

REPORT ON WISPS STUDY DAY: CREATING AN EXTERNAL PROFILE

28 JANUARY 2006

DEPARTMENT OF HISPANIC STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

The study day was organised by Anny Brooksbank Jones, Anja Louis and Carmen Ramos Villar and took place in a sunlit ninth floor seminar room complete with views of rolling green hills, plenty of books and a guitar.

Anny led sessions on how to survive academia in a changing environment and offered valuable advice on what to do at the start of your career. She emphasised that young academics need to be flexible and adaptable and make their research potential clear when applying for jobs. She also underlined the importance of spreading talents and energies and not investing all one's efforts into one project.

Carmen talked about the whole process of conference-going: finding a conference, choosing a topic, preparing the paper, dealing with questions, exchanging ideas and keeping up contact with people afterwards. She also highlighted the fact that giving a paper **can** be a positive, constructive experience rather than being thrown to the lions!

Anja talked about networking, mentoring and confidence-building, and led some role-play exercises to show how we can talk about our work without showing off, or underselling ourselves. We discussed 'action learning', the confidence-building technique that had been introduced to some of the participants at the Retreat in Scotland in January.

After a quick lunch, we returned to the Arts Tower and listened to Anny's thoughts on publishing. She covered a lot of useful ground, including information on writing reviews, book proposals and deciding where to submit articles.

Anja spoke next about research administration, or 'service': extra ways that we can improve our profile. She mentioned creating personal websites, doing translations, organising conferences (or panels) and joining societies such as Wisps.

The day ended with a round table discussion of the issues that had been useful to the participants and more networking over tea and coconut macaroons. The atmosphere of the whole day was very positive and a lot of useful advice was shared. Thanks to all those who took part and especially to those who organised the day, put up the signs, moved the chairs and did the washing up!

Claire Williams
24th February 2006