

Welcome to First Steps into Teaching in Higher Education (#fslt)

Hello, I am George Roberts. Welcome to FSLT13. We are bringing this course to you because we love teaching. It is almost as simple as that. And, we hope you bring some of your own pleasure in teaching and learning to the course. Of course that is not the only reason. We also believe that there are a wide range of skills that can be acquired to help improve teaching. It is a continuous struggle; or should I just say continuous professional development?

You will meet the tutors, Neil Carrant, Marion Waite and myself throughout the course. You may also meet Liz Lovegrove and Jon Bounds who are our Learning Technologists as well as Jenny Mackness, Sylvia Currie and Cris Crissman, our guest speakers. Helping with the course, we have a number of “expert participants”; people who did the course last year or who otherwise bring a perspective and might offer guidance on getting around or addressing topics. But most importantly you will meet other participants from around the world. We hope this course helps develop, grow and strengthen our professional networks.

This is a course about teaching. It is not only about teaching online, though it is delivered online. This course is about teaching in all modes: face-to-face, online and distance; large classes and small. And, is an introduction to teaching in Higher Education. Among the questions we will inevitably discuss is what might it mean to be in “higher” education? You might want to start thinking about this now. Hold that thought!

The course is taught through dialogue and interaction with people. It is an open course. That does mean that you are free to make your own way through the curriculum and to engage with the activities in your own way. Have a look at Neil’s excellent [three minute introduction](#) to the platform to get some ideas as to how you might engage with the course.

We will make suggestions about how we think you might get the best out of it, but one of our key design principles presumes that autonomous learning is important in higher education. The course is designed around the four principles of: **autonomy, diversity, openness** and **interactivity**. The course aims to foster these principles in your own learning practice and indeed we hope that you would in turn foster these in your own students.

The course is structured around six topics, four activities and three guest speakers. Each topic will involve asynchronous discussion with the whole course and each activity and guest speaker will provide the opportunity to engage in discussions (synchronous and asynchronous) with large and small groups. I will speak more about the topics and activities in another short podcast.

For now let me just say on behalf of the whole team, welcome to the course!