

Transforming people

Look and learn

There's more to images than meets the eye –
and a lot more to teaching.



Above and right: Jacqueline Maingard pictured with a group of final-year students during a filming exercise outside the Department of Drama.

'Images are the substance of our everyday lives,' says Jacqueline Maingard, lecturer in the Department of Drama: Theatre, Film, Television. 'They tell us who and what we are.' For students, most of whom are only just emerging into adulthood, such questions of identity are particularly personal. It makes sense for them to take a special interest in the messages that popular culture is sending out about who they are, and who they ought to be.

Jacqueline started teaching in the 1980s at the University of Witswatersrand (Wits) in South Africa, in a department very similar in structure to Bristol's Drama Department: 'Film and Television were embedded in the Drama curriculum in much the same way as they are here,' she says. The field of Film and Television Studies, no longer a fledgling discipline as it was in the '70s and '80s, now has a well-established set of 'tools', or skills, that any student must acquire before beginning to analyse anything in detail: namely, an awareness of how meaning is made in the moving image, through the medium's unique grammar (long or medium shot, close-up, zoom, pan, etc), dialogue, music, and performance.

And how do undergraduates, fresh from a childhood of 'media consumption', react to the idea of taking film and television seriously as a subject for study? 'I think there's always a little bit of wariness at the beginning,' says Jacqueline, 'when students have to take a step back, perhaps for the first time in their lives, and look at images on screen and think about how these things have been made.' But studying things that they may always have taken for granted helps them, she argues, to develop critical and analytical thinking.

Bristol's Film and Television courses also have strong elements of practice, so that, for example, students make their own short films within the curriculum, using the Department's equipment. These practice elements are crucial: 'They give students skills that can then help them find jobs in the industry,' says Jacqueline, 'and getting hands-on experience also helps them interpret what they're learning in theory; they can create something that can be discussed and analysed.' Not only that, but links with the media companies in Bristol – including the BBC – enable students to work on placements and gain first-hand experience of the industry. 'Making "products" in the creative industries depends very much on the process towards completing them,' she says, 'and that process involves economics, technology, teamwork, and dozens of other factors. I think that the way we teach here, and the placements some of them do, gives them an excellent sense of that.'

As well as teaching on the core units, Jacqueline teaches the Moving Image course to second and final years, and various practice-based moving image units. At the postgraduate level, she convenes and contributes to the Arts Faculty MA Unit in Critical Theory (taking a class on Post-colonialism) and to her own Department's MA programmes in Television Studies and Film and Television Production. A new programme, the MA in Cinema Studies, will begin in 2005.

The Department's excellent record of research (it was awarded a five-star rating in the latest Research Assessment Exercise) also feeds into the teaching culture. The connection between teaching and research is, Jacqueline believes,





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‘Commitment is one of the hallmarks of this University. There’s a very strong commitment, at every level, to students’ development, their learning, and the quality of teaching.’

becoming stronger every year, as she and her colleagues find ways of bringing their research into the classroom. ‘Students engage with it because they’ve got access to a scholar’s specialised knowledge,’ she says, ‘and it helps us to stay focused on our research projects and maybe get some feedback from the students.’ Jacqueline’s own interests led her to introduce a unit called Identity, Nation and the Cinema, which she taught in South Africa and re-devised for Bristol. ‘It’s worked very well,’ she says. ‘I added a practice element, so that students can explore the notion of belonging and the meanings of being British or English.’

Helping to develop new courses like this is now part of Jacqueline’s remit as the Department’s Learning and Teaching Adviser. ‘We’re trying to interlock film and theatrical studies more fully,’ she explains, ‘so that students can make comparative studies from the beginning rather than have two separate teaching streams.’ The challenge of figuring out how to create such a curriculum is something she relishes. ‘I did a lot of curriculum development in South Africa, because higher education there was undergoing rapid demographic shifts, and we had to respond rapidly, or fail.’

Her experiences at Wits University, she says, form an excellent background for working at Bristol. Here, too, pressures are at work, in higher education and in the culture as a whole: the need to widen participation, for example, is a familiar one to Jacqueline, and it’s a task that she is committed to. ‘But commitment is one of the hallmarks of this University. There’s a very strong commitment, at every level, to students’ development, their learning, and the quality of teaching. We pay a lot of attention to giving the students the very best that we can. And being able to concentrate on that is wonderful.’ □

Teaching news

Some important teaching stories from the year:

Education Strategy
2004-2008

Teaching quality
assured

How do pupils
interact?

Bristol Centres
one step closer

Teaching prizes

Virtual graduates

Degrees awarded
by faculty

Matching the rhetoric: the Education Strategy 2004-2008

The University's Education Strategy, 'Education through Excellence', was approved by Council in March. The strategy, a central document in the University's plans for the future, was developed by a working group chaired by Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Patricia Broadfoot, after extensive consultation across the University.

'We want our students to have a rewarding time here,' said Professor Broadfoot, 'and one of the key aims of this Strategy is to define what that means.'

The document sets out the elements of a positive student experience – including excellent teaching, attentive personal support and access to the latest research – which the University pledges to supply. It also outlines ten objectives which will translate the over-arching principles of the Strategy into action.

The Working Group will now refine the action plan to put the Education Strategy into practice.

Teaching quality assured

A team of auditors from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) visited the University in April 2004 to carry out an Institutional Audit. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the opportunities available to students and



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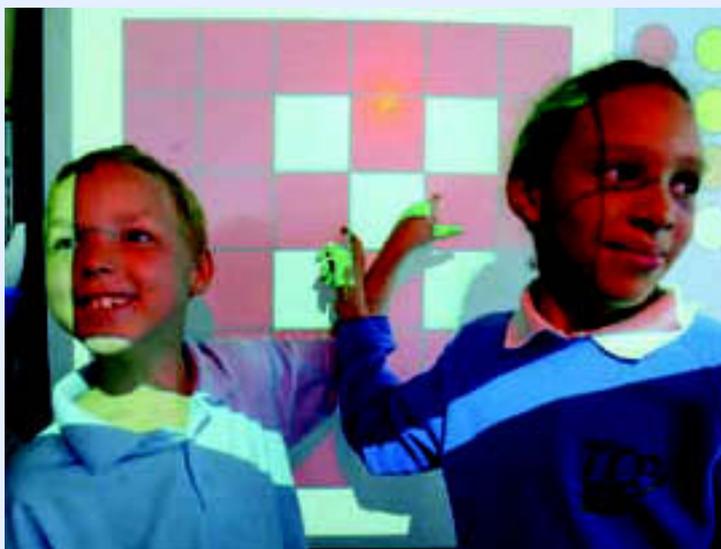
on the academic standards of the awards that the University offers.

The audit team's report concluded that 'broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the quality of its academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards'. This is the highest level of confidence that the QAA can express.

The team singled out several areas that exemplified good practice, including the work of the Teaching Support Unit in advising departments on maintaining high teaching standards, the effectiveness of the mediation service at resolving student issues, and the emphasis on recognising and rewarding teaching excellence. A number of action points are recommended in the report, including the need to work on a systematic approach to reviewing the research postgraduate learning experience.

The report is available online at www.bristol.ac.uk/tsu/ext_quality/qaa/bristolaudit.html.

SOUTHWEST NEWS SERVICE



Above: Matthew Davies and Portia McKenzie demonstrate their understanding of visual concepts at Teyfant Community School in Hartcliffe, Bristol.

How do pupils interact?

A team from the Graduate School of Education has launched the UK's largest interactive education project, to establish exactly what the benefits of Interactive Computer Technology (ICT) are for teachers and pupils.

The project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is studying all levels, from primary to post-16, with the involvement of ten local schools. Professor Ros Sutherland, the team leader, explained that there is no blanket approach to teaching with ICT – each subject in the curriculum must be approached differently.

These targeted approaches include using PowerPoint to teach the past tense in Modern Language classes, exploring the concept of enlargement in Maths classes with Dynamic Geometry software, and using composing software in Music classes at key stages 2 and 3.

Bristol Centres one step closer

The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) initiative is a new programme funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. It aims to reward, and further invest in, excellent teaching practice, by funding special centres for the purpose.

Bristol made two bids that passed stage one of the process in 2004:

- Bristol ChemLabs will be a major national resource for teaching and learning practical experimental science. Renewal of the infrastructure will result in professional-standard laboratories, state-of-the-art instrumentation, and e-learning facilities. Teaching Fellowships will allow University staff, seconded teachers and industrial scientists to focus on educational innovation. Other features will include outreach pre-University education, public engagement in science, and making the new protocols available nationwide through the HE Academy and the Royal Society of Chemistry.
- The AIMS Centre (Applied and Integrated Medical Sciences), in the School of Medical Sciences, will integrate the teaching of applied medical sciences and clinical skills. Proven approaches will be further enhanced by state-of-the-art models, images and simulations of human (and animal) structure and function. A major resource of web-based teaching material will also be developed, building on existing collections within the University. Initially aimed at students of medical,

dental and veterinary science, its sphere of influence will eventually cover a broad range of clinical and medical sciences programmes. It will also extend and develop a wide range of postgraduate Continuing Professional Development courses, build on existing widening participation activities in partnership with local schools and disseminate its experience nationally.

Successfully funded CETLs will be announced in January 2005.

Teaching prizes

Dr Dudley Shallcross in the School of Chemistry won a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship Scheme award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to learning and teaching. He is the first academic at the University and the first chemist in the UK to receive the award in the Rising Stars category.

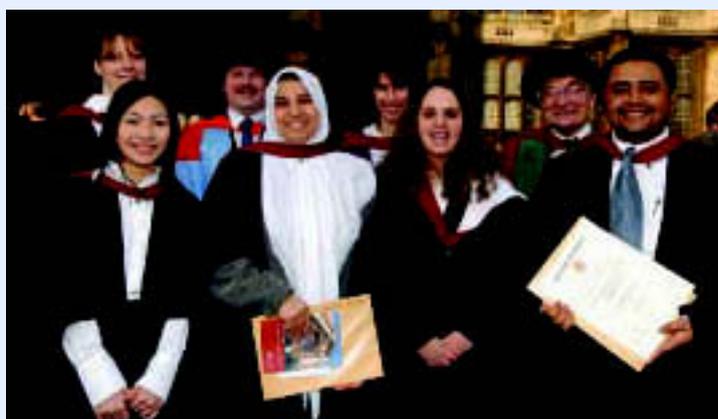
Dr Paul Wyatt in the School of Chemistry is the winner of the 2003 Clifford Wharton Prize. This prize is awarded annually to a member of staff in Chemistry to recognise excellence in undergraduate teaching.

Bristol's first 'virtual graduates'

History was made in 2004 when six students from the Sudan, China, Libya and the UK received their MSc degrees in Reproduction and Development – the University's first-ever internet degrees.

The Masters course, run by the Division of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, uses novel internet-based distance learning technologies. The course has a broad syllabus and a flexible study programme, with full- and part-time study options.

Although thousands of miles apart, the students shared the worldwide 'virtual classroom' set up by Julian Jenkins,



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Clinical Director of the Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine and Senior Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. After a two-week introduction at Bristol, students complete most of the course online from their home countries.

'I was able to study while working in Sudan with very low costs compared to residential courses,' said Dr Elsamawal Elhakim, one of the graduates. 'It would have been impossible for me to spend a year in Bristol.'

Above: Bristol's first internet graduates with their online tutors at the spring degree congregation.

Degrees awarded by faculty

	1st	2:1	2:1:1	3rd	Ordinary	Aegrotat	Totals
Arts BA	103	441	92	2	-	-	638
Engineering BSc, BEng	25	31	21	15	1	-	93
Engineering MEng	79	155	45	8	-	-	287
Social Sciences & Law							
BA, LLB, BSc	83	452	114	6	4	1	660
Social Sciences & Law MSci	1	5	-	-	-	-	6
Science BSc	80	263	95	24	7	-	469
Science MSci	85	78	12	-	-	-	175
Medicine & Dentistry BSc	3	7	6	3	2	-	21
	Honors		Pass				
MB, ChB	33		94				127
BDS	2		40				42
	Distinction		Pass				
BVSc	12		62				74
Totals							2,592