

THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Chairperson's Report 2003

2003 has seen a number of developments in Scottish education which impact on the delivery of Modern Studies in Scottish schools.

Our comprehensive survey of Modern Studies teaching in Scotland has now been completed, published and distributed. Recipients of the survey include members of the MSA, headteachers, directors of education, chairs of education committees, and MSPs, as well as libraries and colleges throughout the country. Copies have also gone to SEED, HMIE, parents' organisations, education researchers, LTSotland and a number of charities. As highlighted in last year's report, the survey makes for very interesting reading, and has been well-received. Although this was a mammoth task, it has produced an invaluable tool with which to promote Modern Studies and to enhance its profile in Scottish education. It is only because of the indefatigable persistence of Gordon Lawrie that such a comprehensive and detailed result was achieved. Our thanks go to Gordon, and to Gordon Black and Gavin Clark who handled the printing and distribution of the final publication.

The links forged with the Scottish Executive and with SAGT and SATH in 2002 have been formalised with the creation of the Social Subjects Citizenship Liaison Group. This group comprises representatives of the professional associations of all three social subjects, along with representatives of the Scottish Executive. Its remit is to examine the roles of the three social subjects in the delivery of Education for Citizenship. A research exercise to 'map out' the role of Modern Studies and the other social subjects in the delivery of citizenship in Scottish Schools is currently being carried out by the University of Edinburgh on behalf of the Scottish Executive. Not only has the MSA been able to participate in this exercise, but through Gavin Clark, has had significant input.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the promotion of Modern Studies in Scottish schools this year. In particular, thanks go to the members of the National Committee of the MSA who give up their time to attend meetings and to carry out the many other tasks that help the MSA work to maintain the profile of Modern Studies in Scottish education. The contributions of Jayne Ashley as secretary, Fiona James as treasurer, and Irene Morrison as membership secretary have been invaluable. In addition, thanks must go to Gordon Black, Eddy Cornock and Harriet Campbell for the publication and distribution of the MSA News, MOST, the Yearbook, and other mailings.

The National Committee of the MSA meets five or six times each year, and is always delighted to welcome new members. Membership of the National Committee can count towards CPD if it is linked to staff/curricular development in your school/authority.

This report summarises the main activities of the MSA since the 2002 AGM. If you would like more details about any aspect of the MSA's work, then contact me at the following address. Elspeth Inch, Calderhead High School, Dyfrig Street, Shotts, North Lanarkshire, ML7 3DH

The MSA as a campaigning organisation

Lobbying the Scottish Parliament

As previously outlined, copies of the MSA survey, along with a letter of explanation, have been sent to all MSPs. Responses from key figures in the Scottish Parliament and Executive will be elicited as appropriate.

Education for Citizenship in Scotland

The Social Subjects Citizenship Liaison Group, which was forged following a meeting with Nicol Stephen MSP in September 2002 has, as noted above, made significant progress since its inception, and is currently involved in a research exercise with the University of Edinburgh. The remit for this exercise has been approved by the Minister for Education, and is being funded by LTS. Gavin Clark, MSA Vice-Chairperson, was invited by Edinburgh University, and agreed to gather a focus group to look at the role of Modern Studies in the delivery of Education for Citizenship. MSA members will be kept informed of further developments via the newsletter.

Moray House; PGCE Modern Studies

As a means of effecting savings in their budget, Moray House has decided not to offer a PGCE, Modern Studies for the foreseeable future. The MSA has written to Moray House, and to Lothians' directors of education, expressing, in the strongest possible terms, our concerns at this move. To date, no positive response has been received. The MSA continues to monitor this situation and will pursue the matter further in the coming year.

MSA survey

As previously reported, the MSA survey of Modern Studies provision in Scottish schools has been completed and distributed to a wide range of interested individuals and groups. 1500 copies of the survey were printed.

Contacts with educational organisations

SQA

The MSA again submitted a response to this year's exam diet, details of which will appear in the February mailing. The MSA continues to have representatives on the Modern Studies Assessment Panel, and has been able to make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on possible changes to Modern Studies at Intermediate and Higher levels.

BBC Education

The MSA continues to work closely with the BBC who continue to expand their range of television and radio programmes, tailored to the needs of the Higher and Intermediate curricula. In addition, a number of online resources are being, or have been, produced.

Learning and Teaching Scotland

The MSA has developed close links with LTS Scotland via a range of initiatives, such as the Social Subjects Citizenship Liaison Group, and will continue to build on these.

Services for Members

MSA Conference and AGM

The 2003 conference will take place at The University of Strathclyde's Jordanhill campus on Saturday 1st November. Key speakers include Professor John Curtice, Mr Chris Moore, Dr Jane Duckett, Alex Salmond MP, Danny Philips, Dougie Mackenzie, and Ken Macdonald of the BBC. Further workshops will be lead by Allan Grieve (Principal Assessor, Standard Grade) on Standard Grade marking, and by Irene Morrison, on 5 – 14 Gathering and interpreting evidence (CD rom). Thanks are due to Henry Maitles and Irene Morrison of the Modern Studies Department at Jordanhill for their work in facilitating the conference, and to the conference committee – Gavin Clark, Melanie Shepley, and Jayne Ashley. Thanks also to Imprint and to Perfect Papers for their sponsorship of the event. As attendance at the conference can count towards CPD, all delegates will be issued with a certificate confirming their attendance, and outlining the curricular content of the event.

MSA website

The website has not developed as we would have liked this year, however we continue to make efforts to place a range of materials on the site and encourage members to use the bulletin board whenever possible. We have recently purchased a lap-top computer in order that we may make the website more useful to members, and are currently examining the possibilities of issuing the next MSA Yearbook on CD ROM. Thanks to David Fyfe for his continued efforts.

The Yearbook and MOST

This year's MOST, recently distributed, is a superb round-up of articles on post-devolution Scotland. As ever, thanks to Eddy Cornock who produces these excellent resources in their entirety, to unfailingly high standards.

MSA News

Gordon Black, aided by Harriet Campbell, has once again produced two excellent editions of the MSA News this year. Due to the increasing demands of his other commitments, Gordon is stepping down from the MSA National Committee after 14 years. Gordon's knowledge, experience and capacity for hard work will be sorely missed. We wish him well for the future.

Careers poster

The compilation of winning posters has now been printed, and will be distributed shortly.

Membership/Finance

We continue to have a healthy balance, despite a considerable outlay on the publication of the MSA survey, (see financial statement below). Thanks to treasurer Fiona James for all her work. Irene Morrison continues to do an excellent job as membership secretary, and membership currently stands at approximately 280. Membership is still only £20.00 per annum, and payments should be sent to the membership secretary. Because of the costs involved in the production and distribution of mailings etc. it is requested that individual, rather than school memberships are taken out.

Modern Studies Educational Trust

At the 2003 conference MSET the following awards for excellence in Modern Studies will be made:

Adv. Higher (David Graham Memorial Award) - David Graham, St Aloysius' College

Higher – Bruce McCombie, Peterhead Academy & Lisa Oyama, Royal High School

Intermediate I – Richard Martin, Grove Academy, Dundee

Intermediate II – Louise Turnbull, Kyle Academy, Ayr

Thanks to the sponsors of these awards, Wark Clements & Co., Mr and Mrs McNeill, and Pulse Publications. Thanks also to the SQA for their co-operation in making the awards.

The S1/2 newspaper competition was well subscribed, and cash prizes were awarded to each of the five winners. The S3/4 poster competition was recently judged, and details of the winners will appear in the February newsletter. Financial awards were disbursed to a number of individuals and departments organising competitions and trips.

Branches

Tayside Branch have run a number of successful ventures this year, including Higher and Advanced Higher conferences and a quiz (S1/2) and competition (S3/4). South of Scotland Branch have held a Higher conference attended by 300 pupils from across the region, and a new West of Scotland branch has been established. Meetings held so far have been on citizenship and exam review, and an S1/2 quiz is currently being planned.

Elsbeth Inch

Chairperson, Modern Studies Association
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