to C). A 15kN point load is applied at B. The beam has a fixed support at A and a roller support at C. The challenge is to calculate the shear force and bending moment at D, which is 1.5m from A. The diagram is labeled 'Case 1'.

# *“What has maths got to do with engineering?”*

**by Dr Charlie McCartan, Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering**

Believe it or not this is a quote we regularly hear on school visits or open days and even from our own students!

There seems to be an issue at the secondary level in motivating students for maths or even advising them to study it based on their future aspirations. In addition, those students with apparently good A-Level maths grades are now potentially disadvantaged by the noticeable ‘drop in standards’ due to the seemingly contentious educational reforms over the last twenty years. This latter point is not made lightly and has been a serious bone of contention in academia for many years.

As long ago as 1995, Channel 4’s Dispatches programme broached the problem of declining standards in A-Level maths grades, much to the chagrin of many from both the secondary and tertiary sectors. Ironically, this television exposé has now been thoroughly validated and vindicated by government commissioned reports and numerous pedagogical publications.

However, I digress – the key fact is that we are facing a serious problem in teaching and learning that must be addressed: teaching mathematics to engineering students is clearly recognised as a worldwide issue, and there are pedagogical publications from every corner of the globe to corroborate this claim.

In the school of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering we have taken a systematic and structured approach to this problem (funnily enough!) and developed new first year

engineering mathematics modules based on the guiding paradigm of active and interactive learning. This was part of a curriculum development project within our Centre for Excellence in Active and Interactive Learning (CEAIL).

Our School is also a collaborator in the CDIO Initiative ([www.cdio.org](http://www.cdio.org)) which is striving to improve engineering education. In a CDIO teaching environment a key consideration is to ensure that any such mathematics module(s) can integrate with the rest of the programme and espouse the same learning strategies inherent in the other more design orientated and ‘hands-on’ modules; this is essential if we are to keep the students motivated, engaged and appreciative of the relevance of the topic. To accomplish this we have carefully examined each of the pedagogical aspects inherent in successfully teaching mathematics to engineering students and employed, where possible (based on practicalities and available resources), these best practices and innovations.

During this process, it became evident that there has been extensive funding in the UK, not only in pedagogical research on this topic, but also in actual support centres, CETLs and online resources to help both students and teachers in higher education. Most of these assets are now freely available and can be viewed on the Engineering Subject Centre website ([www.engsc.ac.uk/er/engmath/index.asp](http://www.engsc.ac.uk/er/engmath/index.asp)).

The key areas of interest for us were the HELM ([helm.lboro.ac.uk](http://helm.lboro.ac.uk)) and MathCentre ([www.mathcentre.ac.uk](http://www.mathcentre.ac.uk)) learning resources, which can be tailored and customised to provide all the necessary module materials in digital format such as lecture slides, hand-out notes, worked examples, tutorial sheets and exam questions (all with solutions) – a great help during the module preparation phase. These resources are very focused on an active and interactive approach to learning mathematics and are complemented with a modern textbook on the subject.

A key premise in teaching maths to engineering students is effective support and feedback, which the aforementioned resources also help provide through workbooks, online/computer self-assessment tasks and video tutorials.

Another of our objectives was to develop teaching, learning and assessment practices that are student-centred. To do this it is necessary to be fully aware of the background and





abilities of all our students, which we accomplish in two ways: mathematical diagnostic testing at entry and learning styles inventories. The former provides information on existing mathematical skills and the latter indicates particular predominant learning preferences. Such information then helps provide clarity with regard to developing module content, teaching methods and effective assessment criteria that affords students a more balanced learning environment.

We focused, where possible, on developing innovative and continuous assessment techniques that had a well proven track record, based on the reality that assessment affects learning more than teaching. We also carefully identified and implemented only the relevant learning outcomes for the maths modules; a fact that was constantly emphasised to the students. This was accomplished by interviewing the appropriate academic staff to help identify exactly what prerequisite mathematical knowledge was required for the other modules on the degree programmes.

In this whole endeavour we are not claiming to be doing anything new or that has not been tried before in universities all over the world. It is the adoption and implementation of well researched pedagogies combined with proven, available, free resources that's new. We are not reinventing the wheel, but instead trying to analyse and utilise all of the current best thinking and practice with regard to teaching mathematics to engineers. By following a structured process of ensuring all the educational boxes are ticked in this regard then we can be satisfied that we are competently striving to solve this serious learning problem.

We have now developed our strategy for three years by applying it to three engineering mathematics modules (two first year and one second year) which have shown substantial improvements (quantitative and qualitative)

in student engagement and attainment. Significantly, the average marks for both modules have increased considerably (15–20%). In addition, the feedback from the students is excellent and they clearly feel that the teaching and learning approaches employed here are beneficial.

We have no doubt that this type of approach to teaching mathematics is transferable across our Faculty and could certainly benefit the students involved. Students have commented that,

*"I now have a much better understanding of maths and how to apply it."*

*"HELM Software was a very accessible and relevant tool. Continuous assessment eliminates the build-up of info for exams. Insistence on self-learning was helpful."*

*"Getting marks for coursework is a big plus as I feel I can thoroughly learn the content instead of cramming for an exam"*

A more detailed summary of our work is contained in the conference paper references below.

## References

- McCartan, C.D. and McCartney, J., *A Strategy to Support Effective Learning in a First-Year Engineering Mathematics Module*, CETL-MSOR Conference, Open University, Milton Keynes, September 2009.
- McCartan, C.D. and Hermon, J.P., *Implementation and Efficacy of Active Learning Strategies in Engineering Mathematics*, 5th International CDIO conference, Singapore Polytechnic, Singapore, June 2009.
- McCartan, C.D., *Evaluating Assessment in an Engineering Mathematics Module*, 4th International CDIO conference, Hogeschool Gent, Ghent, Belgium, June 2008.
- McCartan, C.D. and Herman, J.P., *Systematic Development of a First-Year Engineering Mathematics Module*, 4th International CDIO conference, Hogeschool Gent, Ghent, Belgium, June 2008.

## Available now – the Queen's Careers Guide 2010

Hot off the press, the brand-new Queen's Careers Guide 2010 is now available for students at all levels.

Written by Careers, Employability and Skills staff specifically for Queen's students, this professionally produced one-stop resource covers a wide range of information on topics such as:

- graduate employment, further study and other career options
- work experience and other ways to develop personal and career management skills
- practical tips on effectively negotiating the graduate recruitment and postgraduate application processes
- how Careers, Employability and Skills can help Queen's students and graduates



This year, the Guide has been revised to include more personal stories from current and former Queen's students, to highlight the increasing need for students to make the most of their time at Queen's in order to compete more effectively in the graduate marketplace and to sequence its structure and contents to steer students more smoothly through the career planning process.

Copies can be provided to Schools directly on request and are also available from the Student Guidance Centre and online at the Careers, Employability and Skills website <http://www.qub.ac.uk/careers>

## Careers Videos on Demand

**Careers, Employability and Skills has made a number of videos available through Queen's Online to help students with applications, interviews and assessment centres.**

Titles so far include:

*Making an Impact* – shows real students and graduates being interviewed by recruiters.

*Selection Success in One*

- *Your Job's On-Line* – how to maximise your chances of success when completing electronic applications.
- *The Assessment Centre* – shows what happens at a typical assessment centre when a major employer selects graduates taking part in a genuine selection day.
- *Big Opportunities in Small Businesses* – explores how graduates and small businesses can benefit one another. Graduates and their employers relate their own experiences and offer practical advice.
- *At the Assessment Centre* – shows how recruiters from Enterprise Rent-A-Car, HSBC and RWE npower assess students and graduates at an assessment centre. It includes extracts from each exercise, selectors' verdicts and candidates' reflections on their own performance.

*Introducing Employability and Skills* – illustrates how students can demonstrate and articulate to an employer the skills developed through extra curricular activities.

## How to set up work placement

### Web-based support for those new to and already offering work placement

A website with information to support both staff considering setting up work placement and those already offering work placement, has been established, funded by TQEF funding.

The site contains information on the key areas which need to be considered when setting up work placement and detailed information and templates to guide staff through the three phases of Pre-placement, On-placement and Post-placement.

The site is not designed to be prescriptive, rather to offer information which can be tailored for individual School, degree or module use.

The site is based on the successful undergraduate academic placement modules developed in the Institute of Agri-food and Land Use, in association with Careers, Employability and Skills and is available through the CEAIL website of the School at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/CentreforExcellenceinActiveandInteractiveLearning/BiosciencesProject/HowtosetupWorkPlacements>

For further information contact  
Dr Karen King, Institute of Agri-food and Land Use.

## Subject Director Visits School of History and Anthropology

On 7 September the School of History and Anthropology welcomed Dr Sarah Richardson to Queen's. Dr Richardson is the Subject Director for History in the Higher Education Academy. She delivered insightful presentations on two subjects – *Improving Feedback*, and on *Skills and Employability in the History Curriculum*.

The session introduced QUB staff to the latest subject specific research carried out by the HEA in both these areas and provided an opportunity to reflect on current practices at QUB. The workshop was well attended by staff from all areas of the School, who were given much food for thought by Dr Richardson.



Dr Richardson with Dr Sean O'Connell (Director of Education for the School of History and Anthropology)

## Podcasting for Learning and Teaching

**Monday 18th January 2010 | 10.00am – 3.30pm**  
**The Library at Queen's**

The HE Academy Special Interest Group – Podcasting for Pedagogical Purposes, based at Chester University, will run a one day event hosted by Queen's on Monday 18th January 2010 in the Library.

The event is divided into keynote lectures in the morning and active workshop sessions in the afternoon. The workshops will include:

- Practical session to show how easily and quickly a podcast can be planned and recorded
- Discussion session for those people who are already involved in podcasting
- Open Floor session for participants to present on the topic of podcasting in education.

There will be opportunities to share experiences, network and learn from each other.

Further information is available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/ced>

# Forthcoming CED Annual Conference

This year's CED conference on the theme of ***Engaging Students: e-Learning Approaches*** will take place on **19 May 2010**.



Photo credit: Mark Gregory at Photoshy

We are pleased to announce the keynote speaker will be Professor Richard Noss, London Knowledge Lab, Institute of Education, University of London.

Professor Noss is a Co-Director of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP-TEL). The Technology Enhanced Learning phase of this programme is currently scheduled to last until 2012, and comprises eight interdisciplinary projects with funding of approximately £12 million supported by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. It focuses on applying technology to bring about productive, personalised, flexible and inclusive e-learning. Richard will be speaking on *Technology Enhanced Learning: Theory versus practice?*

The one-day conference will consider new directions in e-Learning based on sound pedagogy. In addition to the keynote address and workshops, there will be a hands-on session to allow participants to try some technologies for themselves. Further details and information about registration for this event will be on the CED website in due course at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/ced>



## Guest Speaker Series 2009–2010

### **Event:** Approaches to Teaching First Year Students

Presenters: Dr Marise Heyns, Drs James Davis and Eric Morier Genoud, Drs Karen King and Brian Green

Date/time/venue: 14 December 2009, 10.00am – 1.00pm, Canada Room

### **Event:** Podcasting for Learning and Teaching

Presenter: Podcasting for Pedagogic Purposes Special Interest Group

Date and time: 18 January 2010, 9.30am – 4.00pm, Library and Canada Room

### **Event:** Assessment of Groupwork – discussing the alternatives

Presenter: Dr Kate Exley, University of Leeds

Date and time: 26 March 2010, 10.00am – 1.00pm, Canada Room

### **Event:** Problem-based Learning

Presenter: Dr Terry Barrett, UCD

Date and time: 23 April 2010, 10.00am – 1.00pm, Canada Room

For details of the above events, please visit the CED website at [www.qub.ac.uk/ced](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ced)

## Summary of CED Workshops | January – March 2010

### January

13 Jan 2010	Using Audio to Enhance Teaching and Learning	available online
27 Jan 2010	Laboratory Demonstrating	2.00 – 5.00pm
27 Jan 2010	Detecting and Preventing Plagiarism	2.00 – 5.00pm
27 Jan 2010	An Introduction to the Features of QOL for Learning and Teaching	2.00 – 5.00pm
29 Jan 2010	Small Group Teaching	10.00am – 1.00pm

### February

3 Feb 2010	Preparing and Giving Lectures – Part 1: Tips and Theory	2.00 – 5.00pm
3 Feb 2010	Teaching your Students to Evaluate Internet Resources	2.00 – 5.00pm
10 Feb 2010	Preparing and Giving Lectures – Part 2: Practical session in small groups	2.00 – 5.00pm
17 Feb 2010	Teaching with Emotional Intelligence	2.00 – 5.00pm
24 Feb 2010	Small Group Teaching	2.00 – 5.00pm
24 Feb 2010	Using the TurnitinUK Plagiarism Detection Software	2.00 – 4.30pm

### March

3 Mar 2010	Using Computer Assisted Assessment	9.30am – 4.30pm
3 Mar 2010	Writing Learning Outcomes and Module Design	2.00 – 5.00pm
10 Mar 2010	Introduction to Assessment in Higher Education	2.00 – 5.00pm
19 Mar 2010	Peer Observation of Teaching: a Practical Guide	10.00am – 12.00pm
24 Mar 2010	Teaching Larger Classes	2.00 – 5.00pm
31 Mar 2010	Using the Personal Response System in your Classes	2.00 – 5.00pm

Please visit the CED website for further information on the courses and registration details at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/ced>