

INSIDE ISSUE 8:

Juggling work with study
 Insight into three experiences of higher degrees

Updates from the library
 See pages 2 and 7 to find out more about how the library can help your research

Improving website design
 Neil Trigger provides a summary of his PhD topic

Learning, Teaching & Research Conference
 A summary of the 2008 conference

Now that we are well into the 2008-09 academic year, no doubt 'time for research' feels like a distant memory for many! However, there is still plenty going on within the institution. This issue of Research Matters provides some insight into the experiences of three colleagues who are juggling their teaching loads with work towards a higher degree. The three interviews (pp 3-6) rather dominate the issue, but offer a good opportunity to acknowledge this seemingly often 'hidden' element of Marjon life. I suspect many colleagues will recognize some of the experiences as familiar to themselves.

This academic year brings with it the need to review our Research Strategy. I hope you would agree that the current (2004-09) Strategy has served the institution well, and we have made substantial progress in research since it was first agreed. The School Research Co-ordinators have undoubtedly played a



large part in that success. We now need to consider how best to build on this further, and develop a new strategy in the coming months.

You may be aware that we now have three Visiting Professors appointed to the University College, contributing to the research life of the institution. Professor Justin Lewis (Cardiff University) gave a public lecture back in February, and many of you heard Professor John Oates (Open University) at the Learning, Teaching & Research Conference in April. Tim Prentki, Professor of Theatre for Development at the University of Winchester, has also joined us and is working closely with David Oddie and the Arrow Project.

Finally, congratulations are due to: **Alan Butler**, for completing his MPhil; **Timi Hyacinth**, who was awarded the MED Trainer Development – ELT in July; **Dave Harris** and **Will Large** on their Professorships; and **Sean McBlain** on his Readership. Well done all!

UCP Marjon Public Lecture Series

The University College's public lectures are now into their second series. All colleagues are encouraged to attend and to publicise the events below. Additional dates will be announced in the next edition of Research Matters.

19 th Nov 2008	Richard Hooker Lecture: Professor Grace Davie, University of Exeter - <i>Religious America, Secular Europe: Framing the Debate</i>	7.30 pm HDC101
20 th Nov 2008	Richard Hooker Lecture: Reverend Donald Reeves, Director, The Soul of Europe - <i>Tackling Disagreement in the Church: Lessons from European Conflict</i>	7.30 pm HDC101
26 th Nov 2008	Film Launch: introduced by Ismael Khatib and Fakhri Hamad Miskawi, Directors, Cuneo Centre for Peace - <i>The Heart of Jenin</i> by Leon Geller and Marcus Vetter	7.00 pm Desmond Tutu Centre
28 th Nov 2008	Lord Caradon Lecture: Bridget Kendall - <i>Russia and the West</i>	7.30 pm Drama Theatre
13 th Feb 2009	Inaugural Lecture: Professor Dave Harris - <i>Work and Leisure in Higher Education</i>	7.30 pm HDC101

Any comments on the series and suggestions for future speakers should be sent to Dr. Geoff Stoakes.

"Results! Why, man, I have gotten a lot of results. I know several thousand things that won't work." - Thomas Edison

Marjon Learning, Teaching & Research Conference Report 2008 - Geoff Stoakes



The annual Learning, Teaching and Research conference, held on 10 and 11 April 2008 lived up to its billing as 'a celebration of Learning, Teaching and Research at UCP Marjon'. It provided a showcase not only for 'home-grown' talent, but also for several local and national figures in their respective fields.

Professors Lawson-Peebles, University of Exeter, and John Oates, Open University, provided stimulating and witty insights into the world of career researchers and the 'economics of knowledge'. Dr Jenny Moon, Bournemouth University, explored the notion of critical thinking and Rachel Segal explained the opportunities offered by the Higher Education Academy. Dr James Hennessy led a fascinating performance of 'verbatim' theatre addressing the divide over homosexuality in the worldwide Anglican Church. A wide range of Marjon colleagues delivered workshops and presentations on their approaches to learning and teaching (from the use of paired placements to personalised learning and the new technologies) and to research (from practitioner research to the assessment of Motor Speech Control in Deaf Children). Other interesting innovations this year were *Learning Matters* and the poster exhibitions.

Amongst the issues which emerged from the feedback sessions were:

- The centrality of the conference to the enhancement of learning and teaching at the University College.
- The University College's distinctiveness. That it needs to develop, and is developing, its own research culture. Whether it should commit itself more explicitly to a particular set of core values e.g. a commitment to social justice or a focus on practitioner research.
- The need to focus on the students' experience of learning and teaching more clearly, exploring their pre-existing knowledge base, their expectation of what is to be taught in HE and how; how far the needs of disadvantaged students are being addressed.
- Staff need time to develop their research profiles.
- The benefit of more cross-school research collaboration.

Thanks go to the conference planning group for organising the event and, in particular, to Dr Wendy Gill for fronting the conference. ***If you have any comments on the conference or suggestions for the 2009 event please get in touch with your School Research Co-ordinator or Learning and Teaching Co-ordinator.***

How can the library help your research activity? - Claire Stevens

Other than being the place where you can find books and journals, what else do we do that supports you in your research and scholarly activities?

- Individual tutorials on using the electronic journals and databases to find articles online.
- Assistance with using the research specific databases (Ceruk and researchresearch.com)
- Recent increase in interlibrary loan allowance.
- Advice on copyright and referencing in your research projects.
- We can register you for Sconul Access so you can use other academic libraries across the UK.
- A dedicated research support page on the Library web pages (currently a work in progress!)
- Masters level theses will be available in full text on Learning Space (also a work in progress)
- Staff extended loans; staff can borrow standard loans for 3 weeks – with up to 4 renewals, this means you can potentially keep the books for over a year before we need to reissue them to you.
- There is a separate budget to purchase generic research support materials – please contact the Research Officer for more information.
- We can provide guidance on accessing existing open access repositories
- There is a dedicated librarian to help support research activities – me! Ideally, I would like to meet with all researchers in the UC to have a chat about your project, find out what your needs are and what kind of support I can provide for you. Just send me a quick email or give me a ring and we can arrange something.

If you have any other suggestions or thoughts about how the Library can help you, just email me at cstevens@marjon.ac.uk

Juggling work with study: three experiences of higher degrees

With the mixture of subjects offered at Marjon a substantial proportion of staff have arrived with years of professional experience behind them, rather than from a 'traditional academic' background. Many of these are currently working towards higher degrees, juggling this with their responsibilities as lecturers. The following interviews give some insight into the motivations, frustrations, struggles and surprises involved in such an endeavour. Thanks to Mike, Sue and Sharon for their generosity in giving up their time for the interviews and being willing to share their experiences.

Dr Pauline Couper, Research Officer

Mike Tripp, School of Sport, PE & Leisure

Mike Tripp is Head of the Sport and Leisure subject group.

I know you are undertaking a PhD, which you have nearly finished. Can you tell me a bit about it?

It is about the history of Cornish Wrestling. I was originally registered in May 2000, so this is my 8th year. I have had a couple of interruptions, and my new deadline is the end of January 2009. I have written about half of it now.



Why did you choose to do it?

To cut a long story short, I was on a Masters course, distance learning with Leicester University, which I thoroughly enjoyed. For one of the assessments I was required to choose a sport and examine the way it had developed, from a Sociological point of view. I chose Cornish Wrestling because everyone else on the course seemed to be doing football! I got really into it. What intrigued me was that this was Cornwall's most popular sport in the 19th Century, and no-one has written a history of it. There are little bits and pieces in various journals, none of it with any academic rigour and mainly written in the 1950s, but nothing modern. I suppose the real reason why I became interested in the subject is that I am Cornish, I am interested in anything Cornish, but particularly sport, and it's an indigenous sport.

Working full time here, how and when do you find the time for it?

Evenings and weekends, when I can fit it in. I have used every one of the 25 research days each year, but in reality it's every major holiday. So this last summer I haven't had a holiday, I spent 5 weeks at the laptop. I think the difficulty we all find is that if you take a day off, it takes half a day to get your head round where you were before, and to get into that kind of flow. I have found that particularly difficult, especially with trying to fit in family life as well.

That was going to be my next question: what is the biggest difficulty you have found?

Time is the crucial thing. For what I chose to do, the only

resources I had were 19th century newspapers. Originally I was using the British Library Newspaper Library in North London (Collingdale). On a good day, if I stayed there all day, I could get through five years' worth of newspapers. They started as weekly newspapers, then from the 1860s were produced twice a week. And I had made a decision that I was going to research every newspaper! The first one was dated 1737 and I went up to 1945, so that's over 10,000

copies. That is time-consuming. When I moved to Exeter, I found there is a specialist Cornish Studies library in Redruth, so they had everything I needed there. I was working on it for a long time before I was asked to write anything and to work out a scheme of chapters, so I had not approached it in a systematic way. It is only in the last couple of years that I have formulated a structure and I know where I am going and the supervisor's happy. And I am happy with it now. But I didn't feel as though I could start writing until I had produced quite a lot of primary data.

How do you think you have benefited from doing this?

One of the big problems I have found is that the topic is not directly related to my teaching. When I first started here it was, but some of the areas that I used to teach in have kind of diminished. Sports history doesn't feature very greatly on the BA programme, so I am currently looking at ways of trying to embed it. I think we, as a team, agree that it ought to be included, but we are looking at ways of trying to do it without having one specialist module on it.

I do think that going through the research process has helped me with dissertation students. I can see their problems: how to structure things and how to be an independent learner. That is the crucial thing. But I have not been able to share it with anyone. I quickly realised that there is only one person who is interested in this topic, and it's me.

Do you mean within Marjon?

Anywhere. I talk to colleagues, but they are remote from the subject. There is a particular issue that I have fought all the way through. I am writing it because I am interested in Cornwall but I am also interested in sports history. So I am trying to draw on the corpus of work which is sports history, but my major thesis is that Cornish Wrestling does not fit the current sports history models. It

...continued overleaf

Juggling work with study continued...

occurred to me about 3 or 4 years ago that the relevant model is within Cornish history and Cornish studies. So the rest of the thesis is trying to marry sports history with Cornish Studies. It's not been easy.

Do you think it has all been worthwhile?

From a personal perspective, I have to think that. I am still interested in the topic. It is still a real slog. I am a bit of a perfectionist so I may re-write a paragraph ten times. What tends to happen is I write a thousand words, then the following day I go back & edit it again. I can't crack on & do another thousand words. That is a weakness in me. And I have only just started to be able to write straight on the lap-top. In the past I used to write it out freehand and then transfer it, but that is my generation I think! So from a personal perspective it has been worthwhile. I have learnt a lot, and done a lot of reading, some of which might not be necessary but it has been interesting along the way, and I think the students benefit from that. I find now that there are some lectures that I can give without any notes, I can just stand there & do it. So I have benefited, and I think the students have benefited, and I suppose the institution has benefitted. But ultimately it is me because it's my interest.

So would you recommend it to other people?

Yes, with a qualification; it depends really on your family and social situation. There is no such thing as the right time, because you can keep putting it off. I wish I had done this before I had children, because it has affected our family life. If I had done it before children I could probably have spent more time at it and done it quicker. But you have to fit these things in when you can. But yes, I would recommend it. You know, the whole process is worthwhile. There is no such thing as an experience that is not.

Sue Cooper, School of Culture, Communication & Society



Sue Cooper is Head of the Community and Youth Studies Subject Group.

So you are doing an EdD, tell me a bit about it.

I have just come to the end of the first year. There are two years of taught modules and then two years of research, and I have completed

3 modules. It is a really interesting programme. You go for a weekend and spend time with your cohort for the taught input, finish the weekend thinking about the assignment, and then between that and the next taught input you are working on the assignment. So the study is really very independent.

I chose to do it was because I have been here 3¹/₂ years

now, but still felt I did not really know much about formal education. My profession is Youth Work, informal education. So the benefit has been absolutely huge in terms of getting a sense of the history of education and the political context we work in these days, and reading around that. I am not a natural reader. I don't sit at my desk reading interesting articles unless I have to. I like it when I am doing it, but I need to have that push, perhaps because our days are just very busy. So this is a good way for me to build my knowledge and confidence in my new profession really. It has been great for that.

The assignments have been a struggle at times, a bit of a roller coaster. It is always interesting when you start studying at a different level, that concern about whether you are going to crack it. I am interested in how groups work, and how people learn in groups, so for the first assignment I went off on a tangent, with a study of groups. It was really interesting, but I didn't do as well as I had hoped. The next assignment was about lifelong learning, reflective practice, and the changing nature of professionalism. Again, that is an area that I am interested in. I know quite a lot about reflective practice and have thought about it over the years. When the assignment came back, the assessors described it as a model answer! So I went from a disappointing mark to one of the best they have ever had for that particular module. The last assignment has been about research and has been horrible to write, but really useful. My Masters is in Applied Anthropology, and was very much focused within that area, so it has been good to go beyond that and do some exploring. Sue Lea is also on the course, in the same cohort, so we shared the angst of this last module! But we both agree that we have felt much more able to supervise our students now, in terms of dissertations. We have much more insight into the complicated nature of research. It was really good, a painful journey, but really quite interesting. I have discovered Appreciative Inquiry, and I really like that. It suits my way of thinking because I do not want to define something as a problem, I don't see that I have the right to do that. I would not have come across that if I had not done the module.

So how do you find the time to do it, or how do you make the time to do it?

I plan my 25 days of scholarly leave to support the doctoral study. But I find that actually I would like to not use all of that just for the doctoral study because there is so much else going on. I met with some colleagues from Devon Children's Trust, who we are working with on our new MA programme, and I can see potential to do some really good research for them. But you have to give something up, and I resign myself to the fact that my focus has to be on my doctorate. But in terms of the amount of work to be done, it takes much more than 25 days a year! This summer I spent my three weeks of leave in August working on my last assignment. It's about fitting it in and giving some things up. I think if the work did not so completely relate to what else I am doing, it would be really hard. But I find when I am reading something I think "Gosh, that's really interesting, I want to change that piece I do in module A or module B", so it does feel like this is part of the whole, and not a bolt-on, something extra. That helps in terms of trying to manage the whole process.

I did my Masters when I was in full-time employment, working as a manager in a local authority Youth Service, and I went to Goldsmith's College one day a week. If I compared that to now, this is easier to manage because the access we have to resources here is so much better, in terms of library and electronic resources. And talking to people who are doing the same programme is good, whereas before, I was travelling from Hampshire to London, and it was just me doing it. This is a very different kind of process.

So once you finish the taught modules, do you know what kind of area your research project will be in?

No, and this has been a difficulty for me right from the start because they encourage you to work towards your final thesis through the modules, which makes sense. But I didn't start with a sense of something I particularly wanted to find out about, which is probably why I did not go down any other route. This suits me, because it is making me look around and think about things.

I am really interested in groups, and I would like to think about the whole kind of individualization of society and learning, and challenge that a little bit. But also the last assignment started me thinking about being a professional, as I work on a professional qualifying course. How do students develop their professional identity? There is a link there with groups, because identity is sometimes formed in groups. And then we are moving towards an inter-professional system of practice, where your professional identity will be really important in a multi-professional setting, because otherwise you will lose your voice. And I am scared that Youth Workers are going to lose the voice we hold for young people if we are not strong enough in those professional groups. Then I started thinking about inter-professional education. If we are going to work together, maybe we should be learning together, but when is inter-professional education most appropriate? Is it before you develop your sense of individual professional identity, or after? So it will probably be something around that, but I don't know yet. It has to be do-able and it has to make a difference.

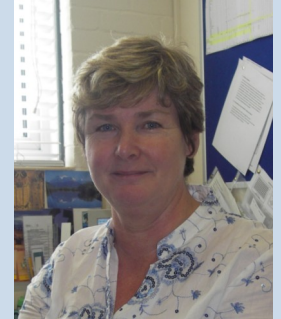
Have you got any ideas about where this is taking you, beyond the EdD?

I wouldn't be doing this if I was not in this job. I think I wanted to do my Masters out of a personal kind of need, but the reason that I am now doing this is because I am in this job, and I feel that it is important in terms of my development and, perhaps, security. But more importantly I want to have a voice within Youth and Community work, and that is why I came into teaching. The idea that you can spend some time on a piece of work that is really quite important, and publish that, at a time when there is a lot happening and nobody knows what the future is going to look like, it is an exciting time to get involved in that. I have had one article published since I came here, and it was so exciting. I would like to think that I can contribute to understanding within the profession of Youth and Community work, but also a little wider than that in terms of inter-professional work as well. I would like to think that it will make a difference to this course, and might raise the

profile of it, because I want Marjon to be the best in terms of Youth and Community Work courses around the country. It has got a good history, but we need to maintain that. So I guess that is what it's all about really. And I suppose I secretly enjoy it – but you can cut that bit out! I am a very reluctant student, but actually I love it.

Sharon James, School of Education & Professional Development

Sharon James is a Senior Lecturer in the Primary Initial Teacher Training team.



Tell me about your higher degree.

I am doing a PhD at the University of Exeter, in Professional Education. So it is not purely a subject-based PhD, although the thrust of my research is to do with Drama. The style of this particular PhD is that you start with four modules (two modules a year, part-time) to learn research techniques. We have been doing Scientific Methodologies, which is incredibly difficult, having come from an Arts subject – but also incredibly worthwhile. It has kind of opened my mind to things that I had discarded and shown me that actually using mixed methodologies is probably a very valuable way of doing the kind of social research that we do. It certainly has helped me grow.

The only downside is that I gave up Maths straight after O' Level. I had no knowledge of maths beyond that, and had to go straight into statistics. It was horrendous. And we had to use a computer programme, SPSS, which again required a degree of understanding. I had used Excel before but that knowledge did not directly translate to SPSS. So I was learning SPSS at the same time as learning statistics at the same time as doing scientific methodologies. I was thrilled to pass, because it was as if I was starting in the wrong place. Really I needed a pre-course to get me up to the right level first. I think if anybody else was going to do it, maybe in-house you could provide some kind of basis to get them there before starting the module.

So what made you decide to do this?

I think really working with the students here. An awful lot of what we do in the Education courses is research-based, particularly now with the PGCE at Masters level. Doing my own small pieces of research to inform my practice, I felt really I needed to have more structure, and a colleague suggested doing an EdD or PhD. Looking at the two styles of doctorate I felt that, really, it was my own research I wanted to take on, and following a modular route was not the way I wanted to go. So although the first part of this is taught, I have my own research alongside it and will be able to take that forward.

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Juggling work & study continued...

What are the biggest difficulties you have found so far?

Time management. There is that 'guilt' part of the job, where you think, "I'm teaching, I must prepare my lectures, I must do all these things" and they become a priority too. Only a certain amount of the reading done in preparation for lectures actually matches what you want to be reading for your own research. Booking scholarly and research days is really quite difficult, particularly last year when there was no reading week. But I have to say that Sam Peach, who was Acting Dean for us, was brilliant at saying "No, you must take this day, if that's when you need it, and we will find ways round it". To have that kind of support in-house was very good. And colleagues have been very good, pushing me into doing conferences as well, so I did one in the summer and another mid-year, and that was a real benefit. You go and listen to other people who are doing something similar and it can kind of kick-start you, because you hit doldrums, don't you, when you are doing a PhD? But that little kick-start can push you off in another direction. So I think time management would be the only difficulty.

How do you think you are benefiting from doing this?

It has made me re-consider how we ask our students to do research work. Also before, when students wanted to do things scientifically, I wouldn't say I discouraged them, but I kind of queried whether that was really the methodology they wanted to use. Now, because I have actually got a better handle on it myself, I can talk to them on a clearer level about what will work, and what approach is valid for what they want to do. So certainly that kind of broadening has been of benefit.

Also I find that when I am lecturing, I can explain to the students how something I have read has affected the way I look at something, and the way I teach. I am able to give them the very practical side of things – almost like 'tips for teachers' – but from a good solid research base. So it is

not just me telling them that something works in my classroom, I can also refer to people who have found the same thing works in classrooms in Australia, or in Canada.

Do you find your teaching also has an influence on your research?

Yes. I had started this piece of research, before coming here, looking at drama. We often say in education that drama is an excellent vehicle for allowing children to learn. We all believe it, but if you go into school you don't see it being used. It's all pen & paper and sitting around at the desk. So I have been looking at why teachers do not use drama. I thought it was partly out of fear; that loss of control. So I did a very small pilot study here with the students, and discovered that actually it is not knowledge of drama that makes a difference, it is whether they have physically done drama themselves, and it's been part of something they have loved and enjoyed, that has made the biggest difference, which I hadn't expected. But that is literally just where I am with that at the moment, the idea that there is something about them practically taking part in drama themselves that gives them confidence to use it in their own teaching.

Where do you see this leading you?

The research has certainly been informing everything that I am doing, and I hope that means I am going to produce teachers who are more confident in using different techniques, and so it will affect what is happening in classrooms. That is the real plus. As for the PhD, at the moment really I am only thinking about the personal satisfaction. I am hoping that it will sharpen my intellectual response to what I am doing, so that I can be a better lecturer, better researcher, for having had this experience of being forced to justify what I am doing to other people. Because it is so easy to do a piece of research and justify to yourself how you use it in your lesson. When you have actually got to stand up and say, "This is what I think", and have somebody come back and challenge you, that is quite different. I am hoping in that way it will make me a better lecturer.

On-line research resources

Struggling with statistics? The **Statistical Services Centre** at the University of Reading has a number of 'guides to good statistical practice' freely available on-line. Topics include:

- Integrating qualitative and quantitative research
- Basic ideas of sampling
- Modern methods of analysis
- Writing up research: a statistical perspective

See www.ssc.rdg.ac.uk/publications/guides.html

The **Forum for Qualitative Research** is an open-access, peer-reviewed, on-line journal for qualitative research. Established in 1999, it is published three times a year. The current issue is a thematic issue focusing on visual methods.

See it at www.qualitative-research.net/.

Research ethics update

The University College is in the process of establishing a new Ethics Policy. The draft policy has been discussed by the Research Co-ordinators at Research Committee, and by the Learning and Teaching Co-ordinators at Learning and Teaching Committee. A revised version will be presented to Academic Board in the near future. The intention is that the policy will bring us up-to-date in terms of meeting expectations regarding research governance and will encourage consideration of ethical issues throughout the institution, whilst avoiding being overly prescriptive in terms of how research should be carried out. Once approved, *all* research undertaken within the institution by staff and students (postgraduate and undergraduate) will need to comply with this policy. Further details will be provided when the policy has been approved by Academic Board.

PhD research: Improving website design - Neil Trigger

Having completed my first year of my PhD programme at Marjon, I thought I would download some information into the brains of my fellows within the community to keep you all up-to-date on my progress.

I am currently studying under the rather convoluted title: 'The utilisation of Neuro-Linguistic Programming models of mind and of communication in the design of internet based design, layout and language to support persuasive content and aid commercial productivity through multivariate testing.' What this means (basically) is that I am going to be using a form of cognitive psychology, including hypnosis, layout and language ambiguities, to improve the commercial viability of any website. My PhD will outline a set of recommendations that any website designer should be able to follow to improve the effectiveness of their marketing, from first contact (perhaps through an email or newsletter) to the final shopping page on a website. I will be focussing on overcoming objections before they occur and subtle subliminal information that can be added (or in some cases taken away) to improve the effectiveness of the intended message.



A large part of the research will concentrate on the process of multivariate testing, which is a "super-crunching" process which allows a large dataset to be analysed. Multivariate testing involves making a number of versions of something (in this case a web page) and using software to randomly allocate each version of the page to different users to see which is most effective. Using multivariate testing, together with the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) models, I aim to prove that I can make websites more effective in increasing sales.

I have had considerable interest from industry in my work, including a couple of very tempting job offers, but being the loyal student I am, I decided to stay here, work hard and hold out for a higher price. ;o)

I will be looking for participation in experiments in the future, so if anyone is able to volunteer, please let me know by email to: ntrigger@marjon.ac.uk. I promise not to leave any permanent influence inside your mind... Though if I did, I could always start a business selling chicken suits!

New resources in the library

Towards the end of the 2007-8 academic year, we were able to purchase some new research-related books for the library. The Sage 'benchmarks in social research' are a series of four-volume sets, each of which is focused on specific research methods or a particular aspect of research. Examples include:

Atkinson, P & Delamont, S (eds) (2006) *Narrative Methods*.

Bryman, A (eds) (2006) *Mixed Methods*.

David, M (ed) (2005) *Case Study Research*.

De Vaus, D (ed) (2006) *Research Design*.

Hardy, M (2003) *Handbook of Data Analysis*.

Sarantakos, S (ed) (2007) *Data Analysis*.



Given the cost of purchasing these materials, they will be held in the short loan section of the library on the ground floor, but will be issued as weekly loans. We have also established a small fund for purchasing 'generic' research texts, which are likely to be of value to many staff across the institution and unlikely to be purchased by specific subject areas. Recent orders include:

Hartley, J (2009) *Academic Writing and Publishing: A Practical Handbook*. Abingdon: Routledge

Kamler & Thomson (2006) *Helping Doctoral Students Write: Pedagogies for Doctoral Supervision*. London: Routledge.

Mitchell, K (ed) (2008) *Practising Public Scholarship: Experiences and Possibilities Beyond the Academy*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Murray, R (2004) *Writing for Academic Journals*. Open University Press.

Thody, A (2006) *Writing and Presenting Research*. London: Sage.

External Research Initiatives

GuildHE Research Network

Guild HE (<http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/>) is one of the formal representative bodies for Higher Education in the UK, representing the 'small and specialist' institutions. It was founded in 1967 as the Standing Conference of Principals, adopting its current name in 2006. Professor David Baker is the current Chair.

Being smaller than average UK higher education institutions, primarily 'teaching-led' and very student-focused, members of the Guild HE institutions all face similar problems when it comes to research: lack of time, limited resources compared to the large Universities, and all too often little opportunity for contact with other researchers working in similar fields. The Guild HE Research Network is beginning to explore ways to address some of these difficulties collectively.

Guild HE Postgraduate Symposium

Fri 5th December is the date for the first Guild HE Postgraduate Symposium, hosted by York St John University. The intention is to provide postgraduate researchers with an opportunity for cross-disciplinary dialogue about their research, and discussion of the context within which they are working. The theme for the event is "Exploring research interfaces in the arts and sciences". Two of Marjon's current PhD students, Timi Hyacinth & Neil Trigger, will be attending this year, accompanied by Pauline Couper and Will Large.

Shared support for research?

The Guild HE Research Network has obtained funding from HEFCE to undertake a scoping study, led by Alice Hynes (GuildHE Chief Executive Officer), to explore the potential to develop a 'shared service' to support research activity within the small and specialist HEIs. This study involves a survey to assess the current state of research support in these institutions and identify what particular aspects of support could be enhanced through a shared service. It will then examine the feasibility of providing such a service and develop a business plan, with a view to further application for HEFCE funding to trial a service in practice. The scoping study is due to report in around March next year. Marjon has presence on the steering group of this study.

If you would like to submit anything to be included in Research Matters, or if there is an issue you would like to see covered, please contact Dr. Pauline Couper, Research Officer.

pcouper@marjon.ac.uk

Ext. 4321

3HEIs event proposed

Many colleagues will have heard of the '3HEIs' project that stemmed from the Research Co-ordinators' attendance at the Change Academy (run by the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation) in 2005. The project, which was funded by the Leadership Foundation, explored approaches to developing the research cultures within three institutions: Marjon, North East Wales Institute of HE (now Glyndwr University) and St Mary's University College, Twickenham.

Following the completion of this project, the Principals of the three institutions met to explore further opportunities for collaboration. The next proposed '3HEIs event' is a small conference focused on educational research, likely to be held at St Mary's towards the end of this academic year (probably early July).

Further updates will be included in Research Matters as this event takes shape.

The Graduate Junction

Anybody who is undertaking, or has completed, a PhD will know that postgraduate research can be a pretty isolating experience. Two postgraduates at Durham University, Dan Colgate and Esther Dingley, are attempting to combat this with a new website for Masters, Doctoral and Postdoctoral researchers.

The Graduate Junction is billed as "an easy way of making contact and communicating with others who share common research interests." To access all of the facilities you need to register (which is free), and you then have the option of creating your own 'research profile'. A searchable database of profiles enables people with similar interests to find each other, wherever in the world they may be based. Other facilities include a range of 'group forums' for discussions related to specific interests - examples include Early Childhood Education, Sport Marketing & Sport Management, Performance Art, and Ethics - as well as a generic 'Advice Forum'. The latter is a facility for sharing advice on the kinds of issues all postgraduate researchers may face, whatever their discipline, such as: undertaking literature reviews; managing your relationship with your supervisor; and preparing for a viva.

See for yourself at www.graduatejunction.com/

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