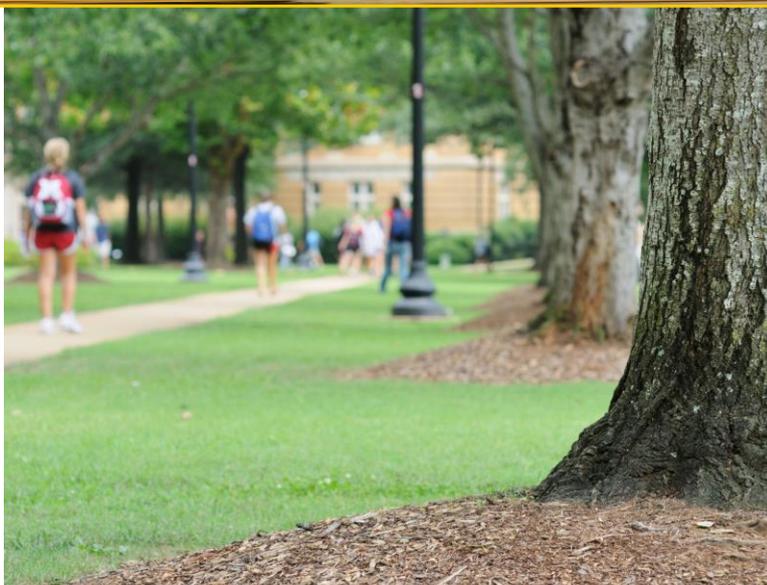




International Federation of
National Teaching Fellows



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Welcome

We're in transformation mode here at IFNTF, and we're revising our newsletter to make it more interactive. From this issue onwards, we'll be posing questions and sharing ideas for your feedback.

As always, we'll be keeping you in the loop about what we've been up to, letting you know about upcoming events, sharing profiles of our members, and digging deep into higher education topics.

If you'd like to contribute material for our newsletters, we'd love to hear from you. We're especially keen to get profile pieces from members. Email Heather Kavan at: newsletter@ifntf.org

Heather Kavan

Call for Expressions of Interest

IFNTF SECRETARY

We are seeking a new executive committee member: IFNTF Secretary.

All full members of the IFNTF are very welcome to apply. The role is for three years in the first instance with the opportunity to serve the committee for a further three years after the initial term of office.

We are happy to discuss the post and its responsibilities. Please contact us if you would like more information and/or to send your expression of interest: ifntf@ifntf.org
The final deadline for all expressions of interest is 1 June 2021.

Communications. We welcome 3-4 members to serve as a "communications" working group to generate and curate content for our website, newsletter and social media. In the first instance email ifntf@ifntf.org



Global Seminar Series

We've had two highly successful seminars: James Intrilligator's "Using Miro creatively to augment the learning experience" and Laura Ritchie's "Yes I Can: From Ideas to Print".

Our third seminar will be **The Feminist Classroom**.

Professor Elizabeth Wells and Professor Toni Roberts will deliver the talk.

We have attempted to find a time that includes members across the globe:

United Kingdom: 19th May, 8pm to 9pm.

North America Eastern: 19th May, 3pm to 4pm.

Australia: 20 May, 5am to 6am.

New Zealand: 20 May, 7am to 8am.

Secure your spot by registering on our website at: <https://www.ifntf.org>

Shaping Teaching Excellence Symposium

IFNTF will host a four-hour symposium at the Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) conference this year.

The focus is on "Shaping Teaching Excellence".

The dates and times for different time zones are as follows:

United Kingdom: 10 June, 8pm to 12 midnight.

North American Eastern: 10 June, 3pm to 7pm.

Australia: 11 June, 5am to 9am.

New Zealand: 11 June, 7am to 11am.

If you would like to help us organise the symposium or participate by giving a short talk, please contact Srinivas Sampalli, email: symposium@ifntf.org

The Feminist Classroom takes an intersectional approach to issues of gender/sex, sexuality, racialization, class, mental health and so on in the classroom. We consider how these social categories impacts students' experience of learning, engagement, and success. Exploring how learning is impacted by these social categories and how we can respond to them in practical ways is central to this session. The Feminist Classroom is a classroom committed to equality and inclusion, embracing diversity as central to the learning of all students in positive and impactful ways.

How About a Recommender System for Members?

We are looking at creating a recommender system to support members applying for promotion and would love to get your feedback on the idea. Here's what we're discussing:

The concept

Bring together:

Members who require a professor to evaluate and recommend their teaching e.g. for a promotion application based around teaching.

Members who are nationally and internationally accomplished professors who would be willing to write recommendations.

Why?

There is a need to offset disadvantages that many excellent teachers have in applying for promotion. These disadvantages include glass ceilings, geographical isolation, and difficulties when research is valued more than teaching.

If we increase the chances of passionate teachers moving to higher positions in universities, this will help keep the artform continually valued.

How?

Option 1. Create two Google forms—one for members willing to be contacted to write letters of support and the other for members looking for evaluators. We would then match members with each other.

Option 2. Extend the Google forms by creating a “pool”/email-thread. Any time we receive a request on the second form, we could post it to a board or mailing list, and one or two people can offer to help, depending on the requester's needs and whether their expertise is a good match.

Contact Us

If you are interested and/or would like to share your thoughts about the idea (including thoughts about extending the idea to meet other needs) please contact James Intriligator. Email: recommender@ifntf.org



Sharing Ideas: We'll Begin with Ice Breakers

We are going to have a section in every newsletter where we invite you to share your ideas on a specific theme. Your ideas will be published in the next newsletter.

To kick off with an example, we (IFNTF committee members) have created a topic: "What ice breakers do you use when teaching?" We've put together our answers, below.

Online

- Ask students to upload a short video introducing themselves. This is very popular for asynchronous study.
- Choose from a selection of Ice breakers in Miro. The platform contains a wealth of inviting templates.

In Class

- A bingo-style game that's specific to what I'm teaching. For example, in Organisational Communication, the items include: "Have worked with a difficult manager" and "Have worked overseas". Students interact until they find classmates who match the listed items.
- The truth and lie game. "Tell us three statements about yourself and one of them is a lie." The rest of the class guesses which statement is the lie.
- The "I have never" game from the Graham Norton show. Students finish the sentence "I have never...." with an example of something that everyone else has likely done. For example. "I have never read a Harry Potter book."

Online and Internal

- Students share their top tips for studying, e.g. managing their time or organising their study space.
- Students share their expectations of what university study will be like. This makes for a productive early discussion, especially for first year students.

For Each Lecture

- I include a bite at the beginning of each lecture. This may be a short "Motivation Bite" (relating to students' career and success) or a "Humour Bite" (a relevant meme or anecdote) or an "Info Bite" (a newsworthy item related to the subject). Most students arrive on time to my lectures, eager to listen to the "bite" of the day.

Have Your Say: Favourite Webpages

Our next topic is webpages. Tell us your favourite website or social media page that you access to inspire your teaching or to rejuvenate after teaching. Email Heather Kavan: newsletter@ifntf.org

A Story of Teaching and Learning Circles

Heather Kavan, Massey University, New Zealand

What activity can excellent teachers collaborate on that would make a great impact?

That was the question National Teaching Excellence Award winners in my university asked in 2009.

While we were brainstorming ideas, colleague Ema Alter came across an article on mentoring circles in the journal “Higher Education Research and Development” (HERDSA).¹

This was the article that paved the way for a grassroots peer mentoring movement that has benefited over four hundred teachers in our university.

Peer Mentoring

Mentoring circles are groups of teachers from across the university who meet regularly to share ideas. They are like traditional mentoring, but without the hierarchy and limitation of only getting one viewpoint.

Seeing the possibilities for our university, Ema co-wrote a successful proposal to bring the article’s main author, Ann Darwin, to our university to give a workshop.

Creating the Plan

With Ann’s help, we created a plan.

1. Invite all staff members in teaching-related work to join the groups for a year.



2. Create groups comprising about six to eight people from different parts of the university.
3. Arrange for the groups to meet for 1.5 hours monthly for a calendar year. At the end of the year, participants can stay in the group, join another one, or leave.
4. Appoint one or two facilitators to each group to coordinate the sessions and convey the expected style—joyful exploration, rather than boring pontification.
5. Use the first meeting to create a list of what participants would like to learn, and invite the participants to choose the sessions they want to lead.

Bringing the Plan to Life

For the most part, the circles went according to plan. Together, we shared fresh approaches, had a go at things we might otherwise not try, and solved problems that were exasperating us.

We also acted as mutual sounding boards for experiences. There were hilarious moments (recounting teaching disasters),

painful moments (seeing colleagues' shock after being offered redundancy) and fearful moments (stepping off a ledge in virtual reality).

Gaining Momentum

Generally, the circles became more successful as the years progressed. Friendships developed, and returning participants became more deeply involved, with three later becoming facilitators.

To date, there have been 52 circles with 449 participants.



The circle facilitators at Palmerston North, N.Z.

What Participants Value Most

In feedback surveys, members invariably mention the enjoyable atmosphere. They describe the circles as a stress-free space where everyone is warm and authentic, where there is coffee, laughter, intellectual stimulation, and sometimes muffins. For some, the circles are a highlight of their university experience, and they feel disappointed if they miss a session.

There are also many positive comments

about the mix of people with different specializations, which leads to novel ideas and makes meetings more dynamic.

A third theme relates to the circle's independence, as group discussions often revolve around adjusting to imposed change. Participants appreciate having a safe environment to express vulnerability and to challenge points of view.

Changing Times, Stable Circles

When we first started, we were talking about lecture theatres, videos, and floppy disks. We had never heard of tweets, apps, and bots, and we never imagined we would be teaching from our homes and competing for attention with Netflix binges.

Nor had we foreseen the surges in student anxiety and depression or that universities would face a deeply uncertain future. Without the circles, it would have been easy to become gloomy about all of this.

Ema still keeps a copy of the HERDSA journal and on the cover is a picture of light-infused greenery. Looking back, the image seems prescient. It's as if the yearly cycles of circles are the rings on a tree trunk, with each annual ring expanding and strengthening the body, helping it adapt to the winds of change.

References

1. Darwin, A. & Palmer, E. (2009). Mentoring circles in higher education. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28(2), 125-136.

Member Profile: Professor Jenny Field



Affiliation

School of Education and Institute of Lifecourse Development at the University of Greenwich

Position and Responsibilities

Jenny Field is a Professor of Mathematics Education at the University of Greenwich. She works in the School of Education, which is part of the Institute of Lifecourse Development (ILD). She was recognised as a National Teaching Fellow by the Higher Education Academy in 2016 for her "*excellent reputation for inspirational approaches, which have improved teaching in the primary classroom, both locally and nationally, over the past three decades.*".

In 2018 she was promoted to Professor of Mathematics Education on the University's Teaching and Learning Pathway, in recognition of her national and international impact on Primary Mathematics.

She has also been involved in various university wide initiatives and pan faculty projects, which extend her work beyond primary education. In 2019 she formed part of an Expert Assessment Group designing the University Feedback and Assessment Policy and she has also written the subject level TEF for the Teacher and Education Submission, as well as being part of a University TEF Assessment Panel. She regularly publishes and presents at Conference, including a Key-Note lecture at the NTF Symposium in 2019. In 2020 she was invited to join the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Teaching Profession.

National Teaching Fellowship Award

2016

Interests and Expertise

Jenny's main area of expertise is in Primary Mathematics. In 2010 she played a key leadership role in forming 'The South East England Consortium' of Universities, who successfully bid to provide the level 7 DfE Mathematics Specialist Teacher Programme (MaST). This was a government-funded national programme, and she was responsible for leading the training of MaST teachers across five local authorities. She continues to work with many of her alumni of specialists from this programme, who have gone on to support next generation of primary mathematics specialists.

In recent years her main work has been at regional and national levels –

developing and extending external partnership work. This work includes influencing provision within large Teaching Alliances, and in 2020 United Learning, the largest Academy Chain in the UK, worked with Jenny who helped them to extend and improve their mathematics curriculum specifically around multiplicative reasoning.

She has been awarded the title of 'Accredited Lead Provider' by the DfE funded National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) and she currently leads a nationally funded research project, working with Mathematics Leaders from over 150 schools in the South East Region. This work includes designing year-long CPD Programmes including 'Whole School Approaches to Teaching Times Tables' in light of the introduction of the new statutory Multiplication Check Test for all year 4 children. This work has included both action research projects and participatory case studies. She was involved in the Shanghai International Teacher Exchange Programme and works as both a strategic and operational partner with a government funded National Maths Hub.

How the Teaching Fellowship Award Made a Difference

Jenny believes that her National Teaching Fellowship Award in 2016 played a major role in her promotion to Professor in 2018, it brought her to the attention of a wider audience in the University and over the years it

has opened up many opportunities both within the university and nationally.

Influences on pedagogical work

Jenny is passionate about supporting Mathematics Leaders in Primary Schools nationally and internationally. She is keen to reduce negative attitudes and mathematical anxiety, and to increase enjoyment, curiosity and creativity in this subject.

Publications

Jenny has authored over twenty articles, chapters and conference papers in mathematics education, most recently:

Field, Jenny, Day, Allie and Vyas, Sunita (2021) *Teaching, learning and understanding times tables, a case study from the perspective of schools participating in a national CPD programme*. Primary Mathematics, 25 (1). pp. 19-25.

Wider interest and activities

Jenny regularly enjoys kayaking and bike riding at her home by the sea in Whitstable in Kent.

Contact

@Jennyfield6 j.field@gre.ac.uk

Jenny is keen to hear about international approaches to teaching Times Tables and would welcome contact from other Teaching Fellows who would like to network on this, or on any other primary mathematics projects.