



PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

**Project Title: 'Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn'.
Empowering postgraduate students in history to become better teachers**

**Principal Investigator : Dr Catriona Ellis
School / Department : History**

Team members : Dr Emma Hunter, Dr Esther Mijers, Karen Howie, Dr Amy Burge

For further information, please contact: ellis.historytutor@gmail.com

Brief Report

The 'Empowering postgraduate students' website is now up and running for the history department. Following consultations with two groups of undergraduates, a postgraduate focus group and then input from Dr Esther Mijers (Director of teaching, pre-honours History and responsible for curriculum reform) and Dr Emma Hunter (Director of Postgraduate Studies, HCA) the key areas of strengths and weaknesses were identified. Undergraduate students were encouraged to nominate staff who they felt had provided particularly good teaching.

The website has five sections – Tutoring, Lecturing, Student Engagement, Assessment and Feedback and Studying History at Edinburgh. Each section includes materials in a variety of formats, starting with a PowerPoint laying out the basic approaches and then a number of practical hints and tips from experienced tutors. Each section also includes examples of good practice (for example sample PowerPoints and hand-outs) and suggestions for extended reading (for example journal articles), as well as an indication of other resources available to tutors (such as the University's policies on Dignity and Respect or guidance on the provisions for pastoral support). This includes extensive lists of primary sources and links to examples of good practice from other universities. The website also includes 8 'talking heads' – podcasts from members of the department talking about their tutoring, lecturing and assessment practice, with transcripts attached. These were produced thanks to the hard work of the history IT team (particularly Mr Kacper Lyszkiewicz) between June and August 2016 and have generated a lot of interest, while allowing staff to re-evaluate their own teaching practice. The staff included were Prof Stana Nenadic, Prof Frank Cogliano, Dr Emma Hunter, Dr Esther Mijers, Dr Harriet Cornell, Dr Christopher Harding, Dr Andrew Phemister, Ms Anna Feintuck.

All postgraduate tutors and teaching fellows have access to the website via Learn, and it has been highlighted in training sessions for new tutors (Sept, Jan), in two blogs published by the IAD and in an HCA Teaching Circle Event (16th March 2017). The feedback has been supportive and positive, particularly from tutors starting out for the first time. The site has provided news ideas in teaching, but also provided a resource which postgraduates can access at any point during term-time when memories of the initial tutor training have faded. Anecdotally, bringing all the resources together in an easily accessible format has been popular, and a number of tutors have experimented with the more innovative techniques suggested for tutorials (such as mini social biography presentations and role play). The quantifiable results are hard to measure, but a number of postgraduates have commented that it is helpful in conjunction with the other training offered by the department.

The website could be extended to cover Archaeology and Classics with sections on the particular teaching needs of each department, for example teaching lab work or language and translation tutorials.

For further details, contact Dr Catriona Ellis (ellis.historytutor@gmail.com)

Financial statement (please delete as appropriate):

This project has utilised the funding awarded to it by the PTAS adjudication committee and the Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

Please send an electronic PDF copy of this report to:

Email: iad.teach@ed.ac.uk