

SUALL

Scottish Universities

Association for

Lifelong Learning

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SUALL Research Sub-committee

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Minutes for meeting of the SUALL Research Sub-committee, held on 7th Nov', 2007 at Open University in Scotland.

Present: Michael Allardice (Secretary), University of Dundee; Pete Cannell (Chair) Open University in Scotland; Suzanne Ebel, SFEU; Robert Ingram, Glasgow Caledonian University; Hazel Knox, University of Paisley; Ralf St Clair, University of Glasgow; Derek Young, University of Stirling.

1. Pete Cannell welcomed members to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Margaret Blair, Glasgow Caledonian University; Victoria Boyd, Glasgow Caledonian University; Margaret Dundas SFC; James Kelly, Abertay University; Jonathan Staal, Abertay University.
3. **The minute of the previous meeting was approved.**
4. **Matters Arising:** None.
5. **Relevant Correspondence:** The Secretary highlighted the e-mail correspondence from Raymond Thomson to set up a new CPD Group on SUALL Council.
6. **Plans for Future Events:** Plans for an event in October had stalled mainly over the question of funding. Contact with Margaret Dundas regarding co-hosting with SWARF had not been successful. The meeting agreed that these events were a vital part of the work of the Research group and Derek Young volunteered to approach ESCALATE on our behalf to see if they would be willing to host the seminar at University of Stirling. Ralf St Clair also indicated that SUALL could join with them in promoting the seminar series at University of Glasgow – this to be investigated further.

The basic problem remains the funding of a venue and lunch if the Research Sub-committee are to put day-long seminars in for researchers. The Secretary was asked to write to the SUALL Council Secretary to ask what funding might be available for events that we organise.

The group indicated that they were still keen for these events to continue and Suzanne Ebel suggested a seminar on "Bid Writing" for researchers as a future topic.



Item 6 (continued).

The new date for the seminar on Research Interview Techniques was suggested as 7th March 2008.

7 & 8. (Combined). Notes on Research Related Projects from Member Institutions & other Research Activities:

- Open University: Educational needs of new migrants project is now well underway, but there are problems getting beyond ESOL needs and more interviewing is being conducted than was originally planned. Pete also noted that funding changes in England will have an impact on Scottish activities. The OU in Scotland is also involved in a study of Individual Learning Accounts, asking: who is using them? The research has been very successful to-date with an 88% response rate for the 800 plus surveys administered. This means that the publication of the analysis has been delayed to cope with the amount of data. Other OU studies include work on the First Year experience of OU students and how it might differ from students with other institutions; a study with staff and students examining 'troublesome knowledge'; and finally an impact study on problems associated with work-place study and support issues.
- Stirling University: With the ESCALATE funding drawing to a close next summer Derek reported that a number of studies would be published over the next few months, including their survey results on the First Year experience. They were also involved in a lifelong learning project in Malawi using Radio communications to facilitate distance learning.
- Paisley University: The merger with Bell College has caused a great deal of change and re-validation of programmes. Hazel reported that the QAA First Year Experience project was nearing its conclusion and that she was also involved in a joint project with East Renfrewshire Council. Hazel is also working with Julie McAndrews examining the First Year experience of lifelong learners in two institutions and what factors impact their learning, alongside the methods used by these universities to identify and attempt to alleviate these problems.
- Glasgow Caledonian University reported that they were involved in a comparative study of HN courses with English equivalent qualifications and they were also conducting a study into Individual Learning Accounts.
- Scottish Further Education Unit reported that with the proposed merger of SFEU and other college bodies there was limited research being conducted at present.
- Ralf St Clair reported that the West Forum was conducting some research into the learning of older adults. They are also involved in a practitioner-led Action Research project in partnership with SCREE.
- The meeting noted the research paper recently published by Janet Low looking at the impact on students' work/college study/families on the way they perform in their studies.

- Derek highlighted the JISC proposals which are published regularly and suggested these might be the basis for fruitful partnerships between English and Scottish institutions.
- The group also discussed the fact that Regional Forums were reaching the end of their funding strands in July 2008 and that there may be some short-term funds available for time-limited projects between now and then, and also that as the forums receive notice of their new funding streams, they will be looking to establish new projects as well as maintaining those which have been successful over the past few years.

9. AOCB- None

10. Date of Next Meeting: 7th March, University of Stirling, during the lunch break of the proposed seminar.