

Forum Insights

POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND (PSAI) specialist group on teaching and learning

About the Group

Established in 2009, the PSAI specialist group in teaching and learning, brings together scholars (from post-graduates to established academics) to explore innovations and best practice in teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum development, and examine different pedagogical approaches within the discipline.

Aims and Objectives:

The Specialist Group acts as a forum for scholarship, networking, debate, publication and grant application and as a locus of communication between scholars of teaching and learning in politics in Ireland and similar groupings in this field internationally.

It aims to provide a network for colleagues who are interested in exploring pedagogic developments within the discipline in order to apply cutting edge approaches and effective techniques in teaching and learning. In particular, it endeavours to support and promote the scholarship of teaching and learning in the discipline.

Teaching and learning is accorded great significance in the strategies of individual universities, in government documents and in EU reports. Faculty members increasingly engage in various forms of professional development and are particularly interested in disciplinary enrichment. By supporting dialogue and interaction, championing excellence and disseminating best-practice in the teaching of politics, the PSAI Specialist Group facilitates enhancement and innovation in the discipline.

Activities:

Specialist Group activities include organizing events, networking, circulating information on publications and funding opportunities and convening a panel at the annual conference of the PSAI which takes place in October every year. It has also played an active role in the development and promotion of the PSAI prize for excellence in teaching and learning.

Upcoming events:

The highlight of the Specialist Group's activities for 2015 will be a one day event on 'teaching politics in our universities: inspiring, inciting and enlightening' funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the PSAI. This event will take place in Dublin on September 18th 2015 and will bring together students, academics, the media, politicians and managers to discuss

the significance of education in, for and about politics in our institutions of higher education. It will showcase innovative approaches to teaching and learning in politics. President Michael D. Higgins will deliver the keynote address. The teaching of politics can make a valuable contribution to society by equipping students with the knowledge, values, skills and insights to play their role as active and critical citizens. This event will provide a platform and stimulus for discussion about ways of encouraging students to be politically engaged and connected to their communities and society. It will also serve to strengthen the links between teaching and learning practice, scholarship and public policy.

The event will be open to all. It will be of particular interest to those who teach politics or cognate subjects in our institutions of Higher Education, managers, policy makers and students. Further information on the event and registration details will be posted on the specialist group's website shortly (<http://www.psal.ie/specialist/teaching.asp>).

The convenors have recently issued a call for papers for a teaching and learning panel at the PSAI annual conference in October 2015 (see www.psal.ie for details). Previous panels have included papers on a wide range of topics such as: Promoting Interactivity and Active Learning; Developing a research-focussed curriculum; Teaching skills to political science students; Tools and techniques in teaching political science ; Reflecting on research. The panels provoke debate and learning and promote professional development among faculty.



NATIONAL FORUM FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION
