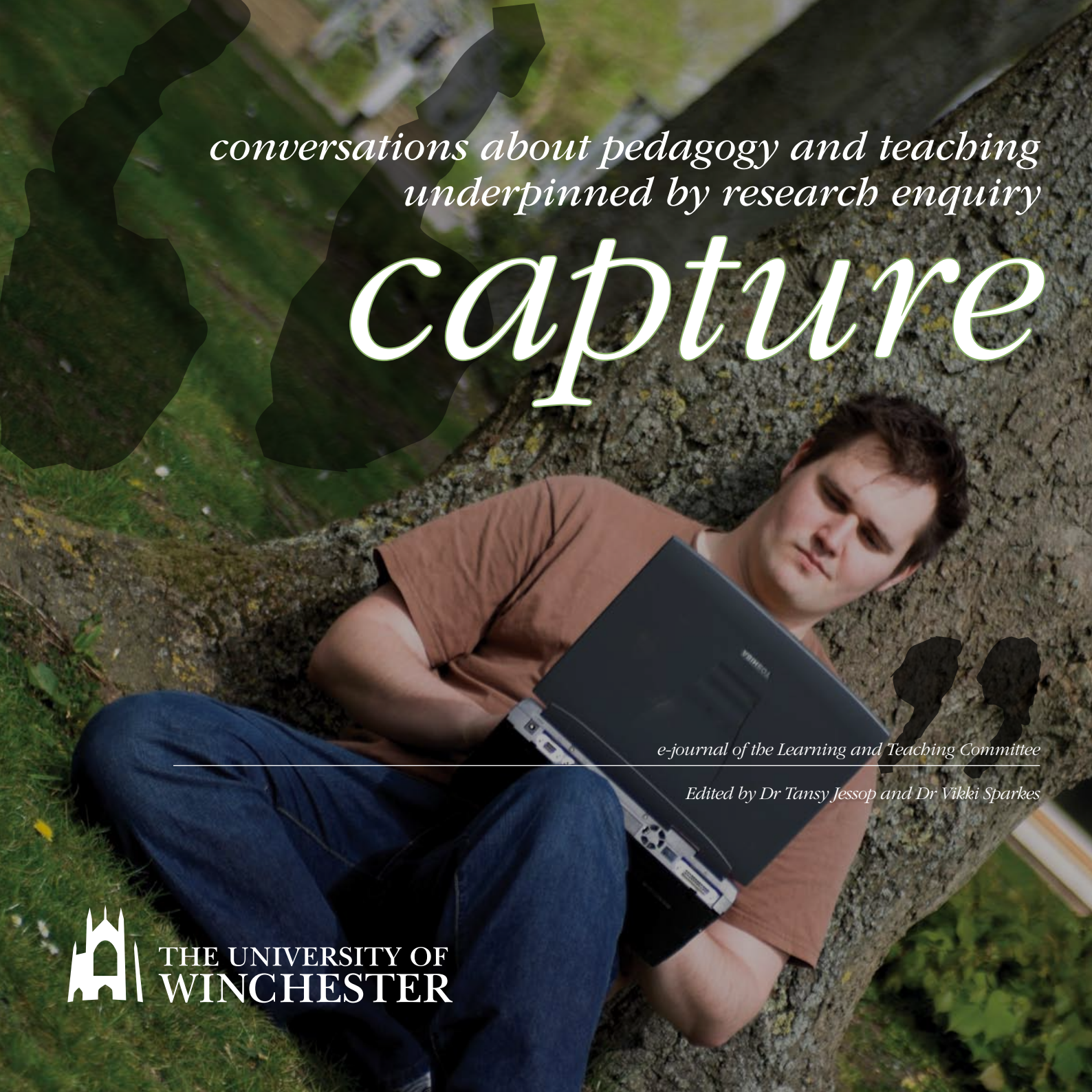

*conversations about pedagogy and teaching underpinned by research enquiry*

# *capture*

*e-journal of the Learning and Teaching Committee*

*Edited by Dr Tansy Jessop and Dr Vikki Sparkes*

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

# contents



capture

The launch of an e–journal for Learning and Teaching at the University of Winchester has been eagerly anticipated. “Conversations about pedagogy and teaching underpinned by research enquiry” (Capture) is the new journal, showcasing initiatives and projects undertaken at the University. It reflects the growth in scholarly pedagogic research, research informed teaching, and conversations about research and practice among colleagues at Winchester.

The focus of many Learning and Teaching projects supported by the university has been on the student experience, reflecting the contemporary emphasis within Higher Education. The range of major university–wide projects reflects our concern to ensure that students enjoy a meaningful education at Winchester, which allows them to develop to their full potential. A range of projects have explored facets of widening participation, including the minority ethnic and disabled student experience and transition to university for first years from diverse backgrounds. Other studies have examined particular issues in relation to our legacy buildings, blended learning, and the university’s performance on the National Students’ Survey questions on assessment. Relevant and responsive work has been generated both within faculty and university wide.

There has been a competitive process of bidding for various strands of Teaching Quality Enhancement Funding. This has ensured that we as an institution use our funding accountably, to promote high quality, research–informed learning and teaching, and to enhance the learning experience of an increasingly diverse student body. The diversity of funding streams has served to ensure that academics can bid for tailored funding – to write an external bid, present a paper at a conference, or undertake an internal research project, for example. It has also allowed for the development of different areas such as volunteering, student participation in research, consultancy informed teaching and practice informed teaching. Research informed teaching, in particular, has created scope for academics to engage in disciplinary research with a pedagogic emphasis.

I am delighted that we are disseminating a selection of the pedagogic research undertaken by colleagues at Winchester. The e–journal is a worthy tribute to all those who have engaged in research on practice, and to those who have managed and supported the process of embedding Learning and Teaching at Winchester. Congratulations to all the contributors, the editorial team, and to our excellent in–house design team.

Read and enjoy!

*Yassein El–Hakim*
*Director of Learning and Teaching*

The first edition of Capture includes a selection of pedagogic research and research informed teaching funded at the University of Winchester over the last three years. It celebrates innovation, diversity and creativity. The style and format of Capture is informed, conversational, and designed to provide a taster of research and practice in digestible, varied and colourful vignettes.

Senate Learning and Teaching Committee and both Directors of L&T, formerly Dr Shaun Kimber and now Yassein El–Hakim, have generously supported the idea of an e–journal. Chloe Battle from Student Recruitment and Marketing has reflected the flavour and contemporary feel of the journal in its design. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and support of colleagues for this new venture.

In this edition, papers and interviews cover the prison theatre project, disability and theatre, special effects in film–making, gender on the BA Primary, the space–pedagogy interface, RIT and Consultancy Informed Teaching, and two relatively new courses, law and an interdisciplinary management MA. We hope you will enjoy reading the journal, and find it both informative and inspiring.

*Dr Tansy Jessop and Dr Vikki Sparkes*
*Research and Teaching Fellows*

# What is RIT?

Dr Vikki Sparkes

## Introduction

Research Informed Teaching (RIT) is the current buzzword within Higher Education quality enhancement initiatives. This paper seeks to clarify what RIT means, and to identify and elaborate its many strands in Higher Education (HE). RIT permeates HE in many guises and disciplinary variations, generating a diversity of interpretations and, arguably, some mystification about what it really is. This paper outlines the historical context of RIT, defines its scope, and argues that an RIT approach constitutes the true fabric of academic professionalism.

## Knowledge creation, dissemination and redefinition: an historical account

HE has been subject to constant change, the catalysts for which have been historically embedded in philosophy, society and Government. For many years the function of HE has been debated, culminating in the most recent agreement that the university is both the source of knowledge creation and the medium through which knowledge is disseminated (Freidson, 1986). Through the generation and transfer of knowledge, the future remodelling of the university is set to continue. Perhaps what has not yet been fully explored is the role of the university in defining its own RIT agenda through a truly integrated knowledge feedback mechanism. The full integration of research and teaching, had not been previously encouraged at national level, instead they were addressed separately.

The Government White Paper "The Future of Higher Education" (DfES, 2003) prompted universities to strive for either 'excellence in teaching' or 'excellence in research', implying that an attempt to achieve both was unattainable. Emphasis on a divided external quality assurance process through the RAE and the QAA has historically pre–empted individual university departments to play to their respective disciplinary strengths, enforcing a choice between research or teaching. Epistemologically, teaching has been considered a soft–science, unlike research. 'True' scientists resolve to research well, whilst the (soft) non–scientists strive to teach well. Further, feminist debate has even explored the masculinity of academic research, versus the nurturing femininity of teaching, arguably denigrating the value of a practical pedagogy, (Katila and Meriläinen, 1999, Dillabough, 1999). Although this particular argument would undoubtedly provoke contestation, in essence, the yin and yang of research and teaching has largely continued to co–exist rather than amalgamate. In addressing pedagogy and research in isolation, an already divided knowledge management system has been reinforced.

## The RIT initiative

A recent Higher Education Academy (HEA) document by Jenkins and Healey (2005) is set to challenge this research/teaching divide. A refreshingly new take on the traditionally didactic approach of teaching from research, this approach is encouraging a new wave of academic innovation. Jenkins and Healey outline quite specifically the expectation that HEIs are inextricably to link research to teaching, and a broad interpretation of this will hopefully foster an innovative and reflective academic approach. Put simply, the ethos is to attempt to redress the entrenched research/teaching divide, to create a more meaningful and integrated research–fuelled pedagogy. The expectations are that research will underpin, illuminate and actively influence teaching and learning, whilst teaching and learning should be responding by actively defining new research. This affords the perfect opportunity for universities to coin a strategic plan to integrate research and teaching that is both responsive and live.

## RIT the realization at Winchester

Although the concept of a research and teaching interplay is not novel, the ideal of a wholly symbiotic relationship between the two has rarely been addressed strategically and at university level. This is where the University of Winchester has been championing the RIT initiative, acknowledging and respecting the wide variety of academic disciplines that constitute its foundation, and in doing so has harnessed the diverse and holistic elements of RIT to enrich both pedagogy and research.

RIT implementation at Winchester has given due consideration to:

- Both disciplinary and pedagogic research
- The value of differing strands of research and research methodologies
- How disciplinary research will naturally vary regarding definitions of research and research activities
- Academic or practice consultancy as an element of RIT
- Performance and/or practice as an element of RIT
- Active student involvement in both the research and pedagogy initiatives
- Interdisciplinary collaboration that can enrich both pedagogy and research
- The enhancement of research skills in undergraduates through pedagogy (such as independent learning, critical appraisal, and so forth)

## Conclusion

Professor Madeleine Atkins warns that the relationship between research and teaching in HE needs to be actively managed since “the pressures to spit the two are powerful” (Ibid, in Jenkins and Healey, 2005). The embedded research/teaching divide is being actively addressed at Winchester at L&T strategy level. What has resulted is a proactive approach to celebrating RIT in its widest context. From utilising the money awarded as part of HEFCE’s Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), through to developing a national and international voice via research dissemination, Winchester is seizing the moment. As the final year of TQEF funding approaches in 2008/09, we hope that through CAPTURE and L&T’s many other conferences and initiatives, that the development and celebration of RIT activities at Winchester is set to continue.

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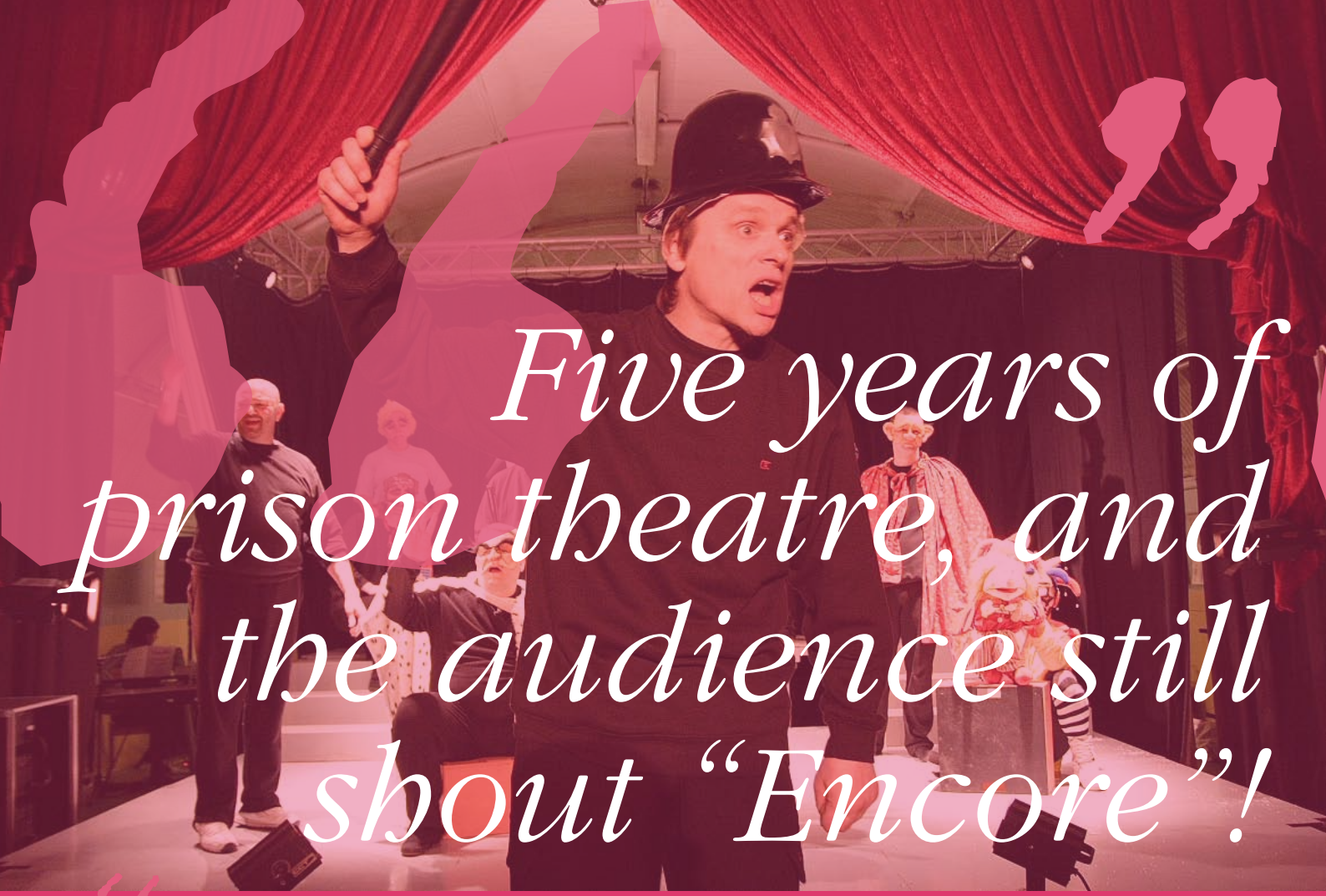


# *Five years of prison theatre, and the audience still shout "Encore"!*

*Annie McKean, Senior Lecturer in Drama Studies, has been running the Prison Theatre Project since 2003, which began when West Hill was a female only prison. During that time she has secured several L&T and RIT awards to support the work. The project has been an ambitious one, but the demands it places upon Annie, her colleagues, the students and the prisoners are well worth the rewards. Here Annie explains to CAPTURE why the Prison Theatre Project, has become such an enduring and successful venture.*

## Q: What is the history behind the Prison Theatre Projects?

A: The first project I ran was in 2003 and it followed a very similar model to this years' in that we ran workshops for three months, but the focus of that project was actually very different. I had been working with male and female prisoners for a couple of years, and at that time West Hill was a female prison. I thought that the experience of prison that women had was very different to that of men and their experience of the criminal justice system and their particular crimogenic needs were very different to those of men.

So I went to the governor at West Hill and I said I would like to do a play about women's experience of the criminal justice system and use theatre as a platform for having women's voices heard. The governor gave permission for that project, amazingly, and I set up in collaboration with Clean Break Theatre Company who are based in London. They only work with women prisoners, ex–offenders, and women who have had experiences of the mental health systems. So in a way they are the last bastion of radical feminist theatre companies which means they only work with women, they don't employ any male staff or work with any men.

They got Arts Council funding to appoint a playwright to work on the project and she came in for a number of the workshop sessions which we used to explore contemporary and historical contexts to do with women and the experience of custodial sentences. That was the very first project in 2003 and the very first time that there had been a play at West Hill.

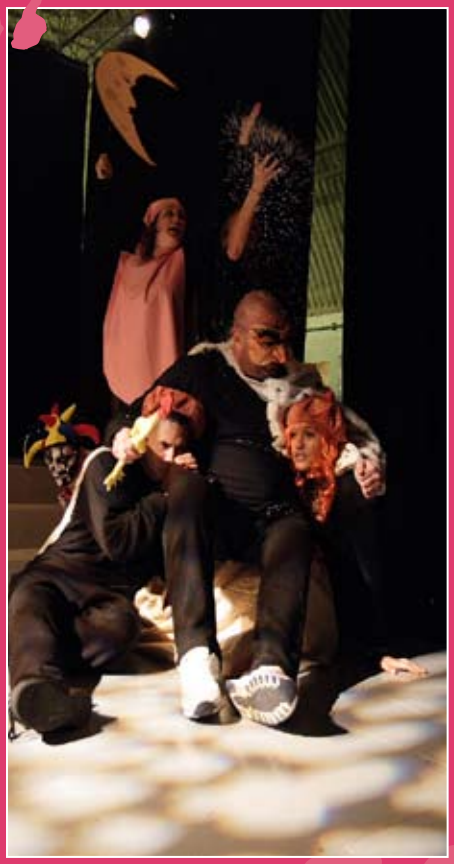
## Q: How did this first play then lead on to your further prison projects?

A: Over 2,000 people came into the prison to see that initial show, because at that time we were allowed larger audiences than we have now. We were then going to do a youth crime diversion project in 2004 following that project, but unfortunately West Hill got closed down in March of that year because of overcrowding in the male prison estate. So the female prisoners were shipped out and their places were taken by men.

So in 2005 we did *Our Country's Good* by Timberlake Wertenbaker, which is a play based on a true story about the very first penal colony in 18th Century Australia where the then governor Captain Arthur Phillip decided that it would be good for the men to put on a play. That play is a very, very clever, funny play, surprisingly, and it explores arguments for and against 'convicts' (as they were then called) doing arts work. In the play *Our Country's Good* some officers are completely against the project because they think that the convicts are there to do hard labour, building the infrastructure of the colony and they shouldn't be enjoying themselves. These are not dissimilar arguments to those of today about whether or not this kind of work should be delivered in a prison.

And then in 2006 we did *Oh What a Lovely War* by Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, and we had an external director and designer for the first time. The director had worked with the National Theatre directing operas and musicals. He was very interesting because he had never worked in that kind of environment before and he was extremely good at working with the prisoners, working out what they needed and working around the practical problems of that environment.

Finally in 2007 we did a play by a French playwright Alfred Jarry called *Ubu the King*, the first of a trilogy of plays based on the Macbeth



story about a man who kills the King of Poland and then goes on the rampage. I was quite worried about that play because of the content and doing a play about which celebrates killing. It's the first in the tradition of Theatre of the Absurd plays, so it's not meant to be taken seriously. But on the other hand even today with a contemporary audience, some can find that play quite odd. It's spattered with scatological language, and at the time the play was first staged in 1896 the audience all walked out and it was banned after its first performance. So it's always been a problematic play.

## Q: How did you cope with the potential problems of this play?

A: Once we started doing it, we began to discuss with the prisoners, the problems of its really deeply amoral content. From this, we created an extra character, the Jester who comes on and acts almost like a chorus in a Greek play to comment on the action. And the guy who played that role, wrote all his own lines in rhyming verse, and it was very, very clever; the text that he wrote was absolutely brilliant. So that was perfect because he was able to talk about Ubu, the way he was behaving, what a coward he was, how deeply flawed his plans were, and that he was heading for a downfall. We also rewrote the end of the play because at the end of the first play of the trilogy Ubu gets away with his crimes. We tagged the end of the last play onto it, where he does get caught.

## Q: So what are you producing for 2008?

A: This year we're doing a play which has been written for the group, it's called *Stand or Fall*, written and directed by Brian Woolland.

## Q: What are your experiences of political or bureaucratic obstacles for this type of project?

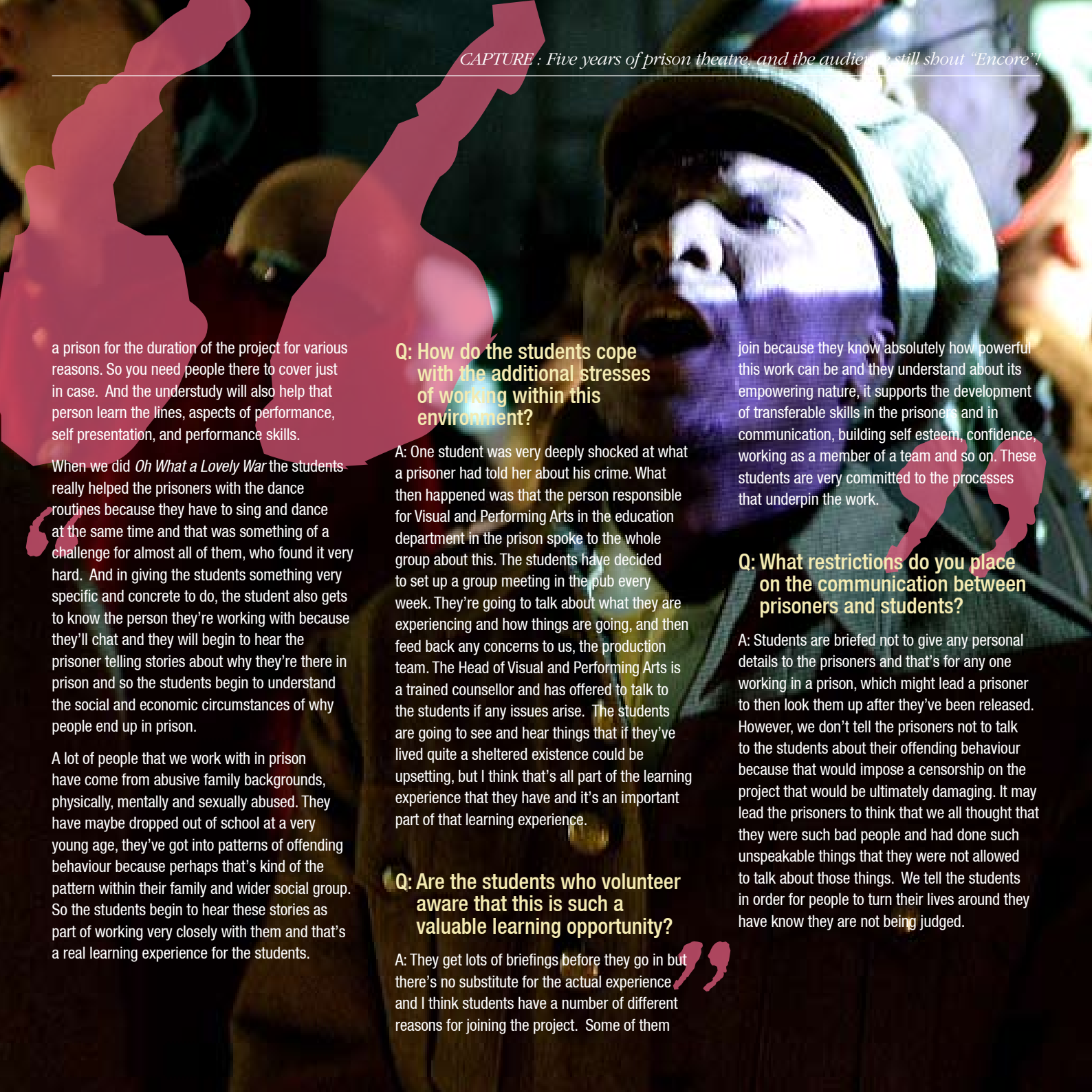
A: The senior management in the prison are incredibly supportive. This year, the issues seem to be about adverse publicity largely because Kingston Prison which is a Category A prison, had Pimlico Opera there doing a production of Sweeney Todd. It was on the front page of The Sun, with very negative publicity about murderers playing murderers.

## Q: And what are your thoughts about that?

A: I do think the choice of piece has to be looked at really carefully. What you're doing in this work is always if not directly but indirectly creating an environment which encourages pro–social behaviour. So if you're doing a piece which is very amoral and anarchic and almost celebrates violence like Ubu does then you know there aren't many good messages there. Interestingly, I think some of the prisoners in the group found Ubu quite a frustrating piece to do because you couldn't do in–depth character analysis, researching the characters' back stories because it's a very two dimensional piece. It only works if you've got actors with very good physical theatre skills, so we had to have a lot of input with Ubu on comedy and slapstick and movement and doing the piece in a very physical way.

## Q: How does the mentoring role work with the students?

A: Each prisoner is understudied by a student and that student has to learn the prisoner's role because you can never rely on people staying in



a prison for the duration of the project for various reasons. So you need people there to cover just in case. And the understudy will also help that person learn the lines, aspects of performance, self presentation, and performance skills.

When we did *Oh What a Lovely War* the students really helped the prisoners with the dance routines because they have to sing and dance at the same time and that was something of a challenge for almost all of them, who found it very hard. And in giving the students something very specific and concrete to do, the student also gets to know the person they're working with because they'll chat and they will begin to hear the prisoner telling stories about why they're there in prison and so the students begin to understand the social and economic circumstances of why people end up in prison.

A lot of people that we work with in prison have come from abusive family backgrounds, physically, mentally and sexually abused. They have maybe dropped out of school at a very young age, they've got into patterns of offending behaviour because perhaps that's kind of the pattern within their family and wider social group. So the students begin to hear these stories as part of working very closely with them and that's a real learning experience for the students.

## Q: How do the students cope with the additional stresses of working within this environment?

A: One student was very deeply shocked at what a prisoner had told her about his crime. What then happened was that the person responsible for Visual and Performing Arts in the education department in the prison spoke to the whole group about this. The students have decided to set up a group meeting in the pub every week. They're going to talk about what they are experiencing and how things are going, and then feed back any concerns to us, the production team. The Head of Visual and Performing Arts is a trained counsellor and has offered to talk to the students if any issues arise. The students are going to see and hear things that if they've lived quite a sheltered existence could be upsetting, but I think that's all part of the learning experience that they have and it's an important part of that learning experience.

## Q: Are the students who volunteer aware that this is such a valuable learning opportunity?

A: They get lots of briefings before they go in but there's no substitute for the actual experience and I think students have a number of different reasons for joining the project. Some of them join because they know absolutely how powerful this work can be and they understand about its empowering nature, it supports the development of transferable skills in the prisoners and in communication, building self esteem, confidence, working as a member of a team and so on. These students are very committed to the processes that underpin the work.

## Q: What restrictions do you place on the communication between prisoners and students?

A: Students are briefed not to give any personal details to the prisoners and that's for any one working in a prison, which might lead a prisoner to then look them up after they've been released. However, we don't tell the prisoners not to talk to the students about their offending behaviour because that would impose a censorship on the project that would be ultimately damaging. It may lead the prisoners to think that we all thought that they were such bad people and had done such unspeakable things that they were not allowed to talk about those things. We tell the students in order for people to turn their lives around they have know they are not being judged.

## Q: How would you define the learning experiences of those involved in this piece of research?

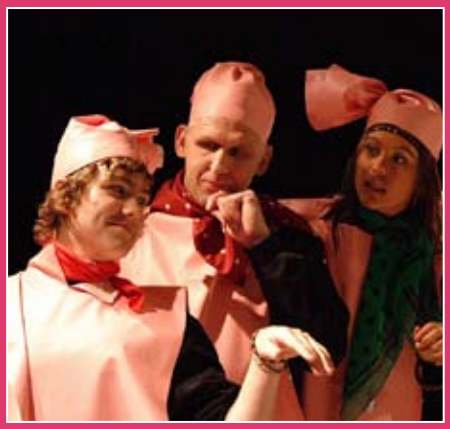
A: This is a tutoring role from the playwrights and directors and tutors, with the students but then from the students to the prisoners as well, so it's a three tier teaching experience. In addition to the prison authorities we are continually having to negotiate with the security, and the people in charge of the prisoners why we're doing what we're doing and how it's going to happen. It's a very, very complex set of interactions. I think I'm the bridge between all the different parts of the project. We have a drama tutor who works with us as well, employed by the education department in the prison, and the drama tutor also provides a bridge between different departments in the prison and the external drama production team.

## Q: How have you personally gained from undertaking these projects?

A: For me I think it is hugely rewarding, it's so stressful, it's so difficult actually making it happen, bringing it off successfully. I have no interest in working on something where the audience come in and they go 'oh didn't they do well because they're just prisoners'. I want the highest possible performance standards from everybody involved. There's no point doing it if they don't reach the very best that they're capable of achieving and they have to be pushed and pushed and pushed. And particularly for prisoners who've never done a play before, and who wouldn't on the outside dream of doing a play, they often can't understand why you're demanding so much of them, why you're getting them to rehearse and re–rehearse. When you do something that's really difficult to achieve, the satisfaction of seeing it all come together and work is just indescribable, and for the prisoners when the audience gives them applause at the end, for many prisoners that's perhaps the first time that anybody's been positive about who they are and what they've done. That is really deeply moving for them, it means a huge, huge amount to them. For me just seeing their achievement, that's what it's all about, it's just constantly saying to them, you can do this, I know you can do this, it will be fantastic, you will be great and really encourage them. Seeing them achieve such success brings a huge amount of satisfaction.

## Q: What do you think the students gain from participating in this project?

A: The students get a huge amount out of it on lots of different levels both in terms of potential career opportunities, carrying on work in applied drama, community arts work, there's a student who's working at Longlarten Prison at the moment in the Psychology department, as a result of going into the Prison. So, you see students taking the work further themselves, but in terms of the project itself you see a huge development in the students. You really can see that development and maturation process. As a teacher your work is all about nurturing people and giving them opportunities, and you certainly see that both from the point of view of the prisoners and the students.



# Space Age:

## *Exploring the interface between teaching spaces and pedagogy*

*Dr Tansy Jessop and Angela Smith*

*This paper reports on exploratory research into teaching spaces at the University of Winchester. It was undertaken in response to a call by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee to investigate the relationship between teaching spaces and pedagogy on campus. Th project was undertaken by the Research & Teaching Fellow Dr Tansy Jessop and Angela Smith a qualified architect whose PhD focuses on the space–pedagogy interface in primary schools.*

### Institutional Context

The University's building stock dates broadly from three periods. The Victorian era includes Main Building (1862), and Holm Lodge, St James's Hall, Medecroft, St Swithun's and West Downs Preparatory School, all acquired in the 20th century. These buildings contribute to the historic feel of campus, but are difficult to maintain. There are tensions between style and function, between their heritage value and their day–to–day use.

The admission of women and consequent expansion in student numbers precipitated a second era of construction from 1960–79. About 40% of teaching and office space was built between 1960 and 1979 (Estates Strategy 2002). These buildings are notable for their poor standard of building envelope construction, 'crinkly tin' facades, and problems with temperature, insulation, ventilation, sunlight and acoustics.

The third era of construction is more recent, and includes the modern and award–winning buildings of the last decade, namely the West Downs Student village, the Library extension, West Downs and the Master's Lodge and the new University Centre. Outside these three eras, is St Grimbald's Court, built in 1932 as residential accommodation (Rose 1981; p. 84).

Until recently construction has kept pace with the expansion in student numbers, but King Alfred Campus has physical limitations, with its steep hill, periphery hemmed in by the County Hospital, cemetery, railway line, and suburban homes, creating complex challenges as the university expands. The purchase and redevelopment of the West Downs site has added considerably to the building portfolio. In spite of being in a small city, the campus retains a picturesque and semi–rural feel, distinguishing the 'Winchester Experience' as traditional, green and tranquil.

This study focused on teaching spaces on King Alfred's and West Downs sites within the constraints of legacy buildings. It investigated daily realities of lecturers and students in the core business of teaching and learning, with a view to shedding light on effective spaces for pedagogy. It precedes the next phase of building, which will create a new teaching and learning block for the challenges and changes of 21st century learning.

### Aims and outcomes

The aims of the project were to elicit academic and estates staff perspectives on teaching spaces, and to explore the relationship between pedagogy and teaching spaces at UW.

The outcomes we hoped for were:

(a) A small qualitative evidence base to inform debates about buildings, and give some strategic direction to the interpretation of the Estates Strategy;

(b) Academics and Estates staff perspectives on these issues;

(c) Action points for L&T to present to Senate and the Estates Department.

*"The computer suite prevented a flexible and creative approach to learning, and possibly even hindered social inclusion."*

## Methodology

The research was based on qualitative principles and used a multi–method approach. Data sources included:

- physical plans of campus;
- a campus tour;
- literature survey of teaching and learning spaces;
- interviews with Estates staff and the Room Bookings Officer;
- observations of four teaching sessions,
- conversations with lecturers observed.

We identified a sample of research informants among lecturers through L&T chairs from all three faculties, and within the small Estates team. We explored contrasts and tensions, and triangulated the data, through eliciting a comparative perspective from Estates and Academic staff. Observation of the four teaching sessions took place in Fred Wheeler 204, Medecroft 21, West Downs 2, and Herbert Jarman Building 18.

One key limitation of our sampling for informants was the omission of students, although we observed students in classes and made notes about their engagement. Enhancing the student experience through refining our knowledge of what constitutes an effective teaching space is central to the study, and a second phase L&T bid with a stronger student and pedagogic focus, is being developed.

## Key Findings

### i) Flexibility, space and pedagogy

Recent research by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment found that students rated teaching facilities as the single most important factor influencing their performance, ahead of teaching quality and campus facilities (CABE, 2005). Evidence for the link between achievement and teaching spaces is virtually non–existent, however. Biggs (2003) draws attention to the lack of research investigating the relationship between teaching, learning, curriculum and physical space in HE (ibid, 2003, in Temple, 2007). One reason is the complexity of identifying a causal relationship between the physical environment, teaching approaches, and learning outcomes. A recent study by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC, 2006) begins to explore some features of teaching spaces in HE and their possible influence on student learning. It describes traditional rooms supporting teacher–centred pedagogies, as prevalent in HE: "general teaching spaces have been dominated in the last century by one type of design: tutor–focused, one–way facing and presentational, with seating arranged in either a U shape or straight rows" (ibid. p.10).

In observing sessions and in conversations with lecturers, we found that the existing layout and furniture of many rooms tended to remain static, and to favour a teacher–centred approach. Medecroft 21 fits the description of a traditional teaching room, with its serried rows of chairs, lectern and data projection facilities at the front. It would be difficult to reconfigure the seating arrangements in any other way, given its narrow rectangular shape, the number of chairs, and the absence of writing desks. The lecturer mentioned that he could create 'buzz' groups within the space, but the fact that the room was booked end–to–end prevented rearrangement of the furniture: "I tend to lecture mainly" (Interview, 2007). The predominant teaching method used in this room was lecturing, but even that was unsatisfactory given the absence of writing tablets on the chairs, and the poor light at the front. In similar vein, the computer suite (FWB204) prevented a flexible and creative approach to learning, and possibly even hindered social inclusion, in the view of one lecturer:

> *An informal approach is inhibited by the furniture…the technology makes the room feel regimented...the narrow gangways make observing group work difficult – come to think of it, I've stopped doing much group work since teaching mainly in here... The social dynamics are encouraged by the furniture – you saw how international students were sitting together, as were British students (Interview, 2007).*

Both examples correspond to research findings that users are reluctant to change the format, and tend to "adopt the mode of learning signalled by the furniture arrangement" (JISC, 2006, p.25). When left to the teacher "…eventually the burden of re–arranging all the furniture for every class, and the modest gains there from triumph, and the course falls back on the lecture mode (O'Hare 1998, p.1). However, evidence in this study suggested more complex reasons for adopting traditional lecture style approaches than simply the room configuration. In a room with desks arranged in small groups, which would tend to favour a more student–centred approach, the lecturer relied on a traditional didactic approach to meet the high content demands of the course, and to achieve appropriate standards:

> *I tend to talk at them a lot. Their subject knowledge is poor – there are some conceptual black holes (Interview, 2007).*

*"Internal design features are key to the flexible use of space, and may positively influence the nature of teaching and learning."*

As this example demonstrates, it would be simplistic to draw a causal relationship between the type of room and predominant style of pedagogy. Nonetheless, creating sufficiently flexible teaching spaces is an important design principle in allowing lecturers scope to use appropriate, varied and student–centred pedagogies. A Performing Arts lecturer praised the space in WD 2 and linked this to flexibility, although we observed the difficulty of converting a large open plan space into one for writing and reflection, which the lecturer commented on:

> *I like the fact that it is very flexible and large, also there is a sense of intimacy – it's private and secret with the double doors. You are in your own space, there is an enclosedness about it...The space feels wrong for messy work, for playing*

capture

*around. There isn't really a way of writing a reflection – you can lie on the floor and scribble but it is constrained. It's not very good for the devising bit, the planning work, assigning roles. It's not so good for the collaborative sitting about (Interview, 2007).*

Defining what 'flexibility' means is difficult, given the different disciplinary needs of subjects, across the spectrum from Business Studies to English to Performing Arts. Flexibility is sometimes interpreted as being 'multi–purpose' or neutral, which runs the risk of pleasing no–one in particular. Estates staff commented that there is a need for core teaching rooms that allow for the most usual forms of university teaching – seminars, lectures and presentations, usually power point. "What we want is sufficiently flexible spaces, non–specialist, instantly suitable for core teaching" (Interview, 2007). Another member of Estates described flexibility as an 'elusive' concept:

*Flexibility sounds good but I'm not sure what it means...decades ago you'd have a traditional lecture. These days you have one different thing following straight after another. 60 in a semi–circle, evening external use, catering set up, hovering outside with a tray. We can't give each tutor their own teaching space. So I guess you want rooms that are most easily converted from one use to another" (Interview, 2007).*

Temple (2007) refers to the layout, furniture and seating arrangements as the 'micro–design' of spaces, maintaining that these internal design features are key to the flexible use of space, and may positively influence the nature of teaching and learning. In his extensive literature review, he found few concrete proposals about the internal design of teaching spaces. This research demonstrated that flexibility is also on the space–time axis – there need to be reasonable time gaps between sessions for the layout and furniture to be adjusted, when necessary.

> *"The reality is that there is an increasing tendency for 21st century students to have their eyes on several balls at once, and to be using different technologies simultaneously."*

**ii) Technology and Pedagogy**

The challenge of future–proofing teaching and learning spaces in the 21st century, adds further support to the idea of creating flexible spaces. Temple (2007, p.40) describes the tendency for today's students to mix academic and social activities, in the multi–media world which they inhabit. In the most regimented, purpose specific layout of the computer suite (FWB204) we observed students watching a power point presentation, flicking through Facebook and BBC sites, and leaving the room to answer calls on their mobile phones. This kind of multi–stimulus activity suggests dissipation of focus and concentration and some disengagement of students from formal learning. However, the reality is that there is an increasing tendency for 21st century students to have their eyes on several balls at once, and to be using different technologies simultaneously. Engendering a learning environment which builds on the positives of this, but retains traditional virtues will demand significant imagination and vision in the development of teaching and learning spaces.

One consequence of both the technological

revolution and the mass expansion of Higher Education is the devaluation of note–taking as the learning currency. Traditionally, a significant element of learning was linked to writing notes in lecture, seminar and tutorial sessions. The absence of tables or writing tablets in many teaching spaces at Winchester signals the pressure of growth in student numbers, often at the expense of adequate resourcing. Web–based notes, the power point culture, large classes, and the lack of writing facilities have made a casualty of the pen:

> *They can't take notes because there are no note–taking facilities. They don't take notes. I'm not sure why. They just sit (Interview, 2007).*
>
> *For students, the ideal would be table and chairs. But you'd have to reduce the place by half the number to fit them in" (Interview, 2007).*

> *"They can't take notes because there are no note-taking facilities. They don't take notes. I'm not sure why. They just sit."*

High tech spaces represent the promise of catering to student diversity by individualising and customising learning and accommodating differences in learning styles and abilities. At the same time, purpose–built ICT suites are highly specialised and inflexible, and can be both costly and inefficient, "computer rooms are useless most of the time" (Interview, June 2007). Realising the potential of student–centred learning through technology is complex, and dependent on pedagogic skills as well as technological know–how, with the result that often "the new technologies may do best what is least desired", becoming "a new and powerful …

variation of the traditional model or "transmission belt" of information" (Paris, 2002, p.98).

We watched one session in a purpose–designed computer suite. The lecturer used a traditional didactic style power point presentation, which was less effective than it might have been because of the distractions of the desktop technology. In addition, room layout, which supported the IT infrastructure prevented human interaction and caused the abandonment of group work for this lecturer. In addition, the difficulty of configuring groups across screens and the physical issues of getting around the space were cited as further problems. The optimum arrangement for teaching in a subject which required some computer–based learning and some 'core' teaching would be to have "all rooms wireless networked, and students bringing laptops" (Interview, June, 2007). These could then be used as and when necessary, although it is not self–evident that laptops are affordable to all students.

**iii) Maintenance matters**

Evidence gathered in this study showed considerable unevenness in the provision and maintenance of teaching spaces, and a wide range in the decorative state of teaching spaces. At the time of the research, the most recent Estates Strategy (2002) stated that nearly two fifths of teaching, office and academic spaces were either 'operational but in need of major refurbishment or replacement, or inoperable or in serious risk of failure'(14). The impression derived from a campus tour in 2007 is that a quarter of all teaching accommodation remains substandard, resulting from a combination of makeshift storage space, low ceilings, poor ventilation and/or heating, visibility issues where layout conflicts with structure, uncomfortable seating, poor acoustics, inadequate writing surfaces, inflexible furniture, glare and lighting issues. Several rooms visited on the campus tour were shabby, untidy and dirty or inappropriately furnished, "small change" issues which seem relatively cheap and easy to address.

Well–cared for premises "provide benefits of psychological security and support feelings of belonging, and thus commitment to learning" (Temple, 2007, p.10). In his study of secondary schools, Rutter found "significant association between good pupil behaviour and good maintenance and care of the building generally. Keeping the school clean, tidy, and well painted… seemed to encourage the children to respect their surroundings and behave more appropriately" (Ibid, p.195, cited in Temple, 2007). Recent studies on buildings, pedagogy, and technology in Higher Education comment on the motivational effect of well–designed and maintained learning spaces (JISC, 2006; Temple 2007). Rundown rooms do not motivate students. The dilapidated condition of a room contributes to a sense of low value where students, lecturers and subjects feel undervalued by the institution. As one lecturer commented:

> *The students feel unconsidered – it's a depressing environment... It doesn't engender enthusiasm. Poor IT equipment, broken furniture, it can't be very good (Interview, 2007).*

*"Recent studies on buildings, pedagogy, and technology in Higher Education comment on the motivational effect of well-designed and maintained learning spaces."*

## Concluding Remarks

This paper has underlined the complex interplay between UW's topography, inherited architecture, contemporary needs, budgetary constraints, learning and teaching priorities, and spatial planning and design. The University is not working on a blank canvas, and is continually juggling competing demands. Within this context, our findings underline a number of issues about space and pedagogy, of which three are highlighted in this paper.

The first issue is embedded in the often invisible relationship between space and pedagogy, and relates to the notion of building more "flexible" spaces for teaching. Observations of classroom sessions in multi–purpose, neutral, 'flexible' spaces, beg the question about what "flexible" really means. Research evidence suggests that as a general rule, furniture and formats remain static, and tend to favour traditional, teacher–centred pedagogies in their layout.

The second relates to how spaces allow for technology – whether the simple technology of note–taking, or the complex multi–media environment of 21st century students. It poses questions about how best to design spaces which integrate high tech, innovative, and social learning with the more reflective, old fashioned end of the pedagogic spectrum.

Finally, the paper suggests a tension between image and substance, evidenced in the contrast between iconic buildings, and routine teaching spaces. Plans for a new teaching block will address some concerns about the paucity of high quality teaching spaces on campus, but what is highlighted by this study is the need to address "small change" issues of micro–design, maintenance and decoration in existing spaces.

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# The new law degree:

## 40 years on from "Pericles and the Plumber"

*David Chalk recently obtained Learning and Teaching funding to support a Visiting Research Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London. CAPTURE spoke to him about the fellowship, and its relationship to the University of Winchester's newly validated Law degree.*

## Q: How does the L&T award support the Visiting Research Fellowship?

A: The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies makes an annual non–stipendiary award to become a visiting fellow. The L&T award has enabled me to take up the fellowship by covering my expenses for an initial short period. The visiting fellowship allows me access to the Institute's Law Library, which is on a par with the Bodleian in Oxford. It is a research library, so it's for postgraduates and beyond. It is a vast repository of material much of which is only found in print form and clearly there is no comparison to that. There are also opportunities to meet with academics, who are members of the University of London or in some way connected with it, including other visiting fellows. The Director of the Institute, Professor Avrom Sherr is an acknowledged expert in the field of legal education, and is taking a personal interest in the project.

## Q: In your L&T bid you mention "Pericles and the Plumber". What does the allusion mean?

A: "Pericles and the Plumber" is a seminal article written about 40 years ago by Professor William Twining, who is still active in the teaching of law at University College London. The main thesis of his paper is that there is a continuum in legal education, from training lawyers to administer the law (akin to plumbing) through to educating lawyers to work at a high level of abstraction and become decision–makers about the law, which is the Periclean side of law. Most law schools in the country train at the plumber end of the scale, which is what most lawyers do. Most lawyers don't have an influence on policy or on legal education. They may have views about it but most of the time lawyers are paid to administer the law on behalf of a client. And your client isn't paying you for your view that the law ought to be changed, and how you would change it if you were in charge. They want you to know what the law is now, and how to work with it – now.

## Q: As you develop the law degree at Winchester, what are the implications of the Pericles and the Plumber question?

A: The nice answer to that I suppose would be that it is a spectrum or a continuum that you don't need to be at one end or the other – you can slide backwards and forwards. I don't know that that is true, but that would be the nice answer to give. Statistically, less than half of those who read law, go on to practise as lawyers. The cost of the postgraduate training is a factor which discourages students once they've studied law for three years. It can be as high as £10,000 and it is a real debt, at a commercial rate, not a student loan. The chances of getting a position as a trainee and prospects after that traineeship are also factors that influence students' decisions about going into legal practice.

There is also a distinction between barristers and solicitors as they are separate professions. They are run separately and have their own professional bodies. Barristers are involved in advocacy and advising, so a lot of court–related work, whereas solicitors do all sorts of other legal work, such as company law, conveyancing, employment, drafting contracts and that is not court based but it's still law. So, the Winchester degree balances the Pericles/Plumber spectrum and addresses the fact that a good percentage of law graduates will take their degrees into fields other than legal practice.

## Q: So why do students study law, if only 50% of them are likely to qualify as lawyers?

A: The vast majority of those who start a law degree have some notion of becoming a lawyer, but that changes over the period of the degree for all sorts of reasons. What academic lawyers will say to the death is that your legal training suits you for all sorts of work other than being a qualified lawyer – the transferable skills that a law degree engenders are hugely useful whatever you end up doing.

## Q: What are the transferable skills that a law degree gives you?

A: The QAA benchmark for law sums these up as an ability to deal with complex factual problems, using fairly advanced linguistic skills. Students will gain an experience of complex written material and large quantities thereof. They will have been exposed to argument in the technical sense and be used to using and meeting an argument, and they will have pretty advanced written communication skills in terms of precision. Beyond that they will have acquired sophisticated oral communication skills and the confidence to make a presentation to a potentially critical audience.

## Q: How does the Pericles and the plumber question influence curriculum content and pedagogy?

A: The inevitable part of a law degree will be its hard content and whether you are at the Pericles or the plumber end, there is an irreducible minimum of hard content. Knowledge of the law can be acquired through learning activities, based on the skills that I've mentioned, and therefore the student experience is holistic, without a separation between the hard law and argument, for example. Mooting involves hard law, it involves the student finding that law from a large body of complex written material in various sources, and producing a written and an oral argument. The student not only learns law but is actually doing those skills and acquiring greater proficiency in them. To return to your question, the plumber administers what is there at the moment, has no influence over change, but should have skills to keep up with any change that does occur, in the same way as a plumber would. You are not training plumbers to be able to redesign the water closet system, you are training them to install and maintain the existing system.

The Pericles end of law would go on to consider the value of a law, its underpinnings, and whether it is morally acceptable. In a moot the problem could be set at the House of Lords where it is appropriate to argue for a change in the law and to examine its underpinning. A legal debate would certainly include criticism of the law and proposals for its reform. So a great deal of work is done by students on the role of law in society and in addressing perceived problems, for example on the constitution, particularly at a comparative level – looking perhaps at places like South Africa or Iraq, for example. Our law degree will aim to reflect the spectrum and not be concerned only to train the technician lawyer – that is more a function of the vocational stage of training that follows the degree. On this topic I would like to research publicly available documents that describe law degrees in different institutions as a small research project to see what statements are made that reflect the Pericles/Plumber spectrum.

## Q: What influences the content of a law degree?

A: The main influence on content and to some extent pedagogy is the control which by Act of Parliament the two legal professions, solicitors and barristers, have over law degrees: those bodies' documents and statements haven't been updated in any real sense for some time but we are expecting a review in the next year or so and it will be interesting to see what change is thought desirable by the professional bodies whose concern is to maintain the quality of its membership. In constructing a law degree we are guided by these professional bodies, without which you won't get accreditation.

So in a comparative study of other UK HEIs the only differences you are likely to find are that the old established and very large law faculties will have more option modules available, which will reflect a greater breadth. There is still going to be training of plumbers as well as some Pericles–related work, and I would expect that the texts that students are recommended to use will in many cases be books more at the plumbing end of the law. The assessment will also probably reflect this, especially in exams, by testing what is hard content and how students can actually apply it.

## Q: How will the Winchester law degree assess students?

A: The control by professional bodies over assessment is significant, and for the core subjects required by the profession there must be a minimum of 50% exam. The methods that we will use for assessment at Winchester reflect the learning activities to the extent that this constraint allows. An exam can assess some of the learning activities but not all. So mooting will be used as a form of assessment, negotiation exercises, debates and essays as well as exams. Plenty of room therefore in the learning (and therefore assessment) methods for both plumbers and dear old Pericles!

## Q: How has the Visiting Fellowship influenced writing the new law degree at Winchester?

A: While the fellowship has no prescribed events or outcomes, and has not dove–tailed exactly time–wise, it is part and parcel of the thinking behind the writing of the validation document and has been hugely useful. The development and implementation of the degree and the building of a team of academics is likely to be influenced by the fellowship. It has also created a space in which to work which is of an entirely different dimension to working at one's own institution, with access to external library resources, academics, and events.

I would hope that this project doesn't end with the fellowship, and that there may be opportunities to disseminate through events at the Institute, other legal education events, the HEA subject hub, the UK Centre for Legal Education, and the Association of Law Teachers. I feel it is important for Winchester to stay 'plugged in', to continue this research on the nature of legal education, and to disseminate it at annual law conferences.

# Research Informed Teaching

## - An Exploratory Project

Rachel Donoughue

*The Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) is used to finance research which enhances the quality of teaching within Higher Education. Enhancing the link between research and teaching for undergraduates is a strategic priority for the fund. In 2006/07 a University of Winchester team (Jane Erricker, Rachel Donoughue, Camilla Leach and Carol Smith) investigated how links between teaching and research are experienced by lecturers and undergraduate students.*

*This project drew together lecturers and students from across the university to discuss and share their experiences. It laid the foundations for a university wide exploration of the research teaching nexus and how this impacts upon the undergraduate curriculum. The results were discussed at Senate Learning and Teaching Committee and presented at an international conference, "Student as Producer – Reinventing the Undergraduate Curriculum" at the University of Warwick in September 2007. This paper reports on the findings.*

## Methodology

### Aims

As research into the teaching–research nexus is in its relative infancy in the UK, the university–wide project team felt that this project should reflect this exploratory stage. Understanding the nature of possible links between research and teaching at undergraduate level was a main priority, as was considering the student voice. The literature questioned the necessity of explicitly linking good teaching with research. Addressing the complexity of defining Research Informed Teaching (RIT) was a further aspect of the research problem, as was beginning to explore the hidden aspects of practice which count as RIT.

The stated aims of the project were:

1) To investigate the term RIT in the literature and to gain a full appreciation of the many forms of research–teaching links which can be made.

2) To understand lecturer interpretations of this link and to identify many different understandings of the research–teaching nexus.

3) To explore lecturer and student conceptions of the term research across the University.

4) To examine the impact of research informed teaching on the undergraduate (and postgraduate) experience using Jenkins' (1989) and Smith and Rust's (2007) research into student experiences of research and teaching as a guide.

### Method

The research was a qualitative study. We used a multi–method approach including focus groups, one–to–one interviews, documentary evidence, and analysis of the university web pages. Focus groups with students and lecturers were conducted during the year by two university project officers. Lecturers were asked about their experience of doing research, and how links were created between their research and teaching. They reflected on their original sense of the university research community and what drew them to teach here. Data gathered in discussion and through analysis of public documents relating to teaching modules, explored how individual staff projects fed into teaching modules. Together,

lecturers and researchers explored student awareness of the role of research in the life of the academics who taught them. The extent to which publications and research seminars delivered by lecturers impacted on the undergraduate community and their understanding of the role of research, was considered.

Students, approached via an open invitation placed upon the portal, were asked to relate these questions to their own experiences. They were asked to identify their reactions to lecturers doing research and how academic research contributed to (or interfered with) the lecturer's teaching role. Students were asked what they felt about research in the curriculum and its part in their own studies. They were also asked to what extent they participated in the research community themselves.

Web analysis considered the profile of research on the University web pages and the links made between research and teaching.

## Methodological issues

Before outlining the results of our study it should be noted that a number of methodological issues arose during data collection and analysis. These are outlined below.

### Definitions

The terms research and research informed teaching suffer from a lack of consensus as to their definition. Therefore in researching both of these concepts we were aware of the problematic and complex nature of these terms. Questions about the link between research and teaching cut to the heart of the nature of the university and how it perceives itself. Are links between research and teaching necessarily good links? Should universities aspire to make very close links between their research and the teaching in undergraduate classrooms? Should research staff teach undergraduates? Should undergraduates do research? What is the nature of research and how is it valued? All are questions with complex and political answers within the university. The research team approached the investigation with an awareness of these questions and with a need to straddle the simpler aims of the project which were to report upon perceptions from students and lecturers and the more complicated rhetoric which accompanied our questions. We decided that we must, in as much as this is possible, report objectively upon the perceptions we encountered "out there" and not engage too closely with the arguments which accompanied these terms. This was to be left open for discussion within the institution once our report had been delivered.

### The sample population

While it was relatively easy to locate lecturers to take part in our research, students were more difficult to access. Therefore the results presented here reflect the views of a self–selecting group of students and are not necessarily representative. The student sample reflected the university's gender and age profile.

## Exploring the terms

### Research informed teaching

Krause (2007) following Trowler and Wareham (2007) identifies the "conceptual confusion" around RIT. Several terms occur in the literature (Jenkins 2004, Badley 2002, Brew 2001) and sometimes appear to be used interchangeably. Our research uncovered a need to clarify the differing linkages and definitions used at our own institution. The definitions provided by Krause (2007) have helped us to unpack what the team meant by research informed teaching. She lists forms of RIT as follows:

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1) Students undertake research
2) Lecturers undertake research
3) Students and lecturers research together
4) Research is embedded in the curriculum
5) Research culture influences teaching and learning
6) Teaching and learning influences research.

In this study we chose to focus specifically on (2), the flow from lecturers' own research into their teaching and how this informed students' understanding of research. We investigated how this aspect of RIT affected the undergraduate curriculum.

### Research

Research across the university takes many different forms, depending on disciplinary boundaries. There is a wealth of different kinds of research, some of which falls outside of the traditional canon of what counts as academic research. Our investigation illuminated these differences in the status of research end–products, from high status outputs in peer–reviewed journals, through to devised performances which are often not conventionally considered research.

## Key findings from the project

We drew on Jenkins (1998) who interviewed students at Oxford Brookes University about their experiences and perceptions of research and teaching. The focus on perceptions and the student experience were at the heart of our study, mirroring earlier work by Jenkins.

There was evidence of a university with a thriving research community and many leading researchers involved in both research and teaching informed by research.

> *As soon as I arrived here I became aware of this thriving research community very quickly…(Lecturer)*

Another lecturer commented:

> *Perhaps we are missing a trick if we are not pushing ourselves more as a place where research happens…(Lecturer, Focus Group 2).*

There was evidence that lecturers' research fed into taught modules:

> *When I first arrived here the first thing my manager said was "Write a third year module on your PhD", which I did and it was validated straight away. I can always guarantee that space will be made to think about research–orientated things and how they link to my teaching (Lecturer).*

Some lecturers wished that the process could be made even more responsive so that current and ongoing research could be picked up immediately in teaching and time not be lost in validation. However, in general there was clear evidence that teaching and lecturers' research were closely aligned at undergraduate level. Lecturers' own conceptions of the importance of a close link between teaching and research reinforced the impression of a university committed to straddling both teaching and research. As one commented:

> *How can you have teaching without research? (Lecturer, Focus Group 1).*

The flow between these two areas was clearly part of many lecturers' identities as academics. In several subject areas time and energy was expended on displaying lecturers' research areas on the portal and in physical spaces on campus. For example, the Arts Faculty portal pages give a strong flavour of individual lecturer's

research interests and publications, with a photograph linking the person to the research. A physical example of research on display exists in the corridors of St Grimbald's, where various education research projects are displayed in glossy poster form.

Lecturers differed in when and how it was appropriate to introduce their own research into the undergraduate curriculum. Public documents showed that lecturers' research was likely to become part of the curriculum in the final undergraduate year and in optional modules and many academics commented that there is much groundwork to be covered before exposing students to lecturer's research interests.

Questions arose in focus groups about the ethical issues surrounding discussing one's own research and exposing students to one's own publications. Many lecturers felt that it was necessary for students to develop their critical skills and understanding of the field before encountering their own work. One lecturer commented:

> *I have this concern that if you put research articles up in a first year then the first years feel an obligation to read it whereas other more general texts might give them a better understanding …(Lecturer).*

This was reflected in documentary evidence from book lists which tended not to list lecturers' own published work until later in the undergraduate cycle. While some subject areas necessarily involved students in lecturers' research from day one, others spoke of the significance of the depth of understanding needed by the student before lecturers' own work is encountered from a critical perspective. Students' comments echoed this and suggested that lecturer "shyness" about their own research had been picked up by students who had a complex response to it. On the one hand they were amused, even relieved, at not encountering 'look at me' pieces, on the other, they indicated an interest in what research their lecturers were researching. The comments below reflect this ambivalence:

> *"Lecturers are quite modest" (Student).*

> *"They don't turn it into a job shop" (Student, Focus Group 1).*

Students were keen to find out about their lecturers' research. They spoke with pride about lecturers who were leading in their field and felt this lent greater credibility to their courses.

> *"You can look up their profiles on the internet" (Student).*

> *"I found one of my lecturers' books in the library" (Student).*

Both lecturers and students showed an ambiguous response to how and when the presence of lecturers' research should be signalled to students. Responses varied across differing subject areas suggesting that some subjects lend themselves more readily to early engagement with research than others. This was an important area of findings in the research and one reflected in work at other universities as evidenced at the Warwick Conference.

Other findings from the research included some consistently strong support from students for lecturers' research role and a clear indication that students found lecturers handling of their dual roles to be professional and positive for their teaching role. One student commented about a lecturer having to be absent to attend a conference:

> *The professionalism of the lecturer who stepped in was fine. You wouldn't know because the material was so well prepared (Student, Focus Group 1).*

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Another noted that research by lecturers in their area "lets you know how passionate they are about their subject" (Student, Focus Group 1). Students described their experience of sharing in lecturers' research in classes as extremely positive:

> *One of the lecturers used a case study they had done in a lesson – that's one of the lessons I remember (Student).*

Students described these classes as memorable and as rousing their interest in the lecturer's relationship with his/her work. They were interested in the reflexivity of academics in critiquing their own work, and saw how the lecturers own knowledge was still growing, giving them a sense of being part of a community of lifelong learners.

## Conclusion

This was an exploratory project which was used by the research team to open up questions relating to the research teaching nexus within the University. The RIT model used in the study exposed areas of concern which may well be relevant for those considering research for undergraduates in the early years of the curriculum. Certainly discussion about how research is done in subject areas, what its end–products might be and when it is appropriate for undergraduates to engage are pertinent. At the same time the study has given a clear signal that there is support for engagement with research in the student community and that a carefully balanced approach would be welcomed.

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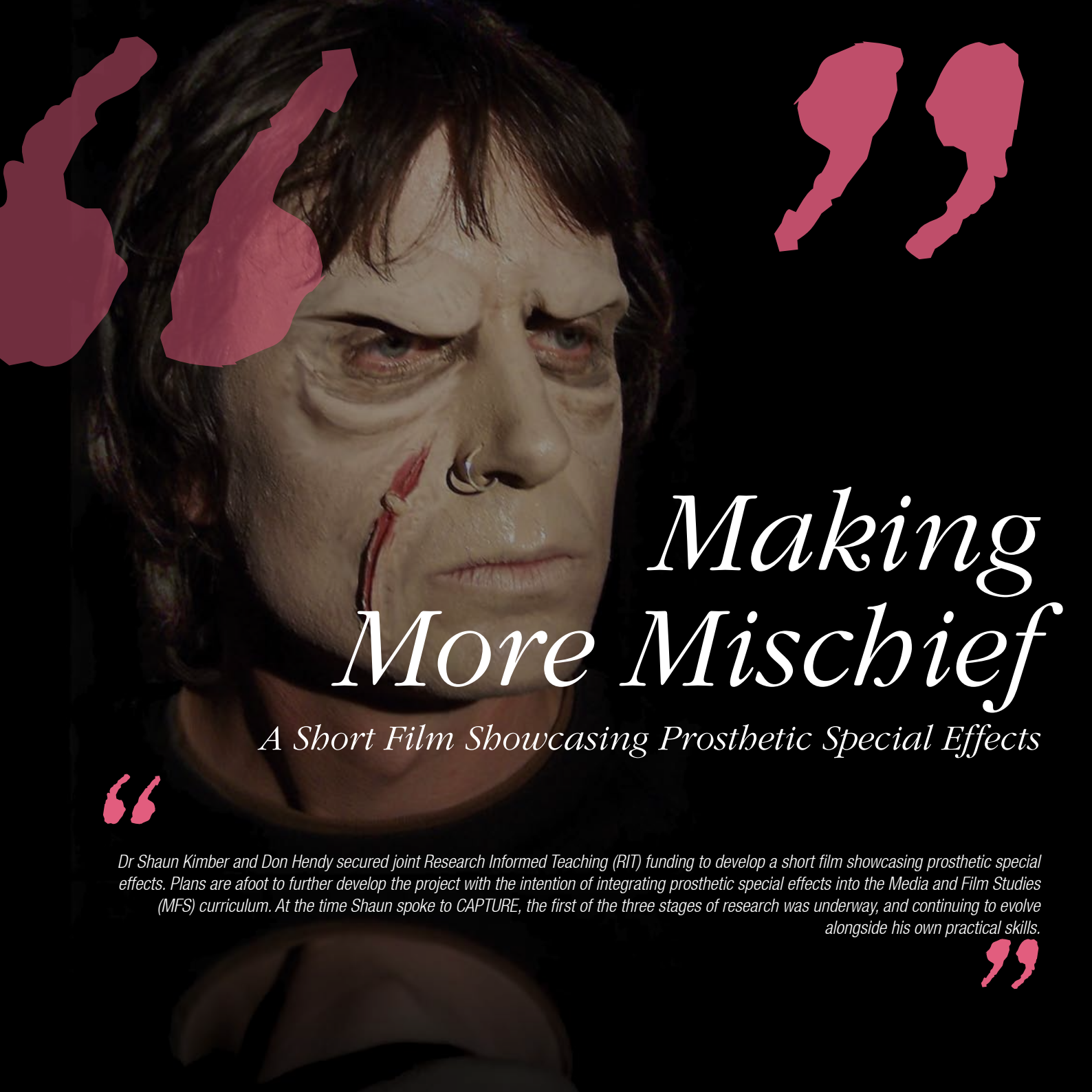


# Making More Mischief

## A Short Film Showcasing Prosthetic Special Effects

*Dr Shaun Kimber and Don Hendy secured joint Research Informed Teaching (RIT) funding to develop a short film showcasing prosthetic special effects. Plans are afoot to further develop the project with the intention of integrating prosthetic special effects into the Media and Film Studies (MFS) curriculum. At the time Shaun spoke to CAPTURE, the first of the three stages of research was underway, and continuing to evolve alongside his own practical skills.*

## Q: Can you explain what RIT means to you within Media and Film Studies?

A: RIT is not an easy term to define. Partly because we are in the early stages of our project I still tend to frame my understanding in line with Hefce's strategic priorities. Essentially, for me RIT is about ensuring that student and staff learning and teaching experiences are informed and enriched by subject specific, current and ongoing research in the university.

## Q: How important is integrating research into teaching within your discipline and why?

A: Because of my background in sociology, creating opportunities for students to actively participate in and reflect upon their experiences of undertaking their own research is an essential feature of the undergraduate learning experience. Within my work in MFS keeping the curriculum up–to–date with current academic research and also undertaking academic research is essential – as it is in all academic disciplines. Sometimes, however, due to theoretical and methodological differences between the range of disciplines that feed into the School of MFS (Media Studies, Film Studies, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Communication Studies and Journalism), some interesting tensions emerge over exactly what constitutes research and how research experiences are best integrated within the undergraduate learning experience.

## Q: What are you hoping to achieve from your project?

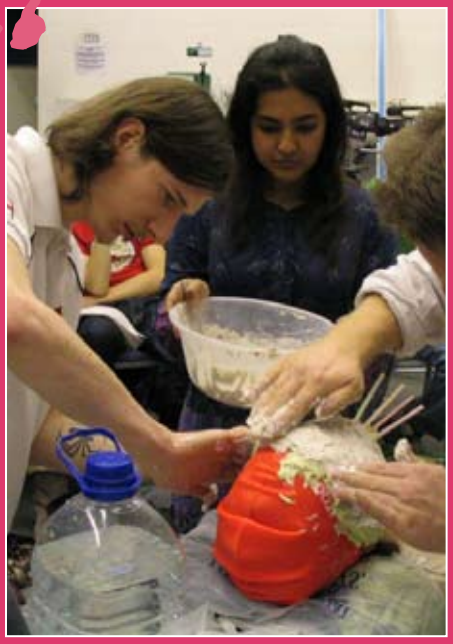
A: The project is essentially about making a short horror film, somewhere between 10 or 20 minutes. Alongside that we are developing a range of resources that can be hosted on a website that anybody can access, including our own students, which will enable us to teach how to do some of the processes we are involved in and also how people can learn how to develop them. The project is also about bringing together interdisciplinary skills. One of us has a theoretical interest in film violence and special effects (SFX), whilst the other has more of a practical interest in SFX and film making. In addition we are hoping to enhance the curricula in MFS. For example over the last year we have run three workshops; two practical and one that was much more theoretical. So, we're constantly trying to contribute to and build upon existing teaching as we go along.

## Q: At what phase is your project?

A: In effect there are three stages. There's the pre–production stage – where we are now, then the production stage, which will probably be done to quite a tight schedule over a couple of days and then there will be the post–production and editing, and finally hosting the website and posting the resources.

## Q: What would you say has worked well so far during this project?

A: I'm really glad we allowed over a year for the pre–production stage, because it was always going to be the most labour intensive and the most difficult. We originally only gave ourselves a couple of months and that would have been impossible. I've really liked the slow roll out in many ways so the chance to pilot things, that's been really, really useful. It's forcing me to work in a different way, working with students and academic colleagues in a way that I'm not used to, and that's a really positive outcome.



## Q: How are you involving the students in the RIT process?

A: We are involving students in a project undertaken by staff in film making. Otherwise what you often see in HE is that people do their own film making outside of the University or even within the University and students do their own film making assessments and the two don't necessarily always come together, so another part to the project is involving the students within the research process.

## Q: Can you discuss any ethical issues which may have presented a concern to you?

A: At this stage of the project we have not experienced too many ethical dilemmas beyond the need to make sure that everyone involved is able to give their informed consent. The project has been given ethical approval by the Faculty Ethics Committee and we will ensure that the project is conducted in a way that is ethically appropriate. Be this as it may, at the heart of the project is the desire to create a short horror film that employs a range of realistic and bloody effects – as a result I'm sure ethical issues will present themselves from time to time!

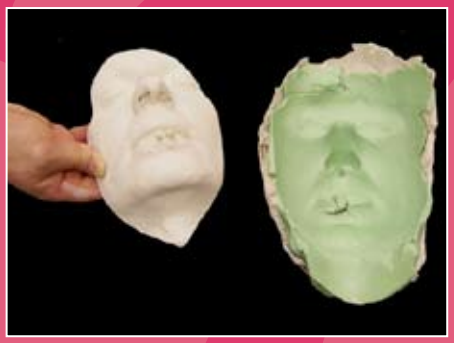
## Q: What have you found exciting about this project?

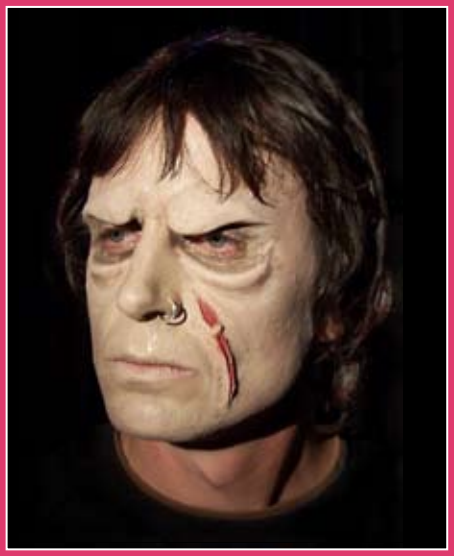
A: The real interesting thing has been we've got students taking part in the workshops, and they are getting excited about it and want to be more involved. A good example is I was taking a workshop on special effects, as part of a Film Cultures module last semester. Two of the students had considered going to another University to do special effects make–up or similar courses but they had since decided that they didn't want to do a complete course on that, but liked the idea of dipping in and trying it out. We have also had students who have graduated and are interested in helping, so we are developing a list of students who want to be involved. It has been exciting feeding off their enthusiasm.

## Q: Has this been embedded into the curriculum yet?

A: In the long term we are hoping to create more provision. We have currently got a Film and Cinemas Technology degree and it would be great to add a prosthetic special effects pathway to that. So the idea is that long term we would generate some modules, and in doing so the film making then becomes an assessment and the resources that we are generating and piloting now could be used to support that course. We are also considering the possibility of developing some short CPD courses in the area which could be built up to an MA in SFX but this is really at the early stages of discussion and development.

## Q: Are there any other ways this





## project has influenced the students?

A: There are some current students who are making their final year films and want to do horror based productions. In this case we are offering them the chance to experiment with the special effects materials and use it for their films. We also have students who came along to the original live casting workshop we did last year, filmed it and then incorporated some of those techniques in their own film making. Their film *Blood Country* used prosthetics in ways they may not have done if they hadn't had been to the workshop. That's the ultimate achievement, because they've actually gone away and reproduced it. Again it's these kind of informal links that are as interesting as the more formal teaching we are doing.

## Q: To summarize, how do you feel you have achieved RIT within your project?

A: I think we are achieving learning that is informed by the research undertaken during our project in several ways – but there is still a long way to go and this is a long term project. Firstly, we have organized a number of prosthetic SFX workshops and are in the process of organizing another as part of a range of undergraduate modules offered within the School of MFS. These workshops have been a good way of the project leaders sharing skills and passing these on to students. During semester 2 of AY2007–8 we have embedded a short 4 week assessment using Prosthetic SFX into the Media Production level 2 module Master Class 2. This has generated six short student films that have used prosthetics SFX in creative ways. Student evaluations of the workshops and Master Class 2 SFX project have been very positive. Secondly, an outcome of activities has been the development of a range of learning resources by staff and students that are not only being used as part of workshops but will eventually be hosted on a website to support students undertaking projects involving prosthetics inside and outside of the formal curriculum. Thirdly, we are working on the pre–production of the actual short film and making contacts with current students, alumni and film professionals to help with the project. It is planned that principal photography will start in the Summer of 2008. Fourth, we are looking into the possibility of creating postgraduate and professional short credit bearing courses exploring prosthetic and digital SFX. We are currently exploring working with CEMP (Centre of Excellence in Media Production) at Bournemouth University exploring opportunities for developing a CPD MA in SFX based on a template they have developed. Finally, we are looking at a range of ways in which we can use the project to raise the profile of the School of MFS in terms of marketing of the School on our website and open days.

## Q: What would your advice be to other academics who are thinking of bidding for RIT money?

A: Making it manageable, because I think the Making More Mischief project is bordering on very ambitious, we know we'll complete it, but we might not necessarily do it in the timeframe we had initially hoped. Also I think it's probably harder than we may have thought to actually have RIT in the way in which we had envisaged. The payoffs at the moment are more informal and small. It's not necessarily a project which has the big bang, such as a module incorporating students in a project that will be completed and then evaluated. It doesn't always work like that. Keep an open mind and be flexible.

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# The Outsider:

## What Does Inclusion Mean?

Jen Goddard

*During 2006/07 Jen Goddard, a lecturer in Drama Studies, applied for L&T funding to set up an inclusive drama company with a specific focus on disability, based at the University of Winchester. Both legislation and the number of disabled students entering Higher Education have focused universities' attention on accessibility. At Winchester, there are some 500 students on campus with a declared disability, of whom 58 study Drama (2007/08 SITS figures). Theatre Inc, the new inclusive theatre company, has aimed to create an equitable experience (ie one that is not necessarily the same, but an equivalent experience) for drama students with disabilities, which challenges social barriers both on and off stage.*

### Why Theatre Inc?

In setting up 'Theatre Inc', we wanted to explore questions in the minds of the audience about surveillance, perceptions of disability and the body, and identity construction. As a mixed group of disabled and non–disabled actors, what began to emerge was that far from merely raising questions and challenging audience perceptions of the body in performance, we were confronted with problematic aspects of ourselves. Prejudices, power struggles, and insecurities left many of us with more questions than answers, in the process of devising dramas and rehearsing. Some of the questions which confronted us were:

- Is it always possible, for an individual to find empowerment through performance?
- How do we balance the tension between individuals and the group?
- Given the nature of directing, is it realistic for everyone to have an equal say in the process?
- What are the limits of integration and inclusion? Is it always desirable?
- How does a non–disabled artistic director (me) justify managing a disabled theatre company?
- What are the implications of the experience of Theatre Inc for a more nuanced understanding of the social–medical model debate?

This paper will consider some of these questions, and how Theatre Inc is evolving from the perspective of a non–disabled artistic director negotiating the tensions of decision– making and the power dynamics of working on an inclusive theatre project. Theatre Inc is work in progress, and this paper raises some unanswered, partially–explored questions and ideas.

### Theoretical principles

The first principle draws on Paulo Freire's (1972) work. The ideas of solidarity, social action and transformation are central to Freire's approach of liberating both oppressor and oppressed:

> *"Solidarity requires that one enter into the situation of those with whom one is identifying…True solidarity with the oppressed means fighting at their side to transform the objective reality which has made them these 'beings for another'…it is a farce to affirm that men [sic] are people and thus should be free, yet to do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a*

*reality" (Freire 1972, 26).*

Within the theatre context, we use Freire's ideas to create space to explore ideas about disability, challenge social constructs, and provide a way for thinking about transformation in society's attitudes and prejudices. Whilst disability isn't necessarily directly referred to in our performances, we provide a platform for discussing how and why we view people the way that we do, therefore challenging social constructs. The focus throughout the development of our work is on participation, accessibility, equality, individual contribution and consideration of individual needs. Through the choice of material for the devising process and the use of the actor in the space and methods employed in performance, we hope to challenge the way people view disability.

A second principle which underpins our work is the concept of a caring ethic linked to practical action, as defined in Nicholson by Baier:

> *"For Baier, the social significance of the emotions is that feelings of empathy and affection lead to practical action. In this way she links the gift to the practice of citizenship, recognizing that emotional involvement with others is generative of a caring ethic which, in turn has wider implications" (Nicholson 2005, 164–165).*

In Theatre Inc we have learnt from experience to create an atmosphere in which the student actors can feel 'safe' and supported in carrying out their work. There is an understanding that if someone is overwhelmed by the emotional, physical or psychological pressures of working in the group there is the space to be able to acknowledge and talk about these things without fear of judgement. In fact, we talk all the time about how the processes are affecting us, so that challenges can be directly addressed before they become too great, or resentment builds up, as we learned from our first performance cycle (see below). We start our group processes with a contract which we all contribute to, and which we can add to as the process continues, which take some of these things into consideration. The space to be able to talk about how we feel, and what we think about the processes we are going through is vital.

The third principle links to the fact that our theatre company is inclusive and participatory. It has disabled and non–disabled players: actors, technicians, producers and director, it is a composite of staff and students of different ages, backgrounds, and experiences. Theatre Inc has been set up within the social model of disability which stresses that disabling physical environments and social attitudes need to change, in contrast to the medical model which takes the view that disabled people need to be 'changed' and 'treated'. But we strive to go beyond the social model, which separates the 'impairment' from the social context, to take into consideration an epistemological and post–structuralist approach. The experience of Theatre Inc has confirmed many of the barriers that disabled people experience in society, but echoed recent literature which moves beyond the social model:

> *"Rather than being restricted by social model orthodoxy, disability studies should be pluralistic, valuing analytical rigour and open debate" (Shakespeare, 2006, p.198).*

Much recent debate within disability studies has centred on the criticism that the social model of disability has remained static, with little or no revision or scrutiny (ibid, 33–34). This contrasts with other social movements, such as feminism and gay rights, which have developed over time, and have included different approaches and interpretations and responses to criticism.

Shakespeare (2006) argues that the social model has become adopted without question to such an extent that "If an initiative or organisation appears to contradict the social model, it must be rejected as inappropriate, misguided or even oppressive" (ibid, p.32). Along with Hughes (1997) he calls for a way forward which embraces the body and the impairment as a part of the social experience of disability, and not as separate to disability.

To some extent, social model views of disability obscured my understanding of the particular medical needs of some students during our first season. The intense pressure and demands of taking the performance on tour meant that some of the cast suffered extra physical, mental and emotional burdens due to their disabilities, which as artistic director I was not as aware of as I should have been. As a result, much of this was stored up, and caused resentment and anger in some of the actors towards the end of the process.

*"The process of directing, devising, performing, and working together as disabled and non-disabled practitioners has been one of the most powerful aspects of Theatre Inc."*

The fourth principle relates to ethics. As a non–disabled practitioner, I cannot fully understand the life experience and barriers faced in the daily life of a person with a disability. The important thing for me is to know that I have something to learn from someone who has different experiences to mine. As a group, Theatre Inc members have learned to negotiate with one another on an individual level so that these exchanges can be meaningful, beneficial and productive in fostering attitudinal change. We take what we are experiencing at a micro–level within our group and mould this into material which gives our audience a chance to do the same: to shift our thinking, confront prejudices, and explore differences of opinion. Our theatre company social interactions form the basis for devising theatre which creates a safe space for audiences to explore their attitudes towards disability and disabled people.

Shakespeare (2006) calls for much stronger dialogue and relationships between disabled and non–disabled people in order to deepen understanding, empathy and solidarity: "Supporting positive social relationships between disabled and non–disabled people and recognizing the beneficial roles of solidarity and mutuality are both vital to the flourishing of disabled people" (ibid, p 199). The process of directing, devising, performing, and working together as disabled and non–disabled practitioners has been one of the most powerful aspects of Theatre Inc. As a non–disabled director, I have sometimes felt that I don't have as much right to be there, because I do not 'belong'. While it is true that I cannot know what it is like to be disabled, this does not mean that I can have nothing to say on the matter, or that I am unable to learn from the experiences of others. As long as my viewpoint is informed by research, by the intellectual debate within disability arts, by a "caring ethic" (Nicholson, 2005) and by a commitment to dialogue, the barriers between disabled and non–disabled people can start to be broken down at this micro–level. As Hughes writes:

> *The ethics of applied theatre practice are active, participatory, dialogical and negotiated. Ethical practice is an ongoing interaction of values in shifting contexts*

*and relationships rather than something delivered by a signed consent form or adherence to a static set of principles (Hughes 2005, p.231).*

As a company we need to continually be questioning, negotiating, redefining the ethics of our practice as we develop our work, and above all, listen to one another. In this way we may stand a chance of developing the trust and interdependency that Baier argues for. By accepting, welcoming and encouraging difference, the company will begin to challenge prejudice and reshape attitudes in our own group and for our audiences.

## Theatre Inc Projects

During our first season, through an intensive workshop process, we devised a 40 minute piece, *The Attic*, the story of four characters, only one of whom had ever experienced life outside, and was happy to construct the 'world outside the window' for the others. This was performed for a public audience at the University, and followed by a schools tour in June/July 2007, at the request of Aimhigher, a government funded initiative to widen participation in higher education by raising the awareness, aspirations and attainment of young people from under–represented groups. Our school tour had an extremely positive response, and we were subsequently invited back to run workshops and carry out further work with three schools we visited. In conjunction with Aimhigher we performed to two specifically designated groups of young people – (i) an audience of young people in care and (ii) gifted students looking to enter higher education.

Theatre Inc has diversified in unexpected ways because of Aimhigher's interest in it. Their widening participation remit, and our intention to raise awareness about disability have much in common, as does our participatory way of working with practitioners and students. The stated aims of Aimhigher are:

- To enable school students to work with undergraduate drama students who will serve as suitable role models for continuing in post 16 education
- To promote various career options in the performance and theatre industry
- To promote social inclusiveness and disability awareness among the participants.

Through this partnership, we are forging links with schools both locally and nationally. This has offered Theatre Inc the potential to raise the profile of performers with disabilities, and to offer positive role models to younger people, often from socio–economically disadvantaged areas within Hampshire, those with and without disabilities who are interested in FE and HE performance courses. It has also created opportunities for us to network with other agencies and organisations working in similar fields, and discover where there are crossovers and possibilities for exchanges in our work. Our work with Aimhigher has led to subsequent funding and an expanded project in 2007/08 which incorporates an initial three month series of workshops in schools to provide the raw material for the devising process.

In the 2007/08 season we are considering the Ionesco play *The Chairs* as a starting point for the devising process. A piece of absurd theatre, *The Chairs* mixes text and highly choreographed movement and plays on text/repetition/subversion of language. It is also highly visual. We are trying to create more opportunities for disabled artists to come and work with us, in particular we are looking at collaborating with the Hampshire Deaf Association (HDA); watching and researching deaf

theatre, creating opportunities to interact with deaf people, and gain insights from working with a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter. One difficulty in producing deaf theatre is the split focus that is created by having an interpreter sign whilst the action is taking place – a deaf person has to choose whether to look at the interpreter, and miss the action of the actor, or look at the actor, and not get the meaning of the spoken word. We are therefore looking into ways of doubling parts so that two actors in the same stage space can combine theatrical sign language with spoken language, and avoid split focus.

*"One difficulty in producing deaf theatre is the split focus that is created by having an interpreter sign whilst the action is taking place – a deaf person has to choose whether to look at the interpreter, and miss the action of the actor, or look at the actor, and not get the meaning of the spoken word."*

We are also incorporating some performed sign language, choral work, and having some parts interpreted. However, this is still in the experimental phase, and is happening in consultation with a deaf actor who is playing an advisory role, and who has been involved in the workshop phase in schools.

In many senses, our more overt focus on the disabled performer in our second season is a response to criticism of our first, where it was felt that disability didn't inform the performances enough. This was particularly the case when one actor was kept behind a desk for most of the play, rendering his disability invisible, and raising questions as to whether we were reinforcing disability by hiding it. Disability wasn't visible enough – we were too cautious in using bodies which moved differently. In the short term, we changed the piece to give it more physicality. In the longer term, we are devising from texts starting with highly visual, potentially very energetic pieces, for example using absurd theatre (which draws attention to the absurdity of language, and questions its inability to communicate meaning effectively), and choral work. Although we are looking predominantly in our current season at aspects of Deaf theatre, we have decided this time round to be bolder in our approach to this, and to create theatre which aims to positively bring issues of communication to the fore, and explore these overtly.

## Concluding Thoughts

The process of setting up an inclusive theatre company has had many positive benefits, in terms of fostering dialogue and understanding among the cast, technicians and directors, and beginning to move theoretical ideas into the domain of practice and performance. It has also developed into a small business venture, in partnership with Aimhigher, and schools, pulling together threads from widening participation, disability awareness and career aspiration. However, as this paper demonstrates, the project has raised as many questions as answers, and is strongly process driven. Theatre Inc is about a process of dialogue, research and development, and it is in its early stages. The questions that remain for me, as the artistic director, are:

- Who is the theatre company for?
- How can we prevent it being or becoming a 'token gesture'?
- What is my role within the company? How do I fit in as a non–disabled director?
- What kind of opportunities can we and should we be accessing, both ethically and artistically?
- How can we engage intelligently with the debates about the social and medical models of disability, and about embodied performance?

Ultimately, my interest is in creating a theatre which pushes the boundaries, which does something new, and works in different ways. I believe that disabled and non–disabled people within the arts need as much exposure to as many different arts experiences possible. It is important that non–disabled people don't see it as unusual that disabled actors should be on the stage, in stand–up, or on TV. Ensuring that disabled artistic directors have the opportunity to take up leadership roles is another important way of making sure that disability is well–represented in the arts.

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# Dancing along the fence:

## Research, Creativity and Practice in Performing Arts

*Yvon Bonenfant has utilised Research Informed Teaching (RIT) funding to explore the larger context of artistic practices within his Cross Disciplinary Devising module on his Performing Arts programme. Here, Yvon talks to CAPTURE about his current project, professional development and the creative tensions between research and practice.*

## Q: What motivated you within Performing Arts to apply for RIT funding?

A: I teach on the performing arts programme, which is dedicated to contemporary performance creation, and we work with students on how they make and analyse contemporary performance. Currently, devised performance practices are breaking down the barriers between performance disciplines at an accelerated rate. Whereas there was once a very clear distinction between dance, theatre and other forms of performance, those distinctions are blurring. Our programme teaches students how to compose performance from an interdisciplinary perspective, so they're thinking of how it looks: the visual qualities of performance, the sonic qualities, the active or the physical movement qualities, and the textual qualities of the performance. What interested me about the RIT framework is that I do a lot of creative practice that feeds into my teaching anyway, and here was a way of actually formalising that means of feeding from practice to teaching and examining the back and forth nature of this relationship. My creative practice is also already a research–based practice. My professional history has been about working within worlds of fringe performance style, so I have always worked around the edges of what's commercially viable. I'm an extended vocalist and kind of a stage character in the work that I do, but I've been increasingly interested in renewing the ways that I interface with artists outside of my field. For this RIT project, I wanted to work with a very sophisticated painter and video artist, Ludivine Allegue, who is also a researcher, associated with the Insitute of the Aesthetics of the Arts and Technologies at the Pantheon–Sorbonne (IDEAT) (University of Paris) to look at how the actual physical act of painting could inform the performance making process, incorporating how passing from painting to voice might help inspire this process.

## Q: How does this feed into your teaching?

A: On my programme we have a module called Cross–Disciplinary Devising, where the module's purpose is to take standard approaches to devising stage performance and inform those with schools of thought and knowledge from outside the sphere of performance. I have taught workshops for that module on neuropsychological research and performance, for example. The idea here was that in a concise, interesting, experiential, and professional way, I wanted to really bring this experience of what we might call paintedness into how our students might think of their workshop process in devising. Our goal was essentially to get the students to paint on stage with moving bodies and sounds. Ludivine and I went through a fairly extensive documentation process for the creation of an installation together. We then extracted from this a workshop structure that we could bring to the students, and piloted it this year. Because we have a creative programme, the results of such workshops aren't always immediately visible. The module provides models for students to help them cross lines of discipline themselves, and they aren't required to make a performance from painting processes. Rather, the workshops are used to help them develop transferable skills for dipping into a discipline outside performance in order to create, inform and reinvigorate performance itself. We are actually working with how to stimulate creativity and to source performance material in interesting ways.

## Q: Explain how you would articulate research informed teaching within your discipline.

A: I would call it something between research and creative practice informed teaching. One of the reasons I collaborate with Ludivine is that her post doctoral research is centrally funded by the Scientific Research Council (SRC) in France. The SCR mostly funds hard science with a little bit of the humanities, yet it supports the creation of art and not just its analysis. They made a very strong argument that there is a different logic to creative thought than there is to scientific thought and that artistic thought cannot be channelled into hard scientific thought and still retain what is special about it. There is a tradition in Francophone scholarship of artistic philosophy being a discipline that is not about citation and logical argument. I don't see a difference between research and creative practice, but then again I also articulate my creative practice in words, through journal article writing. In our field, the whole notion of what research is, the notion of whether creative practice is research, is hugely contentious, and across the UK a wide variety of opinion exists about this issue. I am part of the performance as research working group of the International Federation for Theatre Research, and from country to country this contention is playing out along similar lines with sometimes very different results. Finland, Holland and Australia are creating pure practice based doctoral programmes in the arts in some fields. Despite the progressive nature of the IDEAT at the Sorbonne, there are no indications of such developments in France. I think we can afford to be visionary about the ways research is creative and creative practice is research. And in creative fields, it is really impossible for one's practice not

to influence one's teaching – we are teaching creativity, and the bottom line is that we must, in the end, draw on our personal resources in doing so.

## Q: What are your plans for disseminating your research to the wider audience?

A: If there is an RIT day I would be really enthusiastic to present there, at a local level. Besides the pedagogical material, there are a lot of outputs from this project. We have a paper we're giving at a conference in Quebec City, which has been accepted and funded. We are building the paper around the notion of

transparency and opacity. We are also preparing a pair of articles to be submitted to Consciousness, Literature and the Arts, which is an online, peer–reviewed journal. In this instance, my article is more formally academic in style and Ludivine's is a piece of creative writing. We have a confirmed exhibition of the artwork at a commercial gallery in Paris from 13 May to 1 June, part of which involves featuring the work at the IDEAT research symposium. I am hoping to release a sound recording of the material. In the mean time, we have secured support to use an experimental dissemination strategy, and the sound is being made part of a limited artist's edition of textile art objects woven by Uruguayan artist David Salamanovich and sold during the exhibition. Salamanovich will be creating wall hangings inspired by the painting as CD jackets. One of them is being donated to the University library. We have just confirmed that the installation will also be exhibited at the ATRiUM in Cardiff in June.

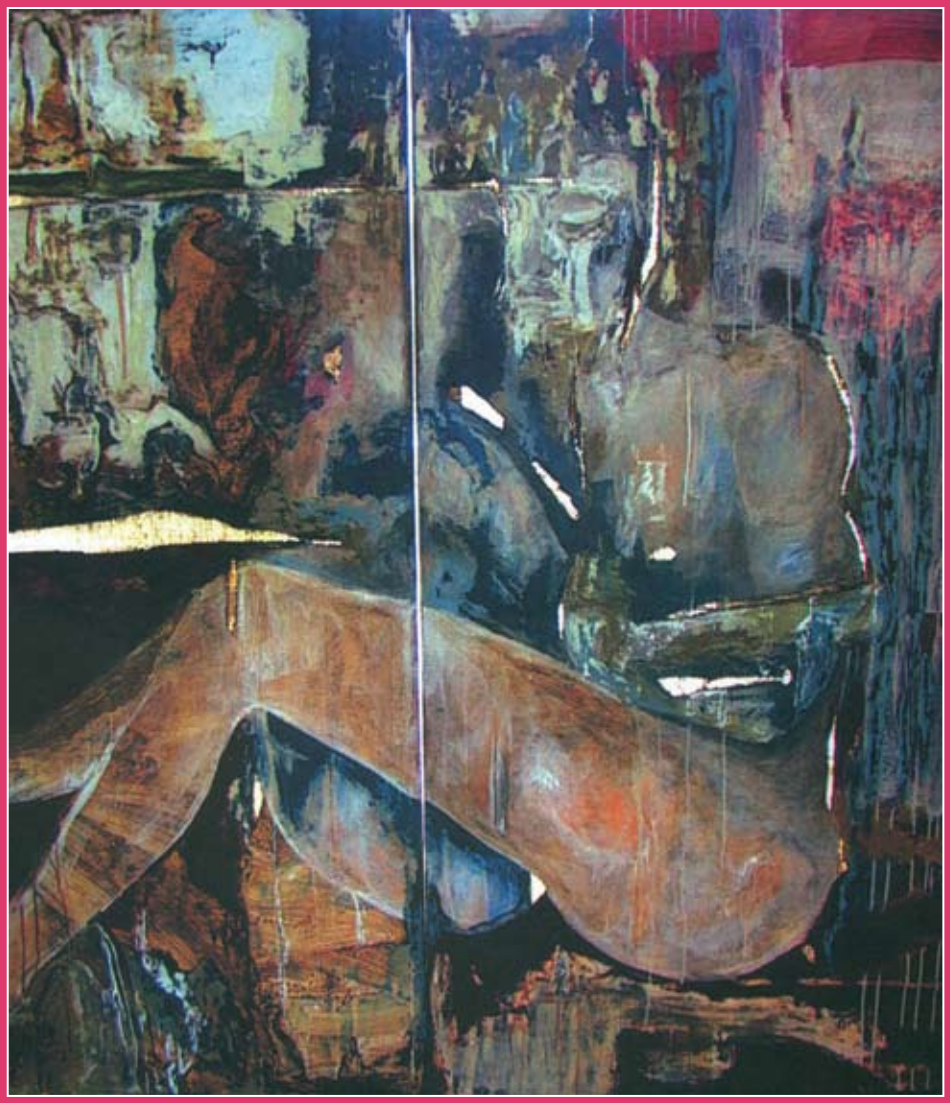
## Q: How have you gained from this experience at a personal and professional development level?

A: It seems like there are a million possibilities that have come out of this. For one, I now have my foot in the door in all kinds of places and created links with a wide range of artists and institutions. Another is that I have not made a sound recording since 1998 and I rediscovered that I adore making sound recordings and that the technologies for doing so have also gotten so much better. My collaboration with Ludivine has now led to other things. I've got British Council, British Academy grant to work with her through this spring, so I'll be in Paris six times and she'll be in Winchester four times. We're making a video part 2 of this project where we are trying to translate the painting process and voice process onto action and voice, which will end up feeding back into teaching.

## Q: Do you find this type of research unearths professional tensions?

A: There is currently a national argument that has a lot to do with the RAE 2001, and for a long time there has been an argument occurring between 'traditional' and 'practice–making' academics around what constitutes research, as I've already described. So I was relieved at linking up the Sorbonne where it is a very clear and accepted argument why artistic practice–led research is important and how it is distinct from other research in the sciences and humanities. This does not mean, however, that there are no tensions in France. The argument that insists on de–linking research and practice is, to me, tired and out of date, and largely based around defensive rather than creative thinking. I have heard practitioners in academia make the argument that practice can't exist for academics because they 'have no time' and can't stay up–to–date or skilled, which is a peculiar argument, and sees creativity as manifesting in very limited forms. I have also heard creative practitioners insist that they want nothing to do with research. However, there is often profound research content in their work, if by research we mean 'seeking' and 'discovery'. Above this, of course, there is a plethora of academics – particularly those who are loyal to very traditional definitions of research – in theatre–based disciplines who openly proclaim that practice can never and should never be linked to research agendas, for a wide variety of reasons. And there is a level of nervousness, particularly in the field of Dance, Drama and the Performing Arts across

the country, to admit to the fact that we bring our practices into the classroom, and that we bring our pedagogies into the classroom, and that these two things are intrinsically related. This is historical and systemic: the field emerged in UK universities from the English discipline, whereas visual arts and music have always had distinct departments and the politics of these fields are different. Essentially, in our field, we are required to take positions and defend them, as there is much national debate and dissention about the relationship between creative practice, research, teaching, and the role of the academic. This project dances along the fence between all of these conflicts, and I hope it is opens out to possibilities, rather than trying to limit the nature of creative practice and its relationship to research and teaching.



## Q: What advice would you give to other academics applying for RIT funding?

A: I would say go ahead and try it. There is funding around and the institution is enthusiastic and I don't think it is as hard to link research and teaching as a lot of people think it is. If you have an interest in pedagogy, I think it is actually quite easy to find those links if you think outside the limited box of the various, and often competing, national agendas for research and creative practice. Winchester, as a small institution, has an opportunity to build on difference, so I think it's important that we as academics take some risks around how we link creativity, research and teaching and that we develop ways of doing this that serve as models for more conservative environments.

# Men in a minority:

## male and female perspectives of men in primary teaching

*Dr Michael Yates, Dr Tansy Jessop and Simon Boxley*

*This research was upported by a Learning and Teaching Fellowship (2006) and presented at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) conference in September 2006.*

### Introduction

The feminisation of primary teaching is regarded as "an almost universal global phenomenon" (Drudy et al. 2005, p154). Nationally, about one in six primary teachers is male (DfES, in TDA 2005). The National Union of Teachers, UK government and its teacher recruitment agency, the Training and Development Agency (TDA) have all demonstrated real concerns about the shortage of male teachers. A recent survey reported that 83% of parents want to see more men in primary schools (TDA, 2005) reflecting the widespread common sense belief that male teachers raise boys' achievement. The gender imbalance is not only associated with a shortage and decline in recruitment of male teachers but also with the disproportionate number of male managers (Hutchings 2002).

This research sought to explore questions related to the minority status of male primary teachers at the University of Winchester, where around 10% of the intake is male, as against the national average of 15.7% (DfES, 2003). It focused on the student experience, both at university and on school placement. It aimed to develop our understanding of both male and female primary trainees' perceptions of gender and to explore dominant gender discourses reflected within primary teaching. The research was undertaken, in part, to develop evidence–based approaches to gender on the BA Primary programme and within support structures for men as a minority. The paradoxical question of how men's minority status is perceived when male dominance marks most professional spheres, including the management of primary schools, was a key thread in the study (Hutchings, 2002).

The study explored male and female final year student perspectives over a four year period from 2002 to 2006, during which men had an opportunity to attend a voluntary male support group, while female students were offered no additional support of this nature. It used student voice and their richly textured stories as a vehicle for analysis and reflection. In reflecting on both the male and female perspective, it provided a slightly different lens for reviewing gender in the context of the lives of those training to be teachers.

The paper highlights two key themes about male primary teachers which are reasonably commonplace in the literature. These are the feelings of isolation reported as a cause of wastage among male trainees (Thornton, 1999), and male anxieties related to physical contact with young children particularly touch issues, allied with concerns about homosexuality and paedophilia (Tobin 1997; Thornton 1999; Piper and Smith, 2003; Foster and Newman 2005).

In this study, a slightly more nuanced picture of the headlines emerged. Both men and women reported that their student status made them feel excluded on school placements, although arguably men experienced this more acutely. Women as well as men reported feeling edgy and uncomfortable about child protection issues, including touching children. Overall, the narratives of both men and women reflected stereotypical conceptions of men as breadwinners and women as 'carers'.

## Research methodology

Data from both sexes were collected using a series of individual semi–structured interviews with students in the final year of the undergraduate course. The views of ten male and twelve female students were gathered from a voluntary opportunity sample. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. All students signed ethical consent forms which included principles of trust in the research relationship related to confidentiality, anonymity of data and the right to withdraw from the project. When undertaking data collection the gender of the interviewer was considered important and in all cases was matched with the respondent (Fontana and Frey, 2003).

The researchers coded the data, kept interview records and journals, and identified themes from the data. Team conversations and meetings supported the process of data analysis. In representing the data, two or three interview outcomes were amalgamated to form a fictional character. These pen portraits were shared and checked with the individuals from the interview sample to ensure their credibility. The amalgamated pen portraits used pseudonyms for the protection of participant confidentiality since anonymity was considered particularly important for those embarking on a career in teaching.

Pen portraits and the use of stories were key elements in this research because both promote the voice of participants, whilst guaranteeing a level of confidentiality (Campbell and Kane, 1998; Campbell, 2000; Hustler et al., 2003). The approach was developed from Londra et al. (2002) because of its potential to provide additional insights empirically grounded in interview data. Smith and Sparkes (2008) describe the potential for narrative inquiry to bridge the gulf between the social science tradition and arts/humanities research. Narrative research opens up space for personal stories to shed light on socio–cultural realities. In using an amalgamated form of storytelling, we were representing some of the broader public themes which occurred in personal narratives and constructing our analysis around them.

> *"The paradoxical question of how men's minority status is perceived when male dominance marks most professional spheres, including the management of primary schools, was a key thread in the study."*

## Male and Female Perspectives

The pen portraits shed light on the male experience of studying to become a primary teacher. In this paper, we highlight three main themes which recurred, using excerpts from the portraits – these were:

capture

- Gendered career expectations
- Feelings of Isolation
- Masculinity and sexuality

*"Female students worked within dominant gender discourses embracing primary teaching as an ideal career for women and mothers."*

## Gendered career expectations

Stereotypical gender roles in society contributed to a negative perception of primary teaching for men. Students reflected the dominant and gendered view of men as breadwinners, and women as carers (King, 1998). There was a widespread perception that money and status mattered most in men's career choice, leading to unease for the few men who were swimming upstream by choosing to teach young children. Some men recounted opposition to their career choice from family and friends, as evidenced below:

> *My mother, who works as a Learning Support Assistant, tried to dissuade me from teaching. The reasons, whilst not directly related to gender, were due to poor pay which she thinks is only adequate as a second salary. My mates at home think that too (Will).*

Similarly, Dave expressed dissatisfaction with the financial rewards of teaching, and felt that the workload expectations merited a higher salary.

> *The workload expectations associated with the primary teacher's role are considerable and I think unacceptable when linked to financial rewards. I did not really appreciate this until Year 3 of the course. You just don't realise that you are never going to have free time in your life. I really don't know how anyone who is married with a family can ever be a primary teacher. Maybe that is one of the reasons why so many people leave (Dave).*

Stan decided to leave teaching in his final year, mainly because of poor pay.

> *I chose not to complete my final placement. The decision not to teach was not an easy one. A few factors influenced my decision: poor pay – one of the reasons I opted for teaching was because I didn't want an admin job in an office but it became clear that the only way to increase my salary would be to become a head teacher. The very long hours and mountains of paperwork were incredibly unappealing, I wanted to teach but I didn't want the teaching to swallow me whole! (Stan)*

Female students worked within dominant gender discourses embracing primary teaching as an ideal career for women and mothers. Carol described her teaching as family–friendly because it allowed her to take school holidays with her children. She implicitly devalued the intellectual side of primary teaching, essentialising it as "a domain devoid of intellectual or abstract reasoning" (King, 1998, p.4), and therefore, in her view, not suitable for men:

> *Loads of mums think "I need to go back to work. Where can I work?" Mums, like me, opt for teaching because it suits the family. I suppose it fits in with expectations of men as breadwinners, and women as carers, no–one thinks it's the male who*

*needs to work around the school holidays! Having said that, teaching is really 24/7, 365 days a year job... Also it's not seen as a manly job like a fireman or a policeman or something. They think if you've got a decent brain you don't want to waste it in the classroom, and get that salary (Carol).*

Female students described being supported in their choice of primary teaching as a career. Tina reflected on gendered family expectations of what counts as a suitable career, social perceptions of masculinity, and the expectation that 'real' men who become teachers generally take up management roles:

*Society expects women to become primary teachers, not men. It's a real shame, because people raise their eyebrows when a bloke becomes a teacher: "…is he that way inclined?" I remember my dad was really chuffed that I wanted to be a teacher, but if my brother had said he wanted to be a teacher, my dad wouldn't have been half as excited. He's a plumber and my dad loves it because it's a macho sort of job that 'real men' do. When men do become teachers people assume that they want to be head teachers. One of the students I taught with on placement was a bloke, and the teachers all asked him: "So, Nick, are you going for headship?" – not a question they asked me! (Tina)*

For a few women, male primary teachers represented a challenge to the dominant social reality, but at some financial and social cost, as reflected below:

*Having men teachers is good for both boys and girls throughout the school. It sort of challenges the stereotypes of men working in the city or being a plumber or builder. I suppose the biggest deterrent is the salary and the difficulties of working in a female dominated environment (Lucy).*

A striking feature of virtually all the female students' narratives was the relative invisibility of the impact of lack of financial rewards and status on them. Their stories seemed to reflect gendered expectations of primary teaching as a viable second career for wives and mothers, but a difficult career choice for men.

## Feelings of Isolation

In line with the literature, male students recounted feeling isolated (Moyles and Cavendish, 2001; Carrington, 2002). Given that men constitute around 10% of all students on the BA Primary, the experience of feeling isolated and in a minority was not surprising. For most, being in a minority at university was not a major problem as they were able to engage with campus life more generally.

*"I felt an outsider in all the staffrooms until my final practice – there is a mysterious rite of passage on final placement."*

Feelings of isolation and exclusion were expressed almost entirely in the context of school placements. While this was often an acute experience for male trainees, female students also described feeling on the outside at schools, and final year students recognised that staff rooms tended to be more inclusive the closer that they got to qualifying. As one female student commented, "I felt an outsider in all the staffrooms until my final practice – there is a

mysterious rite of passage on final placement".

Dave described some of the difficulties for a male trainee, but suggested that the university context had some advantages:

> *Despite knowing I was moving into a profession dominated by women I was struck by female predominance on the course – there are only 20 male students out of 200 in our year. I must say I missed the banter and humour of an all male environment… In university there are always a few men around with whom you can seek sanctuary but it's not like that in school; at times it can almost feel hostile, there is no escape….(Dave).*

Staff rooms were the main place of exclusion in male student narratives, both in terms of the nature of the conversation and the absence of men, as the extracts below demonstrate:

> *The staffroom was female dominated– as was the conversation – I found that difficult, somewhat restrictive and it limited my conversation to work–related matters. I would have welcomed the opportunity to talk about football and sports rather than the more difficult areas of family and personal relationship issues which seemed to characterise everyday staff conversation… (Will).*

> *My teacher commented to the link tutor that I was very quiet in the staffroom but I did feel out of it somewhat… the topics of conversation were about families, babies, going to the shops and gym after school….calorie–controlled diets – very female topics. I would have dearly liked to have talked about football….(Dave).*

Perceptions among female students provided a slightly different lens on the problem, and at times contradicted it. One commented, "The kinds of men who enter the profession are a bit unusual, they're the kind of men you can sit down and have a good gossip with" (Carol). In the university context, men were perceived as receiving preferential treatment by some female students, "Being in a minority does confer special status. Most of the tutors know all of the men by name. I bet they wouldn't all know my name but if I was a male they would!" (May). From a female perspective, men in primary teaching are both a minority and an elite, reinforced by the reality that they occupy a disproportionate number of head teacher and promotion posts. Carol reflected on this:

> *On the course, men aren't shut up by being a minority though– they tend to be very confident and the quaint all–male support group flags them up as being different and special – an elite... Sometimes their achievements get noticed when if they were a woman they would be overlooked because they get preferential treatment because they are in a minority. We joke with them and say "Of course you'll get the job. You've got a penis!" (Carol)*

## Masculinity and sexuality

Male primary teachers' constructions of masculinity are widely discussed in the literature. Issues include perceptions of men as being somewhat different and outside typical masculinities; expectations of men to provide a muscular, sporty presence in schools (Foster and Newman, 2003; King, 1998; Sumsion, 2000); allusions to the multidimensionality of identity, of which gender is but one part (Hall, 1992; Connell 1987; 2002 in Skelton, 2003); gender isolation; and the view that men who teach younger children are sexually suspect, cast either

as perverts, paedophiles or wimps (King, 1998; Carrington, 2002; Hutchings 2002).

One pen portrait depicts men's anxiety about the invasion of their personal space by children, feelings of being constantly under scrutiny, and some men's response of distancing themselves from children as a defence:

> *One issue that I have found hard to share with anyone except my wife and one or two close friends on the course is the paedophile paranoia that exists within society. The management of mixed changing for PE in classrooms for instance …. My male mates who are not teachers tease me socially and I am very conscious of how a male teacher's actions could be misrepresented. I found it very difficult on one placement when a precocious Year 6 girl was too familiar – I felt uncomfortable because she invaded my space and stood too close…. Although not wishing to be cold towards children, especially those without a father figure, I have tended to distance pupils because of that experience (Dave).*

Ambiguities and silences around touching children, which King (1998) refers to as "touch hysteria" are key to Stan's rejection of teaching as a career, and form a central contradiction for male entrants to the profession: "the necessity of teachers touching, and the impossibility of men touching children" (King, 1998, p.76):

> *On my third year practice, which I completed satisfactorily, I asked my teacher for advice – 'What should do if a child in my Y1 class begins to cry in assembly?' I had noticed female teachers picked these children up and placed them on their laps. My teacher became all blustery and said 'Oh no, you definitely can't do that.' She directed me to the only male teacher who was nearing retirement. He did not seem to have a clue how to answer my question– 'Don't know, just pick them up'. Here is a perfect illustration of my predicament – two conflicting pieces of advice from staff in the same school (Stan).*

From a female perspective, Carol's narrative confirmed the prevalence of suspicion about male primary teachers' touching children, but went on to explore how child protection made both men and women edgy and anxious:

> *Recently I visited a school where there was a male head teacher and a young male teacher and I got really uncomfortable because – and it was perfectly fine, I'm not saying it was inappropriate – but they were touching the children all the time. Kids were climbing all over them and it was really tactile and I was thinking, 'Oh dear!' (Carol).*
>
> *I'm also very aware of child protection issues myself. I've probably had more incidents with boys than with girls, which, from a personal point of view hasn't been a problem because I have sons, but from a moral point of view I found it quite awkward. Sometimes, when I've found myself unintentionally on my own in*

"One issue that I have found hard to share with anyone… is the paedophile paranoia that exists within society."

capture

*the classroom with children – like when they're bringing their lunchboxes back after lunch, I've felt a bit uncomfortable, like should I be alone with these children. All that is doubly difficult for men, I think (Carol).*

Another female pen portrait captured the edginess among men in primary schools,

> *"I had a male friend who was really edgy about child protection. He said it was like walking on eggshells, and he dreaded little girls coming up to him and touching his legs."*

likened to "walking on egg shells", but also the surprisingly vulnerable position women sometimes find themselves in:

*I had a male friend who was really edgy about child protection. He said it was like walking on eggshells, and he dreaded little girls coming up to him and touching his legs. You have to be so careful if you are a man, what with the Holly and Jessica stories in the media, and all the focus on paedophiles. I mean one of the things about teaching is that you have to feel comfortable with children – you don't go into teaching if you're not! On one placement, I discovered that it cuts both ways though. There were a lot of emotionally and behaviourally challenged kids, and the school had a policy to cuddle them. There was a Year 3 lad whose dad had died recently, and he came to me for a cuddle in story time. I thought it was all ok, but out of the blue he says "Oh, I love your boobs Mrs Stoppard!" That was when I realised what a fine line we all walk as teachers (Tina).*

Students generally espoused the notion that primary schools need good male role models, in line with commonly yet uncritically accepted discourse that male teachers improve boys' behaviour, enhance their achievement, and act as father figures, particularly in contexts of family breakdown. A mother who had been a single parent echoed the belief that male teachers were able to stand in the gap for families where male role models were absent:

*Speaking from my own experience as a parent of teenage boys I think it's very, very sad that there are so few male role models in primary schools. I do think children lose out and I think also there's the issue with families splitting up. There isn't always the male role at home for them to follow and it would be nice for there to be some form of male mentor that they could look up to. You can't always as a young child talk to a female about things you need to talk about if it's male orientated (Carol).*

A counter–view was proposed by another female student, who regarded gender as irrelevant:

*For me it does not make much difference if you're a man or a woman in terms of doing the job. It's about relationships with the children and it's the teacher who has to make the relationship (Sara).*

This perspective aligned with research evidence that although "common sense as well as theoretical speculation supports the importance of male role models in boys' gender development, there is a lack of supporting empirical research evidence" (Sokal et al. 2004, p.24). They cite

three empirical studies (Carrington and Skelton 2003; Froude, 2002; Martin, 2003), all of which failed to support the importance of male role models in the classroom. A full exploration of the role model argument by Carrington et al. (2005) and Thornton and Bricheno (2006) indicates that students value teachers who maintain discipline in the classroom regardless of their gender.

Prevailing perceptions about the kind of men who take up teaching suggested a fairly stereotypical picture of sporty, muscular men, or those who were somehow more in touch with their 'feminine' side. Several narratives also suggested that male teachers encouraged more risk–taking, were better at motivating boys, and gave an alternative perspective to the curriculum. Interestingly, it was the female primary students who had more to say about the archetypal male primary teacher:

> *Men bring a bit of an alternative view to the curriculum and the sporty side to school life. They can also motivate the lads (Tina).*

> *A lot of them do PE as their specialist subject, maybe that's a bit more of a masculine thing to do. The majority choose Key Stage 2. So they're either quite, you know, feminine or more the Flashman types, authoritarians. Some men do act as fantastic role models, having that softness, that approachability, but also being able to control some of those Key Stage 2 boys (Carol).*

> *From my own experience, men may be better at the sporty side that sometimes women are a little more reluctant to do. They can be better at helping pupils become more independent, pushing them to have a go (Sara).*

## Conclusions

The narratives of final year BA Primary students revealed a complex and contradictory set of expectations around male teacher identities. Expectations of men to be sporty and muscular, yet in touch with their 'soft' feminine side, were widespread. In general, students conformed to traditional social expectations for men to be the main breadwinners and women to act as carers, mothers and nurturers. Responses from some female students made specific reference to gender stereotypes describing men who enter primary teaching and especially the early years as 'gay', 'camp' or outside normative masculinities, and lacking in ambition. The discourse of the male role model as an unquestioned 'good' in schools pervaded.

*"Responses from some female students made specific reference to gender stereotypes describing men who enter primary teaching and especially the early years as 'gay', 'camp' or outside normative masculinities, and lacking in ambition."*

Both male and female students expressed feelings of isolation in the staff room and anxiety about child protection. This challenged the dominant view that these are unique problems faced by male students in initial teacher training. School placements provided the most challenging contexts for students in terms of social exclusion and the culture of fear and silence around child protection and touching children. Female students empathised with men working with primary pupils recognising that men who chose to work

in Key Stage 1, in particular, were often treated with suspicion. Yet even mature married women with families and significant previous experience working in schools expressed anxiety about child protection and the professional parameters in areas such as touch and toilet training.

The research has several implications for the BA programme. The first is that more time and space needs to be created for students to explore their personal beliefs about gender as part of the development of an individual professional teacher identity. Secondly, the research suggests that students would benefit from a more intentional and focused exploration of the literature on gender in primary teaching, and in particular reflection on whether the sex of a teacher has any impact on children's learning experience. Finally, the findings demonstrate considerable nervousness about child protection among primary trainees, which may need addressing earlier on in the programme. In all of these instances, the full pen portraits may provide useful evidence–based tools for exploring the construction of teacher gender identities, and developing a critical approach to stereotyping and the more structural dimensions of sexism.

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# Consultancy Informed Teaching:

## How investigating knowledge management has become key to knowledge generation

*Roz Sunley from Education and Katrina Easterling from Social Sciences joined forces to explore Consultancy Informed Teaching (CIT) as a strand of RIT. Not only did this focus upon a unique aspect of RIT, but it was undertaken with a cross–disciplinary and university wide focus. Here Roz and Katrina talk to CAPTURE about how their project has generated a new enthusiasm for further funding.*

## Q: How is your RIT project unique?

A: It is a collaborative piece of work between two different faculties, which is quite unusual and our subject is about consultancy informed teaching. We were looking at the value CIT would bring to academic staff, students and the university as a whole.

## Q: Can you explain what CIT is?

A: CIT is about academics relating to the world of industry, commerce and organisations. Whilst staying inside their disciplinary remit, they are going out and opening up a dialogue with the outside world. The Government says this is exactly what universities should be doing. CIT is about academics' own continued professional development (CPD) – to renew, to learn but then bringing that back to share with their peers and students, ie, knowledge transfer. It is less about training and instructing and more about learning. For example, theories – how can they actually be applied and to which work in the outside world of commerce and industry? It is also about getting students to engage in their own learning. There is a lot of self reflection involved, which is a key part of consultancy. As university teachers, we should be considering; what have I learnt through engaging outside that I can bring back to the university? We also came across a lot of different dimensions of consultancy because it is many things to many different people – paid, unpaid, formal and informal consultancy interactions. Key, is the fact that CIT is research – more akin to action research but an equally valid type of research. Girdwood (1996) described it as an 'area of legitimate academic activity'. So by undertaking it, we are adding to the research profile of our University.

## Q: What prompted your interest in CIT?

A:We were particularly interested in approaches to teaching and learning that consultants use because they're working in a very different marketplace. There is a difference between learning and teaching in an education environment than in a less formal environment. We were also keen to look at the approaches that consultants were using without even realising it, and that perhaps these could inform and improve approaches to teaching and learning in the university. This is particularly relevant in today's knowledge society where the way people learn is changing all the time. It's going to continue to change because what is required in the marketplace is very different from 20 years ago. We are aiming to find new ways for teachers to keep evolving and changing with the outside world. It was particularly interesting to hear the diversity of people engaging in consultancy. We looked at those involved in arts consultancy, education consultancy and business consultancy, giving our project a multi–disciplinary view. We worked with those who approached it from the opposite perspective – those who were consultants in business but working in a university environment. We got a very rich mix of different approaches and I think that this diversity was one of the most interesting parts of this process.

## Q: Methodologically, how did you investigate such a wide brief?

A: Obviously we were from different faculties, so we represented Education and Social Sciences but we wanted to get all the faculties involved. So we had a working party, two representatives

from each faculty, and that's how the Arts people became involved. We had three meetings with the working party to explore the different research questions that we had. The idea of having a working party that included people from every faculty meant it wasn't just our interpretation of that data we were collecting – we would have an interpretation from each of the faculties. In addition, it served to influence our interpretation of what we then went out and investigated. It was a cyclical and adaptable process. We had to share what we found and explain it to the working party then take onboard their ideas which made it a more iterative, creative process. We then went further afield, outside the university, to undertake interviews with representatives from all of the areas, for example in education we met with head teachers, an education consultant and an advanced skills teacher, giving a broad range. We included people who were calling themselves consultants who worked in non–profitable organisations, private business, working within the public sector and so forth. One of the outcomes of this methodology was that it stretched and tested us more and we had to think in a more robust manner. We were questioned and we had some quite challenging and interesting discussions as well which we had to precipitate, so I think it was developed into a robust research method. In terms of the research model, we were looking at a Reflective Practice Model as opposed to a Traditional Model where the learner is merely a subordinate. In the Ostermann & Kottkamp (1994) model, the learner is much more engaged through the action research of the teacher. In plain English, this helps turn out students who are more engaged in their learning and have greater employability.

## Q: Why did you both decide to undertake a collaborative project?

A: By chance really. We'd never met each other before. We both put in separate RIT bids. The L&T Director at the time saw similarities in our bids and asked us if we would be interested in working with somebody outside our own faculty. One of us has a much more commercial background, whilst the other has a more educational background. We've both got an outward looking, practical approach. So the idea of actually being able to work with somebody else who would bring another idea, another dimension or lens was great. So having thought about that, we thought how do we then encourage this in other people?

## Q: Do you feel you encouraged this within your participants?

A: Within most universities there is a silo mentality in that whatever anybody's doing nobody else really knows about, and the only opportunity one has to find this out is to have conversations about it. This project provided a wonderful opportunity to have real conversations. One of the greatest things the working party came back with was what a fabulous opportunity this had been, to actually talk with other people and to explore their ideas and to be stretched, not just for us but for them, and why don't we do more of this?. One of the immediate spin offs from this for my teaching was that I watched other approaches to teaching and learning and from that observation I actually got somebody in class to come and input on one of my courses. To say 'I'd like you to come in and do a session on one of my modules' was

highly valuable and I'm now going to build them in. Without this project I would never have known about their skills. If more of this was going on, it might enhance the richness of other courses.

## Q: How are you going to take this project on to the second stage?

A: We've now got all this information, so to make best use of it in the university we need to share it. What was interesting was that there is a lot of consultancy going on in the university, there are a lot of skills out there that nobody knows about either. So how do we communicate best practice? This was a springboard for us to say that the second stage is to look at current practice in the university, encourage these people to come out of the woodwork and share what they've done and build on what we've already found out. What we have suggested for our Part II is to explore the possibility of recommending the creation of different processes within the university. We want to get people thinking about how to utilise consultancy, how to do it, then give them ways and opportunities of how to get more involved in it. We also want to look at some of the university's own processes that work against knowledge management and highlight those. We are developing a report for senior management which can then be a useful tool to inform their decision making.

## Q: What advice would you give to people applying for L&T or RIT funding for next year?

A: Don't be daunted by the paperwork, or the process. Seek out the people who can help you to complete the paperwork for the bid and get their help. If you are a new researcher, it is a better learning process to co–research in the first instance. If you have an idea, a passion, keep going and don't give up. It's only by articulating your passion that often you realise what it is you are passionate about. And when you discover knowledge that can make a real difference, it makes it all worthwhile.

# Research to Teach and Teach to Research

*Yaz El Hakim, Director of Learning and Teaching & Professor Elizabeth Stuart, Pro Vice Chancellor*

*This paper has been written to address some important issues around the teaching/research balance and how lecturers could help protect their allotment of hours for research and knowledge transfer.*

The University of Winchester expects all full–time staff (and others as appropriate) to engage in research and knowledge transfer (RKT) with measurable (i.e. peer reviewed) outputs. All full–time staff are given 400 hours per annum to engage in this activity and staff are also able to apply for a variety of internal RKT funds to supplement this allowance. Staff are also actively encouraged to apply for external funding for their RKT projects. Winchester regards the generation, transfer and exchange of knowledge as central to its learning and teaching, as well as its mission. All our teaching from Foundation Degree to PhD should be research informed and we expect all our staff to be able to demonstrate how their research informs their teaching.

The demands of an academic position are high and it can sometimes be hard to balance the demands of teaching with the need to find time to do research.

This paper seeks to help lecturers optimise the time they have for research or knowledge transfer through creative approaches to teaching. The paper addresses six issues:

1) Organisation of time and balance of duties
2) Commitment to research and knowledge transfer
3) Preparation for teaching
4) Different teaching techniques that could be utilised
5) Using students as researchers

## 1. Organisation of Time and Balance of Duties

RKT activity is as much a right and duty of an academic as teaching. It is not an optional activity if you are a full–time member of staff or on a fractional contract. You therefore have to find time to do it and you should negotiate that time with your line manager. You need to take your basic 400 hours because you will be asked to account for them and you have a right to apply for internal and external funds to supplement that time. Modules do not have to be taught once a week for twelve weeks, although traditionally this is how many of our modules have worked. Where appropriate it is sometimes possible to teach modules in different ways – intensively over a few days or weeks or over weekends. Blended learning may also create a more flexible amount of time in which to do research. Many members of staff designate RKT days and work from home or external libraries for those days. Others take periods of time away. Try to find the method which best works for you. The important thing is not to let your RKT activity slip and sometimes this may involve saying NO to other things.

Nothing eats into RKT like administration! Every academic has to take their turn on the wheel of academic administration but it is important not to let it smother RKT activity. External duties such as external examining, journal editing and professional activities are important indices of esteem usually offered on the basis of an RKT profile. You should discuss the balance of your internal and external duties with your line manager in order to ensure you have the requisite time and space for RKT activities.

## 2. Commitment to RKT

RKT enhances teaching. Students like to know that they are being taught by experts in their field. Teaching is an opportunity to test and develop methods, theories and products. A symbiotic relationship between teaching and research is at the heart of best practice and an enhanced learning experience. We engage in RKT activity not just because it is part of the job but because it is essential to our teaching.

## 3. Preparation

There are many ways teaching can debilitate the amount of RKT that individuals do. The main example with regard to preparation is 'the perfectionist syndrome' – spending a disproportionate amount of time on preparation for a lecture. It is understandable when you first start teaching or when teaching a new area/topic that more preparation time will be necessary. The issue arises when, for example, one would spend six hours preparing for a session which had been delivered in some derivative form before. In the early stages of an academic career it is easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of teaching and teaching–related activity you are expected to do. But remember that all too soon someone is going to ask where your RKT measurable outputs are.

## 4. Teaching Techniques

There are a number of teaching techniques which can be utilised to create more flexible time which may facilitate RKT activities. Here are a few examples:

> *"A symbiotic relationship between teaching and research is at the heart of best practice and an enhanced learning experience."*

a) Virtual Teaching and E–Learning – There are many ways in which advances in technology and our own systems here at Winchester are enhancing our capabilities to be more innovative with our teaching. At a recent L&T Day at the University (9th April 2008) there were examples of innovative use of the Learning Network (LN) and other similar e–learning software and devices. Colleagues were clear that the LN offered ways of interacting with the students which were far more collaborative and interactive than traditional seminars. The use of blogging, wikis and forums showed students vibrantly interacting with different topics and contexts and working as colleagues. The use of technology allows slightly less vocal students to share their points of view and provides an opportunity to shine. It allows different debates to grow out of the initial position and include all the members of the group. Strategic use of technology can create time flexibility and space for RKT activity.

b) The use of Problem Based Learning (PBL) – while being both student–centred and an established educational method, PBL uses problem solving as the starting point for learning (Bligh, 1995). This approach is initiated with teachers/lecturers designing a problem based on desired curriculum outcomes, learner characteristics and compelling, problematic situations from the real world (Fournier, 2002, cited in Beringer, 2007). Hmelo and Ferrari (1997) identified 4 main objectives behind PBL:

1. Construct an extensive and flexible knowledge base.

2. Develop effective problem–solving skills.

3. Become effective collaborators.

4. Become intrinsically motivated to learn.

*"Recent research by Fazey and Fazey (2001) suggests that students at year one of their University studies also have the capability to be autonomous in their learning."*

Once the problem has been designed and delivered the role of facilitating the students through the exercise can be less formal in both in time and space. A well designed and considered problem could reduce teaching input whilst gaining some very rewarding academic answers. However, poorly designed and instructed problems which need constant clarification could end up being very time intensive.

c) Practical Sessions – The use of practical sessions within academia has been well established for many years, yet some academics still do not use this effective tool for applying the academic content to real life settings/contexts. Practical sessions are heavily used in language sectors, laboratory based areas (e.g. medicine, psychology and physiology/physiotherapy). Watling (2001) believed that a more practical element within academic learning is needed. With an increasing emphasis from central government on vocational courses (DFES White Paper, 2003), it would be in our best interest to enhance existing business links and conceive new links to offer our students placements in industry. Here students are able to practically apply the knowledge they have gained in their degrees so far. More students with practical knowledge application through industrial experiences can enhance the university experience by informed sharing, reflecting and debating with lecturers and peers. The University Activity Based Learning module allows programmes to use the module as an elective for their programme. It also provides an opportunity for staff to provide students with an industry specific experience alongside learning outcomes for the student and increased flexibility for RKT activities in the unique way most placements are structured.

## 5. Students as Researchers

The culmination of an undergraduate student's time at University is the production of a Final Year Project (FYP), in which the student undertakes an independent piece of research with only tutorials and workshops as contact time. The rationale for this has been that third year students are in a position to learn independently and are self motivated to research a specified area. However, recent research by Fazey and Fazey (2001) suggests that students at year one of their University studies also have the capability to be autonomous in their learning. They concluded

that it was, "the responsibility of those who structure the learning environment to nurture undergraduate potential if autonomous behaviour is to be realised as an outcome of higher education." (pp.345). Encouraging students to become active researchers may reduce time in the classroom but involving students in existing RKT projects also has the potential to enhance their experience and skills and also contribute to your own RKT activity. It embeds RKT firmly in the teaching environment and encourages progress towards Masters and research degrees.

## Summary

It is possible to develop a symbiotic relationship between your teaching and RKT activities to enable you to do both effectively. It is also possible to teach in such a way as to create more flexible time and space to engage in RKT activity. When we teach, our aim is to create independent learners, capable of critical and creative thinking. Reflecting this way of working ourselves is therefore crucial to the teaching and learning process.

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capture

# On the cutting edge:

## Globalisation and Management

*CAPTURE spoke to Dr Paul Sheeran, who leads an interdisciplinary MA in Managing Contemporary Global Issues (MCGI). The MA explores the interface of cultural studies, business management, economics and politics, within the context of globalisation, and is unique in UK Higher Education. Paul is the author of several related books, including Cultural Politics in International Relations (2001), International Political Economy of Investment Bubbles (2004) with Amber Spain, and Literature and International Relations: Stories in the Art of Diplomacy (2007)*

## Q: What sparked your interest in developing an MA (MCGI)?

A: Firstly, it was a spell of being a communications officer for a law firm in Washington DC, in my early twenties, where I was always going to the World Bank and the IMF. Actually, I went to study in Vancouver B.C. in my early teens and that sparked an interest in geography and basic International Relations. When I returned to the UK after Washington D.C, I set up my own market research firm doing media monitoring for some large clients like Canon PLC, Post Office Counters, and Michael Heseltine's 'City Challenges', and we went Europe–wide. These experiences underlined the relationship between economics and politics. In the early 1990s I started doing a PhD which began by looking at the informal economy in the former Soviet Union, and moved on to explore how dissidence was expressed through cultural politics. The study of international relations often misses these cultural subtleties – as a discipline it's traditionally masculine and conservative. My research on the disintegration of the former Soviet Union was about recognising the impact of informal markets (blat) and culture on international relations.

## Q: How was the MA conceptualised?

A: It came about as a result of my interest in international business, and my frustration with international relations, which is overly dominated by theoretical perspectives. The main aim of the course is to give students who have an interest in international relations, the opportunity to build a career around it. We have several examples of this happening on the course – we had someone with a first degree in engineering with a strong interest in the work of Greenpeace, and went on to become their Solutions Manager after graduating. Another example was a Russian student who had experience in the Banking sector, and has gone to Coventry University to do a PhD in International Relations. One of our Japanese students won a contest against 300 job candidates in Tokyo to work in a management capacity in the tourism industry. Apparently what set her apart from the other candidates was her capacity for critical thinking. She had come to us as a very nervous Shoei student and she used the course to liberate herself from certain cultural restrictions.

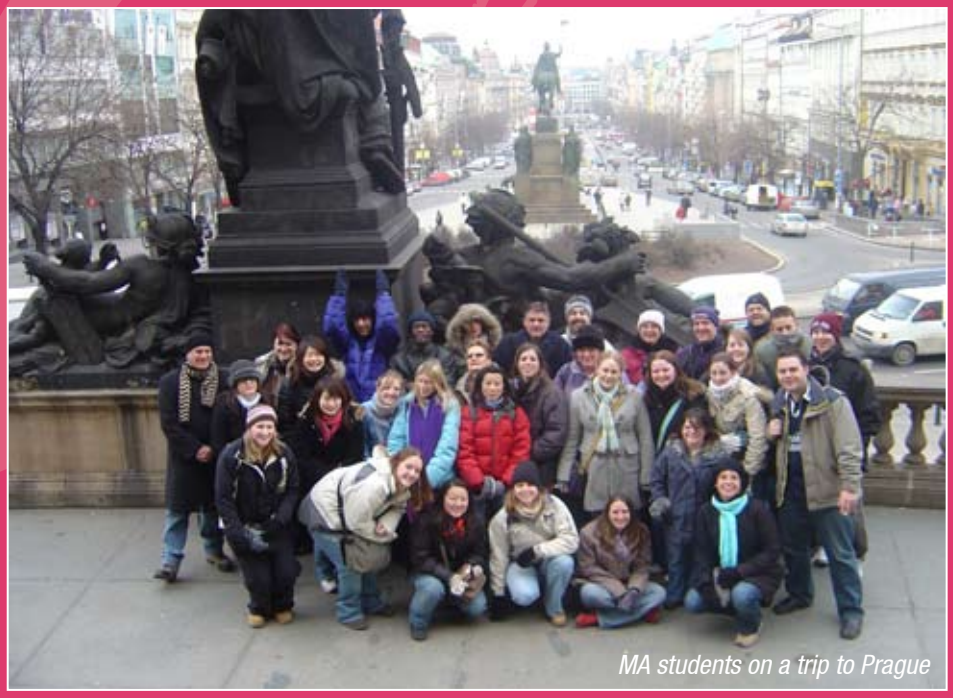
## Q: How would you describe your pedagogic and theoretical approach to the course?

A: We explore mainstream theoretical perspectives from International Relations, like liberalism and radicalism. On the business side we focus on students' interests as the basis for developing an understanding of project management, and familiarising them with tools like Microsoft project software. The project management element uses 'real–life' projects such as a development project seeking to deliver aid relief by Oxfam to Madagascar. Students' assessed projects include import and export documentation, storage and logistics. The course is very student–led, so the project management final assessment is in an area of the student's interest. We've had projects on setting up an indigenous art centre in South Africa, one on Land Rights in Australia, and one on using dance and theatre to help disseminate information about taking prescription drugs in communities where a written prescription may not be effective, which was undertaken by someone from Eli

Lilly. The project managers are given a realistic budget and have to cost their projects, in a way which enables them to get to grips with financial management. I work out a realistic budget by finding a similar project being done by the World Bank, IMF or the investment banks, and give them an equivalent figure. It's interesting, because the student is usually familiar with the area, the costing of their resources is pretty accurate. The whole exercise feels quite tangible to the students because they have to deliver a project within a realistic budget. About 80% of our students have worked in a career and the majority are studying to enhance their career skills.

## Q: How does the MA address the interface between business management and socio-cultural factors?

One way we do this is by studying real cases from community projects, the prison service and border disputes. Last week, we were looking at the multinational prison environment, and exploring how prisons reflect the tensions in society. Students had to look at Home Office stats on the distribution of different nationalities in British prisons, and find out about recorded incidents related to gangs in prison. The students are often our cultural resource for exploring socio–cultural tensions. In the past we've looked at the Eritrean/Ethiopian border dispute, using a non–Western model to get to the roots of the dispute. In the West we tend to think of disputes as being mainly about money or territory, but there are often much more subtle historical influences that are personal, tribal or even existential. The Western model tends to underplay the spiritual, and the role of clan and personal factors in disputes.



*MA students on a trip to Prague*

## Q: Who teaches on the MA Managing Contemporary Global Issues?

A: We are a team of one, and a team of many. We invite guest speakers from the business sector or NGOs to take sessions on course. One of the plusses for me has been to get an idea of what other people are doing in the university, like Tim Prentki with Theatre for Development, and Christina Welch in Religious Studies, Stephanie Spencer in Education and William Sheward in American Studies, for example. The programme has allowed me to meet colleagues who are working in a range of fields in global studies – the institution is littered with colleagues doing amazing things outside the UK.

## Q: Why is the course taught in Basingstoke?

A: Historically this was part of Winchester's regional development. The rationale for us was that Basingstoke has an international business community, whereas Winchester's economy is based on heritage and tourism, the church and schools. London is only 45 minutes on the train, and there are good links to Newbury. It made more sense for us to be in Basingstoke. Basingstoke is a business town.

## Q: How does your MA relate to the university's internationalisation agenda?

A: About 70% of our students would be classified as international, paying international fees, and probably about 90% of our students have historic ties to overseas countries. Many work for international firms. There is an issue that international students require substantive support, in terms of visas, finances, pastoral care and accommodation, and Student Support Services is all located in Winchester. It would be hugely helpful if there was a weekly slot where the Welfare officer for International Students was on site at Basingstoke for referral of some of these complex issues that I can't really deal with but feel an obligation to handle. I spend quite a bit of my time getting help from Ann Keating – the team in student services are very supportive.

## Q: What are your hopes for the course?

I think if the course was marketed in external facing journals like the Economist, we would be able to grow to two or three times our size. People reading the Economist, as one example, would also be more likely to be the kinds of students we would want to recruit, in terms of having a business or development background. When I drive between Winchester and Basingstoke, I sometimes listen to WinFM and I keep hearing publicity about Solent and Portsmouth Universities and even Eastleigh College, but never Winchester. I think we may be missing out on new immigrants in the South, from Eastern Europe. The other thing we need is to build a strong postgraduate culture at Winchester, where students are supported and nurtured as post graduates. In Basingstoke, we can feel as if we are off the radar. Last year we validated an MSc in Global Environment and Development, and I see that the Centre for Climate Change at the University is busy going through the birth pangs of validating an MA on Climate Change. It is as though Chute House is invisible sometimes, which I'm certain isn't the intention.

## Q: Any chance of you bidding for L&T or Research Informed Teaching funds?

A: Research is very important to me. We are using a variety of assessments in the programme – filming, presentations etc. So, yes, teaching bids might be forthcoming. One of the difficulties is 'being a team of one' and another is the constant challenge of being in a rapidly changing and evolving area of study. Global Issues demands a holistic perspective. Sometimes I wish I was exclusively teaching an old classic like Richard III.

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