

Alastair Campbell teaches campaigning at LSE

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Tony Blair's former Communication chief [Alastair Campbell](#) is lecturing students at the [London School of Economics](#) on political campaigning. I sat in on his talk today and he was very good value on the role of opinion polling in contemporary politics. But the real stars of the show were the Campbells of the future, the students.

These post-graduates are from all over the globe and many of them have worked on campaigns in places like America, Australia, Europe and Asia. As part of the session they had to give 'War Room' presentations where they take the role of communications teams for the Republicans, Democrats, Boris Johnson and Ken Livingstone. As they answered Alastair's professional questions we had a benign vision of how modern political communications works. The 'Democrat' team were convinced that Barack Obama has the momentum, but that Hillary has to fight dirty to expose his empty rhetoric. The 'Republicans' were luxuriating in Democrat discomfort but still had to deal with the Huckerbee as Vice President Issue. Meanwhile, back in London for the Mayoral campaign, the 'Boris' team were deeply worried by their candidate's uncouth TV performances and his lack of policy grip. While the 'Ken' team couldn't find any evidence that their man was actually doing any campaigning at all, so they mocked up a very convincing poster campaign that Livingstone would do well to use.

Even as a journalist I confess admiring watching Campbell at work as he put the student campaigners on the spot. It was a gentle performance compared to what he has described in his [diaries](#), but nonetheless, he can still put his finger on a strategy weak-spot.

Which is why it was interesting to hear his views on what Gordon Brown must do to win the next election. It's nothing that he hasn't said before but it is interesting nonetheless. Gordon, says Alastair, must do more than simply exploit people's fear that a new leader like Cameron might screw up. Brown must:

"Reframe the challenges that the country and the world faces. He has to point out that there are different and bigger challenges facing us now such as the rise of China and India. He must convince people that globalisation is an issue that matters. With Energy Policy he must make people aware of how geo-politics is changing things. With terrorism he must give the sense of the completely different nature of the challenge. It's the same with Climate Change".

That's a tall order. Especially for a politician who has not shown much interest in globalisation beyond macro-economics. It will be fascinating to see if Labour's current campaigners can turn that grand vision in to a credible set of tactics. Perhaps the LSE students can advise?

Another former Number 10 communications chief, [David Hill](#), has also been speaking out as [Martin Moore](#) reports on his blog.

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