

# Preface

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There is no requirement to have a teaching qualification in a university. This means that those teaching in a university often have little guidance on how to teach, and little access to tips relating to best practice. This book is a comprehensive overview of all aspects of teaching in higher education, specifically in a Business School, written solely by Aston Business School academics.

All of the contributors to the book have drawn on their considerable experience of teaching, and have reflected on what works well and what does not. Each chapter contains teaching tips, and guidance on further reading if the reader would like to explore a particular area in more detail.

In addition to the chapters addressing the different aspects of learning and teaching, we have included a number of ‘Thoughts’ scattered throughout the book. These are short reflections on specific approaches that have been used in our Business School, shared as ideas to help you further enhance your own teaching.

The book is divided into six sections:

## PART I INTRODUCTION

The book starts with an overview of learning theory. This underpins all of the remaining sections, and looks at the way that students learn and acquire knowledge.

## PART II ENGAGING STUDENTS

Getting students to engage with their learning is a crucial first step to effective learning. How can we encourage students to turn up for scheduled learning events such as lectures and seminars, and how can we encourage them to contribute once they do attend? Undergraduate students are coming to university from the different environment of school or college so there is a requirement to help them as they adjust to a new, more independent, way of learning.

In this section we address these issues, and think about some specific ways of engaging students, such as encouraging debate, introducing creativity and helping students to understand critical thinking. We also look at the way that icebreakers can be used to engage students from the start of a module.

### PART III ENHANCING TEACHING PRACTICE

Different teaching situations bring different challenges for the university teacher, and in this section we look at these challenges and how they can be addressed. We suggest some innovative approaches to teaching that can make the learning experience more interesting for students.

We address the specific issues of teaching both large and small groups of students, and the associated challenges. We also look at the skill of giving a confident presentation to students, and share some tips and ideas on how those skills can be further developed. Making sure that learning is relevant, and communicating the relevance to students, is addressed. We look at the specific issues of teaching a diverse group of students and teaching those who do not speak English as their first language.

Innovative approaches such as storytelling, experiential learning and problem-based learning are explained in some detail.

### PART IV TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LEARNING

Using technology in learning is becoming a standard part of the learning experience in higher education, but it is still a new technique to many teachers. In this section we look at the range of ways that technology can be used to enhance learning, and we also look at the way that we can enhance students' digital literacy.

We look at the way to design and use online classrooms, and how to manage online learning in a way that ensures the ongoing engagement of students.

### PART V TEACHING CONTENT

It is not possible to cover every topic area taught within a Business School in just one book. However, there are some areas that commonly cause difficulties amongst teachers, and we concentrate on those in this section.

We look specifically at how to teach mathematics, law and corporate

social responsibility to business students. These are areas that are typically in all syllabi, but are areas where it can be difficult to get student engagement.

We also address the use of short in-class games and module sponsorship as two ways to liven up teaching content and to gain student interest.

## PART VI ASSESSMENT

Our final section addresses assessment. For many students this is the most important part of their learning experience, because that final grade is what communicates their competence to the wider world. However, assessment is also something that students complain about and can find difficult to understand.

We start this section by addressing assessment criteria and how they can be used to help students understand what is required to be successful. We then look at specific ways of assessment – using posters, writing multiple choice questions and using peer assessment. We end this section by looking at tips for providing feedback on assessment that is useful and beneficial for students.

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