

2008 UTAS TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS SUMMARY FINAL PROJECT REPORTS

Dr Rob Andrew
Faculty of Education

“Service Learning and UTAS’ relationships with communities of interest”

Summary of project

The broad objective of the Fellowship was to set up a unit of learning, at an undergraduate level, that would provide opportunities for learners across several disciplines to practice *community-engaged learning*, known in the northern hemisphere as ‘service learning’. The simplest way to describe it is as community service for academic credit. That academic credit is achieved through critical reflection on the experience to draw implications for the organisation, for the student’s learning, and for the student’s future in his or her discipline. Examples of organizations within which students might volunteer for up to 12 weeks of part-time service are migrant resource centres, environmental repair programs and our own University’s structured supports for international students. The overarching purpose is to give EDGE2’s pursuit of ‘relationship with local communities’ a curricular presence and deliver reciprocal benefits not available through informal ‘volunteering’.

Summary of Outcomes

1. Research of the policy, principles, practices, programs and processes that define the development and current state of ‘community-engaged scholarship’ (‘service learning’). Derived from visits to US and Canada sites, reading and direct inquiry of experienced personnel.
2. Consultations with 23 key related personnel at UTAS and within our communities of interest.
3. Submissions to University Teaching & Learning Committee (UT&LC) and Faculty of Education Teaching & Learning Committee (FETLC).
4. Full ‘Unit Outlines’ for units in Community Engaged Learning at introductory and intermediate levels, to be hosted by the Faculty of Education, elective to students of any Faculty wishing to participate. Service Learning options are to be offered at both the 100 and 200/300 levels. A future 400 level unit will facilitate trans-disciplinary international and indigenous service options.
5. Paper and digital copies of all correspondences and resources gathered during the course of the Fellowship.

Future plans/recommendations

1. The concept of Community Engaged Scholarship demands championing from the University senior executive. The initiative is vulnerable to passive resistance from some academics who perceive no personal benefit from trans-disciplinary work and who boast disdain of experiential learning and critical reflection. UTAS’ aspirations to give students (not researchers alone) generative links to our communities of interest *will not succeed* if initiative is left to silo-bound mindsets.

2. As in broader society, those at University of Tasmania who offer their time and energy in a voluntary context go largely unheralded. Service learning can acknowledge this work, asking “What sense do you make of this experience for your personal growth, your discipline of learning and your career?” An Award in Community Engagement is an encouragement to our students to reach beyond themselves and to continue enriching our learning community and our standing in the community. UTAS should offer acknowledgment on the Graduation Statement for a combination of academically analysed and volunteered service.
3. That the University employs two to three people through CALT or a hosting Faculty to oversee development at UTAS of Community Engaged Scholarship, including collaborative assessment and accounting of student engagement in, say, a minimum of three eligible student/degree electives and a minimum set of service engagements within the UTAS learning community.

Dr Heather Monkhouse
Conservatorium of Music

Dr Sara Booth
Faculty of Education

Building institutional supports for developing academic leadership in course co-ordinators

Summary of project

The project initially aimed to design and implement a leadership program for course coordinators on course reviews at UTAS. The project changed its focus due to two main considerations:

- a) A majority of course reviews had been allocated to 2010 due to the Common Course Structures project;
- b) The ALTC funded project, led by Professor Robyn Lines and Neil Trivett, which focused on embedding and sustaining leadership development for course coordinators, changed in its focus to include the role of academic developers.

The main aim of this project therefore became one of informing the ALTC project on the context of course coordinators at UTAS.

Summary of Outcomes:

This study has produced two outcomes:

1. It has contributed to understanding the context of roles and responsibilities of course coordinators at UTAS;
2. It has informed an ALTC funded project focused on professional development for course coordinators undertaking course reviews. Mentoring support will be given to course coordinators in preparation for course reviews in the Arts Faculty.

Details of Dissemination to date

The project will be disseminated in three ways:

1. A journal article has been submitted in June, 2009.
Booth, S. & Monkhouse, H. (2009). Understanding the context of course coordinators at one university site. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* (presently under review)

2. A presentation will be made at UTAS Teaching Matters, 2009
3. The findings from this project will also inform an ALTC funded project: Trivett, N. & Lines, R. (2009). Embedding and sustaining leadership development for course coordinators through tailored support during curriculum review. *What's Happening in Leadership*. Australian Learning and Teaching Council, Strawberry Hills, NSW.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the study for UTAS are:

- a) The organisational environment needs to have clear expectations for all academics which includes workload models that recognise the role of leadership in learning and teaching and time release for leadership development;
This first recommendation recognises that to build leadership capabilities in academics, it is necessary to provide clear statements defining the role and responsibilities involved in the position which is also endorsed in workload models (Marshall, 2008).
 - b) Provide leadership development for course coordinators focusing on strategies which are contextualised to their role;
This second recommendation highlights an imperative need to design leadership programs that are more relevant to the role, position and context (Debowski & Blake, 2004).
 - c) Leadership development training needs to include a role focused diagnostic framework to reflect on leadership positions.
The third significant recommendation is professional development should also focus on giving leaders a role focused diagnostic framework to reflect on their academic leadership roles (Vilkinas & Cartan, 2001, 2006; Scott, Coates & Anderson, 2008).
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2008 UTAS TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS

SUMMARY INTERIM REPORTS

Dr Chris Burke

National Centre for Marine Conservation and Resource Sustainability, AMC

Curriculum Development within the proposed new degree, the Bachelor of Applied Science (Marine Environment)

Summary of project

This fellowship provides guidance to staff in the NCMCRS for the development of the Bachelor of Applied Science (Marine Environment) – BAppSc(ME). The BAppSc(ME) has been formed from the integration of 3 disparate academic groups teaching 4 undergraduate degrees. Its development necessitated the identification of the science core curriculum and the integration of the core with each of the discipline majors. The overarching aim of the degree is to produce graduates who can critically analyse issues relevant to the marine environment (scientific, economic, social and political) in order to synthesise rational management and policy programs. The difficulty of achieving this was exacerbated by the fact that 3 groups of staff were combined to form NCMCRS and had to establish new collegial relationships at the same time as develop the new degree. Aims of project to be completed during fellowship

1. To enhance communication and where relevant, collaboration, between staff of the NCMCRS during the development of the curriculum for the proposed Bachelor of Applied Science (Marine Environment).
2. To guide the development of a curriculum that is fully integrated with respect to both specific discipline and generic attribute outcomes.

Summary of Outcomes to date:

- June 2008 to Dec 2008: Met with Dr K. Takayama, Brown University, Providence, USA to discuss the process of curriculum development.
- All staff met within disciplinary groups to determine the learning outcomes for each of the 6 majors in the BAppSc(ME).
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Marine Environment), approved for introduction from Semester 1, 2009 at the July 2008 Academic Senate meeting.
- Ongoing: Development and dissemination of teaching and learning resources via the NCMCRS curriculum wiki (developed as a repository of course information and for staff discussion on curriculum development and general pedagogical issues).
- August – November 2008: Collegial discussion groups were organised amongst the disciplinary and core majors in order to formulate curricula.
- December 2008 to January 2009: The unit schedules were upload to the wiki and to the N-drive in order to make it easy for all staff to see the whole course.
- April to May 2009: Moderation of semester 1 unit outlines. Following this, the mapping of generic attributes began with the aid of Dr Troy Gaston. This will continue with the semester 2 units.
- May 2009: Voluntary student groups were asked to provide feedback on semester one units. A summary of comments was generated and as an outcome, a workshop is proposed for September 2009 of staff involved in teaching Aquatic Biology.

- June 2009: Met with several academic staff of Colorado State University in Boulder to discuss curriculum development. In particular, the development of a survey tool to assess student engagement with the course and their opinion of its structure and learning activities. This tool will be offered to all students enrolled in coursework degrees in NCMCRS and will be offered online in September of each of the years 2009 – 2011 via Survey Monkey. Human Ethics approval has been recently granted (HE no: 10736) and an account opened on Survey Monkey.
- Responses will be summarised and returned to the student body, together with staff comments. In October, Dr Carew will run focus groups with student volunteers to discuss the summary of responses in order to try to identify reasons behind the student responses.

Future Plans:

- Two NCMCRS staff workshops to further review and develop Aquatic Biology A and B for 2010.
- Run an online student survey. Analyse and evaluate student responses and implement any recommendations that may arise. Repeat in 2010 and 2011.
- Run student focus groups. The results of the summarized feedback of survey and focus group responses along with staff comments returned to the students and made available in MyLo.
- Complete mapping of generic attributes across the degree.
- Map student learning outcomes in terms of their developing disciplinary knowledge.
- One day workshop of all NCMCRS academic staff to review 2009 unit offerings.
- Develop Teaching and Learning Resources to support BAppSc(ME).
- 2010-2011 ongoing review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the degree and of individual units.

Dr Melissa Nursey-Bray

National Centre for Marine Conservation & Resource Sustainability

Mr Colin Jones

School of Management

Dr Kathryn Ogden

School of Medicine

Promoting student learning outcomes through the development of communities of teaching and learning practice

Summary of project

The development of communities of practice (CoP) has become part of the pedagogical discourse around supporting teacher learning and professional development. Very little work has been done however on the relationship between participation in a CoP and enhanced student learning. Drawing on the work of Wenger and others, the project was conceived as a methodology for implementing CoP's at UTAS with the aim of enhancing student learning.

Aims:

The aims of the project were to:

1. Determine specific student learning outcomes that can be improved via collective scholarly action;
2. Identify existing communities of practice and support their robustness by encouraging groups to collect evidence of their efficacy for enhancing student outcomes, and/or; -
3. Build a sustainable community of practice around those currently recognised as leaders of teaching and learning best practice at UTAS;
4. Promote the idea and the value of forming communities of practice within UTAS and build interest in the notion of networking across disciplinary boundaries;
5. Build a new community/ies of practice (where appropriate) focussed on building student learning outcomes;
6. Develop intellectual and social capital that has the potential to lead to specific behavioural changes at UTAS that are both sustainable and widespread and positively impact on student outcomes.

Summary of Outcomes:

1. 20 individuals within the Launceston based campus were contacted by formal email and invited to participate in the CoP project. Follow up face to face discussions were then held with each individual. The face to face meetings enabled the parameters of the project and the nature of the problems which beset each colleague to be elucidated. Specifically, teachers spoke of the need to get feedback on their curricula and to find ways of determining what enhanced student learning actually looked like.

Trial of the peer review guidelines launched by ALTC in 2008 was conducted to address the first issue, and through that enable feedback into course curricula in ways that would enhance delivery and therefore the student experience. Results from this process will ultimately feed into academic teaching portfolios which can then be used for promotion purposes.

An invitation was received to be part of an institution wide trial of Pebblepad, a program that can be used as a learning management tool but also for the development of e-portfolios. Although this is in early stages of establishment, a nascent CoP seems to be forming on a national basis around practitioners trying to meaningfully use this tool to enhance student learning and development of evidence based portfolios. The program is also being used to chart the progress of this Fellowship project.

Overall, all individuals approached about being part of a CoP evinced high levels of interest, but little intent to commit to actioning such involvement. It became clear that discourse about CoP played a key role in participant engagement levels; the term CoP triggered ambivalence (indeed meant little to most people), but when the CoP was represented as an opportunity to become a better teacher, or to be institutionally rewarded for effort put in to become a better teacher, interest was immediate. By the conclusion of the project, it was clear that time was a major inhibiting factor to all concerned. It emerged that people need incentives to participate over and above a genuine interest in teaching. Thus, in order for these types of programs to work, CoP need to provide tangible rewards.

The project team emerged as a CoP and through the questionnaire has begun an important phase of building institution wide awareness not only of existing CoP but the notion and utility of Cop as a support mechanism for teaching and learning.

2. A 'Google Group' was set up. Invitations to educators who had previously nominated an interest in receiving 'mentoring' support were sent to eight educators.

The aim was to achieve a collective common concern (i.e. recognition of one's teaching practice) across a geographically fragmented 'campusscape'. The aim of this particular CoP was that increasing the recognition of members would in turn lead to increased legitimacy for such 'recognised' teaching practice at UTAS; thus contributing to increased student-learning outcomes.

In summary, there appears to be an artificial aspect to this approach that potentially creates an impediment to participation. It would seem that despite the logical intentions of providing a functional platform for academics to engage, the most important of prerequisites is not present, that of friendship and trust. Perhaps this represents a major hurdle to creating a CoP, ensuring that trust precedes structured development, rather than development preceding trust.

3. An initial effort to develop a CoP of academics who had demonstrated commitment to the scholarship of teaching by completing a Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching failed due largely to geographical spread across 5 locations, but also because the process was not generated around a perceived need. An alternative concept was developed, which would see the development of a CoP of clinical teachers located at the Launceston General Hospital.

A formal meeting with clinical teachers was arranged to initiate the CoP. This was attended by 7 senior clinicians and 4 junior doctors. The initial meeting was useful in identifying the issues that are faced by clinical teachers, however did not lead to the natural emergence of a CoP, nor did it generate an endeavour towards the development of scholarship of teaching.

The process did result in some targeted educational development activities which are currently being undertaken by the junior doctors who attended including: (i) development of a curriculum for a "Masterclass" for undergraduates in their nominated area of interest, (ii) an action research project targeting at collection of data towards developing a methodology for best managing student activity when on the ward, and (iii) a review of the literature around 360 degree workplace assessment, how it is best achieved, and its relevance to undergraduate medical students. Work will continue towards supporting a CoP located at the LCS, however it is apparent that for this to truly succeed the impetus must come from within the group and simply convening meetings does not in itself create a CoP.

Future Plans

Budget allocation of \$10,000 for workshop remains. It is the recommendation of the fellowship that this be used to trial a system of providing support to existing communities of practice to ensure their ongoing viability and to encourage increased activity.