
Changes in economics teaching practice and the role of the Economics Network – Results of the Economics Lecturer Survey 2009



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Executive summary

This is a summary of the report and analysis of the Economics Network Lecturers survey, carried out in April - May 2009.

This survey is part of the centre's research programme into teaching and learning in Economics, along with the Student, Alumni and Employers surveys. The main objectives of this survey included clarifying current practices and issues of concern to Economics lecturers and their students, as well as providing the Economics Network and its stakeholders with information about how economics lecturers use our services and what impact it has on their teaching.

This is an observational survey and was conducted online for ease of use and low cost. There were 18 questions, in 3 sections, including free-text commentary.

Profile of respondents

There were 198 respondents from 70 HE institutions across the UK. The results of the survey describe our typical respondent as:

- Male (69.2%)
- First language English (73.7%)
- In the post of Lecturer or Senior Lecturer (56.6%)
- With more than 10 years of experience in teaching in HE (53.0%)
- Having one or more of the administrative roles (82.8%)

Key results

A. About Teaching Economics

When asked about support or advice for their teaching, the majority (79.8%) report receiving advice from colleagues; 47.9% from a central university Education Development/ Support Unit; 41.9% from Economics Network and 9.5% stated that no support was required. Respondents also commented on various sources of advice and support.

When asked about funding received for a teaching/learning project, nearly three quarters of respondents report that they haven't received any. Among those who succeeded in obtaining funding 12.1% received funding from the Economics Network and 15.6% from their university.

Respondents were asked if they had received a teaching award and 15.7% gave positive answer with the awards coming from the Economics network, HE Academy and institutions.

B. Change in teaching practice

Since 2003 in all our lecturers' surveys we have asked respondents if they have changed their teaching practice in the past two years. Two thirds of respondents reporting a change in teaching practice this year. Reasons for change included: Feedback from students (83); Students skills and abilities (76); number of students (62); suggestions from workshops (44); colleagues' suggestions (42).

In their comments lecturers described their reasons for change and their actions. This continuing trend for change of teaching practice due to various reasons increases the demand for services and resources provided by Economics Network.

C. Most important issues in teaching

Respondents were offered a list of current teaching issues and asked to select those which they and their colleagues consider very important (they could select as many issues as they thought relevant in their current teaching). Nearly two thirds of respondents chose *Student maths skills* and *Student motivation* as the

most important issues, with half of the respondents mentioning *Large number of students in lectures* and *Large tutorial groups*. Another issue whose importance increased threefold in the last two years is *Specific needs of international students*.

As well as commenting on these issues, respondents wrote about the various pressures on their time and differential rewards for success in research and teaching.

D. Support from the Economics Network

Respondents were asked about the Economics Network's services and resources. Nearly half of them (47.5%) replied that they use Economics Network services and resources and positively assessed their value.

We asked lecturers who hadn't used Economics Network resources to comment on their reasons. The majority stressed "time" as a major barrier ("*Time is the main constraint*") as well as satisfaction with their own teaching.

Those who had used Economics Network resources and services were asked to comment on how it had influenced their teaching and what improvements this made to student learning or educational experience. In their replies many respondents praised the work of the Economics Network and provided suggestions for its future developments.

Among their suggestions were the need to support students, which Economics Network is addressing through the development of two focused websites: *Why Study Economics?* <http://whystudyeconomics.ac.uk> to encourage potential students to study economics and *Studying Economics* <http://studyingeconomics.ac.uk> to support current students.

Respondents were also asked to share the websites they recommend to their students and their replies will be used to update resources on the *Studying Economics* site.

Funds permitting, the Economics Network will explore some of the suggested ideas and look to provide the community with further resources and services, as well as highlighting policy issues through the HE Academy.

E. Specialist area networks

At the time of the survey the Economics Network was seeking UK-based academics to contribute teaching resources in their field as part of a HEFCE-funded [Open Educational Resources programme](#). The project, 'Teaching Resources for Undergraduate Economics' (TRUE) covers 14 specialist areas.

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in sharing ideas and materials for teaching in these areas. Two thirds of respondents replied positively and their names were passed to the leaders of the specialist groups.

F. Conclusions

Results of the survey demonstrated positive support from the community for the work of the Economics Network. They will also inform centre's strategy and planning of the events, resources, briefings and publications in support of economics lecturers.

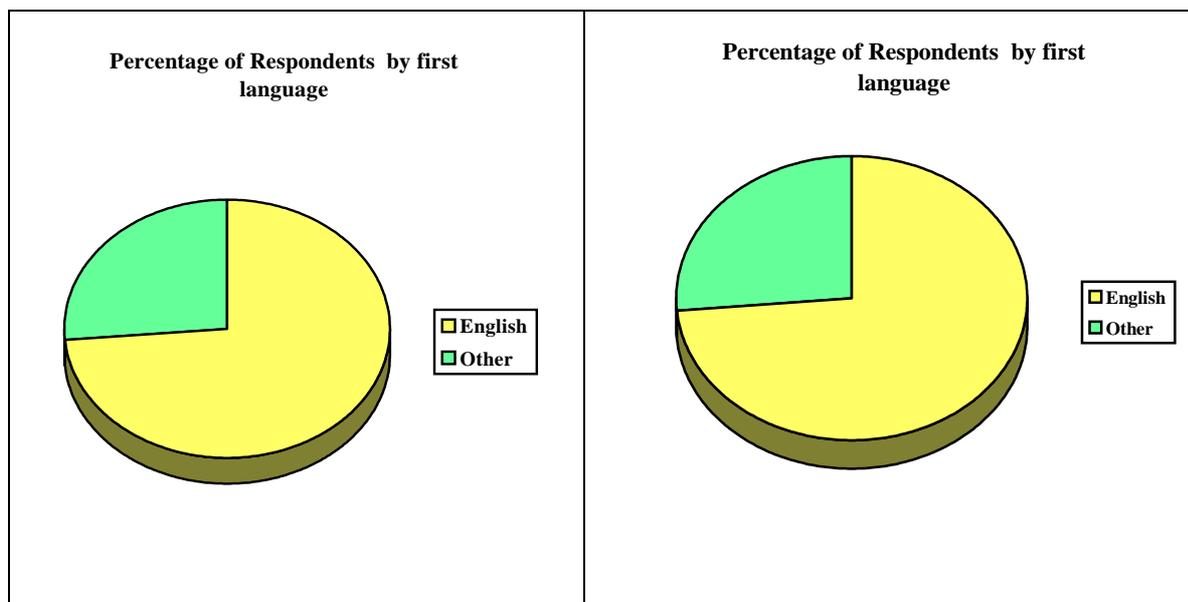
Section 1: About the Respondents

The Economics Network has conducted its biennial national lecturer survey in April/May of 2009 as part of its research programme into teaching and learning, which also includes surveys of students, alumni and employers. The main objectives of this survey included clarifying current practices and issues of concern to Economics lecturers and their students, as well as providing the Economics Network and its stakeholders with information about how economics lecturers use our services and what impact it has on their teaching.

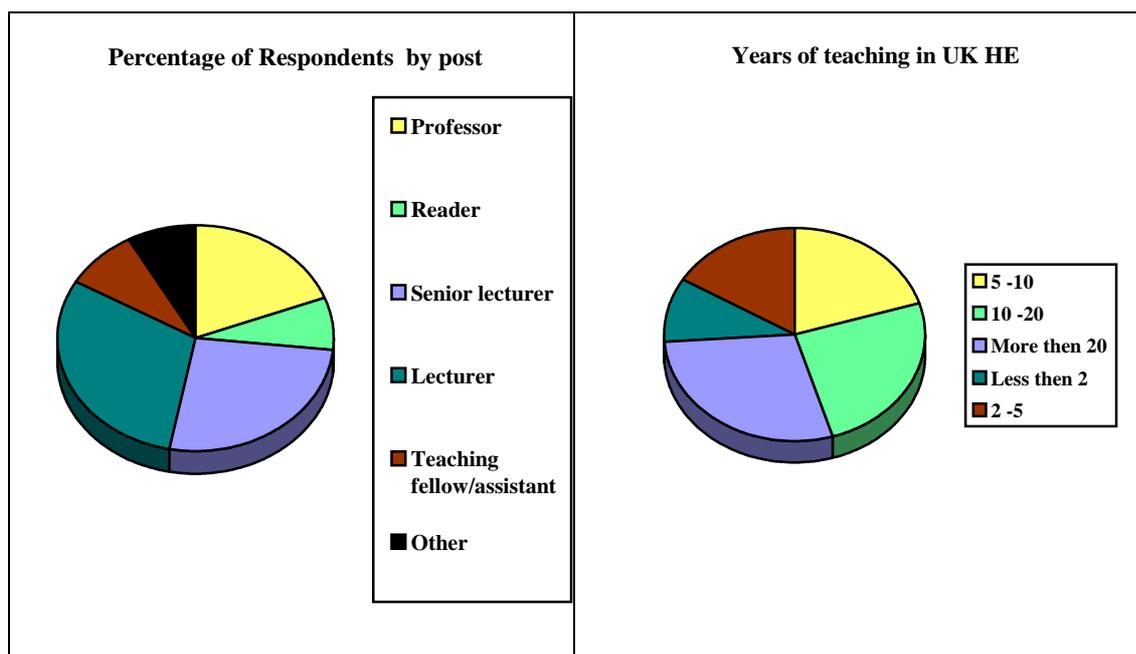
The survey was conducted online, using BOS <http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/> and consisted of 18 questions focussing on changes in teaching practice over the previous two years; use of Economics Network (EN) services; and specialist areas networks. It included open questions with free-text commentary. Representative quotes from these responses are included in the report.

Nearly 200 respondents from 70 UK universities completed the survey, which is more than in all previous surveys. It was intended as an observational study and not a controlled experiment. The respondents do not constitute a random sample of all economics lecturers in the UK, but a self-selected group. As a result, their views may not fully reflect the opinions of all economics lecturers

Among the respondents 69.2% were male and 30.8% female.



Nearly three quarters regarded English as their first language. More than half were lecturers and senior lecturers, 19.2% were professors and 8.6% were teaching fellows and teaching assistants.



When asked about their administrative roles only 17.2% replied that they don't have any. Among the mentioned roles were Economics Network departmental contacts or associates (fewer than a quarter); 20.0% were either Head of Department or Director of Undergraduate or Postgraduate studies; 20.0% were year tutors. Other roles included teaching and learning coordinators, module leaders, placement coordinators, etc.

The majority of respondents were very experienced teachers: 28.3% have taught for more than 20 years; 24.7% between 10 and 20 years and 25.0% between 5 and 10 years. Only one in ten have taught less than 2 years in UK HE.

Section 2: About teaching Economics

When asked about support or advice for their teaching, the majority (79.8%) report receiving advice from colleagues; 47.9% from a central university Education Development/ Support Unit; 41.9% from Economics Network and 9.5% stated that no support was required.

We ask the respondents to provide details, including how useful the given support has been. Respondents commented on various sources of advice and support.

From colleagues:

- *My colleagues are the most useful help I can get;*
- *Especially useful was the support given by colleagues in the beginning of the lecturing career;*
- *Colleagues provided useful day-to-day advice;*
- *Colleague help has been the most beneficial to learn how others perform tasks efficiently and effectively;*
- *All the support has been useful, but support from colleagues is the most important.*

From central university units:

- *The University's Teaching and Learning Centre runs conferences/seminars which provide useful information and enable exchange of ideas and reflection on teaching practice etc; they also provide advice and support on specific issues such as plagiarism, assessment and feedback etc;*
- *Education Development Unit, Support formal and informal usually increases my human capital and productivity! Sometimes the informal or technical advice most useful;*
- *Support for Blackboard is provided by the university through a support unit. Unfortunately, this Unit has little control over contractual details entered into by the university with Blackboard. Thus there are frequent problems about access to blackboard from off-campus sites, especially those that rely on BT. Blackboard and BT cannot be forced to communicate and resolve these intermittent problems;*
- *I have taken courses on voice projection and on using PowerPoint slides in teaching, from our Staff Development Department.*

From the Economics Network:

- *Economics Network representatives came to the department to give a presentation on Playing Games in Economics. As a result, specific games have been included in one of the units I am responsible for;*
- *Information about the school experience especially what A levels*

are now like, was very useful;

- *Make good use of the tools on the Economics network site for teaching;*
- *It has caused me to refine my teaching material and modify my teaching style, as well as explore greater use of interactive teaching materials;*
- *LTSN resources are very useful.*

There were some negative comments about teaching advice and support:

- *Awful, over-formalized 3 day training session at start of post;*
- *Limited support - they're all mainstream economists who are largely ignorant of alternative approaches (such as emergent complex systems applied to economics).*

When asked about funding received for a teaching/learning project nearly three quarters of respondents report that they haven't received any. Among those who succeeded in obtaining funding 12.1% received funding from the Economics Network and 15.6% from their university. Projects that got funding include:

- Funding for developing experimental economics module;
- Developing a question bank for transfer to VLE;
- Funding for setting up on-line quizzes to support introductory maths course;
- Teaching heterodox economics;
- Various projects to improve teaching;
- Grants to fund research into how students learn economics and for conference and workshop attendance;
- LTDP Fund to explore the direction of health economic teaching from director's perspective

We asked respondents if they had received a teaching award. 15.7% had received a teaching award, which included:

- *Economics Network teaching award*
- *Academy Inspirational Teaching Award;*
- *Chancellor's award for distinguished teaching;*
- *University Teaching fellow;*
- *Best Undergraduate and Overall teaching scores (awarded by school);*
- *Excellence for teaching (from different universities);*
- *Fellow of Higher Education Academy.*

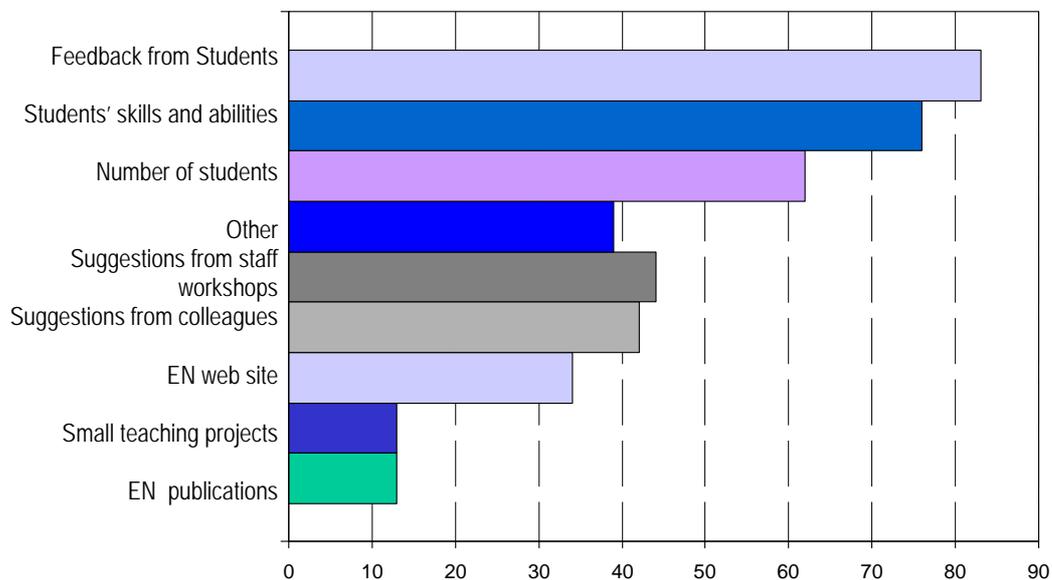
One of the respondents commented: "I am not aware that there is such a thing."

Section 3: Change in Teaching Practice

Since 2003 in all our lecturers' surveys we have asked respondents if they have changed their teaching practice in the past two years. More than half of the respondents in all previous surveys answer positively to this question and the 2009 survey results follow this trend, with two thirds of respondents reporting a change in teaching practice. This continuing trend for change of teaching practice due to various reasons increases the demand for services and resources provided by Economics Network.

Reasons for change included: Feedback from students (83); Students' skills and abilities (76); number of students (62); suggestions from workshops (44); colleagues' suggestions (42).

Reasons for changing teaching practice in the past 2 years



Other reasons included: changes in technology; personal reflection on teaching; new courses; Network suggestions; pedagogic literature.

When asked to provide details lecturers described their reasons for change and their actions. Among them, those who changed practice due to student feedback:

- *Students feedback is invariably useful, and I try to incorporate their suggestions into my teaching;*
- *If a lecture format proves unsuccessful in terms of delivery (and student feedback) eg. boring or dry - would change it to group work or exercise or debate or whatever.*

Change due to students' skills and abilities:

- *A wider inclusion of examples and media references; as well as adapting the material to the skill levels of student;*
- *In two of my units I completely re-wrote the syllabus in line with what I had learned about the students abilities and what engaged them;*

- *I teach courses at different levels some at UG level, many at PG level, and some for executive education (for experienced or mature learners). I find that approach to learning varies from one group to another and even one individual to another. I have found that the use of various activities helps learners of different styles.*

Change due to the number of students:

- *Due to the current large size of tutorial groups, and the lack of motivation of students to work, I have moved to a more exercise lecture style of tutorials, rather than a traditional student-led tutorial ;*
- *I have used new technology (turning point) for interaction in large groups;*
- *Providing greater resources for students practice and learn material from other sources in other to reduce the individual help they sort from myself. This was due to a larger numbers of students where it became difficult to sort through these issues on an individual level;*
- *I now focus on two things separately, addressing the bottom tail and the top tail in large classes. The first group is helped with non-reflective material placed in blackboard. The second group is challenged to think beyond the blackboard/textbook stuff in lectures .*

Many respondents try to make their teaching more interactive:

- *Increased the duration of the teaching hours, made teaching more interactive, weakly tests for students to monitor their progress, exercises in class in small groups as applications;*
- *Greater degree of application; Greater concentration on key principles; Greater use of WebCT - more interactive. More enquiry based learning;*
- *I have made classes more interactive - introduced estimation and calculation tasks and competitive tasks - this was in order to encourage attention during lectures;*
- *Tried to make more interactive and problem solving.*

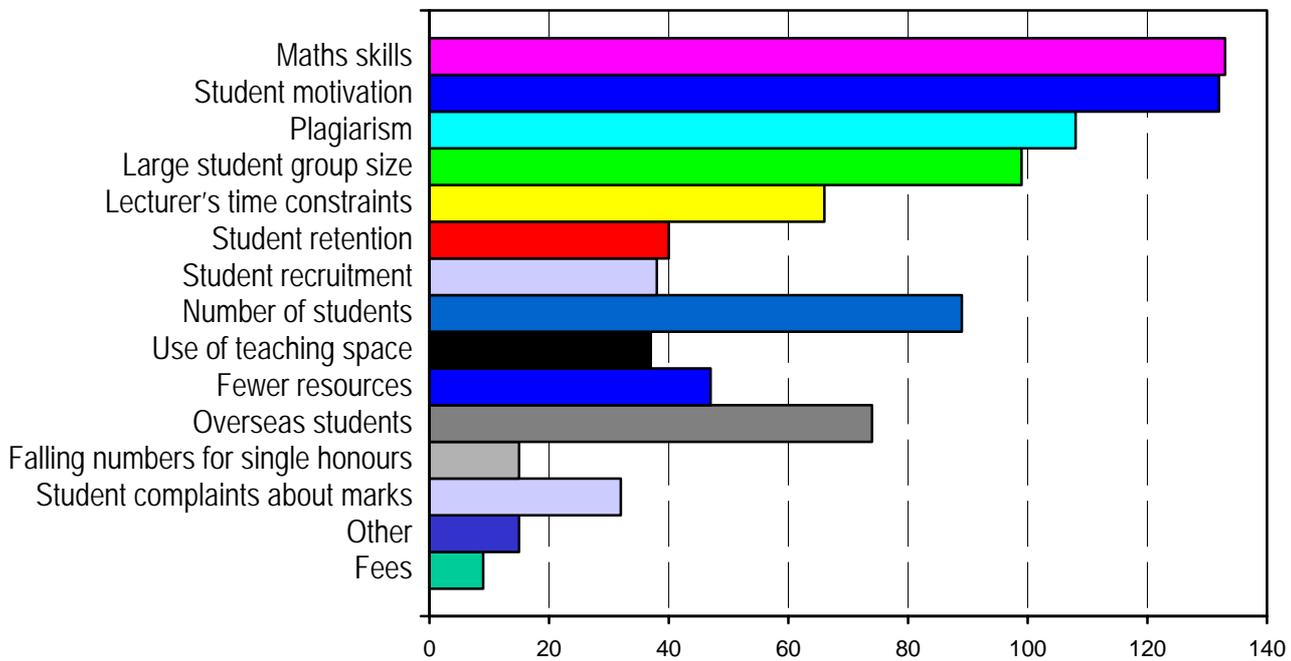
Some made changes to the assessment:

- *Changed assessment regime to make coursework a rehearsal for exam;*
- *Instituted literature search and review as coursework assessment;*
- *Assessment was also slightly changed to reduce the very heavy marking load;*
- *Reduced frequency of assessment due to increasing numbers on some modules and changed assessment pattern to reduce likelihood of plagiarism. Introduced reflective practice in a module .*
- *Diversified methods of assessment to try to align them with intended learning outcome*

Section 4: Most important issues in Teaching

Respondents were offered a list of current teaching issues, suggested by the focus groups, and asked to select those which they and their colleagues consider very important (they could select as many issues as they thought relevant in their current teaching). Nearly two thirds of respondents chose “Student maths skills” and “Student motivation” as the most important issues, with half of the respondents mentioning “Large number of students in lectures” and “Large tutorial groups”. Another issue that has seen its importance increase threefold in the last two years is “Specific needs of international students” (it was mentioned by 24 lecturers in 2007 and by 74 in 2009).

Most important issues in current teaching in economics in 2009



Respondents described the issues in more detail.

Maths skills of students:

- *Maths skills are becoming increasingly problematic as is the cut-and-paste structure encouraged by 'A'-levels.*
- *As I teach in third year or postgraduate, students have taken core economics and maths modules, yet many seem unable or unwilling to remember and retain a fear of equations.*
- *Maths is a key issue in our department as students are often very weak at maths and disengage from the subject early on. We are trying a new system this year of delivering the material in smaller groups as opposed to through lectures and we are separating A-Level and non A-level.*

Student motivation:

- *Motivation is a particular issue in year 1 alongside growing difficulties of student transition to university and university learning*
- *Motivation of students is often to pass the exam rather than to learn*
- *Problems with some second year students who don't attend lectures and/or tutorials*
- *Too many students who are not well prepared and don't want to work to learn*
- *The majority of our students see no need to do any work and have no real interest in the topic they have chosen to study*

Number of students and large size groups:

- *There seems to be continual pressure to teach greater numbers of students more cost effectively*
- *We're caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. The university has a policy on contact hours and class sizes. Given the challenging outlook in terms of public finances, it is likely that student/staff ratios will rise further over the next 5 years. With pressure to conduct research that maintains our position in the top 5, something has to give*
- *The course has nearly 800 registered students. The content is very difficult, and we often do not have time to cover it in the detail we would like during classes*
- *Biggest problem is some teaching rooms not being big enough especially lecture theatres.*

There were also comments from respondents regarding the various pressures on their time and differential rewards for success in research and teaching:

- *A central issue for me over the last few years has been that the institution in which I work has shortened the academic year in order to pursue a research agenda, leaving students with insufficient time to learn effectively and staff with insufficient time to provide adequate feedback to students. This has led to continuing tensions*
- *The idea that resources are overstretched and that we over teach is a self-serving fiction used by academics to justify reducing their teaching loads at the expense of students and maximizing the time they have for career-promoting research. I teach at most six hours a week (which is on the higher than average) and would be happy to do more and thereby help reduce class sizes, increase contact hours and improve the experience of students. However, to say this openly would mark me down as not being serious about research, jeopardize my future, and have no effect whatsoever on the powers that be. Instead, we have been told that next year we must drop courses (including one of my own, which recruits well and has always had excellent reviews from students) and reduce contact hours on those that remain in order to free up resources for research. This is a travesty that is typical of UK HE*

nowadays, and which (I judge) 90% of academics connive in for selfish and self-serving reasons

- *There is drive by universities to be simultaneously better at teaching, better at research and to generate more income without addressing the conflicts of interest*

Section 5: Support from the Economics Network

Respondents were asked about their use of services and resources provided by the Economics Network. Nearly half of them (47.5%) replied that they use Economics Network services and resources.

Of these, one fifth use IREE and the Handbook for lecturers, slightly fewer use case studies and other web resources, attend Economics Network workshops and read the email newsletter.

Respondents positively assessed the value of the resources and services provided by the Economics Network. They commented on the workshops:

- *The workshop for new lecturers was very useful, but before then I read the lecturer handbook, which every budding Ph.D. student should probably get a copy of before going up to teach*
- *The workshop have provided good ideas for adapting the way units/tutorials were being delivered and a good idea of what other departments have had success with*
- *The GTA workshop enabled me to better mentor the GTAs on my course. It helped me focus more on what made a good GTA.*

On the website and other resources:

- *The exchange of ideas and experience with peers from other institutions and references to textbooks and teaching material by the economics network, as well as access to the videos introducing to students the reasons and motivations to study economics were very useful*
- *Used course specific materials to develop tutorial exercises etc in Microeconomics*
- *Very useful to see what is taught elsewhere and draw from that*
- *Web site - great portal for resources on teaching, textbooks, data, etc*
- *Information on textbooks and other lecturers' material has been extremely useful to develop non-traditional modules.*

On developing new ideas:

- *Given me ideas that I could adapt into my own style of teaching*
- *Good inspiration to develop own questions for question banks and case studies*
- *Very useful when I was thinking recently about game theory teaching at a distance*
- *EN as a source of ideas and innovations.*

We asked lecturers who hadn't used Economics Network resources to comment on their reasons. The majority stressed "time" as a major barrier (*"Time is the main constraint"*) as well as satisfaction with their own teaching *"My module materials are already written to my satisfaction, and constraints on my time (VC: research is the only thing that matters) make it less important."* Two of the respondents mention their problems using the Question bank in the past.

Those who had used Economics Network resources and services were asked to comment on how it had influenced their teaching. Among the responses:

- *Generally provide opportunities for reflection. I don't necessarily come back with ideas to implement, but know that there are different ways of doing things*
- *I have introduced new concepts and tested new ways of teaching my lectures*
- *Allowed me to make the teaching more student-led*
- *Previously also I was trying different activities but I was not sure if I was deviating from the subject and whether I was doing something which is not mainstream. From the resources of Economics Network, I now feel more confident to use these different approaches and also to sharpen and improve them*
- *I have developed them for my own classes and seen how active sessions make it more interesting*
- *The workshop was very effective in helping me see how games could be incorporated into the lecture, and building on how students pay attention in class*
- *I have introduced new concepts and tested new ways of teaching my lectures*
- *The main thing has been the use of games in seminars. Also the IREE articles have helped me change the content of the macroeconomics module which I teach*
- *They sometimes give good ideas of what can be done that one hasn't thought of, plus some useful tips of how to go about things.*

Respondents were asked to comment on changes or improvements this made to student learning or educational experience. Among their replies:

- *Even the least motivated and also the least able benefit more. I am not sure that the best students have been helped*
- *Better communication. More efficient codification of information*
- *I feel that the students have really enjoyed the new material in the foundation units as they have been able to have debates and discussions making the tutorials much more student-led. The standard of answers in the exams has improved with students providing much more discursive answers. In the year 1 unit where problem-based learning was introduced the student attendance improved and we were able to see how much more*

capable the students were than we had given them credit for. The standard of work was much higher than we would have expected

- *I think some concepts have been illustrated more clearly than they could through reading/debating*
- *It seems to me that they are grasping the material, and working a lot harder on the work I set them, as compared to the experience my colleagues have with the same classes*
- *made students more responsible for their learning More engaged*
- *New GTAs were able to give much more structured classes*
- *Students are very enthusiastic about the games and appear to learn quite a lot from them*
- *Quizzes have shown some useful student engagement - we're still learning from them. Will use them better next year and may use them more widely.*

Two of the respondents mention that it will be difficult to assess and “*very hard to tell, on the margin it probably helped to motivate some of them better.*”

After the discussion on the most important issues to the respondents and their colleagues we asked them how the Economics Network could support them with these issues. In answering this question many respondents praised the work of the Economics Network:

- *Keep up the good work*
- *With respect to students' motivations, I have received some material from the EN, thank you*
- *The Metal resources are very good and further development of these to include stats material would be useful as well as continued support in how to deliver an effective quants unit*

Among suggestions for future developments of the Economics Network:

- *Help with tips for encouraging students to turn up in lectures would be helpful*
- *An equivalent to Metal but for English/essay skills?*
- *All the issues ticked are important but I would say that student motivation is qualitatively more important than all the rest. Anything focused on that would be most helpful*
- *Ideas on addressing differing abilities in one tutorial (differentiation of activities) and within that the idea of encouraging lecturers to have activities in their tutorials*
- *Produce and disseminate online maths drills with the possibility of monitoring use by individual students and, perhaps, allowing randomization of the questions (eg parameters) to deter cheating, thereby allowing such drills to be used for assessment purposes*
- *Information on how others deal with these things*

One of the respondents referred to the need to deal with policy issues at the higher level – “*Don't think about supporting me, or the vested interests*

represented by our profession. Instead, support our students who are being short-changed, and their families who are paying for it, by campaigning against cuts in contact hours and increased class sizes, by examining much more critically the self-serving claims of academics that they cannot afford to devote more time and effort to teaching, and by arguing against the long-standing imbalance in the way research and teaching are valued in UK universities”.

Support for students is also a key objective for the Economics Network. To this end in 2004 the Economics Network developed a website to encourage potential students to study economics – *Why Study Economics?* <http://whystudyeconomics.ac.uk> and in 2009 developed a website to support current students – *Studying Economics* <http://studyingeconomics.ac.uk>. 44.0% of respondents were aware of this work and 34.5% actively encourage their student to use resources from these sites. In their comments some of the respondents report that they have used *Why Study Economics?* while visiting schools, while others plan to use the website in the future.

Respondents were also asked to share the websites they recommend to their students and their replies will be used to update resources on the *Studying Economics* site.

The last question in this section of the survey was about possible resources and services that the Economics Network should provide in the future. Some of the respondents in answering this question refer to specific areas:

- *Transport Economics (the information provided is limited by depth and could be updated)*
- *More resources on behavioural economics*
- *At the moment, the emphasis seems to be mainly on undergraduate teaching. I will appreciate if you can have a section on postgraduate education where PG students can find some resources.*
- *blogs for students on specific topics/disciplines, where they ask questions and answer, helping each other*
- *Lesson plan ideas. A forum on the website to allow staff from across institutions to leave ideas, ask for help, share resources etc. (a little like the TES staffroom forums) This would also help new staff to come up with interesting tutorial/seminars*
- *training and resources for Graduate Teaching Assistants involving GTA-directors from different UK-universities*
- *We have large numbers of students from China, but little data in our library on that country. Information on English language sources for summary statistics on China would be helpful.*

Other respondents commented about policy issues and a need for provision of incentives for good teaching:

- *Frankly, I need reward rather than either resources or motivation to teach better. The students' achievement is quite a reward in itself, I must*

say, but it does not pay the bills. Lowering the bar on teaching achievement that can result in promotion to professor would be helpful. In other words, someone who has done consistently high quality delivery and has contributed significantly to developing new degree schemes or new courses should be able to obtain promotion based on this. Otherwise, most people quite rationally will focus on getting out articles. I'm sorry to say it, but it's true

- *I'm not convinced that a centralised organisation is able to provide much more than is currently being done. It's a difficult job you guys have on your hands and you do it well, but in a system of distributed knowledge you need to encourage innovators to air their views in an open manner without the diehard mainstream theorists shooting them down for no other reason than they can because they have bought into the dominant paradigm and believe they hold some fictional intellectual high ground. I am seriously concerned about the future of economics if these people are allowed to continue as gatekeepers (which are of course a systemic problem). What hope is there for curriculum development when most of the staff teaching are products of the paradigm? If you could encourage more open debate that would be great, but I seriously doubt it will happen. I'm so fed up with it all that I am leaving academia after over 20 years teaching and researching (17 of which were in the UK). The irony is that students love the alternative approaches I introduce them to and explore with them because they are grounded in the real world*
- *I would like to see an initiative nationally, perhaps with the RES, to promote serious undergraduate research more*

Funds permitting the Economics Network will explore some of the suggested ideas and look to provide the community with further resources and services, as well as highlighting policy issues through the HE Academy.

Section 6: Specialist areas networks

At the time of the survey the Economics Network was seeking UK-based academics to contribute teaching resources in their field as part of a HEFCE-funded [Open Educational Resources programme](#). The project, ‘Teaching Resources for Undergraduate Economics’ (TRUE) covers 14 specialist areas. Respondents were asked if they would be interested in sharing ideas and materials for teaching in these areas. Two thirds of respondents replied positively and their names were passed to the leaders of the specialists groups.

At the end of the survey we asked respondents for any further comments.. Many of these were positive comments about the Economics Network: *“hope you continue to prosper and grow. Increasingly important to us”*, while others referred again to the importance of raising policy issues: *”what is needed is culture change and recognition by academics that, since student fees account for 50-70% of our salaries, they deserve a similar percentage of our time and effort to be devoted to teaching them.”*; *“I remain convinced that the 50% target is worth reaching and that half the population can reach it at a meaningful level of achievement. It all hangs on what we mean by learning, and more important, what students mean by it.”*

Section 7: Conclusions

The Economics Network has conducted its biennial national lecturer survey in April/May of 2009 as part of its research programme into teaching and learning. The main objectives of this survey included clarifying current practices and issues of concern to Economics lecturers and their students, as well as providing the Economics Network and its stakeholders with information about how economics lecturers use our services and what impact it has on their teaching.

Nearly 200 respondents from 70 UK universities completed the survey, which is more than in previous surveys. Data analysed in this report do not represent the opinions of all Economics lecturers and reflect the views of those who replied to the survey.

The survey confirms a trend amongst increasing numbers of lecturers to change their teaching methods over the past two years due to changes in students’ skills and abilities, larger classes and feedback that they receive from students. This continuing trend for change of teaching practice increases the demand for services and resources provided by Economics Network.

When questioned about the most important issues in their current teaching, nearly two thirds of respondents reported *Student maths skills* and *Student motivation* as the most important issues, with half of the respondents reporting *Large number of students in lectures* and *Large tutorial groups*. Another issue that has seen its importance increase threefold in the last two years is *Specific needs of international students*.

Due to various reasons, half of the respondents have used existing services and resources of the Economics Network and the Network will explore raising awareness and promoting support amongst the community.

Respondents who do use Economics Network resources and services very positively assessed their value and the impact on their teaching. They also reported on the impact to students' learning: *“Even the least motivated and also the least able benefit more”*; *“It seems to me that they are grasping the material, and working a lot harder on the work I set them, as compared to the experience my colleagues have with the same classes”*; *“Students are very enthusiastic about the games and appear to learn quite a lot from them.”*

When asked about possible resources and services that the Economics Network should provide in the future, some of the respondents refer to specific areas, while others commented on policy issues. Funds permitting, the Economics Network will explore these suggestions further.

The last section in the survey was included in support of the Teaching Resources in Undergraduate Economics project funded through HEFCE. Two thirds of respondents responded positively to sharing ideas and teaching materials within specialist areas.

Results of the survey demonstrated positive support from the community for the work of the Economics Network. The results will also inform strategy and planning.