A TEAM-BASED APPROACH TO ENABLE ENGAGEMENT IN SCHOLARSHIP

Case Coordinator Name : Tracy Douglas

University: University of Tasmania

UNIVERSITY *of* TASMANIA

- Priority Focus and explanation of PATS variation

The focus was Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). This PATS variation enabled peer engagement to integrate scholarship into the everyday practice of a teaching team in the School of Health Sciences, Faculty of Health.

The goal was to use PATS as a means of expanding the impact and influence of a Community of Practice formed by bioscience teachers interested in scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). The members used a shared leadership approach to form project teams and professional development activities included workshops on ethics application writing and conference paper presentations. The intended outcomes of enhanced SOTL skills were the ability to collectively:

1. Identify key learning and teaching projects within their learning and teaching paradigms
2. Enhance existing teaching practices
3. Meet UTAS Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) by engaging in activities that demonstrate a scholarly approach to teaching
4. Report via scholarly publications, enabling individual academics to meet UTAS Research Performance Expectations (RPEs)

Why
PATS was adopted as a framework for organizing a community of practice (CoP) of staff interested in SOTL to mentor staff within and outside of the membership of the CoP. A strategy to collaboratively integrate SOTL into the design, delivery and evaluation of curriculum was intended to positively influence student experience while enhancing the professional development of staff. PATS enabled members of the CoP to use peer partnerships within small project teams to develop and extend their skills while embedding scholarship into their learning and teaching practices.

People
A teaching team of ongoing academic staff employed to teach bioscience across four campuses in the School of Health Sciences, self-organised into SOTL-project teams.

CASE STORY

Timeframe
Ongoing

Scope: Discipline
Discipline-based service teaching within a Faculty.

- Key Outcomes

PATS Variation – outputs and outcomes
Members of the COP developed a timeline of meetings and workshops to facilitate professional development in SOTL for project teams.

Peer reflection and feedback on SOTL activities during project team meetings supported the development of project goals and planned quality improvement of the curriculum. Engagement in SOTL projects developed teaching staff members' ability to peer review (providing quality assurance) and mentor other staff interested in engaging in SOTL.

Activities of the project teams focused on professional development of SOTL through a series of seminars and workshops organised by the CoP members. These learning and teaching projects included:

- COP presented workshops on units, feedback, and student engagement in lectures.
- Organised professional development workshops sponsored by the Tasmanian branch of HERDSA.
- Two of the three original project teams are currently active in collaborative writing targeting conference presentations and publications in higher education fora.

Staff reported confidence to mentor others and developing core skills such as ethics application writing, learning and teaching project design, data analysis, conference presentations and writing for publication. Some original members of the CoP extended their leadership to cross-university SOTL projects.

1) Two successful ethics applications, four conference presentations (including two peer-reviewed papers) and a transcript submitted to JULTP (Journal of University Learning and Teaching Practice)
2) CoP members have also been able to demonstrate fulfilment of the University of Tasmania's Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) in scholarship and enhanced their Research Performance Expectations (RPEs), with some members adapting their discipline-based research skills into SOTL.

System level impacts
Within the University of Tasmania, this PATS variation aimed to have impact at IMPEL levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

1. **Team members:** have developed a number of SOTL skills, which has enabled engagement in SOTL projects and dissemination to others by organization of workshops, mentoring others and peer reviewing SOTL activities.
2. **Immediate students:** CoP members have changed learning and teaching practices based on their engagement in SOTL research leading to changes for students.

CASE STORY

3. **Spreading the word:** contributions to knowledge in the field both by the academic team members of the COP and dissemination of knowledge of the learning and teaching projects at local and international conferences as peer-reviewed papers and embarked on peer partnerships in other SOTL projects outside of the CoP.
4. **Narrow opportunistic adoption:** via dissemination of knowledge by project team members to other teaching staff in courses that include bioscience, and more broadly, in the Faculty.

- Learning

1. Barriers and opportunities

The main barrier is time and staff workloads have increased since the CoP was founded. This has impacted on progress within the learning and teaching projects, with only two of the original three projects continuing. The CoP has, however provided a wonderful avenue in which like-minded staff can work collegially to engage in professional development activities. Dissemination of CoP activities has also enabled CoP members to peer partner other staff interested in SOTL within their School and the University.

2. What worked well

Using core concepts of PATS within a CoP enabled team members to work collegially towards a common goal. Allocation of a team leader for each project team to facilitate group discussions, distribute workload and internal peer review processes within the project teams enabled learning and teaching projects to be developed, approved and implemented. Cross campus meetings and workshops of each project team and the CoP as a whole were possible through videoconferencing facilities.

3. What didn't work well

The time frame for projects was occasionally adversely affected due to workloads of team members negatively impacting time available to meet across multiple campuses.

4. What was learnt

Integrating aspects of PATS into a CoP was a useful way to establish peer support and promote professional development in SOTL. SOTL workshops can be successfully engaging in a videoconference format across multiple campuses if facilitated well. One project team identified the need to allocate strict deadlines for processes to ensure that projects progress and deadlines are achieved, particularly when working as a team to produce a scholarly paper for publication.

5. National System Impact

IMPEL Level 3: Contributions to knowledge in the field: growth or spread of disseminated ideas; serendipitous adoption/adaptation by people beyond the project's intended reach.