Course Guide 2005

Updated for the Course Team by Peter Knight
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This course has been designed and adapted over several years, so it is impossible to mention all those who have contributed to its current form. The following list represents those who have been most recently working together on the production and presentation of H850.

Barbara Hodgson, Programme Director and Course Chair 2006
Rhona Sharpe, Course team member and staff tutor (2000-2002)
Jo Tait, Course team chair 2001-2003
Chris Pegler, Course team chair (2004) and consultant author for Pack 5
Peter Knight, Course Chair 2005 and consultant author for Pack 3
Critical readers: Maggie Coats, Professor John Richardson, Anthony Righini-Brand, Tina Waterman-Roberts
Sheran Wilson, Course Manager
Wendy Morgan, Tracey Milne, Course Assistants

It is in the nature of professional programmes such as H850 that members of the course team are keen to continue learning and changing alongside participants and their tutors, so we invite you to contact us with your feedback at any stage during your studies.

If you want to talk to a member of the course team, your first point of contact will usually be the Courses Office: tel: 01908 653781 e-mail: iet-pgcthe@open.ac.uk.
Introducing H850

Welcome to H850, the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. We hope that you will find your work for this course interesting and engaging, as well as professionally rewarding.

The course has been designed for people teaching or supporting learning at higher education level, such as teachers, tutors, lecturers, supervisors and student support staff (such as librarians, educational technology and e-learning managers or academic advisors). The Higher Education Academy and the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) (the accrediting bodies), and the H850 course designers recognise that learning at higher education level can take place in many situations. You are encouraged to use the reading and your engagement in the assignments to explore your own professional learning in your particular context.

The work of a teacher clearly involves much more than classroom performance and the traditional activities that have always aimed to engage students in learning. Teaching embraces planning and running sessions, designing learning environments, supervising and mentoring students in practice situations, marking and giving feedback on student work, undertaking the associated administration, coping with a multi-faceted workload and managing complex relationships with colleagues. Successful teachers will also be reflecting across the range of their experiences and planning for continuing development.

Furthermore, design for learning within the H850 course encompasses the planning or modification of programmes of study (which, in your professional context, will probably focus on short units, modules or courses). Planning for learning involves a consideration of the learning context and the broader requirements of your programme (or qualification) as well as the organisation, structure and content of sessions.

We have suggested that you read this Course Guide first for a very brief overview of all the materials and resources provided within the course. Your Study Calendar – provided in print and online – will help you map your work (and the resources you will be using) on to your working year. You are advised to take advantage of these clear structures as a basis to design your own work-plan for successful completion of this course.

Outcomes and values for the course

By the end of the course, you will have developed your ability to:

- design and plan effective learning environments in the form of learning resources, programmes of academic study, or student support systems
- select and use a range of teaching methods to support learning and offer learner support
- configure and implement effective assessment schemes using a range of approaches, and link these with your ability to give feedback to students on their work
- monitor and evaluate your teaching using a range of self-, peer- and student-monitoring techniques, to appraise your own teaching and to inform the course review process
Course structure

- reflect on your own personal and professional practice and development, assess your future development needs and plan your continuing professional development.

You will also have compiled a portfolio and written a substantive piece of assessed work that together provide concrete examples of your abilities and show how you relate your practice to the underpinning values and principles that you have chosen.

Many colleagues find that they have to develop new ways of writing and using evidence because educational research, like other disciplines, has its own practices of argument and making claims.

Your professional practice as a teacher is likely be underpinned by many or all of the following:

- an informed understanding of how students learn
- a concern for students' development
- a commitment to scholarship
- a willingness to work with and learn from colleagues
- a wish to work effectively with diversity and promote inclusivity
- continuing reflection on professional practice.

The course requires you to consider the relationship between your abilities and the underpinning values that drive your professional choices. For example:

- the teaching sessions or support activities that you plan should be driven by your interest in helping students to learn and to develop
- in monitoring your teaching and support activities in a scholarly way, you will need to draw on the findings of research into obtaining and using feedback from students.

On successful completion of this course, you will have demonstrated not just that you can teach, but that you have thought critically about what it means to teach well. In addition, you will have shown that you are continuing to develop and learn.

Course structure

H850 centres on five key themes of teaching and learning in higher education that relate to the core abilities identified by the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE) (now part of the HE Academy). There are five Packs (see below) and the themes and the titles of each Pack are:

1 Teachers' learning and professional development
2 Students learning
3 Assessment of and for learning
4 Design for learning
5 Ways of teaching

The reading material in each pack will be supplemented by online resources and activity, your own experience and resources, tutoring
support, and online activity with other course participants either in plenary activities or as part of a small group of around ten fellow participants.

Much of the online activity is focused on helping you to successfully complete the five tutor-marked assignments. We anticipate that working on the assignments will provide a framework for enhanced understanding of your own teaching and learning context. The outcomes of your work on these assignments will also build into a valuable portfolio. The final examinable component (a longer piece of written work) provides an opportunity for you to review and integrate your learning as a professional in higher education and to demonstrate your mastery of the skills and scholarship of teaching. Further information about tutor support and assessment will be found under 'Tuition' below and in the Assignment Guide.

Written materials

This Course Guide, together with the Study Guide and the Assignment Guide contain crucial information about H850. Each is provided online as an ebook as well as in print form. We would expect you to refer to the Study Guide and Assignment Guide frequently throughout the course.

The Assignment Guide details exactly how you will be assessed – assessment indicators, deadlines and the key examination regulations. The Study Guide provides a narrative thread through the materials and suggests some of the important questions you will need to be addressing as you produce your assignments.

Five packs of theoretical and practical materials provide the core content for the course, drawing on authoritative and accessible writing from, among many others, Carole Baume, David Baume, Graham Gibbs, Peter Knight, Andy Northedge and Alistair Morgan. These authors and experienced practitioners introduce you to research and thinking from a wide range of theoretical and practical sources. They have also designed activities and reflective exercises that engage you with the ideas and encourage you to experiment in your own context.

Although the written material for the course is organised into these five Packs, we do not imagine that your professional life is really organised in such a linear way. For this reason, we wholeheartedly encourage you to browse through the Packs at regular intervals, to find material that interests you, or to answer an immediate question from your practice. The following brief summary of each Pack should help you to identify where you may like to start. The Study Guide (in hard copy and online) provides Commentaries on each Pack to help you take full advantage of the research and practical experience in which the written materials are steeped.

Pack 1 Teachers’ learning and professional development

All the chapters in this Pack focus on your work and your own learning as a teacher. For example, you will find:

- survival tips to help you manage the conflicting demands of academic or professional life
- theoretical and research-based analysis that asks about some basic assumptions of teaching and learning
• challenging ideas and activities to help you consider equal opportunities issues in all aspects of your work
• different ways to think about and record reflection
• structures and ideas for planning your own development and assessing your effectiveness as a teacher
• suggestions for trying new ideas and testing their value in your teaching or learner support situation.

Pack 2 Students learning

In this pack you will find theories and research that encourage you to think about the different ways in which learning can happen, with the focus on your students' learning. You will also notice that these ideas resonate with many of the theories and ideas from Pack 1 that focused on your own professional learning. Practical hints and guidance for tutors and advisors suggest ways to support the diversity of your student groups and encourage learning.

Pack 3 Assessment of and for learning

This pack encourages you to look back over the past ten years in higher education and consider how assessment practice has adapted in response to the changing environment. A narrative by Peter Knight draws on the writings and selections while also inviting you to join in the current debates within higher education on assessment:
• Is it possible, or even desirable, to assess everything that is learned?
• (How) can I be sure that my grading is valid and reliable?
• What is the most useful feedback for learning?
• What is the most appropriate form of assessment for a particular learning outcome?

Pack 4 Design for learning

Whether you are designing a whole curriculum for an undergraduate year of study or a series of loosely related learning events, this Pack provides a framework that relates the ideas covered in other packs to the complex design task. You will find:
• a range of examples and ways to think about design for learning and using resources creatively
• questions to ask before you begin designing a course, module, or programme
• a critical exploration of aims and learning outcomes
• ways to evaluate courses and programmes effectively, and
• ideas to help you plan for improvement based on your own enhanced understanding or in response to feedback from colleagues and from students.
Pack 5 Ways of teaching

Teaching in groups, lecturing, e-learning, supervising, demonstrating and field trips are all considered in this Pack. The focus is on the 'bones' of teaching. This Pack uses a combination of resources (both print and online) to encourage you to try new approaches with students.

Course resources

Online conferencing and a course website allows H850 to offer a flexible range of support materials and activities. These resources are designed to inform and challenge your thinking about your teaching. Online technologies are likely to increase in importance for teaching in higher education over the next few years. This course offers an opportunity to experience the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) firsthand, useful experience for your future career and practice.

FirstClass conferencing is an essential skill for participating fully in the course. The course website gives you direct links to a range of help and advice, with opportunities for practice. If you need help with accessing the website or installing FirstClass the Student Computing Helpdesk is available from 09:00 to 22:30, 7 days a week, including most Bank Holidays, on +44 (0)1908 653972; email: LTS-Student-Helpdesk@open.ac.uk

Three online conference areas provide social and study spaces for you to interact with other course participants, the H850 tutors and the course team.

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<tr>
<th>Plenary conferences</th>
<th>H850 Course conference</th>
<th>Tutor Group conferences</th>
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<td>A place for all participants to discuss ideas and themes and undertake planned activities.</td>
<td>An open forum that allows you to 'talk' with all participants studying in your cohort and ask questions in an unstructured way.</td>
<td>The tutor group conference is for use by you, a small group of fellow participants, and your tutor (see below for more tutorial information). This conference will start up once the course is established.</td>
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Tuition

Your tutor can be contacted by phone, post or email, but most of the interaction with your tutor, and probably all of the interaction with your tutor group, will be through the FirstClass conference set aside for that purpose (see above). The online relationships you build with these people will form a valuable source of information and feedback. Your tutor will use the conference to offer advice and encouragement, based on their experience of the course and their own teaching. However, your experience (and that of your peers) is equally valid and collectively your tutor group can prove to be a rich and useful resource.

Your tutor is also the first assessor for your TMAs and for your examinable component. While reading and commenting on your work throughout the
course, a tutor can develop quite a deep understanding of each participant’s professional context and needs. Feedback from your tutor will always relate to the assessment indicators, values and outcomes, particularly where changes are required in presentation or content to meet the assessment standards. Feedback can also take the form of a professional conversation about practice and your tutor may encourage you to try a different or new approach.

You may be invited by your tutor to share within the tutor group conference something you have written, to enrich the practice of others. The value of establishing a good working relationship with your tutor and your tutor group cannot be over-emphasised.

Assessment

You will be producing six TMAs (five assessed plus a non-assessed, introductory assignment (TMA 00)) and a final examinable component to meet specified ‘cut-off’ dates or deadlines. The Assignment Guide provides clear information about the requirements of each TMA and the examinable component, but do ask your tutor for clarification if the assessment requirements do not appear to readily map onto your teaching role.

For this course, your tutor will provide developmental feedback for each of the five assessed TMAs. Each will be returned to you marked as ‘achieved’ (A/50) or ‘not yet achieved’ (NYA/30), with detailed comments. A ‘NYA’ grade does not mean that you have ‘failed’ either as a student or as a teacher; the process is designed to be developmental and your tutor will clearly indicate what revisions you need to make to be marked as ‘achieved’. Sometimes these revisions may be quite minor, but they will nonetheless be necessary to meet the accreditation requirements of this course.

Using the feedback from your tutor to improve any TMA that needs more work, you are required to submit a final version of all your TMAs as a completed portfolio at the end of the course. The formative feedback will also help shape your collected TMAs into a successful portfolio of teaching for other professional purposes.

The examinable component is an extended piece of writing that allows you to integrate all the work you have done while preparing the TMAs: to reflect on your own learning and development; to demonstrate your academic achievements; and to undertake an effective review of a course or programme. This review will be submitted for assessment, along with the portfolio, at the end of the course. There are no grades, but you will receive written feedback that indicates how clearly you have passed or, if appropriate, what amendments may enable you to successfully resubmit your work.

Open University terms and systems

As you will probably realise, The Open University is a huge and complex institution, supported by a variety of administrative and academic systems. Even if you have studied with the OU before, it may be worth scanning the following information, since H850 differs in some important respects from many standard OU courses.
This section provides a rough guide to some of the jargon, acronyms and key people you will come across in the coming year. You will find more administrative detail (essential OU addresses, telephone numbers and the University’s rules and regulations) in the Assessment Handbook: Taught Higher Degrees, and in Terms and Conditions, most readily accessible online through your Student Home page (http://www.open.ac.uk/students) or the H850 course website (http://desktop.open.ac.uk/H850).

Glossary of terms

Here is a brief description of some terms which are commonly used in the Open University and with which you may not be familiar.

Assignments (TMAs) and cut-off dates H850 has five assessed assignments, with an examinable component as the capstone assessment at the end of the course. At the OU, tutor-marked assignments are usually called TMAs. You will find the essence of each TMA and the examinable component summarised in the Assignment Guide. You should carefully note advice about submission deadlines (cut-off dates) given in the Assignment Guide, particularly the advice on the final submission of the ECA (examinable component). TMAs should never be submitted late without first seeking permission from your tutor.

Course team All OU courses are produced collaboratively. H850 has been developed over a period of several years by academic staff based mainly in the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CeHEP) and the Institute of Educational Technology (IET), supported by course managers, editors, consultants and readers, designers and course assistants. The course team presenting a course may well be different from the team that produced it.

Examinable component Sometimes also known as an ECA, this is on many courses simply an exam. For H850, the examinable component is an extended piece of writing (fully detailed in the Assignment Guide). You post this to Walton Hall (and not direct to your tutor) at the end of the course, together with the collected TMAs that, at this point, become your completed portfolio.

First Class conference Most Open University students are given access to computer-mediated conferencing using FirstClass. Some courses, like this one, use FirstClass to tutor and run online activities. You will need to become competent in the use of FirstClass in order to engage with the structured activities of the course and to ‘talk with’ your tutor and colleagues in your tutor group.

H850 Is the OU course code and will often be used in place of the full course title. All the codes for courses in the OU have a ‘hidden’ meaning. Those with an H prefix are developed and run from within the Institute of Educational Technology and any courses with a number eight as their first number are taught at post-graduate level.

PT3 This is the standard OU form that you send to your tutor with each assignment. Your tutor will use it to record whether or not you have achieved the required standard in that TMA and may also write feedback on the form that relates to that assignment and your progress through the course. Some tutors also send feedback on a separate sheet or make notes on your TMA. On H850 tutors will generally also use a ‘blue form’ to record specific advice on how you can improve on any TMAs which have been graded as ‘Not Yet Achieved’.
**Regional Centre** Although The Open University has 13 Regional Centres throughout the UK, guidance and administration for this course is managed by staff in Region 06 (the OU in the East of England). Contact R06 for non-academic guidance and administrative queries; see http://www3.open.ac.uk/near-you/east-of-england.

**Study Calendar** As its name suggests, this is a calendar of all the important dates that structure the course. It is sent to you in print as well as being available on the course website. In the H850 Calendar, we provide space for you to record your other professional deadlines and pressures so that you can organise your different workloads in line with TMA cut-off dates and conference activities.

**Tutor** All H850 tutors are experienced teachers and developers in higher education but they are also colleagues learning alongside you. Your tutor will offer guidance and advice on how to relate the course to your own practice and is responsible for managing your online tutor group and supporting you and other members of the group in taking full advantage of all the resources available. Tutors mark and provide feedback on your assignments, encouraging you to integrate this feedback into your final examinable component.

**Walton Hall** The central site housing the academic and administrative buildings of The Open University in Milton Keynes. This is where the course team is located.

We hope that you will soon get to know the course, the other participants and the staff who are there to support you. If you have any queries about the course, contact your tutor or the course team. If you need advice on procedural or administrative matters, contact the Regional Centre (see above).

We look forward to 'meeting' you in our online discussions. Welcome to H850.

**The Course Team**