

CLASS

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

AUGUST 2010

UPCOMING EVENTS

Facilitation of
Professional
Development
Workshops—Phase
2a:

January 27-28:
Sydney

February 1-2:
Adelaide

February 3-4:
Perth

February 7-8:
Melbourne

February 10-11:
Brisbane

November 30:
CLASS Project
Newsletter Vol 1,
Issue 3 Published

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CLASS Project

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.

Professional Development Workshop

A major initiative of the CLASS project is a Professional Development Workshop, designed explicitly to address aspects related to coordinators' leadership and management of sessional teaching teams. A pilot Workshop was facilitated at the University of Technology Sydney, on Friday June 18, 2010. Subject coordinators from each of the four initial partner institutions—University of Wollongong, Australian Catholic University, University of Technology Sydney and University of Western Sydney participated in the day.

Workshop participants:

- Explored the *Integrated Competing Values Framework* (iCVF) examining the components of this model in relation to leading a sessional teaching team
- Used the iCVF framework to identify specific practices that could be adopted to enhance leadership of sessional teaching teams
- Evaluated a suite of resources that could be used by subject coordinators to professionally develop sessional staff
- Generated a draft action plan detailing a strategy for developing an aspect of their leadership capacity.

Professional development workshops will be facilitated in 2011 in: Sydney at University of Technology Sydney, January 27-28; Adelaide at University of South Australia, February 1-2; Perth (Venue TBA) February 3-4; Melbourne at Australian Catholic University, February 7-8; Brisbane (Venue TBA) February 10-11. (Continued on page 2)

LEAD INSTITUTION:

University of Wollongong



PARTNER
INSTITUTIONS:



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY Bringing knowledge to life



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Professional Development Workshop (Continued)

The CLASS Project Professional Development Workshop Program will be modified from the feedback and suggestions that were provided by those participating in the June 18 pilot workshop. Overall the workshop feedback was



positive with 91% of participants stating that the program met their expectations and 94% affirming its relevance to their subject coordinator role. The activities facilitated throughout the workshop were designed to engage participants. This goal was achieved, with 94% of participants indicating that there were adequate opportunities for them to contribute and 91% stating that the workshop was well organised and administered and that the activities were effectively facilitated. Comments endorsing the workshop program included:

“An excellent workshop. Well organised, high engagement levels of participants and thought provoking activities and discussion.” (Workshop Participant)

A further advantage of the workshop was the cross institutional affiliations that were established. A participant describing this benefit with the comment:

“I feel mostly that I have a support network outside my own university.” (Workshop Participant)

The refined Workshop Program will be facilitated with cascade partner institutions in January and February, 2011. These workshops will be delivered in Sydney, Melbourne,



Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. In addition to the subject coordinator workshop, a second day will be implemented for new facilitators to provide advice and guidance for leading the program and developing communities of practice in their own institutions.

Video Trigger Update

A set of three video triggers have been developed for use by coordinators to professionally develop sessional staff. These triggers focus on dilemmas that could be faced by coordinators and provide a possible response from a leadership perspective to the dilemma. The video triggers include:

Scenario 1: Starting the Semester - Which focuses on a Subject Coordinator meeting with tutors and demonstrators at the beginning of a semester to introduce them to each other, the subject, and their roles and responsibilities. The ensuing discussion addresses tutor and demonstrator concerns and expectations and the depicted scenario illustrates the need for some of the key skills that leaders use to build teaching teams .

Scenario 2: Dealing with Pressure - Which focuses on a Subject Coordinator meeting with a tutor who is concerned about a decision she has made to remark an assignment after feeling pressured by a student. The ensuing discussion presents strategies to deal with student pressure and reinforces the importance of assessment criteria. The depicted scenario illustrates some of the key skills that leaders need to support those with less confidence and experience in the tutoring role.

Scenario 3: Developing Reliability in Marking Assessment Tasks - Which focuses on the Subject Coordinator meeting with a teaching team prior to marking a poster assignment. The discussion centres around making judgements, comparisons, assessment criteria, moderating, reliability, and common standards. The depicted scenario illustrates the need for some of the key skills that leaders need to build equitable assessment procedures within their teaching teams.

These video triggers will be used in the Professional Development Workshops and are also accessible through the CLASS project website at www.classleadership.com. The video triggers, which were developed through the University of Wollongong were showcased at the 2010 HERDSA Conference in Melbourne. Details about this showcase are available at: <http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2010/program/concurrent1.html#lefoe>.

CLASS del.icio.us Links

Additional resources related to coordinators and sessional staff are available through the CLASS Project del.icio.us site. The project team welcome suggestions of additional resources that could be included on this site.

Add CLASSLEADERSHIP to your Delicious network to access the suite of CLASS project resources and provide further suggestions of useful resources.

Project Team and Reference Group Update

There are two project team meetings scheduled for September 13 and November 8. These meetings are crucial activities that focus on progressing key project initiatives such as the development of resources that can be used by subject coordinators in their leadership and management of sessional teaching teams.

A project reference group meeting is scheduled for November 2. This meeting will provide the reference group with an update on the project activities and invite feedback from the reference group members on project progress and activities.

University of Wollongong CLASS Project Participants

Dr Amy Chan:

Lecturer, Psychology

Project Title: Empowering tutors to help students in their academic writing development .

Project Details: This project explores the use of Turnitin as a means for tutors to provide support to students and increase their awareness of how to avoid poor academic writing practice. The project will provide sessional tutors an opportunity to develop an improved appreciation of how a lack of experience in academic writing and/or lack of engagement can lead to plagiarism in students' written work. The aim of the project is for sessional tutors to develop more positive regard for students' capacity for good academic writing practice when they are provided with a supportive learning environment.

Ms Rebekkah Middleton:

Lecturer, Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health

Project Title: 'Innovation' in Tutorials .

Project Details: This project will explore innovative strategies for delivering lectures and tutorials. The aim of the project is to identify alternate lecture delivery methods that will promote active student learning and challenge students' creativity and knowledge. An anticipated outcome of the project is better informed casual tutors who report confidence in delivering new material to students.

Dr Tracey Kuit:

Lecturer, Biological Science

Project Title: Developing Demonstrator's Skills with Group Work in Large First Year Classes .

Project Details: This project aims to develop demonstrator's skills in setting up and encouraging group work amongst first year biology students. Through the use of group work, and innovative written and oral assessments, demonstrators will help the students contextualize the theory being learnt in the subject. The anticipated outcomes are that the students will achieve a deeper understanding of the subject by exploring applications of the theory and secondly will enhance their skills in communication. The demonstrator's will have the opportunity to enhance their skills in administering group work, providing feedback to students and utilizing various assessment methodologies.

Dr Christian Ritz:

Senior Lecturer, School of Electrical, Computer & Telecom Engineering (SECTE)

Project Title: Developing and Monitoring Assessment Practices Amongst the Teaching Team.

Project Details: This project aims to develop a clear communication plan for meeting and discussing assessment practices with staff. It will focus on identifying new methods for ensuring consistency of standards amongst a marking team for laboratory reports or design reports. The SECTE already has procedures for ensuring consistency in major reports and this project will aim to adapt these for other forms of assessment involving multiple markers. An anticipated outcome of the project is that sessional staff will gain confidence in their role and that good practice examples for use within the SECTE and possibly other parts of the University will be produced.



Ms Lidia Bulbatua:

Associate Lecturer, Languages, Spanish studies

Project Title: Action Assessment Marking Program.

Project Details: This project aims to develop a plan and clear marking criteria to minimise the variability in marking assessments in a Spanish subject. The project will explore and investigate strategies to minimise the variability in marking, in collaboration and communication with sessional staff.

Dr Greg Peoples:

Lecturer, School of Health Sciences

Project Title: Mentoring teaching strategies for volunteer casual teachers in the anatomy laboratory.

Project Details: This project will aim to identify and mentor teaching and communication strategies for 100level volunteer anatomy demonstrators. Volunteer demonstrators are already placed under the guidance of more experienced staff, however, this project will extend the relationship to encourage specific teaching strategies. Volunteer staff and experienced casual staff will be asked to make post-strategy comments and evaluations based upon the impact of these strategies.

Dr Glennys O'Brien:

Lecturer, Chemistry, Director of First Year Studies

Project Title: Developing Demonstrators Questioning Skills with Specific Emphasis on Mental Models of Molecular Structure.

Project Details: The aim of this project is to develop the confidence of first year chemistry demonstrators in engaging students individually in the lab with open ended questions that lead to discussion. Demonstrators will also gain an understanding of the importance of representations which chemists use freely as everyday language. Students will have the opportunity to further develop their use of models and representations of species and reactions in organic chemistry.

Dr Venkata Yanamandron:

Lecturer, School of Management and Marketing

Project Title: Developing a Marking Rubric To Improve Learning.

Project Details: The aim of this project is to develop a scoring scheme to guide the analysis and judgement of quality when evaluating students' activities. The project will focus on developing a marking rubric that will assist students to recognise and align their work to markers' expectations thereby encouraging student autonomy and promoting deep learning.

