



Economics Network Meeting for Associates and Research Project Leads

Friday 19th April, University of Birmingham

GTA and NL workshops

- The New Lecturers' workshop is interactive and hands-on and offers advice and the opportunity for discussion. Sharing is an important aspect of the NL workshops – they are a platform to exchange ideas and share experience.
- NL and GTA workshops are very different and need to be looked at separately. GTAs are taking tutorials and have little say in how it's done. Nevertheless, they are teaching for four years and their development is important so it's important to take a longer term view and equally, down the road they may be teaching in a different department.
- Continuity is important for both GTAs and NLS.
- At the UCL workshop (GTA), there was a panel discussion with departmental staff and EN presenters – this gives a departmental focus. Lancaster and Bristol also had a similar session by bringing a representative from the department to speak to GTAs.
- Suggestion to establish different level GTA workshops (beginner to advanced) – however presenters felt that learning from other/more experienced GTAs is beneficial.
- Suggestions for GTA workshops:
 - For international GTAs, an overview of the educational system is valuable.
 - Some workshops take a departmental approach (larger departments which can fill workshops) – these will be open to all but will be designed for that department in particular.
 - Other workshops will take a particular focus (e.g. quants or econ) but will not be department specific.
 - Two presenters are preferable.
 - Have an initial workshop in September and then a follow-up event towards the end of the academic year, which is more of a practice-based, reflection on teaching event/conference for all GTAs (or divided regionally). This has the benefit of repetition to cement and consolidate what they learn in the first workshop and allows them to cover more. GTAs could sign up for the whole package at the beginning (charge for second part?). If the workshops are accredited, there could be an input here, e.g. writing/reflection on teaching. This follow-up event could be more comprehensive with broad content and give teaching practice (e.g. show how to teach something in two ways and ask GTAs to think of third).
 - Think about the workshop aims – even if GTAs don't stay in academia, it is important to develop leadership, presentation, mentoring, teaching skills. The workshops can also be about career development and perhaps this needs to be made explicit.
 - It is important that these workshops feed into the postgraduate teaching certificate and that GTAs receive credit for them. The EN workshops need to be an 'instead' rather than

additional. Getting accreditation needs to be a priority for the Network. Institutional training programmes have optional modules, perhaps the EN workshops could fit here.

- More information needs to be provided on the focus of each workshop, e.g. if department focus, on the type of teaching covered.
- In larger workshops with two presenters, it could be possible to split the participants, e.g. to look at different themes, by experience, international.
- It could be possible to use videos to introduce content or as an introduction to be watched before the workshop.
- Workshops could be longer so that they are more comprehensive, i.e. a full day. Also, in larger workshops with two presenters, it could be possible to split the participants, e.g. to look at different themes, by experience, international.
- Make videos available in the intervening period as resources for GTAs to use – both to integrate into teaching and as refreshers of teaching methods and ideas.
- If presenters are happy to, they could ask the group to decide on their priorities and then focus on these at the event.

Video Clips

- These videos could be made available:
 - In short segments (possibly alongside the full film);
 - As a trailer with the highlights to give an overview of the topic;
 - As the full film with details/text on when each new section starts.
- Promote through departments.
- Further videos could be used as teaching resources, e.g. how to teach a topic in a different way; demonstration of teaching methods which can be watched and discussed (not good vs bad but just different methods); show GTAs' predictable problems.
- Videos could also show the classes and students' responses to different kinds of teaching.
- Film other GTAs – their incentive would be to get feedback and if the courses were accredited, this could be used as an observation.
- Videos can be used as lead-ups or follow-ups for GTA training.
- Interviews with teaching staff could also be used – showing how they teach and their views on teaching – this could be followed by questions, reflection and discussion.
- Videos could be promoted through a GTA specific blog or newsletter.

Research Project

- Focus on expectations and behaviour of students following fee increase – have to consider that international students' fees haven't changed.

- Information to gather:
 - Data on attendance, submission rates and assessment.
 - Data specific to these students.
 - Any changes that have been introduced this year, e.g. deadlines, quantity of coursework, change in standards (entry requirements), clearing entries, liberalisation of grades, changes in student support, online submission, curriculum reviews. EN to make a checklist on this and send to departments.
 - KIS data.
 - Information on whether universities are doing anything directly about employability, as modules like this inflate expectations.

- Suggestions for future/next year:
 - Consider social acceptability bias – ask how many students will inflate estimate of private study and how they position themselves compared to peers on private study.
 - Survey was very long – lecturers may be unwilling to do this in their teaching time again next year.
 - Ask about salary expectations.
 - Find out whether students are private or public school – assumption that private school students are used to paying so will be less affected by changes.
 - Are students paying fees themselves or are their families paying?
 - Opinions on lifetime earnings – not what their salary will be but what difference they expect to their salary.