The introduction of a Postgraduate Diploma and Masters programme in Medical Education at Cardiff was in itself a rather low key affair. The (then) Dean of the School of Postgraduate Medical Education, Professor Tom Hayes, recruited a medical education researcher, Lynne Allery, from Addenbrokes in Cambridge as a lecturer at the School to help develop and deliver an innovative mix of educational theory and clinical practice. With an initial cohort of 6 students in January 1989 and a second tranche of 5 more in October that year, the course was born. Since then more than 350 students have graduated from the courses and now occupy a variety of related positions where their educational expertise can be put to good use such as Postgraduate Deans, board members on PMETB and the GMC Education Committee, Programme Directors, Directors of Clinical Skills Units and Postgraduate Organisers.

Since then the provision of programmes and short courses, that are theoretically informed with a strong element of practical application, has steadily increased. Lynne and the other academics, Steve, Lesley and Janet, together with our administrative team, James, Angela and Claire, have continued to develop medical education at Cardiff and we are all delighted to celebrate the face to face programmes’ 20th anniversary and the 1st birthday of our e-learning postgraduate, Certificate, Diploma and Masters courses.

Medical Education is becoming increasingly professionalised and courses in medical education continue to mushroom in response to the currency which academic credentials provide in terms of professional status, career progression and accountability. Our present Dean, Professor Derek Gallen, has been very actively involved in the work of MMC and as an inaugural member of the Academy of Medical Educators. He is also a committed supporter of formalised programmes in medical education. The Wales Deanery is delighted that what began as a small seed of an idea in Cardiff has been influential in the development of medical education both nationally and internationally.
The class of ‘89 was a very good year – for the participants at least! As the years have flown by I can recollect MSc teaching Practical Skills and the wonderful experience of working with the Medics at Carmarthen as a Postgraduate Organiser; introducing new curricula and working with Dental colleagues as an Educational Tutor for Wales with challenges in Tele dentistry, portfolio development, evaluation and the concept of General Professional Training. All this because I saw a poster advertising the Cardiff course in Medical Education and yes I'm still sailing and rallying old cars.

I blame Keith Harding for everything! Back in the late 1980s when Keith was in the pre-Professorial stage of his career, he and I attended a conference in Prague. Keith happened to hear me present a paper. Being well versed in the principles of providing feedback and with characteristic tact and reticence, Keith sidled up to me afterwards to say: “God, but that was a shocker! You need some serious help.” Before I knew it, I had Lynne Allery’s phone number in my pocket (the Internet was then a dream rather than a nightmare) and my life and career went into freefall. I well remember the first get-together of the Masters class of 1989. In an impressive show of solidarity, the entire faculty (i.e. both Tom Hayes and Lynne Allery) assembled to meet the new students. The venue (a broom closet at UHW) was to be our spiritual home for the next two years. There were only six of us students, but what we lacked in numbers we made up for in enthusiasm, good looks and an insatiable thirst for alcohol. We were an eclectic group – Evan Kachale from Malawi, Sheila Nicholson and Shan Aquillar (both refugees from England), Rhys ap Delwyn Phillips (a mad dentist from Llandeilo), Gladys Tinker (the doyenne of Geriatric Medicine in Cardiff) and myself. Together, we grappled with the ravings of Skinner and Piaget, developed our lesson plans, learned the difference between formative and summative assessment and planned an educational revolution. For me, the Masters’ programme became a kind of magic carpet onto which I've clung for dear life over the past 20 years. It brought me to Australia, where I spent 10 wonderful years at the University of Newcastle and later at Flinders University in Adelaide. It scooped me up again to drop me back in my native Ireland, first at the Medical Council where I was Director of Education and since 2007, at the University of Limerick, where a new medical school (the first in Ireland for over 150 years) has a mandate to spearhead the reform of Irish medical education. Keith, Lynne and Tom – you each have a lot to answer for!

The class of ‘89 was a very good year - for the participants at least! As the years have flown by I can recollect MSc teaching Practical Skills and the wonderful experience of working with the Medics at Carmarthen as a Postgraduate Organiser; introducing new curricula and working with Dental colleagues as an Educational Tutor for Wales with challenges in Tele dentistry, portfolio development, evaluation and the concept of General Professional Training. All this because I saw a poster advertising the Cardiff course in Medical Education and yes I'm still sailing and rallying old cars.
Una Jones

My main memory from the course is the many arguments, sorry, discussions that went on in the tiny room just off the old concourse at University Hospital Wales. The days would start off well with gentle explanations of theories and practices and would end up in total cognitive disarray! Looking back it was the usual group dynamics with the stirrer, the calmer and the bewildered (I fell in that category!), with Lynne attempting to guide us with all the success of someone herding cats. Yet that was all part of the learning and we had lots of fun. For me, the MSc provided a springboard for my career. I was working as a clinical physiotherapist when I started and as a physiotherapy lecturer when I graduated. Pedagogy played a major part in my role as lecturer and I became the assessment officer for the department which involved developing assessment practice and procedures for the undergraduate programme. This then led to a seconded post as Change Champion in Assessment for the newly merged Cardiff University. I am back lecturing again and undertaking a PhD, but I do often look back with fondness on those days in the little room and think of the people who helped shape my ideas and thoughts on medical education.

Fayez Saleh

Studying medical education at Cardiff added a new dimension to my intellectual life as an educator. As soon as I came back to Beirut on July 1992 from the beautiful city of Cardiff where I spent unforgettable moments with good company and in a real interdisciplinary health educational context, I joined the Dental School of the Lebanese University as associate professor and chairperson of the department of orthodontics between 1993 and 1999. Since then I have been Chair of the department of orthodontics at Beirut Arab University in Beirut. In the post civil war era there was a university budgetary constraint and we were asked to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of our educational system and show evidence that our graduates are well prepared to respond to the health needs and challenges of the 21st century. The context was therefore appropriate to introduce the concept of training in medical education to maintain our institutional lead and render our alumni accountable to the public. Through the support of the W.H.O. office in Beirut and the Regional Directory in Alexandria I was able to engage with a variety of educational events which I believe provided a good starting point. Since then I have attended a number of conferences and conducted several educational workshops in the region and published multiple health science articles. In 1995, I was appointed by the Minister of Education as an expert in medical education in Damascus University and other Syrian Universities. My areas of interest include quality assurance, curriculum development and assessment. I have served as a member of the Eastern Mediterranean Advisory Committee on Health Research and in 2004 received a further Award of Excellence in Medical Education from the President of Damascus University for outstanding performance and lasting contributions to the committee for educational health sciences development. I am still struggling to establish an educational development center in Beirut affiliated to the W.H.O. and in collaboration with partner medical education institutions in Europe and North America.

1990

- Nelson Mandela freed
- Hubble Space Telescope launched by Space Shuttle ‘Discovery’
- Med Ed celebrate its 1st Birthday

1991

- First NHS Trust Established
- John Pathy Award established to provide financial assistance to those undertaking our courses
Rodney Peyton

A chance trip to Heath Park to talk about missile injuries in the run up to the first Gulf War and a notice outside the lecture theatre advertising a Masters in Medical Education led to my enrolment in the Class of ’92. It was an eclectic group and the social highlight was each Thursday evening when virtually the whole class went out together for a meal. The cognitive school of learning would be proud of us! Actually, because we did get to know each other so well it led to one of the most memorable experiences: the final practical assessment whereby the whole class, the tutors and the external assessor came to South Tyrone Hospital in Northern Ireland to deliver a one day practical course on teacher training for the doctors and nurses of the Southern Area Board. During the time I was at Cardiff I was appointed the Training the Trainers Tutor at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. This was followed by Faculty Development Tutor and more recently as International Tutor. I am also the Educational Adviser for Examiner Training as part of the Intercollegiate Surgical Board of all the Royal Colleges in the UK and Ireland. My first book published in 1998 on “Teaching and Learning in Medical Education” became a standard text for a number of universities, followed by “Appraisal and Assessment in Medical Practice” which has become a rather surprising best seller. An international career in medical education has flourished; I now have the unique distinction of holding Fellowships in all four Surgical Royal Colleges in the UK and Ireland for services to education and the Werner Korte Gold Medal and the Rudolph-Pichlmayr Medal for services to education in Germany among other awards and I have been the visiting Miller Professor at the University of Witswatersrand in South Africa. It is very easy in retrospect to see how this all happened. In the early 90’s, I felt that an Education Degree would be useful for my teaching for the National Health Service, little did I see then how big an impact it would have not only in my life and career, but also for many thousands of other senior clinicians on the world stage. I am therefore eternally grateful to the grounding given to me by Tom and Lynne during that course commencing 17 years ago in Cardiff.

Gareth Parry Jones

When I joined the Class of ’92, I made my first big mistake early on. I wanted to appear cool and relaxed, and wore jeans and a chequered shirt for the first module. From then onwards I was nicknamed ‘Tex’! Since that time I have drifted across several plains, rode my luck through some deep canyons and over steep mountains. Despite this early setback I won my battles, and became the fastest gun in the West of Wales. My newly acquired skills and knowledge stood me in good stead, and I was awarded a new badge – that of an Associate Dean in General Practice, a post I have held ever since. What a privilege that has been! My greatest lesson throughout has been not to give up without a fight, and to reach for the sky. Some of my greatest moments have been in assessing and advising medical education courses as far away as China, Egypt and India. I have attempted to follow this philosophy in my personal life too and literally aimed for greater heights. In my latter years I have trekked the Inca trail and Atlas Mountains, crawled to Everest Base Camp, and reached, the highest of them all, the summit of Kilimanjaro. I believe there must be one more, even higher peak, to conquer before I finally hang up my boots. So, before I say “Adios amigos”, and ride off into the sunset, I hope that one day I will be able to meet up with my old colleagues from the Class of 92, and have a drink at the local saloon! I have forgotten the burden of my nickname, and would rather offer my gratitude to those who were instrumental in ensuring that I went on to greater achievements and a happy life.

1992

Lynne accepts a 2 month consultancy in medical education in Malaysia

Compact Discs surpass cassette tapes as preferred medium for recorded music

Channel Tunnel opens

Visit our website at www.cardiff.ac.uk/pgmde/sections/medicaleducation
Elgin Hackenbruch

I have so many good memories about the year I spent in Cardiff. I can definitely say that the MSc in Med Ed opened doors and smoothed my professional development over the years and was almost always focused on educational programmes in health. Being a nurse by profession, the MSc helped me get my foot into the door of the medical association for recruitment purposes. That was also the start of being invited to teach at various tropical institutes and for a short while my husband and I worked in Khartoum, and later, as a family, we went to Uzbekistan for two years, where I worked as a medical coordinator of a huge programme. Again, the title MSc opened doors into the Ministry of Health and to meeting senior people from other organisations. Six years ago we came back to Germany, deciding to settle and put down roots for the family. I went back into nursing (part-time) as it is easy to combine with the kids’ schedules. To satisfy my professional needs, I went back into teaching at various institutes - always in the subject area International Health. Four years ago I joined the board of MSF Germany - a demanding, unpaid task and for the last two years I have worked on the second edition of my book "go international" - a handbook for health professionals interested in work in developing countries.

Glyn Elwyn

Thirty something with itchy brains … It was a dangerous idea, doing a Master’s degree in medical education. Learning theories by day and beguiling assignments by night. I don’t think any of us could have predicted so much change could be catalysed by so few sozzled debates about hidden curricula and instructional design. One thing led to another as they say, and it was a PhD next, in Nijmegen, in the Netherlands. Up the greasy academic pole, without sufficient insight, albeit with hoops of fun along the way. So, beware of doing a Master’s … such a stupid thing to do when you really should be out there washing a Volvo.

Phil Matthews

The first session of module one for the class of ’93 included an exercise during which we revealed to each other why we were there. An interesting question I thought! During the revelations that ensued, I remember clearly the clarity of personal goals expressed by many of my classmates. Though it shouldn't have if I'd ever given it more thought, this naked and splendid ambition came as a shock to (a then) relatively naive GP VTS course organiser only aware personally of a need to scratch a pretty poorly defined learning itch. My comrades were a lively, witty and highly likeable bunch, engaging with loud opinion in cyclical debate over such matters as whether all human action is predetermined by prior conditioning. We lapped up these opportunities for cerebral stimulation almost as enthusiastically as we lapped up the wine list in a number of Cardiff's well stocked restaurants. Sixteen years on, I have observed that many of my chums have gone on to do wonderful things in medical education; and several have achieved the positions of inter-galactic power which they had quite rightly predicted for themselves in that first session of module one. Having reached these lofty heights, two or three have even had the vision to retire young and enjoy the fruits of their honest toil. Best wishes and well done to all of you!!
Joseph Michael Branday

If global warming was around in 1993, it certainly had not yet reached Wales. Cardiff seemed profoundly cold and wet and created serious doubts about the sanity of my decision to leave the warm sunshine of Jamaica for an entire year and to return to being a student. To say that this was a memorable time would be understating things. The 1993 MSc class consisted of thirteen students and was a mix of ethnicity, nationality and health occupations. As a surgeon and having come from a fairly structured educational system, it took me some time to adjust to the flexibility and freedom of the programme. Monthly three-day taught sessions were interspersed with relatively long intervening periods of unstructured time for self-study, reflection and completion of assignments. I recall that one of these was to evaluate the existing medical curriculum at the UWCM and to make recommendations for change. Our group soon decided that change would be difficult without introducing radical new policies such as early retirement for some of the staff! Little did I know at the time how valuable this experience would be for me when I returned home to Jamaica. As Chair of the Curriculum Committee, I was immediately given the responsibility for leading a process of curriculum review and major overhaul of the undergraduate medical programme at my own university. It was a challenging but rewarding time for me and I have no hesitation in admitting that without the training and experience I received at UWCM, I would not have been able to achieve as much as I did. The new curriculum was implemented in 2001 and in 2005 I was recognized by our University for contributions to teaching and curriculum development. I presently hold the post of Professor and Deputy Dean for Medical Education and Curricular Affairs at Mona and now have responsibility for coordinating the delivery of the undergraduate medical programme at each of the campus sites in Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados and the Bahamas. I reflect on my time in Cardiff and the influence it had on my late change in path from surgeon to educational administrator. I have few regrets. I hope that I have charted a course that others at my institution and elsewhere may follow.

Mike Clapham

I well remember my first day on the course in Cardiff being overdressed with a tie and blazer. Neither of these remained on for long. It is interesting to note that wearing ties is no longer considered ‘appropriate’ when on clinical duties and so the MSc course was clearly ahead of its time. My most endearing memories of the taught part of the course were the friends I made during my expeditions from England to Wales. There was a great sense of camaraderie and team building which enabled us explore new ideas within a safe environment. On reflection the most influential part of the course content was the ‘change module’. Perhaps those involved early in MMC might have benefited from studying it! Since Cardiff, education, in particular teaching others to teach, has become the major thrust of my career. I relinquished anaesthetic practice three years ago to concentrate on critical care and education. The Cardiff experience set me in good stead for being involved in teaching the teacher initiatives for the Royal Colleges of Surgery and Anaesthesia, University of Birmingham, the West Midlands Deanery and with University Hospitals Birmingham. My more formal appointments include examiner for the Royal College of Anaesthesia, associate postgraduate dean (education), and director of medical education (UHB). Last year I completed my PhD in education at Birmingham University and Jane has now drawn a line under the academic qualifications and placed a paint brush in one hand and a spade in the other. I’ll leave you to speculate on their expected use. Cardiff and the class of 98 have had a huge impact on my life and I would like to thank all of you for your help and support.
Francis Richardson

My memories of the Class of 1995 are varied; the slickness of the tutors and the Faculty and knowledge of the subject area was impressive. I recollect a wide variety of professionals from different parts of the UK and the globe united during their days together in Cardiff with one purpose. That was to learn from the tutors and each other and then to take back to our workplaces a greater understanding of medical education and to improve medical education in our respective institutions. Overseas colleagues were from countries such as Thailand and Tanzania. Getting into the literature on medical education was an eye opener and I realised very early on that I would never have the time to really read all the material in the depth that I wanted to explore. Writing in the style expected for the assignments was a new learning curve given my many years of writing in a different format. My postgraduate educational work has been varied. Instructing on various Advanced Life Support Courses, I’m still doing the Pre Hospital Trauma Life Support Courses. I was the Royal Gwent Hospital Postgraduate Organiser between 2000 and 2007. I am now Deputy Foundation Programme Director for Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust. I have been Chair of the Emergency Medicine Specialty Training Committee for Wales and undertaken the educational and clinical supervision of numerous trainees. The experience of working with tutors and colleagues in Cardiff was very helpful to me in carrying out all of these roles. Top tip-do not do the MSc Medical Education whilst starting a new post with 1:2 on call in a busy A&E Dept! But the flexibility that was provided for me to enable me to defer the second year of the Diploma course (as my professional priority in 1996 was to my new appointment) proved tremendously supportive. It was frustrating for me not to have been able to complete the research element and submit the dissertation for the award of MSc. Since I left the Department I have always encouraged younger colleagues to go and join these courses. Every best wish to everyone involved with Medical Education at Cardiff.

Mair Hopkin

My favourite ice-breaker is to give people a blank sticky label and ask them to write their name as they wish to be known to the group and a symbol that represents something important to them at present. This was my first task on the Medical Education diploma course when I drew a pig’s face as our pet pig was lost that morning. Those who visited the farm for our farewell BBQ will be sorry to hear that ‘Sochey’ died (of old age!) but as you can see has been replaced by ‘Peggy Piggie’. There are many fond memories of the 2 year course, though I must admit most are of the social events such as BBQs and cruising to Weston-Super-Mare on a paddle steamer. I do remember our educational sessions and use many of the lessons I learned when running courses myself. I usually try to encourage learning using the techniques I want to teach as that was such a big influence of the course for me. It was an opportunity to experiment in a safe and supportive environment. I’m sure everyone remembers Joe’s session on feedback when he almost broke the overhead projector and reduced us to helpless laughter. I have copied this on many occasions – sometimes even intentionally! I am lucky to work in Cardiff and still have contact with Medical Education. I am now an Associate Dean for Postgraduate General Practice in the Wales Deanery. I will be going to the AMEE conference later this year so if any of you are going, you can contact me through the personnel section at www.gp.Cardiff.ac.uk. It would be great to catch up with you.
Vicky Osgood

It hardly seems possible that 12 years have passed since I started the medical education course in Cardiff. Looking back, my memories of the course are initially of some trepidation as I was a little unsure what it was all about and whether I could do it! However, I soon discovered that the way the course was set up really suited my way of learning as the sessions were run very openly with ample opportunity to question and discuss. In fact it soon became clear that the format of the teaching often mirrored the particular form of education theory we were learning about. Thus the learning was often on several levels. As well as the theory the course also provided many practical techniques which I have found invaluable over the years. These included an appreciation of design of educational materials and an invaluable introduction to the use of power point, the only downside of which has made me perhaps hypercritical of poor presentations ever since. My journeys to Cardiff were a good time to keep up my reflective diary. I was completely converted to reflective writing by this process and have found it a very useful tool in my work and for encouraging trainees to use it to explore challenging situations in their training. I was delighted to learn recently that this is now one of the ways in which we can help develop a professional approach in trainees. Of Cardiff itself I remember watching parts of the hospital change and develop with every visit, a lot of rain and great kindness from our teachers who even opened their homes to us. I did the course when I was an Associate Director of Medical Education in a large Trust, and became Director of Medical Education in 2001. In that role I was able to develop a clear link between education and clinical governance our end of course topic. In 2005 I was seconded from my clinical role as an obstetrician to become the medical advisor to the Workforce Review Team doing workforce planning for the NHS in England. The skills of facilitator, enquirer and manager (especially of difficult group members) that I had developed on the course were invaluable. I became Postgraduate Dean in Wessex in 2007 and I am always constantly reminded that in order to manage and deliver quality education one needs to understand the basics of quality education which the Cardiff course definitely provided. Sadly, I have met very few people from the course since finishing but I hope that their memories are as positive as mine.

Chris Price

I remember walking into the room in the postgraduate centre on the first day of the course in 1998. Joe and Lynne were there and our first task was to move the room around so that “it didn’t look like a bus”. We all soon got into a routine of our time at Cardiff, frantic searching of the library for references and production of assignments-mostly on time. The closest I came to the wire was printing off 40 pages on the morning that it was due. We formed ourselves into small study groups, mine met in between the Cardiff days-this proved a very helpful experience. Verbosity, always a failing of mine, led me to discover the appendix-yes it was not included in the word count! I wonder how many of the class of 98 still have the stylish giveaway from Master class of 2000? My white china mug emblazoned with “master class 2000 innovations in medical education 21st and 22nd of June 2000” is sitting on my desk holding ink cartridges. Which one of us came up with such a snappy strap line? I wonder how others use their experience in medical education. I know that Steve is an associate director for GP specialty training in inner London, Dean has gone from strength to strength with online learning, Pete is active in undergraduate GP training and appraisal and I work in postgraduate medical education at the Wales deanery. I am still active in clinical practice and enjoy that, however the opportunities afforded to me by my training in medical education have been huge. I do not regret for one moment the time I spent in all those different rooms around the Heath campus.

I hope the rest of the class of 98 feel the same.
Sal-ly Davies

Being appointed to the role of Postgraduate Organiser at the University Hospital of Wales in 1998 made me aware of my lack of knowledge of the theory behind all the educational principles and techniques I was using. I applied to do the MSc at Cardiff to address my deficiencies. Little did I suspect the way that it would change my life! It involved a lot of work, meeting really interesting new people and especially sharing some unforgettable moments. I only need to mention the curriculum module, Matt and pompoms and everyone else involved will remember with a smile. My children learnt to lecture me about leaving my “homework” to the last minute and I came to dread the brown envelope landing on the doorstep. My worst memory is the horror of travelling to a conference in Manchester with Janet Macdonald’s keys in my pocket. It has taken me years to recover from that. Since completing the MSc, I have been appointed to a role in the Deanery in Wales, presented the new Clinical Genetics curriculum to PMETB and developed an interest in performance issues for doctors in training. Most importantly, I don’t have any regrets.

Ni-ck Lyons

A few years on and the panic when I had to put pen to paper in my first assignment still stays with me, as does the warning that the MSc would change my life! Change me it certainly did… a secure life in general practice has been swapped for the rollercoaster of trying to see the successful introduction of revalidation for doctors, development of innovative educational projects for an SHA and leadership at a national level. Who would have thought it.. not I (and certainly not my tutor or my colleagues on the course). I still think in the same way (education is the bedrock of professional development) but I can talk the talk and people listen (well, sometimes). I ask the right questions and can even still do a literature search if needed. I am proud to be a clinician, but those MSc postnominals still make me smile and have led me places I can’t believe. Applying the principles that we debated in many a tutorial (and perhaps even over an occasional drink at the Moat House Hotel) reaps rewards both professionally and personally. Thanks!

Kris-tie Truman

The class of 2001 was unforgettable… a group of individuals from all areas, with differing personalities brought together by a common aim: Medical Education. My knowledge of education improved exponentially, the joys of Adult Learning obtained through small group work, the recognition of my own learning style whilst making a silly noise during the FISH exercise and mastering the intricacies of tying a bow tie whilst obtaining an alternative approach to ‘see one, do one, teach one’. I even got to buy a hat when two colleagues who had met on the course got married! Obtaining a Medical Education MSc has led to my career progressing into GP training and becoming Programme Director locally in 2006. I continuously utilise the skills discovered during the MSc to enhance the educational experiences of GP Trainees. Overall the MSc was a very memorable and worthwhile experience.
A motley crew assembled that first Autumn day in Cardiff, from different specialties, career stages and countries, united by one common aim (though we did not then know it) to find ourselves in a place where we were able to understand the Brigmeister when he fell to speaking in tongues about epistemology, and learn not to dread assignments. And for the Moat House mob there were the stories, almost apocryphal now! The awful sense of utter incomprehension faded as we went along, strangers in a room that afternoon where he movingly described what he wanted to do for medical education in his country. Also, as the course modules passed, there became a real genuine mutual respect between the different professionals in the group. The barriers of primary and secondary care began to break down and then quickly evaporated completely. Every individual appreciated the skills and abilities of others in the group, an attitude which would undoubtedly benefit both education and patient care in today’s NHS. The course also gave me a confidence in the direction that I felt I wanted to take my learners. I knew in my own mind what I wanted to achieve but the taught modules gave a structure which I have valued over the past seven years. Since starting in 2002, my teaching career has slowly evolved. Soon after starting the programme, I became Course Organiser of Carmarthen GP Vocational Training Scheme and when I became a GP Tutor my practice became one of the first teaching practices to take Swansea graduate entry medical students. In 2006 I became a selector for medical student applicants at “Bart’s and the London School of Medicine”. Most recently I have been appointed as Lead of the Primary Care Department at Swansea Medical School, this is an exciting challenge because Swansea will become a free standing Medical School as from September 2009.

John Rees

There are numerous things I remember about our two years in Cardiff, many of which are unsuitable for publication! My abiding memory is of friendships which have lasted long after the course finished. If however, I were asked to name one incident which has remained with me, it would be a session when Wai, a student from Myanmar, was reflecting on the fact that he was desperately missing his little boy whilst being away from home doing the course. It was only then that I appreciated how easy things had been made for those of us who worked and trained in the UK to do the course. I don’t think there was a dry eye in the room that afternoon where he movingly described what he wanted to do for medical education in his country. Also, as the course modules passed, there became a real genuine mutual respect between the different professionals in the group. The barriers of primary and secondary care began to break down and then quickly evaporated completely. Every individual appreciated the skills and abilities of others in the group, an attitude which would undoubtedly benefit both education and patient care in today’s NHS. The course also gave me a confidence in the direction that I felt I wanted to take my learners. I knew in my own mind what I wanted to achieve but the taught modules gave a structure which I have valued over the past seven years. Since starting in 2002, my teaching career has slowly evolved. Soon after starting the programme, I became Course Organiser of Carmarthen GP Vocational Training Scheme and when I became a GP Tutor my practice became one of the first teaching practices to take Swansea graduate entry medical students. In 2006 I became a selector for medical student applicants at "Bart's and the London School of Medicine". Most recently I have been appointed as Lead of the Primary Care Department at Swansea Medical School, this is an exciting challenge because Swansea will become a free standing Medical School as from September 2009.

Helen Pugsley

Well I nearly fell of my chair realising how long ago it was that I actually started the MSc in medical education because it actually took me until July 2008 to graduate. That is the actual beauty of the course when you are the sole academic working full time looking after 400 e-learning students and trying to study for this important qualification, it might take you slightly longer than you think but you reap the rewards if you persevere. I think many of my class-mates would agree that you could write a dissertation about the class dynamics because you meet both international, UK based medics, non-medics and in our case a token techie (Matt won’t mind me calling him that!), he often brought a completely different perspective to the top heavy medics. This was character building, highlighting that there might be a different way of doing things. Each member had their own learning needs, quirks, likes and dislikes, all of which you learn to work with because we all had a similar aim, to finish, to pass and ultimately to improve our medical education knowledge and raise the profile of teaching and learning. Reg was our hero and as a full-time student we were devastated that he only stayed with us for one year, the majority of us opting for the less intense two year taught component and in my view he should be running the United Nations! Two memorable classroom events throughout the year had to be a naughty, but fun, betting event during one particular module, purely for educational purposes of course. The second, slightly more unfortunate incident entailed a 999 ambulance to take a student to A&E! Thankfully it was a happy ending and Mair made a full recovery! The course brought us more than just the knowledge, it introduced us to a new language and many new friends, many of whom we still count on to provide us with their expertise and skills in our own teaching and learning setting. 20 years as a successful course taking teaching and learning medical education into the 21st
Chris Harrison

What do I remember about the course in Cardiff? – rain! I used to come down on the train from Manchester, which I used to think was quite a rainy city, but nothing had prepared me for the monsoon conditions we frequently encountered in Cardiff on module days. Once there, however, there was great warmth from our group, possibly helped by the mountains of junk food we used to buy to help us through each module. But, like everything else on the course, the junk food was there for a purpose. I remember the debate in one of the early modules, about behaviourism versus humanism. The behaviourists asked a series of questions and rewarded correct respondents with Mars bars and other treats. Laughter was a common theme, but I also remember the passionate, sometimes heated, discussions we had on controversial topics. However, we never quite worked out how to shut up some of the chattier members of the group. But what did I learn? Well I learnt 59 different ways to divide a big group into multiple smaller groups. And that the Welsh for Manchester is Manceinion, so I could get the right train back on a Friday. So what has Cardiff done for me? I was already involved in the delivery of education in Manchester Medical School, but the MSc course has given me a lot more confidence to speak out about where our course should be going. When I returned from the Assessment module, I criticised some of our assessment practices and before I knew it, I was recruited to lead a redesign of our Year 3 OSCE. Assessment is now in my bloodstream and I am shortly taking over as the Head of Assessment in our School. My studying is not quite over, as I’m hoping to embark on a PhD via Maastricht University later this year, looking at the area of feedback after assessment. The course has also enabled me to gain international experience. While on the course, the Medical School sent me to teach in Barbados as they thought it would be good experience for me. It was, but perhaps not in the way they intended! Recently I was asked to help an Egyptian medical school set up OSCEs, which was really fascinating. I’ve also been to a number of international conferences, the highlight of which was definitely Melbourne. You go all that way and who do you bump into? Lynne, Lesley and Janet of course!
Graham Boswell

The class of 2006 included medics from all specialties and all ages. The visits to Cardiff were never dull and meeting up with the group and seeing how we had approached the tasks was always interesting. The discussion during the day and the evening was thought provoking with and without the tutors. The course social night out was a regular feature and high included returning to the “Phili” in Cardiff after over twenty years to be surrounded by Cardiff medics, who I had recently taught, and the final end of year party in Mark Stacey’s house.

After the course, a group of us went off to Prague to the AMEE meeting and hopefully we will meet again this year. Since the course I continue to be involved with student and junior doctor teaching both in the classroom and in the emergency admissions unit. The course has given me the skills not to be afraid to try something different and removed the fear of failure. Best of all though was the opportunity to meet a great bunch of people.

2007

I was lucky enough to be a part of the 2007 Cohort on the Medical Education MSc. As a full timer I was part of two fantastic groups of people who supported me through a rather difficult time. I guess the first thing I learnt (the start of many!) was that it not sensible to do the MSc full time while also doing a full time obstetric anesthetic job. Somehow I survived and managed to pass all of my modules and enjoyed helping run the final e-learning course. This was followed by a most enjoyable BBQ that most of the participants of both groups seemed to enjoy (especially Steve R - not his real name - if my memory serves me correctly). Since I finished the MSc I have done nothing much - okay that's not entirely true. I have started teaching again (something I had stopped in 2007 to free up time - paradoxical eh!) and have revamped several of the courses I run. I am also running a national project for Welsh medical trainees looking at innovative methods of delivering information and improving patient care, using a PDA linked with a suite of electronic medical textbooks. The next step of this project is to look at the introduction of Smartphone technology to enable access to the internet. I am also trying to finish my dissertation (aaaaagh!) which is on skills training and performance in the medical setting - very interesting, but you all know how rubbish my writing skills are. As a part of this I have also introduced Crisis Resource Management training on to my labour ward and have now changed (hopefully improved) the way I teach skills. And yes I do try looking at different paradigms now - you can teach an old dog new tricks.......
The MSc course in Medical Education at Cardiff was a very stimulating and suitably challenging experience, stimulating due to the diversity of the participants who came from different medical specialties, nations and cultural backgrounds; and challenging because of its high academic standards, reputation and requirements. The various competencies that I acquired from the course have contributed to my professional development as a GP appraiser. They have helped me write for publication, and enabled me to conduct further educational research and now to be accepted to undertake study for a PhD at Oxford University.

Mark

Medical Education course successfully re-accredited by the Higher Education Authority

Our motley crew of the taught Medical Education Postgraduate MSc team gathers in Cardiff every few months to gather gems on how to become the next generation of medical educators. We enthusiastically debate, sometimes over excitedly, the ways in which to educate, drawing out aspects of educational theories from behaviourist to humanist. We are a diverse group ranging from physiotherapy to pharmacy and from as far away as Egypt and Germany. This year we have learnt a great deal from the course and from each other, gaining the opportunity to personally develop taking our skills back to our own medical teaching communities. As part of my General Surgical South West Thames Registrar rotation I recently presented for the STRYKER Prize Presentation. I presented a talk based on our ‘lesson planning module’ investigating techniques for teaching surgery in a cognitive manner. This posed a challenge since I wanted an interactive session which needed to appeal to a global audience of surgeons, most of whom do teach, think they can teach and aren’t necessarily considering changing their techniques. I approached the session purely in pictures, initially with a picture of ‘tree hugging’ (disarm yourself before they disarm you) and images of prim 1950’s school teacher, through to interactive skills sessions. I asked them about Pavlov and then discussed Vygotsky in relation to a surgeon training another surgeon. They were asked which teaching method they would like to be taught to use and how they might teach. One of the main aims of the session was to enthuse my colleagues (Registrars) into developing their own teaching styles by planning and exploring ways in which they teach to make their teaching interactive and dynamic. What I wasn’t expecting was the consultants to be quite so interested and for them to take on my suggestions. The following discussion was quite heated leaving me pleased to have brought to light an issue which many seem to think is trivial but actually applies to them all. Fortunately my talk was appreciated and I was awarded the ‘courage’ prize. I would not have presented in this way previously and my techniques have certainly changed since learning about educational theories and lesson planning, producing a presentation, with learning objectives, interaction and cognitive elements to stimulate the audience.

Markus Schichtel

I thought about the usefulness of my undertaking a degree in medical education for a long time and thought it was something that I ‘had to do’ to further my career. Now after active participation in the course it has become something that I ‘want to do’. This is related to the interactive nature of the course and the practical activities provided during the modules which demonstrate different ways of thinking and reveal hidden aspects related to the topics. There is a friendly responsive environment making the course even more pleasant. Comparing what I am currently doing in planning lessons, selecting educational media and evaluating activities with what I was previously doing I realise that I am now thinking critically and analytically. I now feel more competent in managing teaching activities from a solid theoretical base. Going back to student life after a long time is a very exciting experience and using the student discount card in the shops and seeing people taken aback that I’m the student (not my son) is really funny.

Stacey 2008

James Moore joins as new Course Coordinator
Enrolling on the Medical Education Masters degree course at Cardiff has to be one of the best decisions ever made for me. Following my recent appointment as a Senior Teaching Fellow at the University of Manchester we all felt that a more formal grounding in education would not only be desirable but essential. I therefore applied at the last minute and had to ring my parents in Scotland to try and dig out not only my Degree certificates but my School examination results! Thank goodness school reports were not required. After successfully gaining entrance to the course I began receiving warnings such as “it’s hard work you know” or “it takes a lot of time and commitment”. How could going back to university be any more difficult than practicing acute medicine in the Hospital environment? It’s not life or death after all. How wrong could I have been? I first had to reacquaint myself with the library! Looking for literature on the ERIC database, finding time to read it and then having to actually write essays was to say the least challenging. At induction it was stated that “it may have been some time since we had all written an essay”. Using my newly-found and completely dormant powers of reflection I worked out that the last essay I actually wrote would have been in 1988! It has proved invaluable to lean on the other students for support and advice and the Faculty are also a tremendous help and were very understanding of my first rather inept attempt at essay writing. From a feeling of dread and foreboding in September at enrollment I now really look forward to my visits to Cardiff from both an educational and social perspective. I am honoured to say that I have made many genuine friends on this course who I have no doubt will stay good friends in the future. I have already applied many of the theories and techniques from the course to my teaching and have transformed the way I deliver any session I give. Blue sky thinking, concept mapping and

When I first started looking for a suitable programme in education it was my own egocentricity that led me to Cardiff University’s Website. I was looking for a programme that would put me in a position to support German Physiotherapy in its move towards a University based academic profession. After 22 years working as a physiotherapist in Munich and teaching on postgraduate courses it would be nice to spend more time “at home” in Wales. So I was pleasantly surprised to find the Cardiff medical education course and I’m now the exotic one on the course. I’m the oldest, an ex-patriot and a non medic! I’ve been teaching for 15 years and I’ve grappled with methodology and didactics during that time – I really have! Now here I am, half way through year one, and only just starting to feel the ground beneath my feet after swimming around in educational psychology for a while. Nocturnal fits of work, missed flights, journeys on National Coaches from Heathrow, using my students pass and crashed computers have all been part of the parcel. I have wondered a few times why I’m doing this. So why do it? It’s really interesting, useful and applicable; I’ve met lots of interesting new people; it’s fun; I’m home more often and it’s a super substitute for geriatric brain jogging! I’m looking forwards to the next year and a half. Congratulations to the Medical Education Team, I’m glad to be part of it all!