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The Transforming Practice Programme: some lessons learned

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The Transforming Practice Programme: Some lessons learned

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A presentation to the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. March 10th 2015.
Today:

What is the TPP and what did the pilot aim to achieve?

Promoting the Reward and Recognition of teaching in universities via the TPP

What seems to have worked and what might we learn from the TPP for the future?

Some discussion on improving recognition for good teaching in HE
Background to the Transforming Practice Programme (TPP)

OLT/HEA UK MoU signed 2013

*Setting up an effective system to promote innovation in the sector – a methodology not an entity...*

We called it the ‘Transforming Practice Programme’ with the focus of the Pilot TPP being *Reward and Recognition for Teaching*
TPP – Process and Progress

• Review of the literature, institutional reports etc.
• Collaboration with HEA staff
• Interviews with a range of previous inst’l participants
• Appointment of a Reference Group
• Agreement on running a programme in Australia and the UK in collaboration in 2014
• Agreement on the programme content and conduct
• Mutual involvement in events
TPP – Process

• Sharing and Sustainability day took place in November (this was the final formal day of the programme)
• e-Reports were due in early February
• Today’s presentation of formative conclusions
• Final report due to OLT in June
• Showcase event planned for June/July 2015
Important characteristics of the TPP

The TPP is a structured programme intended to support change/innovation:
• decided upon by participating institutions;
• which is evidence-based – content and process;
• by allowing time and space for teams – incl. a retreat;
• (but) within a finite period;
• with practical facilitation/support/follow-up; and
• cross-institutional collaboration.
Reward and Recognition of Teaching Focus

- Developing explicit criteria for teaching excellence
- Developing processes and practices with regard to promotion for teaching
- Developing policies and approaches to support reward and recognition for teaching
- Benchmarking promotion policies and practices

Nb. These were suggestions made in the call for EoIs
The TPP can thus be seen as an exercise in:

**Knowledge Transfer** in collaboration with the sector (a key to successful innovation is ‘good evidence’); as well as

**Capacity Building** in relation to facilitating change/innovation *as well as coping with it*. 
The evidence emphasised in the TPP:

The evidence particularly emphasised in the pilot TPP was:


2. ‘The Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards Project’ - a project by Denise Chalmers (UWA), Rick Cummings (Murdoch University) (Joint leaders), Sofia Elliott (Notre Dame), Sue Stoney (ECU), Beatrice Tucker (Curtin University) and Rachel Wicking (UWA – Project Officer) (2014) - [http://vimeo.com/89458063](http://vimeo.com/89458063)

These projects were provided to the TPP by the respective projects leaders and subsequently made available on Yammer.
The evidence emphasised in the TPP:

The evidence particularly emphasised was:


4. ‘Considering teaching excellence in higher education: 2007-2013' a literature review written by Dr Vicky Gunn (Principal Investigator) and Dr Anna Fisk (Research Assistant) in 2013. This review was commissioned for the HEA UK - http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/Teaching_Excellence/TELR-final.pdf

Both of these projects were provided to the TPP by the respective project leaders and subsequently made available on Yammer.
TPP Participation and Support

• The process was facilitated by team participation in formal days throughout the year as well as via the provision of skilled and knowledgeable ‘supporters’ – Shelda Debowski; Elizabeth Greener (QUT); Sara Booth (UTAS); and myself, 3-4 weekly.

• Formal Days:
  – Start-Up Day (18 February 2014)
  – Residential (15th-16th April 2014)
  – Sharing and Sustainability Day (17th November 2014)
TPP 2014 - Participating Institutions

- Avondale College of Education
- Australian National University
- Charles Sturt University
- Curtin University
- Macquarie University
- Queensland University of Technology
TPP 2014 - Participating Institutions

• RMIT University
• Swinburne University
• University of New England
• University of South Australia
• University of Western Sydney
• University of Wollongong
• Victoria University
TPP 2014 – UK collaborating Institutions

• Birmingham City University
• Buckinghamshire New University
• Manchester Metropolitan University
• Nottingham Trent University
• Robert Gordon University
TPP 2014 – UK Collaborating Institutions

- St George’s University of London
- University of the Arts London
- University of Ulster
- The University of Warwick
So what were the projects about?

Promoting the Reward and Recognition of teaching in universities via the TPP
Australian National University

- **Project Title:** Recognition, Evidence and Progression at the ANU

- **Project Focus:**
  - Education Indicators for Promotion
  - Academic Professional Development
  - Educational Fellowship Scheme – Collaborating with the HEA to get staff accredited as Teaching Fellows.

Avondale College of Higher Education

- **Project Title:** Winning Ways Program

- **Project Focus:**
  - To create greater awareness of the teaching-route to professor appointments
  - To develop evidence-building guidelines for promotion
  - To provide structures and support to staff who are eligible for teaching-based promotion.
Charles Sturt University

• **Project Title:** The CSU Academic: a framework for describing our academic activities

• **Project Focus:**
  – Developing an evidence guide for improving promotion prospects and for improving career development in general.

Curtin University

• **Project Title:** Teaching Excellence: Review, Reflect, Refine, Reward

• **Project Focus:**
  – Peer based Professional Learning Programme;
  – Linked to Curtin’s teaching excellence criteria;
  – Linked to a 360° Survey
Queensland University of Technology

- **Project Title:** Flourish: The QUT Professional Learning Framework for Teaching and Supporting Real World Learning

- **Project Focus:**
  - Customise the UK-PSF for QUT’s Blueprint4 aspirations for Real World Learning transformation
  - Map existing QUT professional learning and professional development offerings and check for alignment with the UK-PSF & professional learning contexts
  - Pilot QUT Real World CPL Framework in different contexts, gap analysis on professional learning opportunities
  - Progress institutional accreditation of the QUT Real World CPL Framework with the Higher Education Academy

RMIT

- **Project Title:** Peer review of teaching for decision making at RMIT

- **Project Focus:**
  - Reviewing and refining related peer review policies and procedures.
  - Benchmarking peer review processes.
  - Consulting with Colleges and Schools.
Swinburne University of Technology

- **Project Title:** Evaluating Academic Promotions

- **Project Focus:**
  - Research to ascertain the impact of the changes that had been introduced to the Academic Merit Promotion Process since 2012, with a view to evaluating the effectiveness of the changes, particularly in relation to gender-based differences of promotions experiences and perceptions of staff and impact on the number of promotions based on learning and teaching.

University of New England

- **Project Title:** UNE Framework for Recognition of Contributions to Learning and Teaching

- **Project Focus:**
  - A home-grown framework to recognise excellent teaching, one that was endorsed by staff and recognised the unique aspect of UNE teaching in
    (1) catering for on- and off-campus students in almost all units,
    (2) providing a blended learning experience for almost all on-campus students, and
    (3) often dealing with a diverse mix of students in each unit.
University of South Australia

- **Project Title**: A framework for quality teaching that supports the development of teaching excellence at UniSA

- **Project Focus**:
  - Develop a matrix of indicative ‘Teaching Excellence’ characteristics relative to individual experience and position parameters (academic profile and classification), the needs of academic and professional, multi-disciplinary teams, and teaching modes.

University of Wollongong

- **Project Title**: Recognising teaching excellence at UOW

- **Project Focus**:
  - Provide professional learning support for applicants to develop an evidence-rich and compelling case for their impact on student learning. The case should allow for:
    - Disciplinary differences in professional expectations
    - Highlight curriculum-focused teams
    - Acknowledge spheres of influence that individuals exert across multiple networks. Draw increasingly on evidence from peers
University of Western Sydney

- **Project Title:** Academic Careers & Development

- **Project Focus:**
  - Development and recognition of academic contributions throughout the Academic Life Cycle and a consideration of the nature and capabilities of a successful Academic Workforce of the future.

Victoria University

- **Project Title:** Implementing the VU Teaching Capabilities Framework

- **Project Focus:**
  - To develop, implement and embed a Teaching Capability Framework.
  - To develop customised professional learning opportunities and resources focussed on the Framework to develop and support teaching excellence.
  - To align relevant policies, documentation, processes, structures and systems within the University.
  - To develop ongoing monitoring strategies to evaluate effectiveness and impact of the Framework on student outcomes.
What seems to have worked and what might we learn from the TPP for the future?
So what worked and what did we learn?

1. **The benefit of the ‘Sheriff’s Badge’**: The benefits are twofold – (1) empowered staff who felt they were being backed by the institution; and (2) external input and expectations gave credibility to the project and empowered the teams.

2. **Skilled Supporters**: The provision of skilled supporters has not been a constant feature in the HEA programmes; but past participants said they had valued it and accessed it IF they felt it would be provided by knowledgeable people. This, plus evidence from EBP in health, led me to purposefully provide support AND regular follow-up.

3. **Time away to focus on the project**: Time away to work with teams facilitated focus and provided collaborative opportunities to discuss initiatives with others teams with a similar focus.
Continued...

4. **Diagonal organisational slice basis of team membership**: Very useful in providing multi-faced input in the initiative, especially HR voice.

5. **Student voice**: Requirement of student voice facilitated deeper consideration of students as stakeholders.

6. **Adequate resources**: The existence of adequate resourcing, such as providing a project office was integral to the success of an initiative. Project officer = Project success.

7. **Institutional Stability**: The existence of instability at the executive level seriously undermined some initiatives.

Another positive: Over time, people started to ask if they could use ideas/material from other teams/institutions - in itself knowledge transfer, but this also had a positive effect on those whose ideas were being ‘valued’. This has led me subsequently to come up with the idea of the ‘Higher Education Leadership Exchange’
These are not all ‘new lessons’

The TPP was based on the HEA’s ‘Six Essential Elements for Change’:
1. Having a vision and goals
2. Having a champion and engaged stakeholders
3. Having good evidence
4. Having the right team
5. Being transformational
6. Having action, communication and evaluation plans
So what was the feedback – how do we ‘know’ these things?

**Online Surveys:**
- Post-Start Up Day
- Post-Residential
- Post-Sharing and Sustainability Day

**Team Leaders Interviews:**
- May 2014
- February 2015
TPP event feedback

Feedback from the event surveys included:

- 90% of participants were satisfied or highly satisfied with the events
- All event activities were perceived as ‘useful’ (ranging from 3.75-4.85 in a 5 point scale)
- A near unanimous recitation of the value of cross-institutional collaboration and networking; including comments like:
  - “Useful to hear what others are doing and how they are sustaining change”
  - “Useful exchange with other colleagues facing both similar and different challenges”
  - “Good opportunity to swap draft frameworks with other unis”
What else did participants think of the TPP?

- The TPP helped create “momentum and a profile. It created a sense of urgency” (Interviewee May 2014 – post-residential)
- “The team time at the residential was terrific - it really made for focussed, coherent planning. It also bought us the one precious resource we just don't get on campus: time. So that was really useful” (Interviewee May 2014 – post-residential)
- “The TPP enabled us to create a diverse team which was able to achieve more than originally envisaged. It was great to be part of an national initiative and learn more from others.” (Survey respondent, December 2014 – post-Sharing and Sustainability day)
Now what?

- e-Reports are coming in now, these are being reviewed. Now available on the secondments page of the OLT web-site: http://www.olt.gov.au/TPP-reports
- Post-programme interviews with team leaders are currently underway, as the final step in evaluation of the pilot TPP

We have a collaborative, evidence-based, evidence-focused system to facilitate collaborative change within and across HE institutions; which is apparently acceptable to the sector.
Questions and/or Discussion

Improving recognition for good teaching in HE:

• Does it matter?
• What might help?
• Who might help?
Contact?

Contact: pcrookes@uow.edu.au
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TPP project information at: