

# Department of Education Newsletter

Issue 5 Autumn 2011

## Welcome to the Department of Education Newsletter

### Welcome to the new academic year from Judith Bennett, Head of Department

We have several new staff to welcome: Professor Leah Roberts, Dr Zoe Handley, Dr Irena Kuzborska, Dr Jim King, Joe Fagan and Laura Taylor have joined the department recently. And several staff have taken on new roles in the department. Please see the 'Staff changes in the Department' section for more information.

### There have been several items of good news for the Department in the last few months, further details of which are in the newsletter.

The Department won the Departmental award in the University's 'Supervisor of the Year' competition, voted for by students, and was judged to be one of the top ten Education Departments by the Sunday Times league table of Universities, and in the National Student Survey for quality of teaching, academic support and organisation and management of its undergraduate programme. The first Jones Prize for the best Undergraduate Dissertation was also awarded.

The Department bid successfully for a PhD scholarship in the new White Rose Doctoral Training Centre and there have been successes for staff in securing new research grants across the Research Centres.

Last, but by no means least, Graham Low retired at the end of September 2011. I would like to wish Graham all the very best for his retirement, and thank him for all the excellent work he has done for the Department over the last years. Happily, Graham will be returning to do some teaching in the next year.



## First ESRC PhD Scholarship in Education awarded.

The Department's first PhD Scholarship as part of the new Economic and Social Research Council's White Rose Doctoral Training Centre was awarded to Rowena Hanan. The award is a fully-funded 3-year scholarship covering maintenance and fees, starting from Autumn 2011. Rowena graduated from the University of York (Language & Linguistic Science and Education) in 2010, and is currently on the MA in Language Learning and Education programme. Rowena's PhD will investigate 'The role of explicit knowledge about language in learning a foreign language at primary school'.

## Department News

### Supervisor of the Year award for the Department

The Department of Education is delighted to be the winner of the University's Departmental 'Supervisor of the Year' award. This award is given annually to the Department which gains the most positive overall feedback from students about the quality of their

supervision. Professor Judith Bennett, the Head of the Department of Education, said: "This award is a tribute to everyone in the Department and all the hard work staff do to help support students. I would like to thank everyone for all their excellent work. On behalf of the Department, I would also like to thank all the students for their nominations. We were very touched by the comments people made."

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## Students rank Education in the top ten for teaching

The Department of Education at the University of York has been ranked in the top ten of UK universities' Education departments by its Undergraduate students. The Department was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> for the quality of its teaching, 6<sup>th</sup> for academic support and 2<sup>nd</sup> for the organisation and management of its undergraduate programmes. Overall, 81% of Education students at York expressed strong satisfaction with their course. The Department also achieved the highest response rate in the University for the second year running.

Vanita Sundaram, Director of Undergraduate Studies, said: "This is a great result for the Department, which indicates that our students continue to enjoy excellent teaching and support across our programmes. We place high importance on maintaining an outstanding quality of experience for our students and take pride in the positive responses received."

## Undergraduate students celebrate success

On 14 July 2011 29 single subject and 6 joint degree students graduated with a York BA. Congratulations to all of them. For the first time this year the Department offered a Jones Prize for best empirical dissertation in Education'.

This is given to the student with the highest scoring dissertation - three dissertations scored 85. Laura Neal's dissertation won the Jones empirical dissertation prize, as it was judged to have made the most significant contribution to education as a field. Becky Bradley and Emily Fisher were awarded book tokens to recognise the outstanding quality of their work.



## Visitors to Educational Studies

Bill Rogers, the internationally renowned expert on classroom management and discipline in schools, visited the Department in June. He is seen here with Chris Kyriacou (left) and Poppy Nash (right).



## Staff Stories

**Mary Whitehouse** has been elected to serve on the Council on the Institute of Physics and will also be a member of the Membership & Qualifications Board. She is a graduate of the University of York (1973), has a background in Physics teaching and works in school science curriculum development in CIRSE.

## Student Education Society

Laura Calsela steps down as Chair of Education Society this term. Laura has been an asset to the Department in her role as Chair of Education Society, as a key link between students across all three years and staff in the Department. Under Laura's leadership the Education Society has worked with staff to develop improvements to the academic programmes, as well as the social culture of the Department. She has been an effective student rep on departmental committees and she has really pushed forward volunteering and community involvement both in the Department and the University. Laura has injected energy - and a sense of humour - into everything she has done. The Undergraduate team would like to thank Laura for all the hard work that has gone into developing numerous initiatives which have undoubtedly contributed to social and academic provision in the Department.



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## Research News

Congratulations to Florentina Taylor who has been successful with two research bids:

**Improving the perceived relevance of Modern Foreign Languages in Year 9: An experimental intervention** has been funded by the British Academy. Florentina will work with Emma Marsden and Chris Kyriacou on this project.

The British Council has awarded funding for the project **Identity in foreign language learning and teaching: A comparison of four European countries** where Florentina will again work with Emma Marsden, and with colleagues from overseas institutions.

Members of CIRSE, Robin Millar, Mary Whitehouse, Liz Swinbank and Anne Scott have also been awarded funding from the Salters' Institute for the pilot phase of a project **to develop new and innovative teaching materials for Key Stage 3 Science**.

Judith Bennett, Gill Hampden-Thompson and Martin Braund have won funding from the Nuffield Foundation for their project **Comparing Student attainment in context-led (SNAB) and concept-led approaches to teaching a-level Biology**

## Publications

Abrahams, I., Reiss, M., & Sharpe, R. (2011). Getting practical: The evaluation. *School Science Review*, 93(342)37-44.

The journal *Writing Systems Research*, co-edited by Benedetta Bassetti, published a special issue on Linguistic and cognitive factors in reading Chinese (volume 3, issue 1). <http://wsr.oxfordjournals.org/content/current>

Millar, R. (2011). Reviewing the National Curriculum for science: Opportunities and challenges. *The Curriculum Journal*, 22(2), 167-185.

Roberts, L., Pallotti, G. & Bettoni, C. (2011). The EUROSLA Yearbook. Amsterdam: John Benjamins

## External Activities

Conferences at which staff have been attending and presenting, at home and overseas over the last few months.

### UK conferences:

**Ian Abrahams**, Science, Technology and Mathematics Education (STeM) Group Seminars, Cambridge University

**Gillian Hampden-Thompson**, International Society of Child Indicators Conference, University of York.

**Emma Marsden**, British Association of Applied Linguistics Language Learning and Teaching special interest group's Annual Conference, Aston University.

**Emma Marsden**, Younger=Better? Comparing 5, 7 and 11 year olds learning French in the classroom conference, University of Newcastle.

**Robin Millar**, White Rose Science Education Research Conference, National Science Learning Centre, York

**Poppy Nash**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the International Society for Child Indicators at the University of York.

**Sarah Olive**, Cambridge Shakespeare Conference, Cambridge University.

**Maria Tsouroufli, Gill Hampden-Thompson and Vanita Sundaram**, Equity, Identity and Education conference, Centre for Learner Identity Studies, Edge Hill University.

**Paul Wakeling**, The evidence base for fair admissions conference, University of Manchester.

### Overseas conferences:

**Ian Abrahams**, European Science Education Research Association, Lyon, France.

**Ian Abrahams**, invited paper and workshop, Munster University, Germany.

**Martin Braund, Judith Bennett and Fred Lubben**, 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial conference of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT), Braga, Portugal.

**Martin Braund, Judith Bennett and Fred Lubben**, European Science Education Research Association, Lyon, France.

**Martin Braund** 1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on New Trends in Science Education, Kusadsi Turkey

**Ian Davies**, Changing Styles of Citizenship: Communication, Media and Youth Engagement seminar, University of Stockholm, Sweden.

**Chris Kyriacou**, European Conference on Educational Research, Free University Berlin.

**Emma Marsden**, European Second Language Association Annual Conference in Stockholm, Sweden

**Robin Millar**: OECD/France Workshop on Education for innovation. The role of arts and STEM education, Paris, France

European Science Education Conference, Lyons, France.

Monash University/King's College London seminar on 'Assessment in science education', Monash International Study Centre, Prato, Italy.

MONA (journal of science and mathematics didactics) Conference, Middelfart, Denmark

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**Beatrice Szczepek Reed**, 10th Conference of the International Institute for Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, Fribourg, Switzerland.

**Leah Roberts**, The Fourth A. Guiora Annual Roundtable Conference in the Cognitive Neuroscience of Language, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

**Danijela Trenkic**, Workshop on Bilingualism: Neurolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives, Aix-en Provence.

**Danijela Trenkic**, New Trends in Experimental Psycholinguistics, Madrid, Spain.

## What's going on!

### Departmental Seminars

Wednesday 2 November, 1.00 – 2.00 pm

**4 questions about the educational potential of social media for promoting civic engagement.**

*Ian Davies*

Wednesday 23 November, 1.00 - 2.00 pm

**To be confirmed**

Wednesday 14 December, 1.00 – 2.00 pm

**Teachers' perceptions of disruptive behaviour at school**

*Poppy Nash*

## Staff changes in the Department

We welcome a number of new staff to our Language Education programme: Professor Leah Roberts as Chair in Education and Dr Zoe Handley (Lecturer in Language Education who joined the department on 5<sup>th</sup> September. Irena Kusborska (Lecturer in Language Education) joined us on 19 September.

Dr Jim King and Joe Hagan joined the Department on 3 October as Teaching Fellows on the TESOL programme and Laura Taylor also joined the TESOL programme on 10 October (part-time).

Graham Low retired on 30 September but will be returning to the Department to teach next year.

## New roles for staff from 1 October 2011

**Ian Davies** – Deputy Head of Department

**Leah Roberts** – Leader of the Centre for Language Learning Research

**Emma Marsden** – Deputy CLLR Leader

**Jan Hardman** – Director of Graduate Studies

**Beatrice Szczepek Reed** – Deputy Director of Graduate Studies

**Emma Marsden** - Chair of Ethics Committee

**Danijela Trenkic** – Chair of Board of Examiners and Mitigating Circumstances Committee

**Florentina Taylor** – Deputy Programme Leader for MA TESOL

**Benedetta Bassetti** - Deputy Programme Leader for the PhD programme

## CELT News

Our summer Pre-Sessional programme has been very successful under the leadership of Bill Soden: a major contribution to the success has been the work of our specially-recruited extra teaching staff and the work of Patricia Mellor as first-time Team Leader for the 10-week Management School Pre-Sessional.

Our summer Contract Language Courses have been similarly successful. Of particular note is our first ever contract with a Korean University: language education students from Chinju University completed a four-week course with us in July. Their accompanying Professor took the message back to Chinju that the course was of excellent quality and we can now confidently look forward to a regular yearly contingent of similar students.

We will again be expanding our range of Departmental English Courses. We are pleased to be extending our suite of Integrated In-Sessional English to modules in Sociology and in the Law School.

We welcome Dr. Yin Hongshan, from Qingdao University of Science & Technology. Yin Hongshan will be with us as a Visiting Scholar until the end of February. He will be studying corrective recasts and associated affective factors.

### Departmental Newsletter

Deadline for Spring Issue:  
9 December 2011

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