



## GTA and New Lecturers follow-up survey report

As part of our evaluation of Economics Network (EN) work, we conducted a survey of the Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and New Lecturers (NLs) who took part in our workshops between 2010 and 2012. The survey was run online, through the Bristol Online Surveys website, from 18 March until 7 April 2013. We received 50 replies to the survey: 49 replies through BOS and 1 in an e-mail sent after the online survey had closed.

Of the respondents, nearly a quarter were New Lecturers and the rest were teaching assistants.

More than three quarters of the replies came from those who took part in the workshops in 2012, one fifth from those who took part in 2011 and the rest were attendees of the 2010 workshops. This difference in response rate from the various years is understandable, as many of the GTAs may have moved universities in the last 2 years or left higher education entirely. This was also indicated by the fact that we received a number of automatic replies stating that the email was not delivered to the sender.

More than half of the respondents use EN resources in their teaching activities: with 75.0% of NLs using them and 45.5% of GTAs. Among those who use them, about three fifths use case studies/reflections on teaching; one fifth use the question bank and handbook chapter for teaching assistants, and one sixth use other handbook chapters and topics pages. Data set pages were used by 7.7% of respondents (only NLs use them) and 3.8% use IREE papers. Among other resources used were the METAL resources and the information and ideas on classroom games.

When asked how they are using EN resources, nearly seven out of ten respondents said they used them to help prepare their classes. More than two fifths use EN resources in the classroom and three out of ten use them to design modules or programmes (the percentages were higher among New Lecturers – 77.7%, 55.5% and 55.5% respectively). More than one in ten use EN resources to help with setting assessment, to help with giving feedback and with other matters (such as “*extra exercises for students to complete*”, “*as part of my study for a postgraduate certificate in academic practice (PGCAP) and to provide extra materials to students*”).

The reasons given for not using these resources included lack of time, lack of familiarity with the resources, not having enough control in teaching to be able to use them, being adequately resourced by the department, and didn't need them at that stage of their career. Some mentioned personal laziness and lack of relevance to the courses they are teaching. About 4.0% of respondents didn't find them useful.

Respondents were asked in what way the workshop and/or the use of EN resources impacted on their teaching. Two thirds said that they feel more confident when teaching, three in five feel more prepared for classes, three out of ten feel that their students are more engaged and more than two fifths feel that the quality of their teaching has improved. The replies to this question were more positive from NLs than from GTAs. The following were among the comments received: “*I have tried to implement some of the suggestions discussed during the workshop in my lectures and I feel they have helped make the lectures more stimulating and useful for students*”; “*The workshop gave me a*

*better idea of what to expect and how to approach teaching. I've still got a way to go, but it has definitely helped get me started"; "I know better how to handle issues arising in classes."*

The next question asked the respondents which of the various aspects of the workshops they would like to see more focus on both in the workshops and the EN website. More than 50.0% of **all respondents** want more focus in New Lecturers workshops on lectures, and course and assessment design; and in GTA workshops on small group teaching, e.g. seminars. With regards to website resources, respondents requested short example classes given by experts, assessment, course and assessment design, effective use of technology, and how students learn economics, e.g. theories/research into pedagogy.

More specifically, over 50.0% of NLS wanted more focus at their workshops on:

- teaching specific subjects e.g. statistics;
- short example classes given by experts;
- small group teaching e.g. seminars;
- lectures;
- course and assessment design;
- effective use of technology;
- integrating new methods into teaching e.g. problem based learning;
- managing relationships with your teaching colleagues;
- teaching international students and other diverse students;
- how students learn economics e.g. theories/research into pedagogy.

The only two issues that less than 50.0% of NLS requested more of at the workshops were assessment and providing effective and efficient feedback, which they would like to have in the form of additional website resources instead.

GTAs also stated that they would like to see attendees give short teaching demonstrations with feedback, and for there to be more focus on:

- teaching specific subjects e.g. statistics;
- short example classes given by experts;
- small group teaching e.g. seminars;
- providing effective and efficient feedback;
- integrating new methods into teaching e.g. problem based learning;
- teaching international students and other diverse students;
- how students learn economics e.g. theories/research into pedagogy.

More than 50.0% of GTAs believe that focus on lectures should be for NLS, and that focus on course and assessment design, effective use of technology and how students learn economics e.g. theories/research into pedagogy, should be shared in the form of website resources.

When asked to identify any further support from the EN which would help respondents in their current teaching activities there were differences in replies from NLS and GTAs. More than 50.0% of New Lecturers would like to have networking events with other early career lecturers and follow-up workshops. More than 50.0% of GTAs would like specific resources for GTAs/early career lecturers and follow up workshops.

The final question offered the opportunity to comment on any issues relating to teaching, assessment or the work of the EN. Among the comments from NLS were the following: *"I was so glad to attend the workshop, it really helped me. I found out about it by accident though. Perhaps it would be worth advertising through university departments - I know many of my colleagues would love to*

*attend but never know when the workshops are on”; “Some of the subject guides need work. I'm thinking especially the economic history one.”*

*Among the comments from GTAs were: “In my opinion the GTA workshop was very poor and misdirected. We did not learn a thing and most of the materials covered issues GTAs in Economics do not deal with, such as essay marking and different ways of teaching. In Economics we solve problem sets. Perhaps focusing on the best way to solve them (involving students or not, time constraints, etc.) would be a good idea. The current set up of this workshop makes it quite useless and ridiculous at times”; “Probably a bit outside the remit, but some time talking about place of GTAs in department/university. Rights and responsibilities of GTAs - what we should expect in terms of support and feedback. What to do if we're having problems with unit directors/lecturers on our courses”; “The GTA workshop was good, but it was rather short, and it was disappointing that it did not start on time. I think it would be better to hold it in your own department/university along with other GTAs and lectures from your own department - facilitated by EN - so that it could be tailored to the institutional etc arrangements there. I went to one at another university, and a lot of time was spent discussing issues at that university, which were not very relevant to me.”*