

# Abstracts Thursday 29 October 2015

Reference in APA: Verpoorten, D., Jérôme, F., Delfosse, C., & Detroz, P. (2015, October). Infusing SoTL components in staff training - A faculty development continuum at the university of Liège. Paper presented at the 12th annual conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) - Leading learning and the scholarship of change, Melbourne, Australia.

initiatives based on the CAT that illustrate how the initiative has been scaled across disciplines with community college, university and high school faculty. Quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of the initiatives on faculty will be presented.

Data from six diverse higher education institutions that have administered and scored the CAT instrument will be presented as an example of how the initiative has been scaled across institutions. The relationship between experience scoring the CAT instrument and subsequent changes made in faculty teaching and assessment practices will be explored.

The CAT is beginning to be used outside the US. But does it translate across cultures? How might an initiative on critical thinking be introduced into a new culture? To address these issues, data from a study on Palestinian student and faculty perceptions of the CAT will be presented.

Attendees will participate in an activity related to CAT skills and will engage in a discussion of the relevance of the critical thinking skills foundational to the CAT across cultures (individualistic and collectivist) and across learning philosophies.

## SCALING A CRITICAL THINKING INITIATIVE ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Denise Drane<sup>1</sup>

*1 Northwestern University*

Northwestern University will present data from two faculty development critical thinking initiatives based on the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (Test) that illustrate how the initiative has been scaled across disciplines from welding to electrical engineering to linguistics with community college, university and high school faculty. Quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of the initiatives on faculty will be presented.

## DRIVING FACULTY CHANGE ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

Elizabeth Lisic<sup>1</sup>

*1 Tennessee Technological University*

Faculty and administration recognize the importance of critical thinking skills, however there still appears to be a disconnect between this awareness and the implementation of change in teaching and assessment practices. Research focusing on high-impact instructional practices indicate that these strategies, when correctly implemented, can lead to gains in critical thinking. Institutions are seeking ways to train and equip their faculty to effectively utilize these strategies. This drive for instructional improvement has led to an increased focus on faculty development in higher education. The Critical thinking Assessment Test (CAT) is an instrument used in higher education institutions across the country to assess students' critical thinking ability. This tool engages faculty members at the testing institution as they score student responses from their own institution allowing faculty to gain insight into strengths and weaknesses in their own students' critical thinking ability.

Results will be presented from a study seeking to understand the relationship between experience scoring the CAT

## Session H13

Paper

### INFUSING SOTL COMPONENTS IN STAFF TRAINING - A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIEGE

Dominique Verpoorten<sup>1</sup>, Franscoise Jorme<sup>1</sup>, Catherine Delfosse<sup>1</sup>, Pascal Detroz<sup>1</sup>

*1 IFRES, University of Liege, Belgium*

This paper documents the attempt of the University of Liège (Belgium) to establish a 'pedagogical development continuum' by offering three nested programs, each likely to be credited in the next one, thanks to a single overarching competency framework (the CREER model). At a proper level of intensity, each program builds upon SoTL components, as defined for instance by McKinney (2007): 'The systematic reflection/study of teaching and learning made public'.

Level 1: FORMASTART (10 ECTS; attendance attestation) is compulsory for all newly hired teaching fellows. They have to choose and attend ten short training sessions dealing with major topics of higher education pedagogy (syllabus, pedagogical alignment, eLearning, etc.). Each training path has to be concluded with a reflective report in which participants describe the resulting benefits. For most of them, this program is a discovery of pedagogy fundamentals. A reflection on own practice is initiated, without developing a systematic turn. Along the continuum, the overwhelming majority of trainees (1260 involved since 2007) will not move beyond this slight formal engagement with pedagogy.

Level 2: FORMAPLUS (10 ECTS; certificate) mainly targets new tenure-track faculty facing the pressure to develop relevant teaching practice within a short time. The program is tailored to these immediate needs. Through a combination of additional training sessions, coverage of relevant literature, continuous reflection recorded in a SoTL diary, participants bring significant but limited improvement to their daily teaching practice. The program (4 participants since 2014) supports a reasoned approach of these changes and fosters internalization of different tenets of instructional quality. However, these evolutions are kept private.

Level 3: FORMASUP (60 ECTS; master's degree; <http://www.formasup.ulg.ac.be>) is addressed to teachers in higher education (in Belgium and abroad). This program (100 faculty since 2001) commits to all SoTL components. Participants engage in a methodical and many-sided scrutiny of one of their course and in a theoretically/empirically-founded regulation thereof. These outputs get a public dimension via a blog, a portfolio, a formal communication to colleagues, and the writing of 'regulation articles' that, for some, will result in a conference paper.

At all levels of the continuum, teaching practice is made an object of a) attention, b) conversation, c) transformation and d) study (ACTS model, adapted from Watkins, 2012), through a variety of instructional methods.

Besides the presentation of the continuum and its underlying models, the paper will document major issues encountered by the trainers: individual coaching, participants workload, pros

and cons of a research-based teaching approach (Healey, 2005), and fluctuating borders between SoTL and scientific writings.

#### References

- McKinney, K. (2007). *Enhancing Learning through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: The Challenges and Joys of Juggling*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Anker.
- Healey, M. (2005). Linking research and teaching exploring disciplinary spaces and the role of inquiry-based learning. In R. Barnett (Ed.), *Reshaping the university: new relationships between research, scholarship and teaching* (pp. 67-78). McGraw Hill / Open University Press.
- Watkins, C. (2010) Learning, Performance and Improvement. *Research Matters*, 34, 1-16. ISEIC: Institute of Education.

---

### Session H13

#### Paper

#### **MAXIMISING POTENTIAL FROM TEACHING FOCUSED ACADEMIC POSITIONS - THE INAUGURAL CURTIN TF RETREAT**

**Georgina Fyfe<sup>1</sup>**, Helen Flavell<sup>1</sup>, Kerry Pedigo<sup>1</sup>

*1 Curtin University*

In the current Enterprise Bargaining agreement (2012-2016), Curtin University in Western Australia introduced Teaching Focused (TF) positions to improve the student experience and teaching quality. The shift of teaching workload allocations also aimed to strengthen our research outputs. The TF role recognises clinical or professional experience for some academic staff, so TF (Clinical Professional) roles, not requiring a PhD at levels B and C, were a welcome addition in the Faculties of Health and Humanities.

There have been Teaching focused positions in the US and UK for some time (Probert 2013), and many Australian universities have similar positions described in their current EBA documents. Some consider these positions a deficit academic role (Probert 2013) without a career structure equitable with a research role (Chalmers 2011). Indeed, many Curtin staff were reluctant to be transferred from T&R positions to TF positions, fearing loss of status and increase in teaching hours.

Building academic leadership capacity in TF positions in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Curtin is supported by the Dean T&L and her team. Professional development of academic staff has evolved in the last decade, and must now refocus on developing teaching teams and building communities of practice (Gibbs 2013). With this in mind, and from feedback gathered from informal meetings with TF staff, a Faculty plan was developed which included a funded capacity-building Retreat for TF staff. The Faculty of Humanities became involved, and together we ran the inaugural two-day residential TF Retreat in November 2014.

Learning Outcomes for the Retreat included understanding the drivers for change in Higher Education, sharing best practice, building evidence for SoTL, and planning for career progression. Our aim was to build on the strengths of Curtin's most able and effective teachers to identify key issues and plan for a future where TF staff lead the university in T&L effectiveness and Scholarship of T&L. Twenty two Health Sciences staff in TF (Academic and Clinical Professional) roles joined 40 staff from the Faculty of Humanities at the two-day residential Retreat. The Retreat program drew on Curtin staff to facilitate sessions on academic identity, career progression, faulty thinking, leadership in T&L and the definitions and importance of SoTL. The Vice Chancellor contributed a session on Curtin's vision and expectations of TF roles, and took

questions and comments from the participants.

Ethics approval was sought to allow evaluation of the impact of the Retreat. Feedback showed that staff were still confused by definitions of SoTL, but they valued the session on career progression. Sessions that challenged participant thinking, such as managing change, were less well received (Fyfe, Flavell et al. 2014). Staff identified the participation of the VC very positively. One point came out strongly in relation to professional development: TF Staff wanted to identify their own PD needs, rather than have us tell them what they needed. Further findings and recommendations for improving the impact of our subsequent TF Retreats will be presented, and participants will be encouraged to contribute their experience and reflections to the discussion.

#### References

- Chalmers, D. (2011). "Progress and challenges to the recognition and reward of the scholarship of teaching in higher education." *Higher Education Research and Development* 30(1): 25-38.
- Fyfe, G., et al. (2014). *Teaching Focused Retreat: Leading Teaching & Learning into the Future*. Bentley, Western Australia, Curtin University.
- Gibbs, G. (2013). "Reflections on the changing nature of educational development." *International Journal for Academic Development* 18(1): 4-14.
- Probert, B. (2013). *Teaching-focused academic appointments in Australian universities: recognition, specialisation, or stratification?* Sydney, Australia, Department of Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.

---

### Session H13

#### Paper

#### **SOTL VISION AND THE NEED FOR A USEFUL WORKING DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

**Cathryn McCormack<sup>1</sup>**, Angela Carbone<sup>2</sup>

*1 Southern Cross University*

*2 Monash University*

The incessant pressure for innovation in teaching and learning has resulted in ideas being recycled, and hype about the 'next big thing'. While a number of factors interplay to create this phenomenon, it is in part because we do not have a concise, clear and compelling working definition of effective teaching, meaningful to both academics who teach and managers who assess their performance. A useful working definition would help us frame a vision for SoTL by encouraging evidence-based, scholarly practice. Hattie (2009), after a career of meta-analyses of teaching and learning across all levels of education, points us in a scholarly direction with the factor identified as having the singled largest impact: 'teachers, working together, as evaluators of their impact.'

The tyranny of accuracy holds us back from shaping an effective working definition. Our very expertise and critical thinking skills work against us as we reject useful definitions because of minor inaccuracies. We have literature defining excellent, expert and scholarly teaching (Kreber, 2002), and in Australia a framework for teaching quality (Chalmers, Cummings, Stoney, Herrington, & Elliott, 2015), yet despite efforts by outstanding scholars (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010) proposed working definitions of effective teaching lack 'saleability'. From my experience working with teaching awards and teaching and learning grants, I see some applications fail, not because of the quality of work presented, but for lack of a clear and compelling message. Similarly, to provide vision, our working definition must encapsulate