



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong
Research Online

Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health - Papers

Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health

2012

Coordinators leading the advancement of sessional staff: A CLASS act

Geraldine Lefoe

University of Wollongong, glefoe@uow.edu.au

Dominique R. Parrish

University of Wollongong, dparrish@uow.edu.au

Jo McKenzie

University of Technology Sydney

Janne Malfroy

University of Western Sydney

Yoni Ryan

University of Canberra

Publication Details

G. Lefoe, D. Parrish, J. McKenzie, J. Malfroy & Y. Ryan (2012). Coordinators leading the advancement of sessional staff: A CLASS act. presented at the ICED 2012 Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 23-25 July.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:
research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Coordinators leading the advancement of sessional staff: A CLASS act

Abstract

A presentation.

Disciplines

Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

G. Lefoe, D. Parrish, J. McKenzie, J. Malfroy & Y. Ryan (2012). Coordinators leading the advancement of sessional staff: A CLASS act. presented at teh ICED 2012 Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 23-25 July.

Subject Coordinators: Leading Professional development for Sessional Staff

aka

Coordinators Leading Advancement of Sessional Staff


COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN
DIRECTORS OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT





Dominique Parrish, Geraldine Lefoe, Yoni Ryan, Janne Malfroy, Jo McKenzie

Why leadership development for coordinators leading sessional teams?

- the role of the academic supervisor of sessional teachers is often the most crucial in establishing quality processes in teaching and learning
- there is little formal acknowledgement of or support for the subject coordinator's leadership role in ensuring quality teaching practices
- there are virtually no instances of formalised standards of practice or professional development for the subject coordinator's role in managing the teaching team

Terms

- **Subject co-ordinator** leads & manages all academic activity at the subject or unit level
- **Sessional teaching staff** - those employed on a teaching session basis - Lecturer, Tutor, Demonstrator, Course/Unit/Subject Co-ordinator, Course/Unit/Subject Designer, Clinical Supervisor, Practicing Professional, Conjoint & honorary appointment, Auditor of marks & grade, Laboratory Supervisor, Field Supervisor, and Casual Marker

Challenges

- Recruiting, inducting & developing teaching team
- Starting out & the problems of inadequate handover
- Establishing & maintaining teaching & assessment standards, in distributed, multi-locational and transnational environments
- Designing & operating communication & working within technology-enabled, flexible environments
- Integrating support services
- Maintaining subject quality, collaborative & collegiate relationships in a context where team members, including the subject coordinator, often feel undervalued, isolated and unrecognised

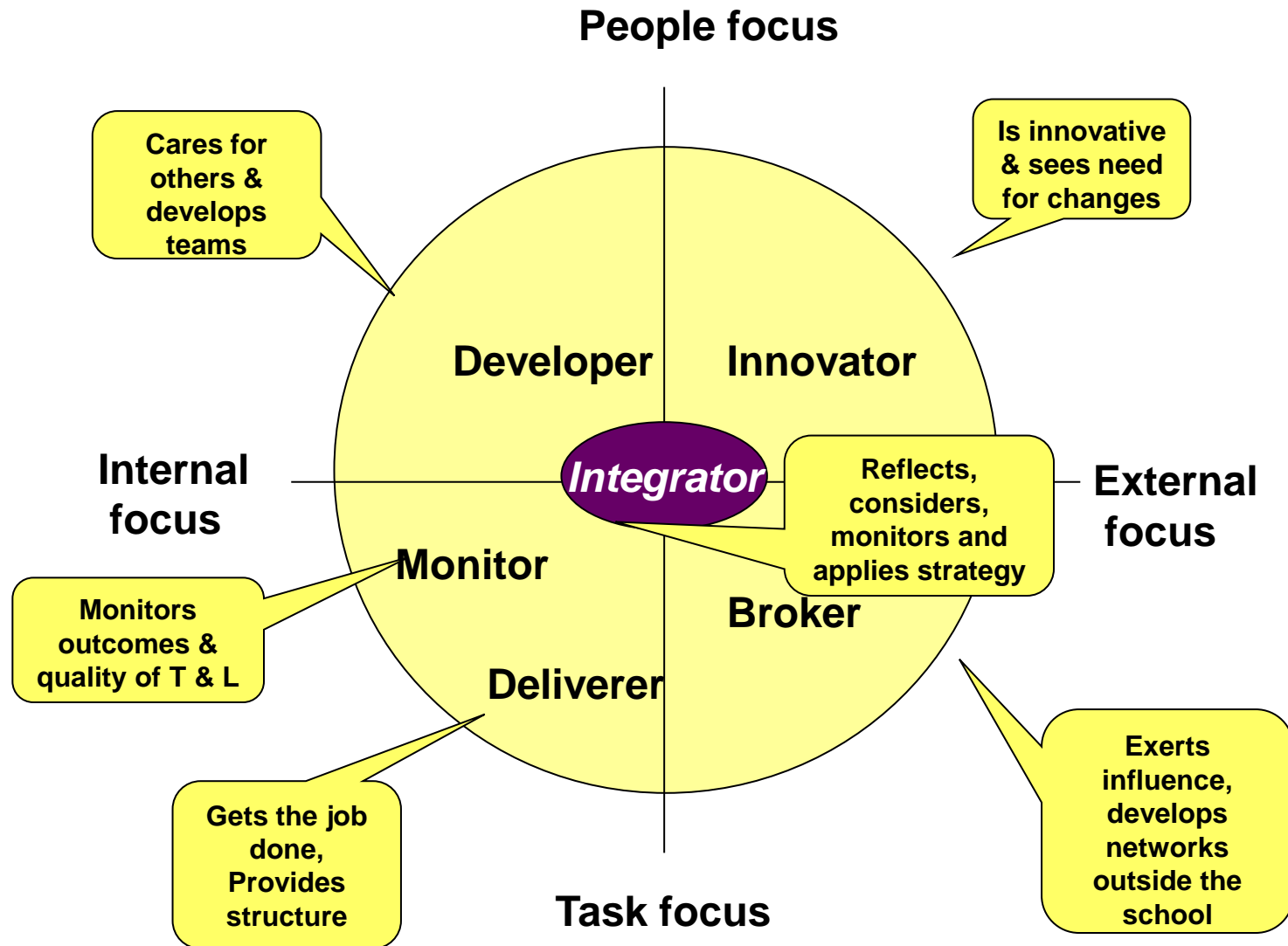
More challenges

- Working collaboratively to deliver coherent programs
- Managing research-versus-teaching agenda, which limits prospects for promotion
- Time pressures and inequitable workloads
- Feeling unprepared & untrained for variety, volume of student issues that arise
- Understanding & managing infrastructure & complex administrative systems
- Feeling frustrated & incapable of performing role effectively & uncertainty about scope of role

Building on success

- Distributed Leadership Project – Faculty Scholars
- Leadership capacity developed through action-learning project within authentic context of individual's work practice & supported by formal leadership-capacity development & reflective practices.
- Integrated Competing Values Framework (iCVF) developed by Tricia Vilkinas and her colleagues (Vilkinas, Ladyshevsky & Saebel 2009)





Implementation & Evaluation

- Phase 1: pilot PD workshop program to introduce 39 participants from collaborating institutions to an action-learning process that engaged the teaching team in collaborative activity.
- 25 completed process with their teams – facilitator role for AD
- Phase 2 – cascading improved program to 170 people from 26 institutions through national roadshow as an embedded dissemination strategy.



Framework

- Formal workshops
 - 1 day for subject coordinators & AD facilitator
 - Half day for AD;
- Authentic action-learning projects;
- Reflective practice;
- Communities of practice; &
- Networking



Overview – Day 1

- 9.30 Welcome & introductions
- 9.45 Speed dating, Introducing the iCVF and identifying leadership roles and capabilities
- 11.00 Morning tea
- 11.30 Good practices in working with sessional staff
- 12.45 Lunch
- 1.30 Good practice videoclips
- 2.30 Planning development of a leadership role
- 3.00 Coffee on the run
- 3.15 Action planning in institutional groups
- 3.50 Evaluation & Future directions

The CLASS Project outcomes

- An adaptable leadership capacity development framework
- Increased leadership capacity of subject coordinators
- Improved communication & teamwork in teaching teams involved, through the focus on action-learning projects
- Large-scale practice sharing through the national workshop program and the classleadership.com website
- Raised awareness of strategies for influencing policy & procedures to acknowledge contributions of all
- Resources such as trigger videos and sample collection of institutional policies, guidelines and practices

Resources



Guidelines & Templates

FOR INSTITUTIONAL, FACULTY & SUBJECT COORDINATOR USE IN
LEADING & MANAGING SESSIONAL STAFF

www.classleadership.com

Support for this initiative has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council



Scenario B: Dealing with Pressure

Summary

The Subject Coordinator is meeting with a tutor who is concerned about a decision she has made to remark an assignment after feeling pressured by a student. The discussion touches on strategies to deal with student pressure, the importance of assessment criteria, tutor/student relationships, tutor confidence, assertiveness, Subject Coordinator empathy and support.

Note: the scenario depicts some aspects of a longer meeting. It is critical to note that the Subject Coordinator convey the correct information about university policies in relation to student assessment and student Code of Ethics in having such a discussion.

University policy and procedure for managing a student grievance; rights and responsibilities of students/staff; tips for successfully managing student interactions; a flowchart for how to appropriately manage a student's grievance, suggestions for managing various mental and physical conditions that might be prevalent in students may all be useful here.

B1. Watch Scenario B: Dealing with Pressure

As you watch the video, consider the following questions.

How does the Subject Coordinator:

- seek the experience of the tutor
- affirm the tutor's actions
- demonstrate that they are listening carefully
- provide support and build confidence in the tutor
- explain the tutor role and responsibilities
- provide advice about dealing with similar future problems



Scenario C: Developing reliability in marking assessment tasks

Summary

Student complaints often focus on the variability of grades between tutors. Grading is often also a cause of anxiety among first time tutors in particular: what are the 'standards' expected? Here, the Subject Coordinator is meeting with the Marketing 101 teaching team prior to marking a poster assignment. The discussion centres around making judgements, comparisons, assessment criteria, moderating, reliability, and developing common standards.

Note: the scenario depicts some aspects of a longer meeting. Consider some options that you might as Subject Coordinator provide before this meeting, such as sample previous assignments, and certainly the marking criteria, as well completed criteria sheets from the previous assignment.

C1. Watch Scenario C: Moderating and Standards

As you watch the video, consider the following questions.

How does the Subject Coordinator:

- explain the importance of this moderation meeting?
- explain the assessment criteria
- seek the ideas of the tutors
- affirm the ideas of the tutors
- provide support
- build the team
- facilitate consensus
- provide clear expectations
- build understanding of the tutor role and responsibilities.

The discussion may lead to further discussion on the difference between criteria-based assessment and normative grading: one of the tutors suggests looking at a second assignment to see how they compare. This might suggest a partial reliance on comparative marking.

USING THE VIDEO TRIGGERS



Participants

- *“... the quality of marking is ensured. The marking criteria for each question ... have been refined thanks to the meetings with tutors who provided very valuable additional information. Students’ learning problems identified from marking their exam papers are noticed and discussed in the first place in an efficient way which will help all teaching staff to take corresponding actions in the future.”*

“For me, the key challenge was to be brave and have the courage to try something different.”



“Having the subject coordinator involved [this way]... ensured a team teaching approach and alleviated any apprehension by sessional staff.”

“It is conceivable that this type of internship teaching programme can be modelled & adjusted to fit a broad range of large, first year subjects. It is important that any implementation of this style of teacher development needs to grow its own identity and by doing so will become an accepted & natural part of the teacher training scheme for casual employees.”



HOME

PROJECT TEAM

ABOUT

WORKSHOPS

RESOURCES

WELCOME

Coordinators Leading Advancement of Sessional Staff (CLASS) is a project that has been funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC). The project aims to support and enhance subject coordinators' leadership and management of sessional teaching teams by developing quality processes, practices and resources that can be used across institutions.

The project builds on a key finding from the [RED Report](#) that subject coordinators have little support for developing their leadership and management of sessional teaching staff despite the fact that sessional teachers are critical in ensuring quality learning experiences for students.

The CLASS project will:

- develop contextually appropriate resources for coordinators to use in their leadership and management of sessional teaching teams
- enhance coordinators' capacity to lead their teaching teams in the context of their own subjects.
- engage coordinators in reflective practices about their own leadership development within a collegial and supportive network of peers.
- establish and disseminate good practice models for leadership and management of sessional teaching teams
- identify and promote the alignment between policy and practice.

PROJECT TEAM



Support for this project website has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The views expressed in the project do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.