

University Development
and Administration

Series Editor: Fernando F. Padró

SPRINGER
REFERENCE

Carina Bossu

Natalie Brown *Editors*

Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education

 Springer

University Development and Administration

Series Editor

Fernando F. Padró

University of Southern Queensland

Queensland, QLD, Australia

It is a generational work designed to take a comprehensive and utilitarian look at higher education in the first decade of the twenty-first century and to provide a glimpse of potential developments as the century progresses. In this regard, it combines many of the intentions found in the three antecedent works previously described. This series provides basic and (per force) historical perspectives on topics covered that touch upon the impact and approach within universities regarding issues of social justice; designing and fostering a climate and structure that promotes the provision of high skills and new knowledge (transmitted and created); creating schema that ensure the quality and integrity of all programs across the campus; issues and approaches toward establishing and maintaining good external and internal governance; the effective management of financial and human resources; the importance of purpose in generating a viable university structure; the impact of changing paradigms in learning, teaching, and student engagement (the changing toward a learner-centered environment); capacities in relation to human and financial resources available to higher education; and the expectations from and performance of higher education institutions.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/14341>

Carina Bossu • Natalie Brown
Editors

Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education

With 36 Figures and 19 Tables

 Springer

Editors

Carina Bossu
University of Tasmania
Hobart, TAS, Australia

Natalie Brown
University of Tasmania
Hobart, TAS, Australia

ISSN 2522-5626

ISSN 2522-5634 (electronic)

ISBN 978-981-10-6856-0

ISBN 978-981-10-6858-4 (eBook)

ISBN 978-981-10-6857-7 (print and electronic bundle)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018946680

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Preface

Volumes discussing the functions and roles of professional staff at higher education institutions (HEIs) are rare. HEIs are complex and highly specialized organizations based on performing a variety of tasks within the university or similar institution of higher learning. Tasks range from clerical activity to high level managerial activity to student engagement support in regards to learning (co-curricular activities, instructional online activity, learning support), personal needs, and transactional activities (e.g. enrolment management, bursar's office, residence halls) to knowledge creation support (e.g. research specialists and technicians) to physical plant maintenance and security. This diversity makes a discussion about professional staff challenging; yet, as an aggregate group, they are essential to ensure the effective and efficient running of a campus. The difficulty comes from not being able to talk about them from a system-level integrative and unified perspective (cf. Bertalanffy 1968). There is ultimately an *autopoietic* dimension to these different staff groups that at times makes a discussion of professional staff perplexing based on difficulties in (a) understanding the role of nonacademics, (b) legitimizing the function and roles of nonacademic staff that leads to (c) the treatment of some of these positions as what Etzioni (1969) termed quasi-professions.

Professional staff as an aggregate cohort represent an important component of HEIs expenditures. To put the magnitude and breadth of their presence at universities and similar institutions, the OECD's (2017) *Education at a Glance 2017* indicates that 64% of expenditures in higher education go to core services. These costs include expenditures directly related to teaching, which include administration, teaching salaries, books and teaching materials, and physical plant construction and maintenance. Staff compensation comprises about 67% of current expenditure, with two-fifths going to nonteaching staff. Of the remainder, about 3% goes to ancillary services – defined as student welfare, institutional housing, meals, and healthcare – and the remaining 33% goes to knowledge creation (research and development). These last categories also represent staffing expenditure commitments to professional staff serving in these areas.

While Australia, the UK, and USA reflect a higher cost for student-related activities in the OECD data, staffing numbers from these three countries also provide an example of the extent to which professional staff populate HEI campuses. In Australia, data from the Department of Education and Training (<https://docs.education.gov.au/node/46141>)

shows that 54% (64,376/123,038) of full-time and fractional full-time staff were classified as nonacademic positions in 2017. This amount represented a 1.2% increase in staff from 2016. In the UK, almost 51% of staff had either full- or part-time nonacademic contracts in 2016–2017 (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/18-01-2018/sfr248-higher-education-staff-statistics>). This number was an increase of 1.9% over 2015–2016. In the USA, if one does not count librarians, curators, and archivists as professional staff (as a number of them hold academic appointments), professional staff make up just under 50% (1,952,686/3,915,918) of HEI employees for all institutions in 2015 (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_314.30.asp?referrer=report), a 1% increase from 2014 (<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016014.pdf>). If librarians, curators, and archivists are included in this count, the percent of professional staff increases to almost 51%. UK and USA databases data distinguish by occupation type, offering an idea of the breakdown of positions that can be classified as professional staff. Adding to the confusion in defining professional staff, positions labeled “Management” may or may not be classified as academic positions (possibly dependent on linkage to another, “substantive,” academic position within the HEI). Table 1 provides an example of professional staff occupations as defined in the UK and USA databases. This table is based on my best efforts to bring together the different parameters applied to professional staff. Occupation types in bold suggest occupation types that crossover between databases while not bold occupation type linkages are at best indirect or incomplete based on database definition of terms, again suggesting slippage in the type of functions and roles these staff play within HEIs.

Miles and Snow’s (1978) framework separates organizational functions into three areas. Firstly, entrepreneurial (leadership and strategic) activities; secondly, administrative throughput activities that allow for effective and successful student engagement and learning to happen through curricular and learning environment processes. The third area is the learning and teaching interactions that lead to graduates whose opportunity for employment is significantly enhanced and who value their university experience. These functional areas are embedded within the three major concerns of universities and equivalents: academic affairs, student engagement and support, and enterprise management. Professional staff work in key roles across the three areas, which is why the need for professional, quasi-professional, and other skilled work occupations are needed to ensure the overall performance success. There is an economy-of-scale argument surrounding the amount of professional staff required to complete essential tasks. Logically, institutional size and complexity of tasks surrounding teaching and research affect staffing numbers and type (Coaldrake and Stedman 2016). The more students enrolled the more staff required to ensure effective and efficient administration and teaching obligations toward students, regulators, partners, and other stakeholders.

There are other arguments driving the increasing numbers of professional staff in HEIs; some are positive, and some are negative. Accountability pressures resulting from an increased regulatory environment overseeing higher education may be a

Table 1 Professional staff at higher education institutions in the UK and USA

UK (2016–2017)			USA (2015)		
Occupation type	Number	Percentage distribution	Occupation type	Number	Percentage distribution
			Librarians, curators, and archivists	42,627	1.1%
Professional occupations	42,840	10.2%	Student and academic affairs and other education services	171,551	4.4%
Managers, directors, and senior officials	11,190	2.7%	Management	256,888	6.6%
Associate professional and technical occupations	47,330	11.3%	Business and financial operations	203,890	5.2%
			Computer, engineering, and science	231,957	5.9%
Caring, leisure, and other service occupations	7,200	1.7%	Community, social service, legal, arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	174,694	4.5%
			Healthcare practitioners and technicians	121,135	3.1%
Elementary occupations	24,505	5.8%	Service occupations	243,833	6.2%
Sales and customer service occupations	2,345	0.6%	Sales and related occupations	13,873	0.4%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	69,315	16.5%	Office and administrative support	441,222	11.3%
Skilled trades occupations	6,540	1.6%	Natural resources, construction and maintenance	74,041	1.9%
Process, plant, and machine operatives	1,570	0.4%	Production, transportation, and material moving	19,602	0.5%
	212,835	50.71%	Totals	1,995,313	50.95%

Sources: Adapted from <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/18-01-2018/sfr248-higher-education-staff-statistics> for the UK and https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_314.30.asp?referrer=report for the USA

contributor, paradoxically one that Evetts (2006) suggests potentially undermines the trust of professional staff based on the exigencies placed to meet regulations and standards (implicit and/or explicit) built into regulatory oversight mechanisms. Accountability practices imply outside interference predicated on governmental aims at implementing public administration and quality management system practices (Kai 2009; Padró and Green in press). Questions that come to mind are whose goals are pursued and who is in charge of this process. Traditional governance places the burden on academics, but in a corporatized institution, administration oversees the process, often with the assistance of professional staff. At issue, knowledge and understanding of what accountability means in higher education. The destabilizing argument is based around Kai's (2009) observation that "[analytical] tools for measuring efficiency and effectiveness and for evaluating performance are, in fact, inappropriate for the complex and interconnected processes that occur in such multiobjective organizations as institutions of higher education" (p. 41). The concern, mainly from academics, is the extent of knowledge and understanding of the knowledge dissemination and creation aspects of performance beyond enterprise management concerns. The basis of the concern is the arms-length relationship between traditional academic work and the finance side of HEIs that disassociates quality and cost, in particular when it comes to teaching (Massy 2016).

Another argument made along similar lines is that professional staff can take the place of some academic staff in performing some of the knowledge creation and dissemination activities within an HEI. For example, instructional designers are harbingers of social change (Schwier et al. 2006). The ensuing blurring of roles where academic staff are only "but one group of many professional specialists involved in producing instructional materials" (Rhoades and Slaughter 2004, p. 49) generates concerns that traditional governance is undermined and academic jobs threatened, especially full-time academic positions (Poritz and Rees 2017; Rhoades and Stensaker 2017). On the other hand, there is the counterargument that professional staff are better equipped to handle some administrative tasks and their presence provides more time for academic to do their teaching and research roles (Bexley et al. 2011). This is the pattern noted in the European higher education sector (Sursock et al. 2010). Nonetheless, tangential to the concern over job displacement where academic staff are the losers is the notion of the different interpretations of the meaning of staffing models as it relates to conditions of service, full- and part-time employment, permanent and fixed-term, flextime and job sharing employment propositions for all staff (Whitchurch and Gordon 2013).

A fourth argument is that the proliferation of professional staff is an indicator of increased corporatization and managerialism of universities itself. The negative perspective of this argument is the devaluation of academic standards (Donoghue 2008) based on the prevalent neoliberal political economic paradigm (Giroux 2002). Corporate values are deemed noxious to academic matters and the prerogatives of academics. The argument has been around since at least as far back as 1918 when Thorstein Veblen wrote that the academic corporation corrupts the pursuit of disinterested science and scholarship by preferring utilitarian ends. Nowadays, this argument manifests itself through a concern over the proliferation of administrators,

many of whom have no experience as functioning full-time academics or academics wanting to return to the classroom. This view of managerial bloat sees management as an end in itself and thus prefer to promote administrative domain to academic endeavors (Desrochers and Kirshstein 2014; Ginsberg 2011). Conversely, the counterargument is that the increase of professional staff, managers, and non-managers makes HEIs more “capable of responding to an increasingly complex and volatile environment” (Pineiro and Stensaker 2014, p. 509), with professional staff increasingly working within multi-professional teams to perform the various tasks of an HEI (Whitchurch 2012).

In sum, a discussion of professional staff reflects the mixed identity emanating from new roles to meet new needs, a paradigm shift from roles previously considered the domain of academics only and shifting boundaries of between specialist and more specialized functions and roles to ensure institutional and student learning outcomes are met (Whitchurch 2008a). Table 1 illustrates the extent of mixed classification types. The table also reflects the identity displacement that occurs within the embedded social relationship between the professional staff and the different units within an HEI (cf. Forsyth and Danisiewicz 1985). Legitimacy of role occurs through the substitution of personal professional identity (based on skillset or specialization) with the representation of role within functional areas to meet intended performance outcomes. In other word, acceptance is not based on the possession of unique and positive characteristics such as relevant higher education credentials or other forms of specialized recognition (Hoyle 1982; Saks 2012). The Anglo-Saxon model of professions where an external perception of boundaries pertaining to power and influence set by professional bodies, regulatory agencies, or by the generic understanding of the public at large (Evans 2008), in effect, does not – cannot – directly come into play under these circumstances.

In response to the mixed identity of professional staff within the higher education sector, Whitchurch (2009) proposed the notion of the blended professional based on characterizing individuals with identifies from professional and academic domains and the relationships and legitimacies they construct. Respondents in her study “working in mixed areas of activity . . . characterised as blended professionals, demonstrated an ability to capitalise on a sense of ‘belonging’ and ‘not belonging’ entirely to either professional or academic domains, often working in ambiguous conditions” (p. 408). Her concept expands on the notion of *third space* between academic and professional identities. This is consistent with Bhabha’s (1994) notion of hybridity based on a new identity crafted from the differences between these other domains. However, as he also noted, “[the] margin of hybridity, where cultural differences ‘contingently’ and conflictually touch, becomes the moment of panic which reveals the borderline experience” (p. 296). This sense of identity arguable situates learning and identify formation as a Luhmann-esque double contingency proposition where a social relation is established to “create” a professional by creating sufficient transparency between the profession for the individual and the profession to learn about each other occurs (Bhabha 1994; Lave and Wenger 1991; Luhmann 1995; Vanderstraeten 2002). The overall resulting process here, as Goffman (1959) identified, is predicated on what the participants from both sides

present about each other and what these identifications do to help predict resulting future behaviors.

Yet, there are specialist positions either in the form of managers as managerial professionals or other forms of program specialists. An argument can be made that managerial types, outside those in legal, accounting and other specialized enterprise related activities, may tend to fit under Whitchurch's blended professional model. However, mainly in the USA, professionals providing student-facing services see themselves as falling under their own professional umbrella (Carpenter and Stimpson 2007; UNESCO 2002) based on a descriptive use of the term professional (Hoyle 1982) such as that provided by Professions Australia (<http://www.professions.com.au/about-us/what-is-a-professional>):

a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.

Student personnel or student affairs professionals have an umbrella discipline and professional associations helping frame ethics and standards (e.g., American College Personnel Association (ACPA), National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)). "Student affairs programs and services function professionally as a distinguishable set of educational and management activities that occur mostly, though not exclusively, outside the formal classroom" (Creamer et al. 2001, p. 4). As indicated in the 1949 version of *The Student Personnel Point of View*, this group of professionals provides a cohesive approach that draws together a university's resources dedicated to facilitating the student's efforts to meet the objectives of higher education. The shaping of these services depends on institutional context, but in general, these units tend to function independent of each other without consideration of a coherent and holistic approach toward student experience (Manning et al. 2006). Although there is a debate of whether practitioners in the field require a degree within the field (Reason and Brodio 2016), two key professional associations have proposed that educators teaching to postgraduate degree programs available within the profession concentrate on teaching ten competency areas: personal and ethical foundations; values, philosophy, and history; assessment, evaluation, and research; law, policy, and governance; organizational and human resources; leadership; social justice and inclusion; student learning and development; technology; and advising and supporting (ACPA and NASPA 2015).

There is another developing profession within academia reflecting the vicissitudes of student personnel practitioners, the academic developers (especially in the online space), of which this volume deals in some detail. A look at the literature surrounding the nature of academic development and developers fits Professions Australia's definition as well. In common with student personnel services, there are different perceptions regarding the status of academic developers. Bath and Smith (2004) suggested that their tasks and identities place them as academics while others suggest

they are a distinct subgroup representing a more hybrid identity due to role ambiguity emanating from localized practice needs (Boud 1999; Di Napoli et al. 2010; Manathunga 2007). Like in student personnel services, there is no one route to becoming an academic developer. Both “professions” derive their context from local institutional practice. The difference is that student personnel services can trace its roots back to the 1930s, whereas academic development is more recent, from around the 1970s onward, as an offshoot of quality initiatives introduced at universities during this period (Hicks 2007). In spite of early concerns that the changing nature of higher education pedagogy along with different local contexts and needs (Fraser 2001), academic development is now considered a specialized professional role with a growing body of knowledge that reinforces the self-identity of practitioners (McDonald and Stockley 2008; Quinn and Vorster 2014). Complicating matters somewhat is that unlike student personnel service staff, academic developers can be academic staff as well as professional staff. Much seems to depend on the role academic developers play, i.e., whether the role is in (1) broader course design and scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) activities, (2) course quality assurance (QA) related duties such as learning analytics or institutional research (e.g., Knox 2017), or (3) supporting academic staff in curricular and/or online organization related matters. Personal experience suggests course design and SoTL activities tend to have academic rank while positions focusing on QA related duties can either be academic or professional and support responsibilities are performed by professional staff. Oftentimes, institutional contexts in terms of enterprise bargaining agreements (EBA) between universities and collective bargaining units rather than role delineation. EBAs can determine status directly through clear statement of role definition. Indirectly, the EBA negotiation process memorializes the prevailing institutional climate preferences of role identity as to whether these positions require academic status as well as or instead of professional staff based on performance requirements. In either instance, bottom-line costings directly influence role status as well. In this current financial retrenchment environment faced by higher education sectors globally, if Australia is a typical example, the preference is for these positions to be filled by professional staff as these salaries are lower and staff terminations handled with fewer complications.

The literature within the fields of academic development and student support services (augmented by personal experience as an administrator and academic in both) reflect the inequality, marginalization, and competition for status between with academics and other professionals even within organizations requiring different specialized functions (Etzioni 1969; Saks 2015). Yet, for those not wanting to provide professional staff in higher education professional status and in an ironic contradiction to his original intent regarding this type of discussion, Flexner (1930) wrote that professions are distinguished by their attitude toward results and this, as has been already discussed, is a major rationale for their presence in universities.

As has been pointed out throughout this narrative, recognition of role, legitimacy of role, and trust are critical elements in establishing a professional identity. These represent the extent of boundary permeability between professions within an organized entity such as universities. Apparent is Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, and

Tejeda's (1999) polycontextual, multivoiced, and multiscripted context present in the processes of defining a profession – or at least granting professional status to a class of employees performing broadly identifiable tasks within the different functional areas existing in institutions of higher learning.

Carving out professional identity and integrity – ethical/moral principles and practical concerns relating to “misconduct, malpractice and a demand for minimum standards of good practice in public and professional services” (Banks 2010, p. 2169) and the concomitant reflection and discernment between personal values, roles, and ethical systems (Edgar and Pattison 2011) – means creating a “space” for the profession. As Lefebvre (1984/1974) proposed, space is a social product, with a reality of its own, yet existing “in a state of uncertainty” (Schmid 2008, p. 29). He identifies three interconnected dimensions that are individual as well as social:

- *Perceived space*: The readable/visible daily reality/routines defining individual-social interaction (such as work) that paradoxically differentiates the personal from public spheres. Intuitions come from what these routines suggest vis-a-vis context. The formal university structure thus represents one aspect of this space. “In a very particular kind of “feedback,” exchanges between knowledge and power, and between space and the discourse of power, multiply and are regularized” (Lefebvre 1984/1974, p. 282).
- *Conceived space*: The fonts and production of knowledge that define the instrumental representations of habits. This is a realm where abstractions are immanent drivers of acts. Arguably then, legal norms and obligations affecting in involvement of individuals and groups emanate from the accrual of cumulative experiences that have led to the creation of the existing (and accepted) knowledge in the form of orthodoxy (from consensus). The orthodoxy thus acts as a filter, if not a barrier, to actual experience unless the experience shifts the perceptions of the knowledgebase. Within this aspect are the Bronfenbrenner's (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006) meso- and macro-system levels as reflected by program, university, discipline/profession, regulator and stakeholder expectations, and standards of practice as formally or informally defined by benchmarks, guidelines, and/or standards. It is here where existing socio-political norms of acceptance exist. There is a fine line separating these conceptions from what is actually lived. The overlap potentially occurs when social reality changes conceptions, but as Lefebvre (1984/1974) pointed out, needs and functions of a social reality are obscure because of the existence of different perspectives on reality.
- *Lived space*: The actual, quotidian lived experience of an individual or group that expressly and/or tacitly shapes perceptions, possibly as a form of Benthamian (1780/1988) utility to generate advantage and benefits. These experiences provide the impetus for changing conceptions when new awareness or disconfirmation comes into being requiring a change in attitudes and ideologies. Lived space does offer the possibility of resistance (Ronneberger 2008) as a driver for change, but the opposite can occur because of the different social realities that make up the conceptual space. “The central, contradictory arena for potentially hegemonic projects of producing space is everyday life, or, more precisely, the point at which

dominated aspects of lived space become integrated into the linear-repetitive rhythms of state, commodity, and technocratic knowledge” (Kipfer 2008, p. 205). As Lefebvre (1984/1974) indicated, there is a preference to uphold the “establishment,” but what this does is question the “justification for assigning priority to what is known or seen over what is lived” (p. 61). More to the point, the central problem as Dewey (1938) observed is the selection of experiences “that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (p. 28).

The interactions between Lefebvre’s three spaces can be seen from an ego/alter ego double contingent perspective of the interaction between a profession trying to legitimize itself and the existing social reality (cf. Vanderstraeten 2002). Movement from one space to another mirrors the *autopoietic* capacity behind the process of professions integrating themselves into the social reality. The movement itself is nonlinear based on how change impacts the reproduction of expectations (Leydesdorff 2008), in this case the shifting of expectations from the lived space to the conceptual space that redefines the work space and networks. When it works, the exchange facilitates the conceptual change, but when it does not it creates resistance because agreement/recognition has not been achieved.

Establishing professional integrity provides a necessary step in the change (recognition and acceptance) process by creating frontiers that both generate and bounds identity in social reality (Künzler 1990). Professional integrity places importance to obligations and duty of care attached to those obligations providing legal considerations to professional practice (Padró et al. 2002). The reason: professions end up having to establish a legal presence as represented by professional standards and codes of ethics as a means of assuring the public that what the profession does is to their benefit. There is a semiotic (meaning making) character in legal considerations that underscore the formal possibilities of establishing a professional identity (cf. Balkin 1990).

Echoing Dworkin’s (1986) observations about how obligations come about the historical development of professional staff indicates the attraction of obligations rather than merely assuming them when it comes to putting knowledge into action within universities. In a way, this suggests an ad hoc and potentially unintended consequence of adopting responsibilities – similar to Dworkin’s (1986) notion of associative obligations – as means of getting tasks accomplished throughout the campus. This process of obligation assumption and/or imposition is the aegis of a duty of care expected from practitioners that, in turn, defines the standard of practice specific to tasks performed by the different types of professional staff. Under this type of legal consideration, negligence provides practical reasoning when standards are not adhered to and damage has been caused (Witting 2007). The complication here is that there is no one uniform definition of practice encompassing all professional staff nor should there be, given the varied functions performed by these staff. Professional integrity is therefore difficult to define and apply in a sense that supports a case for establishing a profession in a context that goes beyond Hoyle’s (1982) prescriptive approach that is self-promoting rather than attributional in scope.

An advantage of having an easily identifiable professional integrity is that it projects a deontic reading of demands placed on the profession regarding the meeting of expectations rather than focusing on intrinsic values held by practitioners (Eriksen 2015). Professional staff are tasked to fill the different roles within a university that academics either are not interested in fulfilling or best suited to do based on expertise and/or time available. With these tasks come a degree of authority – recognition – to suggest and enact decisions. Following Lefebvre’s (1984/1974) conception of space creation and his dialectic concepts of contradictions and overcoming them (Schmid 2008), it is worthwhile to use Hohfeld’s (1913) fundamental legal relations as a lens to understand how professional integrity and meaning is shaped. This lens yields a semiotic process by showing the effects from how professional staff actions navigate through the legal opposites of rights/no-rights, privilege/duty, power/disability, and immunity/liability as well as the legal correlatives of right/duty, privilege/no-right, power/liability, and immunity/disability. Contradictions help construct professional meaning because the interplay between these relations shape meaning, even if it is from a bounding or constraining perspective.

- *Rights/no-rights*: Actions and decisions are shaped by the limits of their role that are defined by traditional understanding of the position or the job descriptions attached to the role. Job descriptions may contravene traditional views of the role, but context dictates otherwise and herein one of the contradictions that professional staff navigate.
- *Privilege/duty*: Job descriptions define expectations for that position and from these emanate certain freedom of action to perform tasks required from the role. On the other hand, while often silent within the job description are the limitations imposed on the role due to overlapping job responsibilities, status, inherent limitations of formal and informal networks within a university.
- *Power/disability*: Power, in terms of capability or the ability to function (Sen 2003) rather than capacity, is variable and dependent on whom the university environment favors intentionally or not as part of its enacted normative preferences. Disability as used by Hohfeld (1913) is related to the inability to go beyond the limitations imposed by the institutional context that defines the roles of professional staff and their nexus with academic staff. There is also a personal aspect to go beyond the formal delegation of authority reflective of French and Raven’s (1959) legitimate power that suggests that personal attributes enhance a person’s or group’s ability to accomplish desired results. Specifically, the person or group are acknowledged and accepted as acting on appropriate institutional (normative) values.
- *Immunity/liability*: Immunity refers to those responsibilities clearly falling within the confines of the job description and normative expectations of the role within the university. Liability refers not only to wrong decisions that lead to a wrong (students, other staff, the university as a whole), but more critical to this discussion what happens when actions fall outside the accepted role parameters defined either by the job description or the broader institutional context of acceptable actions. Lindahl (1977) puts this situation in terms of claims of what is

permissible and counter-claims of what is not. In other words, this interplay between the opposing views of what is allowed and what is not reflects the boundaries of professional staff status referent to identity and obligations that can assumed.

To summarize, these legal opposites illustrate the bounding elements of self-identity within professions. Contradictions in this case shape limits. For example, job descriptions legitimize the existence and need for positions on one hand; however, on the other hand, they limit the scope of acceptable activity. There are personal as well as organizational characteristics influencing a person's or group's (network) ability to perform certain tasks or at least be able to claim a role in the performance of those tasks. These limitations identify the extent of permissible capabilities to act without generating liabilities from undertaking tasks outside the spheres of recognized participation and accepted standards of practice.

In contrast, Hohfeld's (1913) correlates shape professional identity within the space of where these legal relations intersect. The intersection between these dependencies emanating from these relationships help shape advantageous possibilities between different groups (Balkin 1990; Singer 1983). The matching interests these correlates represent provide for semiotic considerations that provide the positive arguments of how to identify a profession:

- *Right/duty*: It is tempting to apply the old adage that “possession in nine-tenths of the law” as an example because this ambiguity in terminology (Hohfeld 1913) suggests that there is a link between right and duty. There is a relation between the two in that claiming a right imposes a duty of care directly linked to accepted standards of practice in the field in which work is performed. Duty in this sense thus can be a form of competence based on having these various responsibilities thrust on them by universities (cf. Spaak 2003).
- *Privilege/no-right*: Privilege relates to permissibility (Lindahl and Reidhav 2017). Permission needs to be granted. More important, privileges can co-exist with each other (Lazarev 2005). Recognition drives legitimacy and trust from which status can emanate. As Hohfeld (1913) saw it, permission negates imposed limitations based on other arrangements and thus acting as an implicit conduit for a change in recognition. Professional staff recognition can co-exist with the traditional roles of academic staff. The limitation here is that action on the part of professional staff are not directly protected from an attempt at changing the boundaries of what professional staff represent at universities, demonstrating different notions of what is permissible (Brown 2005; d’Almeida 2016).
- *Power/liability*: Power, for our purposes, is the ability of individuals or groups (representing themselves) being able to achieve a result such as changing the normative positions of others (d’Almeida 2016; Lindahl and Reidhav 2017). This helps explain some of the dynamics involved in Hoyle's (1982) second form of defining professions: when “used by individuals as a token of their own self-esteem, by occupational elites as these seek to improve pay, status and conditions” (p. 161). It is worth noting how Hoyle's second form focuses on how

“governments as they seek to gain an occupation’s acceptance of a particular policy by appealing to its professional” (p. 161). Thus, the possibility of a reciprocal ability to shape the definition of the profession from within and without through the creation of professional associations and broader community interactions (Padró and Hawke 2003).

- Immunity/disability: Immunity as a form of exemption relates to how an individual or group’s capacity for immunity disables another individual or group to ensure that the latter does not overpower or countermand the former (Lazarev 2005; Singer 1983). Disability in this case thus refers to the lack of power to override a capability to act, although it is passive due to being outside the immediate scope of control (Hoebel 1942; Kocourek 1920). Any movement toward conferring professional staff as a profession in broad terms can occur without direct conflict or threat to academic staff. In addition, the broader claim can occur without challenging recognition or status of specialized activities performed by practitioners of specific professions (e.g., accountants, counselors, lawyers, medical and nursing staff, psychologists) working within universities.

In sum, job descriptions provide an avenue for making the claim that the professional staff’s task is a legitimate one based on credentials that demonstrate competence and experience in the fulfillment of identified tasks. From the description comes the suggestion of a duty of care that organizational context enacts even if implicit or tacit in approach. Rather than imposing limitations, the correlates suggest the ability to expand the claim of being a legitimate player due to the capability to meet expectations. Expectations met normally lead to comfort with professional staff performing designed tasks and acceptance results in role legitimacy. With legitimacy comes the ability to shape identity and enhance status in co-existence with academic staff and self-determination in terms of professional standing.

Whitchurch (2008a, b) typed professional identities into *bounded professionals* (clear, specific functions based on job description), *cross-boundary professionals* (strategic use of boundaries to improve capacity building), *unbounded professionals* (project-based), and *blended professionals* (spanning professional and academic domains). This discussion has touched bases on all of these types in one way or another, focusing on the challenges that these positions provide not only from a taxonomic perspective but also from role perspective. Whitchurch (2009) also wrote about the defining sense of “belonging” that describes professional staff, especially those she labeled as blended professionals. Her focus was on how blended professionals represent a third space based on their networking and abilities to move beyond traditional norms of acceptable activities. What I have focused on are the dynamics involved in generating the recognition and acceptance of professional status and how the claims and identification process navigate through the negotiated environment that third space represents that often results in a hybrid recreation of social reality that accommodates prior with current understanding of legitimate roles and who fill them at universities.

This theoretical speculation of professions and professionals does not directly resolve concerns over staffing in terms of who does what based on capabilities and cost. Policymakers and university administrators are not interested as such on these issues, but what interests them is the interplay that the dynamics represent in terms of staffing patterns. The interest is not in the dynamics themselves, rather, in their results in terms of acceptability. One main reason is to ensure a stable working environment within a campus through the delegation of tasks considered acceptable to all. A second reason is that stability in the sense of balancing institutional interests will lead to effective and efficient performance of tasks.

The volume presents issues and discussions of how professional staff provide benefits to the university as a whole. Reading through the chapters, one item that comes through – at least to me – is the role student engagement and experience has in strengthening the need for professional staff at universities. Universities represent more than in-class or online class experiences. The university environment itself supports the course-based experience through co-curricular experiences or through the encouragement of students pursuing additional learning opportunities, what Press (2018) terms extra-curricular activities “through which personal and collective agency influenced and shaped their future practice and who they were becoming” (pp. 188–189). Consequently, interest in and decisions about professional staff for policymakers and university administrators should be the capabilities and role these staff play in making sure that student learning occurs and that graduates are employable. The focus should not be in simply generating persistence and graduation rates; instead, the emphasis should be on maximizing student-learning opportunities.

University of Southern Queensland
Queensland, QLD, Australia

Fernando F. Padró

References

- ACPA College Student Educators International, and NASPA. 2015. *Professional competency areas for Student Affairs educators*. Washington, DC: Authors. Retrieved from https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA_NASPA_Professional_Competencies_FINAL.pdf
- Balkin, J.M. 1990. The Hohfeldian approach to law and semiotics. *University of Miami Law Review* 44 (5): 1119–1142.
- Banks, S. 2010. Integrity in professional life: Issues of conduct, commitment and capacity. *British Journal of Social Work* 40: 2168–2184.
- Bath, D., and C. Smith. 2004. Academic developers: An academic tribe claiming their territory in higher education. *International Journal for Academic Development* 9 (1): 9–27.
- Bentham, J. 1988/1780. *The principles of morals and legislation*. New York: Prometheus Books.

- Bexley, E., R. James, and S. Arkoudis. 2011. *The Australian academic profession in transition: Addressing the challenge of reconceptualising academic work and regenerating the academic workforce*. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education, The University of Melbourne. Retrieved from https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1490923/The_Academic_Profession_in_Transition_Sept2011.pdf
- Bhabha, H.K. 1994. *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Boud, D. 1999. Situating academic development in professional work: Using peer learning. *International Journal for Academic Development* 4: 3–10.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., and P.A. Morris. 2006. The bioecological model of human development. In *Handbook of child psychology*, ed. W. Damon and R.M. Lerner, 6th ed., 793–828. Hoboken: Wiley.
- Brown, V. 2005. Rights, liberties and duties: Reformulating Hohfeld’s Scheme of Legal Relations? *Current Legal Problems* 58: 343–367.
- Carpenter, S., and M.T. Stimpson. 2007. Professionalism, scholarly practice, and professional development in Student Affairs. *NASPA Journal* 44 (2): 265–284.
- Coaldrake, P., and L. Stedman. 2016. *Raising the stakes: Gambling with the future of universities*. 2nd ed. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Creamer, D.G., R.B. Winston Jr., and T.K. Miller. 2001. The professional student affairs administrator: Roles and functions. In *The professional student affairs administrator: Educator, leader, and manager*, ed. R.B. Winston Jr., D.G. Creamer, and T.K. Miller, 3–38. New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- d’Almeida, L.D. 2016. Fundamental legal concepts: The Hohfeldian framework. *Philosophy Compass* 11 (10): 554–569.
- Desroches, D.M., and R. Kirshstein. 2014. *Labor intensive or labor expensive? Changing staffing and compensation patterns in higher education. Delta Cost Project Issue Brief*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from https://deltacostproject.org/sites/default/files/products/DeltaCostAIR_Staffing_Brief_2_3_14.pdf
- Dewey, J. 1938. *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Di Napoli, R., H. Fry, M. Frenay, P. Verhesschen, and A. Verburch. 2010. Academic development and educational developers: Perspectives from different European higher education contexts. *International Journal for Academic Development* 15 (1): 7–18.
- Donoghue, F. 2008. *The last professors: The twilight of the humanities in the corporate university*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Dworkin, R. 1986. *Law’s empire*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Edgar, A., and S. Pattison. 2011. Integrity and the moral complexity of professional practice. *Nursing Philosophy* 12: 94–106.
- Eriksen, A. 2015. What is professional integrity? *Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics* 9 (2): 3–17.
- Etzioni, A. 1969. *The semi-professions and their organization: Teachers, nurses, social workers*. New York: Free Press.
- Evans, L. 2008. Professionalism, professionalism and the development of education professionals. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 56 (1): 20–38.

- Evetts, J. 2006. Introduction: Trust and professionalism: Challenges and occupational changes. *Current Sociology* 54: 515–531.
- Flexner, A. 1930. *Universities: American, English, German*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Forsyth, P.B., and T.J. Danisiewicz. 1985. Toward a theory of professionalization. *Work and Occupations* 12 (1): 59–76.
- Fraser, K. 2001. Australasian academic developers' conceptions of the profession. *International Journal for Academic Development* 6 (1): 54–64.
- French, J.R.P., and B. Raven. 1959. The bases of social power. In *Studies in social power*, ed. D. Cartwright, 150–167. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Ginsberg, B. 2011. *The fall of the faculty: The rise of the all-administrative university and why it matters*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Giroux, H.A. 2002. Neoliberalism, corporate culture, and the promise of higher education: The university as a democratic public sphere. *Harvard Educational Review* 72 (4): 425–463.
- Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Gutiérrez, K.D., P. Baquedano-López, and C. Tejada. 1999. Rethinking diversity: Hybridity and hybrid language practices in the third space. *Mind, Culture and Activity* 6 (4): 286–303.
- Hicks, M. 2007. *Positioning the professional practice of academic development: An institutional case study*. Unpublished dissertation. Adelaide: University of South Australia.
- Hoebel, E.A. 1942. Fundamental legal concepts as applied in the study of primitive law. *Yale Law Journal* 51 (6): 951–966.
- Hohfeld, W.N. 1913. Some fundamental legal conceptions as applied in judicial reasoning. *Yale Law Journal* 23: 16–59.
- Hoyle, E. 1982. The professionalization of teachers: A paradox. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 30 (2): 161–171.
- Kai, J. 2009. A critical analysis of accountability in higher education. *Chinese Education & Society* 42 (2): 39–51.
- Kipfer, S. 2008. How Lefebvre urbanized Gramsci: Hegemony, everyday life, and difference. In *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, and C. Schmid, 193–211. New York: Routledge.
- Knox, J. 2017. Data power in education: Exploring critical awareness with the “Learning Analytics Report Card”. *Television & New Media* 18 (8): 734–752.
- Kocourek, A. 1920. The Hohfeld system of fundamental legal concepts. *Illinois Law Review* 15 (1): 24–39.
- Künzler, J. 1990. Interpenetration bei Parsons und Luhmann. Von der Integration zur Produktion von Unordnung. *System Familie* 3: 157–171.
- Lave, J., and E. Wenger. 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lazarev, N. 2005. Hohfeld's analysis of rights: An essential approach to a conceptual and practical understanding of the nature of rights. *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*, 12(1). Retrieved from <http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/MurUEJL/2005/9.html>
- Lefebvre, H. 1984/1974. *The production of space*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Leydesdorff, L. 2008. The communication of meaning in anticipatory systems: A simulation study of the dynamics of intentionality in social interactions. In *Proceedings of the 8th international conference on computing anticipatory systems CASYS'07*, Liège, Belgium, 6–11 August 2007, ed. D.M. DuBois, 33–49. Melville: American Institute of Physics Conference Proceedings, Vol. 1051.
- Lindahl, L., and D. Reidhav. 2017. Legal power: The basic definition. *Ratio Juris* 30 (2): 158–185.
- Lindahl, L. 1977. *Position and change: A study in law and logic*. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- Luhmann, N. 1995. *Social systems*. Trans. J. Bednarz, Jr., and D. Baecker. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Manathunga, C. 2007. “Unhomely” academic developer identities: More post-colonial explorations. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (1): 25–34.
- Manning, K., J. Kinzie, and J. Schuh. 2006. *One size does not fit all: Traditional and innovative models of student affairs practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Massy, W.F. 2016. *Reengineering the university: How to be mission centered, market smart, and margin conscious*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Miles, R.E., and C.C. Snow. 1978. *Organizational strategy, structure, and process*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- OECD. 2017. *Education at a glance 2017: OECD indicators*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Padró, F.F., and J.H. Green. in press. TQM's impact on the legal apparatus: Informing and directing compliance practices. In *Education and the law: Considering the legal context of schools*, ed. K. Trimmer, R. Dixon, and Y. Findlay. Dordrecht: Springer International Publishing AG.
- Padró, F.F., and M.F. Hawke. 2003. A perceptual model of organization behavior. *National Social Sciences Journal* 19 (2): 102–112.
- Padró, F.F., M.F. Hawke, and L.M. Hawke. 2002. The dual nature of Professional Service Providers in education. *National Social Sciences Journal* 19 (1): 97–107.
- Pinheiro, R., and B. Stensaker. 2014. Designing the entrepreneurial university: The interpretation of a global idea. *Public Organization Review* 14: 497–516.
- Poritz, J.A., and J. Rees. 2017. Academic governance on the virtual shop floor. *Academe* 103 (3): 20–24.
- Press, N.I. 2018. *Educating for a profession: A phenomenological case study of professional practice preparation for the Nursing discipline from a sociocultural perspective*. Unpublished dissertation. Toowoomba: University of Southern Queensland.

- Quinn, L., and J.-A. Vorster. 2014. Isn't it time to start thinking about 'developing' academic developers in a more systematic way? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (3): 255–258.
- Reason, R.D., and E.M. Broido. 2016. Philosophies and values. In *Student services: A handbook for the profession*, ed. J.H. Schuh, S.R. Jones, and V. Torres, 6th ed., 39–55. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rhoades, G., and S. Slaughter. 2004. Academic capitalism in the new economy: Challenges and choices. *American Academic* 1 (1): 37–59.
- Rhoades, G., and B. Stensaker. 2017. Bringing organisations and systems back together: Extending Clark's entrepreneurial university. *Higher Education Quarterly* 71 (2): 129–140.
- Ronneberger, K. 2008. Henri Lefebvre and urban everyday life: In search of the possible. Trans. S. Kipfer and N. Brenner. In *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, and C. Schmid, 134–146. New York: Routledge.
- Saks, M. 2012. Defining a profession: The role of knowledge and expertise. *Professions & Professionalism* 2 (1): 1–10.
- Saks, M. 2015. Inequalities, marginality and the professions. *Current Sociology Review* 63 (6): 850–868.
- Schmid, C. 2008. Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space: Towards a three-dimensional dialectic. Trans. K. Goonewardena. In *Space, difference, everyday life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. K. Goonewardena, S. Kipfer, R. Milgrom, and C. Schmid, 27–45. New York: Routledge.
- Schwier, R.A., K. Campbell, and R. Kenny. 2006. Instructional designers' perception of their agency: Tales of change and community. In *Instructional design: Case studies in communities of practice*, ed. M.J. Keppell, 1–18. Hershey: Information Science Publishing.
- Sen, A. 2003. Development as capability expansion. In *Readings in human development*, ed. S. Fukuda-Parr and A.K. Kumar, 41–58. New Dehli: Oxford University Press.
- Singer, J.W. 1983. The legal rights debate in analytical jurisprudence from Bentham to Hohfeld. *Wisconsin Law Review* 1982: 975–1059.
- Spaak, T. 2003. Norms that confer competence. *Ratio Juris* 16 (1): 89–104.
- Sursock, A., H. Smidt, H. Davies, J. Korhonen, G. Madill, and L. Wilson. 2010. *Trends 2010: Trends 2010: A decade of change in European higher education*. Brussels: European University Association. Retrieved from http://www.aic.lv/bolona/2010/ministerial/EUA_Trends_2010.pdf
- UNESCO. 2002. *The role of student affairs and services in higher education: A practical manual for developing, implementing and assessing student affairs programmes and services*. Paris: Author. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001281/128118e.pdf>
- Vanderstraeten, R. 2002. Parsons, Luhmann and the Theorem of Double Contingency. *Journal of Classical Sociology* 2 (1): 77–92.
- Veblen, T. 1918. *The higher learning in America: A memorandum on the conduct of universities by business men*. New York: B.W. Huebsch.

- von Bertalanffy, L. 1968. *General systems theory: Foundations, development, applications*. New York: George Braziller.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008a. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of *Third Space* professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008b. *Professional managers in UK higher education: Preparing for complex futures. Final report*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/publications/research.html>
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the *blended professional* in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58: 407–418.
- Whitchurch, C. 2012. Expanding the parameters of academia. *Higher Education* 64: 99–117.
- Whitchurch, C., and G. Gordon. 2013. Reconciling flexible staffing models with inclusive governance and management. *Higher Education Quarterly* 67 (3): 234–255.
- Williamson, E.G., et al. 1949. *The student personnel point of view. Series VI – Student Personnel Work – Number 13, Volume 13*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education Studies.
- Witting, C. 2007. Tort law, policy and the High Court of Australia. *Melbourne University Law Review* 31: 569–590.

Acknowledgments

There are many people to thank for helping to bring a comprehensive book project such as this one to completion. Firstly, we would like to thank the authors of this book. The 29 chapters of this unique volume, including the introductory chapters, have been written by some of the leading scholars, experts, and practitioners involved in professional and support staff in higher education today. We also had the privilege to work with some very exceptional first time scholarly writers. With each chapter going through several rounds of extended and collaborative peer review, we got to know most of the authors well. We feel quite fortunate that all the authors were open to our suggested edits, modifying their contributions when needed, but also providing a rationale for maintaining what they believed was relevant. We have enjoyed working with each of them and learning about their experiences, research, projects, personal encounters, and reflections.

Secondly, we wish to express our gratitude to Vanessa Warren, who started as our Publication Officer, but soon became a key support for us on so many fronts during the course of this book. Vanessa's professionalism, consistency, creativity, and thoughtfulness were essential to the completion of this book.

Thank you also to Audrey Wong and Monika Garg, and the highly professional team at Springer Nature. They have provided helpful guidance and help throughout this long journey and made the completion of this large project possible. We also would like to thank our colleagues who contributed to this volume as reviewers. Their valuable feedback and recommendations were much appreciated.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our wonderful families who have continuously supported our work – without such support, the completion of such large project would not be possible.

Contents

1 Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education: An Introduction	1
Carina Bossu, Natalie Brown, and Vanessa Warren	
Part I Identities and Third Space	9
2 Being a Higher Education Professional Today: Working in a Third Space	11
Celia Whitchurch	
3 Academic Development: A Space, But Is It an Identity?	23
Stephen Linquist	
4 Crossing Divides: Professional Development for Third Space Professionals	39
Vivien Silvey, Lacy Pejcinovic, and Tess Snowball	
5 Role of Educational Developers in Aligning Diverse Learning and Teaching Styles in a Transnational University in China	55
Dawn Johnson, James Wilson, Jianmei Xie, and Henk Huijser	
6 Role of Educational Designers in Higher Education Institutions	71
Donna Bisset	
7 Crossing Boundaries: Projects, Discourses, and Visibility in the Third Space	91
Meaghan Botterill	
8 Intersecting Work Practices: Design Work Practices in a Large-Scale Strategic Project	109
Rhonda Hallett	

Part II Concepts, Practice, and Representation 127

9 Responding to a Changing Higher Education Sector: The Role of Professional and Support Staff 129
 Natalie Brown, Carina Bossu, and Brian Denman

10 Employing Students as Support Staff in Higher Education: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations from Careers Professionals 139
 Sally Fuglsang, Kristin Warr Pedersen, Jane Skalicky, and Julie Preston

11 Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education: Data and Decisions 155
 Jonathan Laskovsky and Jonathan O’Donnell

12 Role of Australian Indigenous Support Staff in Higher Education 173
 Clair Andersen

13 In Pursuit of Nontext Excellence: Reflections on Navigating the Multiple Literacies and Vernaculars of Higher Education Work 191
 Trish McCluskey and Peter Lane

14 Virtual Central Support Unit Approach to Organizational Support and Staff Development 209
 Jonathan Flutey, Beth Smith, and Stephen Marshall

Part III Leadership and Collaboration 227

15 Blended Leadership: From Conceptualization to Practice 229
 Sandra Jones

16 Faculty Managers: A Constantly Changing Role 243
 Judy Szekeres and Tony Heywood

17 Connecting the Dots for Professional Practice in Higher Education: Leadership, Energy Management, and Motivation ... 261
 Heather Davis

18 Professional Staff, Professional Recognition: Bringing Learner Support Staff into the Fellowship of University Educators 277
 Elizabeth A. Beckmann

19 Pedagogical Partnerships: Collaborations for Positive Student Outcomes 293
 Carroll Graham

20 Building a Successful Partnership Between Professional Staff and Academics to Improve Student Employability 313
 Julia Hobson, Suzanne Knuiman, Alexandra Haaxman, and Jane Foster

21 The Role of Professional Staff in Assessing Students: A Case Study of the Objective Structured Clinical Exam 327
 Darci Taylor

Part IV Career Development and Progress **345**

22 Career Progression and Development of Professional Staff in Higher Education 347
 Carina Bossu, Natalie Brown, and Vanessa Warren

23 Careers of Professional Staff in Higher Education: Theory and Practical Implications 357
 Michelle Gander

24 Foundations of a Developmental Framework for Professional Staff in Higher Education 373
 Rania Sanford

25 Querying the P(hD)ath to Educational Development in Higher Education 389
 Sophia Abbot and Emily O. Gravett

26 Creating an Intentional Career Path: The Journey from Graduate Teaching Associate to Educational Developer 405
 Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, Jill Marie McSweeney, and Susan Joudrey

27 Professionalizing the Learning Support Role: A UK Higher Education Experience 423
 André van der Westhuizen, Phil Verrill, Simon Gamble, and Anna Limpens

28 Retirement of Professional Staff in Higher Education: A Three-Phase Transition Model 439
 Seth Matthew Fishman

29 Future Considerations for Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education 455
 Carina Bossu, Natalie Brown, and Vanessa Warren

Index 463

About the Series Editor



Dr. Fernando F. Padró has a double major doctorate in the areas of academic administration and curriculum and instruction. After having served as Associate Professor in the Doctoral Program and Interim Director of Educational Leadership at Cambridge College, he is currently a Senior Lecturer (Quality) at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). In addition, he is currently on Australia's Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency's (TEQSA) Registry of Experts (2013–2016), is Chair of the American Society for Quality (ASQ – 2013 through 2014), Editor of the e-journal *Quality Approaches in Higher Education* (ASQ Education Division), a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education's (INQAAHE) Best Practice QA Review Team, member of the International Standards Organization (ISO) ISO/TC 176 Working Group, member of the Editorial Board of *The TQM Journal* (Emerald), and reviewer for the *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence* Journal (Routledge).

About the Editors



Dr. Carina Bossu

University of Tasmania
Hobart, TAS, Australia

Dr. Carina Bossu is a Lecturer in Learning and Teaching at the University of Tasmania. Having graduated from her Ph.D. in 2010, which investigated higher and distance education, in particular policies and staff development practices to support distance educators, Carina's academic career has been largely devoted to advocating and researching open educational practices (OEP) to enhance learning and teaching in higher and distance education. Prior to UTAS, she was a Research Fellow with Distance Education Hub (DEHub) at the University of New England, Australia. In the past 15 years, Carina has worked in several capacities within higher education in Australia and in Brazil, her home country. In 2013, Routledge Education awarded Carina the New Researcher "One to Watch," and in 2016 she has been awarded an Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE) Fellow for her contribution to research, and learning and teaching in OEP in Australian higher education. Carina's research interests include professional staff development, higher and distance education, educational change, and policy development.



Professor Natalie Brown

University of Tasmania
Hobart, TAS, Australia

Professor Natalie Brown is the Director of the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, at the University of Tasmania. Prior to this appointment, Natalie held the position of Director of Academic

Quality and the Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching at the University of Tasmania. A former teacher of secondary mathematics and science, Natalie's academic career began with a Ph.D. in Plant Science and research work in Agricultural Science. She was appointed to the Faculty of Education as a Lecturer in Science Education in 2001 and later became Program Director of the postgraduate Bachelor of Teaching course prior to moving to the central Academic Development Unit in 2008. Throughout this time, Natalie continued to teach in both the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology, as well as supervise research higher degree students. Natalie has been the recipient of a number of teaching awards, culminating in a National Teaching Excellence award in 2013. Natalie's research interests encompass student engagement, professional learning, STEM education, higher education learning, teaching, curriculum and assessment, and technology enhanced learning and teaching.

Contributors

Sophia Abbot Trinity University, San Antonio, TX, USA

Clair Andersen University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
Division of Students and Education, Curriculum and Quality, TILT, UTAS, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Elizabeth A. Beckmann The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Donna Bisset La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Carina Bossu University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Meaghan Botterill RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Natalie Brown University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Heather Davis LH Martin Institute for Tertiary Education Leadership and Management, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Brian Denman University of New England, Armidale, NSW, Australia

Seth Matthew Fishman Villanova University, Villanova, PA, USA

Jonathan Flutey Victoria University of Wellington, Information Technology Services, Wellington, New Zealand

Jane Foster Careers and Employment Centre, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

Sally Fuglsang University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Simon Gamble University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK

Michelle Gander School of Business and Governance, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

Carroll Graham University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

Emily O. Gravett James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, USA

Alexandra Haaxman Careers and Employment Centre, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

Rhonda Hallett La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Tony Heywood Faculty of Health, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Julia Hobson Centre for University Teaching and Learning, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

Henk Huijser Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, QLD, Australia

Dawn Johnson Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China

Sandra Jones School of Management, RMIT, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Susan Joudrey Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

Suzanne Knuiman Careers and Employment Centre, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

Peter Lane Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, Australia

Jonathan Laskovsky RMIT University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Anna Limpens University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK

Stephen Linquist University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Stephen Marshall Victoria University of Wellington, Centre for Academic Development, Wellington, New Zealand

Trish McCluskey Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, Australia

Jill Marie McSweeney Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

Jonathan O'Donnell RMIT University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

Kristin Warr Pedersen University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Lacy Pejcinovic Academic Skills and Learning Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Julie Preston University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Rania Sanford Stanford University, Stanford, USA

Suzanne Le-May Sheffield Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

Vivien Silvey Academic Skills and Learning Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Jane Skalicky University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Beth Smith Victoria University of Wellington, Information Technology Services, Wellington, New Zealand

Tess Snowball Academic Skills and Learning Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Judy Szekeres DVE Business Solutions, Adelaide, Australia

Darci Taylor Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, Australia

André van der Westhuizen University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK

Phil Verrill University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK

Vanessa Warren University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Celia Whitchurch University College London, London, UK

James Wilson Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China

Jianmei Xie Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China



Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education: An Introduction

1

Carina Bossu, Natalie Brown, and Vanessa Warren

Contents

Introduction	2
Defining Professional and Support Staff	3
Purpose and Aims of the Book	5
Audience and Stakeholders	5
The Structure of the Book	6
Conclusion	7
References	8

Abstract

This chapter offers readers a rationale and an introduction to *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*. It provides the definition of professional and support staff in higher education used as the basis for discussion in the book, presents the book's purpose and aims, and explores the potential audience and stakeholders that will be addressed by the chapters that follow. Lastly, we present an overview of the structure of the book and the key themes explored.

Keywords

Introduction · Professional staff · Professional staff in higher education · Support staff · Higher education

C. Bossu (✉) · N. Brown · V. Warren
University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
e-mail: carina.bossu@utas.edu.au; natalie.brown@utas.edu.au; vanessa.warren@utas.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_29

1

Introduction

Professions present themselves as providing a social benefit to society. Consequently, it is an expectation of society that the professions contribute to the accomplishment of important social goals (Saks 2012). Discussion and debate about the meaning of what a profession is, and what professionalism entails, have varied over the years and continue to do so. To further add to the complexity, some professions face regulatory compliance issues in the form of licensure or other state-defined requirement(s) to denote the state's interest in assuring the public of the practitioner's qualifications and experience as a safeguard to the common public interest (Adams 2016). Given the attention paid to professionals and the elements of professionalism, designation of a person as professional carries with it an expectation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions gained through formal education and experience.

There are different routes toward preparing well-qualified professionals through tertiary education. These routes are largely determined by decisions academics make regarding content, curriculum alignment, in-class and out-of-class learning experiences, pedagogical techniques, integration of research with practice, and accrediting bodies requirements and approaches toward the profession (Adams 2016). Institutions of higher education play a pivotal role in building national – and sometimes influencing international – workforces and the professionalization of these. Higher education institutions themselves have a varied workforce that includes a diverse range of professionals who perform a multitude of tasks (PwC and AHEIA 2016). In the last three decades or so, changes in the higher education landscape around the world have impacted on the staff workforce and the nature of their work. In particular there has been a change in composition of higher education staff cohorts to include a greater number and more varied skill set of professional staff in addition to staff employed on academic awards (Graham 2012). These changes have been impacted by increased government pressures through reduced funding and increases in accountability, increased number of students participating in higher education, the advancement of technology that enhances learning and teaching, increased expectations for innovative and work-ready graduates, increased demands of accreditation and professional bodies, and the list goes on (Graham 2012; Szekeres 2011; Whitchurch 2009). The above pressures also reflect the fact that recently universities have been managed much more as corporate organizations. Currently, changes within the higher education landscape occur continuously and at accelerating rates, “and higher education institutions will need to develop and nurture the capacities of their staff if they are to adapt successfully to change” (Graham 2009, p. 175).

This shift in the higher education sector has impacted on the role of professional and support staff, as they transitioned “from a workforce of low-level clerical workers, to higher-level professionals” (Szekeres 2011, p. 680). In fact, since 1995, the Australian higher education sector, for example, has experienced a decline in clerical worker numbers, Higher Education Worker (HEW) levels 1–5, and a raise in levels 6–9, which are more specialized and skilled levels, such as middle manager staff (Szekeres 2011). According to Szekeres (2011), this might be due to advancement in technology which has facilitated or even totally eliminated certain tasks, and

also due to many of the jobs performed by levels 1–5 being “outsourced, particularly in areas like facilities management” (p. 681). Since then, professional staff HEW levels 6–9 have continued to grow to reflect and meet the sector’s needs (Szekeres 2011). As a consequence, professional and support staff represent a substantial proportion of institutions’ budget in Australia, with an average total operating expenditure of approximately 26% across the sector. Professional and support staff also outnumber academic staff, representing an average of 57% of total university employees (Norton and Cakitaki 2016).

Professional and support staff are one of the universities’ most valuable assets, as they “hold much of the systemic knowledge, intellectual capital, required to ensure the functioning of the university” (Graham 2012, p. 439). In addition, the increasing professionalization and qualification of university professional staff has impacted on the roles they currently perform, as more professionals now occupy senior executive positions within universities; positions that were previously occupied by senior academics (Szekeres 2011). Also, the boundaries between some professional and academic roles have blurred, creating a subcategory: “the para-academic – staff who specialise in one aspect of academic practice” (Graham 2012, p. 439; Macfarlane 2011). Given the contribution professional and support staff make and the increasing importance of the roles they perform within their institution and to the society as a whole, it is surprising that their work, careers, aspirations, conditions, and support remain largely unexplored in the literature and research. We believe that this book will make a substantial contribution to this body of knowledge and assist in shedding some light on the current state of play around the issues related to professional and support staff in higher education globally.

This co-edited book, *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*, has been conceived to explore the issues and experiences of professional and support staff across the higher education sector. It explores a definition of professional and support staff in higher education applied by the co-editors to guide discussion in this book and offers readers an overview of the key elements of this book, its purpose and aims, and the potential audience of this book. Finally, the structure of the book is presented.

Defining Professional and Support Staff

In the past decade or so, many experts have attempted to define the large and diverse cohort of nonacademic staff working in higher education. Common terms used by experts, universities, government bodies and the media have included “non-academic staff, general staff, administrative staff, support staff to name a few” (Graham 2012, p. 438).

In Australian universities, staff are employed under one of two main awards; academic or professional. The term ‘professional staff’ was recently established in Australia in 2011, by the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM), through a sector-wide consultation process (Graham 2012). The professional award, encompasses a range of roles, from high level managerial and leadership positions, administrative functions, support for students (including counsellors), support for

teaching, librarians, laboratory staff, IT and infrastructure roles (Szekeres 2011). There is no distinction in the award itself for roles that have direct responsibilities in supporting students and academics, as opposed to those that could be viewed as more ‘back of house’.

In the UK and South Africa, the term ‘support staff’ has been adopted to be more inclusive of those university employees that were not engaged as academics or teaching staff. This term was further expanded in the Dearing (1997) report to cover ‘administrative and support staff’, not distinguishing particular categories that contributed to this group (Gornall 2010). In essence, mirroring the professional staff classification of Australian universities.

The term ‘administrative and support staff’ is also used in the US, to identify these roles as supporting faculty in delivering their programs. However, there are a complex array of role classifications within the US context that relate to various awards under which staff are employed. This includes separation of professional staff as managerial positions, and those directly involved in the administrative functions of the university, from support staff, who are more directly involved in supporting academics. This is further complicated by other jurisdictions who use the term ‘professional academic staff’ to denote members of professional organisation who may teach into a program (in other contexts these people may be referred to as clinical staff, or adjunct/visiting staff).

It is worth noting that both the presence and absence of such support roles has received attention in the literature. Drawing on experiences from the higher education sector in Mexico, Galaz-Fontes, Padilla- Gonzalez, and Gil-Anton (2007) have noted tensions when academics are called upon to perform functions that would cross into the work of other educational professionals (counsellors, learning centre professionals etc.), rather than employing supporting staff. In other contexts, critique of roles that were traditionally academic in nature (e.g. curriculum design) being performed by professional staff (amongst other reasons, for flexibility) points to a ‘breakdown of the traditional teaching/research nexus’ (Kogan and Teichler 2007, p.11). This latter point is further exacerbated by a faster growth rate in professional and support staff across a number of sectors, including the UK, Finland and Norway (Kogan 2007). Another way of distinguishing between roles taken on by these staff can be where the staff member is located, either within a Faculty or academic organisation unit or within a central administrative unit, rather than the role alone. Where there is some nuance between the terms, support staff would be those more directed to direct, front-acting roles with students or academics/faculty to support the academic endeavour. That is, those who are more directly involved in the delivery of university programs, particularly learning and teaching – rather than more behind the scenes administration (https://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/r4_193.htm). This definition is given with due recognition that the boundaries between actual roles of administrators, support staff and academics are increasingly blurred in the modern university. At the end of the day, the distinction may well be one that is primarily through the award under which one has been employed. The difficulty in classifying and the intersection between these roles and what have been traditionally viewed as academic functions, is explored through this volume.

Despite recognising that there might be contextual differences between the use of the terms professional and support, for the purpose of this book, except otherwise specified within individual chapters, the terms professional and support staff are used interchangeably and represent all staff who are supporting the university endeavour in roles outside the classification of academics (who are employed with direct responsibility for teaching and/or research).

Purpose and Aims of the Book

The primary purpose of this book is to expand and contribute to the limited body of knowledge regarding professional and support staff in higher education, by presenting and exploring key issues facing these professionals today. Another purpose of this book is to provide insights into a variety of roles professional staff perform within their institution currently and ultimately provide these professionals a voice. In addition to bringing scholars and experts in the field together, in developing this volume, we aimed to give professional and support staff the opportunity to engage in scholarly writing to present their own experiences and stories on their own terms, unmediated by the lenses, biases, concerns, and motivations of secondary actors.

To achieve this, an open call for abstracts was put out across multiple local and international channels (such as professional organizations, listservs, formal and informal professional networks) for contributions from practitioners, researchers, and academics concerned with professional and support staff in higher education. Contributions in a range of forms (including case studies, empirical research, analyses, literature reviews, and reflective pieces) and topics (ranging from global trends to specific issues and practices) were encouraged, rather than directed by the editors. This was a deliberate choice, to allow the organic emergence of themes and concerns within the broad scope of this volume. The risk of such a strategy is that the responses may then be limited to those from authors with access to the chosen recruitment mediums; this process has left gaps (geographic, cultural, institutional, and professional) in the book that a more targeted approach to recruiting authors may have filled. Acknowledging these gaps, we believe that this volume does provide readers with a rich and diverse range of case studies and analyses that contribute to our understanding of many of the issues and interests of professional and support staff in higher education today.

Audience and Stakeholders

While the book is mostly focused on professional and support staff in higher education, the topics explored here could be also relevant to many different groups of stakeholders and applicable to professional staff in a range of educational settings, as well as in industry. In addition, this book could also be of interest to researchers in related fields, doctoral students and their supervisors, research departments, academic libraries, and institutions in several different countries. Furthermore, issues

addressed here could be of particular importance to those associated with managing and preparing higher education professionals, as well as to those in senior management positions, policy-makers, and related government agencies. It will be of significance to academic faculty and higher education training professionals who are interested in enriching their teaching and students' learning experiences within their disciplines. It could also be beneficial to those involved in institutional quality enhancement related to the professions, such as curriculum developers, accrediting bodies and policy-makers. Finally, we hope that the examples explored in the book are insightful and meaningful and that it sheds light on professional staff experiences in higher education globally, so they can be better supported and continue contributing to institutional, and most importantly, to students' success.

The Structure of the Book

This book is part of a multivolume series titled *University Development and Administration Handbook*, which addresses a range of international concerns regarding higher education today. This particular volume is focused on a variety of issues, concerns, and experiences facing professional and support staff in higher education globally. These are explored by the authors of the 29 chapters included in this book. The chapters were peer reviewed and then thematically grouped into four main sections under the headings of *Identities and Third Space*; *Concepts, Practice, and Representation*; *Leadership and Collaboration*; and *Career Development and Progression*. Each section has an introductory chapter that was written by experts in the related field. These introductory chapters provide not only an overview of the whole section, but they also make their individual contribution to the theme being explored. The book sections are briefly discussed next.

The first section, *Identities and Third Space*, includes chapters that address issues related to the professional identities of support staff and their changing roles within their institutions. These chapters also reflect on issues that have emerged with the rise of “blended professionals” (Whitchurch 2009, p. 408). In her introductory chapter, Whitchurch examines some of the key themes that arise in the chapters of this section. She also summarises key characteristics of the contemporary professional workforce in higher education and identifies key evolving individual and collective trends and factors impacting on the roles and identities of professional and support staff (Whitchurch 2018). After introducing a range of perspectives, she then explores current thinking regarding the meaning of being a professional and support staff in higher education today, including the unclear boundaries between their roles and identities with academic roles, and insights on how such professionals are successfully conquering other domains (Whitchurch 2018).

Section 2 explores issues related to *Concepts, Practice, and Representation* in higher education: concepts of organizational change, best practice in the use of data and learning technologies, and the inclusion and support of students and underrepresented groups. The introductory chapter of this section discusses some of the current issues driving change in higher education around the world and the impact

of these changes on professional and support staff. The authors, Brown, Bossu, and Denman, also identify approaches that should be considered to further support professional and support staff, so that they can cope with and respond to the fast pace of the current higher education landscape.

The third section, *Leadership and Collaboration*, contains chapters addressing a range of case studies and empirical work from authors in several international contexts. In the introductory chapter for this section, Jones first examines the current empirical work on leadership in higher education that explores key possibilities to build collaboration between professional and academics staff, in particular how leadership for collaboration can be encouraged and supported to better assist the work of professional and academic staff. Jones then explores the concept of “blended leadership” and uses this concept to discuss the chapters that follow. The value of a distributed leadership approach is identified as a powerful tool to building leadership capacity, as well as to promote further collaboration between professional, support and academic staff.

The final section of this book explores the *Career Development and Progress* of professional and support staff in higher education. The chapters in this section cover issues related to career progression, professional development, capacity building, professionalization, different career paths, and retirement. The chapter introducing this section explores some of the unique issues and opportunities for career progression and development of professional and support staff in higher education. The authors, Bossu, Brown, and Warren, briefly discuss the limited existing literature in this space and present some of the emergent trends and findings in recent publications regarding professional staff career development and progression. The authors then summarize the section’s chapters, situating them within a scholarly context, providing a critical exploration of their contributions to the field, and identifying some of their implications for higher education institutions around the world today.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief introduction to the co-edited book *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*. It also presented a range of definitions for professional and support staff in higher education used globally, as well as provided insights about the aims of the book, its potential audience and how it is structured. Twenty-nine chapters written by 51 exceptional authors compile the body of work in this volume.

We truly hope that readers find this book useful and insightful, that it enables greater and deeper insight among and between professional and support staff and their institutions, and that it does contribute meaningfully to the growing body of knowledge and scholarship regarding professional and support staff in higher education globally. We also hope that the book assists in raising awareness about the professions that are part of our educational institutions and the contribution they make not only to their organizations but to society as a whole.

References

- Adams, T.L. 2016. Professional self-regulation and the public interest in Canada. 6 (3). <https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.1587>.
- Dearing, R. 1997. Higher Education in the learning society. National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. Norwich England.
- Galaz-Fontes, J., Padilla-Gonzalez, L., and Gil-Anton, M. 2007. The increasing expectation of relevance for Higher Education and the academic profession: Some reflections on the case of Mexico. In: Kogan, M. and Teichler, U. (Eds.). Key challenges in the Academic Profession. UNESCO Forum on Higher Education Research and Knowledge. International Centre of Higher Education Research Kassel. INCHER: Kassella, pp 49–64.
- Gornall, L. 2010. New professionals: Change and occupational roles in higher education, *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 3 (2), 44–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603109981847>.
- Graham, C. 2009. Investing in early career general staff. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 31 (2): 175–183.
- Graham, C. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (4): 437–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.696326>.
- Kogan, M. 2007. The academic profession and its interface with management. In: Kogan, M. and Teichler, U. (Eds.). Key challenges in the Academic Profession. UNESCO Forum on Higher Education Research and Knowledge. International Centre of Higher Education Research Kassel. INCHER: Kassella, pp 159–174.
- Kogan, M. and Teichler, U. 2007. Key Challenges to the academic profession and its interface with management: Some introductory thoughts. In: Kogan, M. and Teichler, U. (Eds.). Key challenges in the Academic Profession. UNESCO Forum on Higher Education Research and Knowledge. International Centre of Higher Education Research Kassel. INCHER: Kassella, p 11.
- Macfarlane, B. 2011. The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the para-academic. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65 (1): 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2010.00467.x>.
- Norton, A., and B. Cakitaki. 2016. Mapping Australian higher education 2016: Grattan Institute. Retrieved from <https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/875-Mapping-Australian-Higher-Education-2016.pdf>.
- PwC, and AHEIA. 2016. Australian higher education workforce of the future Report prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers Australia (PwC) and Australian Higher Education Industrial Association (AHEIA). Retrieved from https://www.aheia.edu.au/cms_uploads/docs/aheia-higher-education-workforce-of-the-future-report.pdf.
- Saks, M. (2012). Defining a profession: The role of knowledge and expertise. *Professions and Professionalism* 2 (1). <https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.v2i1.151>.
- Szekeres, J. 2011. Professional staff carve out a new space. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 679–691. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2011.621193>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9202-4>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2018. Being a higher education professional today: Working in a third space. In: Bossu, C. and Brown, N. (Eds.). Professional and support staff in higher education. University Development and Administration. Springer, Singapore.
- Whyley, C. and Callender, C. 1997. Administrative and support staff in higher education: their experiences and expectations. Report prepared by the Policy Studies Institute for the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. Norwich England.

Part I

Identities and Third Space



Being a Higher Education Professional Today: Working in a *Third Space*

2

Celia Whitchurch

Contents

Context	12
Being a Professional in Higher Education	13
The Development of <i>Third Space</i> Environments	17
Professional Development	18
Conclusion	19
References	20

Abstract

This section not only provides a snapshot of the contemporary professional workforce in higher education, but also aims to identify emergent trends and indicators in relation to roles and identities, collectively and individually. To introduce the range of perspectives that follow, this chapter reviews current thinking about what it means to be a professional in higher education today, including a converging relationship with academic roles and identities, and illustrates ways in which higher education professionals are pushing the boundaries of their domains. Key themes that emerge in the chapters that follow are the fluidity of identity, a sense of transition and “work-in-progress” as new fields of practice evolve, and issues around building confidence and recognition, particularly for staff working between professional and academic domains.

Keywords

Professional staff · *Third Space* · Professionalism · Professional development

C. Whitchurch (✉)
University College London, London, UK
e-mail: c.whitchurch@ucl.ac.uk

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_31

Context

As assumptions and expectations about institutional purposes have become less settled, working environments have become less contained, externally and internally. This has resulted from, for instance, increasing pressure on institutions to make a socio-economic, as well as an intellectual, contribution to society (Callender and Scott 2013; Krucken et al. 2013; Marginson 2013; UK Department for Business, Education and Skills 2016; Davis et al. 2016); the development of knowledge exchange as a critical activity for institutions in global market environments (Scott 1995; Etzkowitz 2008; Sharrock 2012; Temple 2012; Marginson 2016); and the loss of a monopoly for higher education institutions, and those within them, as knowledge providers (Sennett 2004; Cummings and Finkelstein 2012; Scott 2014). These developments have, in turn, affected approaches to teaching and learning, with a focus on widening participation, the student experience, and employability, all of which impact on the roles of education developers who are the focus of this section. Transnational education, as discussed in a later chapter by Johnson, Wilson et al., can also involve flying faculty from the home country teaching local students.

As a result of this extension of agendas and activities, there is evidence that the traditional ‘binary’ between academic and professional roles is breaking down and that formal employment categories no longer reflect reality. Moreover, terms such as ‘non-academic’ and “support” staff, implying that professional groups are an adjunct to ‘academic’ colleagues, have become contested (Szekeres 2011; Graham 2012; Sebalj et al. 2012; Whitchurch 2013). In turn, some academic staff may move, to a greater or lesser extent, into roles delivering current agendas such as widening participation and employability, while retaining teaching and research responsibilities. The two groups are likely not only to work side-by-side, but also to be integrated in mixed teams (Locke et al. 2016; Whitchurch and Gordon 2017). In educational development units, for instance, some individuals may have similar qualifications and roles but be distinguished by their formal contracts of employment. This is seen as anomalous in that those with professional contracts may have doctorates and be involved in producing pedagogic research and publications.

There is also evidence of pressure on both academic and professional staff to extend their portfolios, often in the interests of broadly based institutional projects that are market and community oriented, leaving less time for pure disciplinary or functionally oriented activity. Groups of “portfolio professionals” (Whitchurch 2013; Whitchurch and Gordon 2017) and “peripheral professionals” (Duncan 2014) have therefore emerged, who do not necessarily see a single, fixed career ladder. The inclination of younger individuals particularly would appear to be to extend their reach as far as possible rather than clinging to the boundaries of one professional area and closing off opportunities, although there may also come a time when they feel that they need to focus rather than broaden their expertise. This represents a key tension between keeping up-to-date with new developments in a specialist area, such as policy legislation or technical advances, and being receptive to opportunities and interests outside the immediate job description.

Examples of new roles that have been created around teaching and learning include:

- *Learning development and academic practice* in support of the student experience, such as tutoring, program design, study skills, and academic literacy.
- *Community partnership* to develop regional links and roles, such as civic and employer engagement, workplace learning, schools and further education relationships, outreach, campus visits, and family liaison.
- *Online learning* to meet demands for distance education and also mixed mode teaching, such as the design, development, and adaptation of web-based programs and the use of social media.

Being a Professional in Higher Education

“Ideal” forms of professionalism imply a relatively structured environment, to which clearly documented bodies of knowledge, procedures, and boundaries relate. These focus on “a cluster of qualities relating to a degree of personal and communal control over one’s work, where the work itself requires specialized expertise (and qualifications) to be used in the service of the community” (Duncan 2014). The concept derives from major professions such as medicine, usually centered round access to a predefined body of knowledge via an accreditation process by a self-regulating professional association. This exclusive knowledge base for professionals, and the legitimacy associated with it, is highlighted by Eraut (1994):

The power and status of professional workers depends to a significant extent on their claims to unique forms of expertise, which are not shared with other occupational groups, and the value placed on that expertise. (Eraut 1994, p. 15)

Upon qualification, and subject to ongoing checks by their peers, the professional has significant autonomy and discretion over this knowledge, which can be updated via reflexive and accredited development activity (Eraut 1994; Schon 1995). The concept also implies norms of behavior, and in consulting a professional, clients are expected to conform to certain conventions in which, for instance, the judgment of the professional is not subject to challenge (Eraut 1994, p. 5).

Classic accounts of being a professional generally have five main tenets:

- A predefined body of knowledge
- A professional body which acts as gatekeeper
- Qualifications as an accreditation mechanism
- Adherence to professional codes
- Accredited programs of updating
- Professional autonomy

However, this notion of professionalism implies a controlled, provider-led environment, with boundaries that clearly separate those who belong to the professional

group from those who do not. Nevertheless, it continues to influence groups of workers who seek to legitimize, or re-legitimize, their position in their occupational sector.

New dimensions to professionalism have been picked up in the wider literature, particularly in relation to the creation of a more market- and customer-oriented environment in the public sector. Friedson (2001, p. 12) differentiates between “bureaucracy,” where the autonomy of professionals is tempered by the state or organization, and the “market” where the dominant influence is that of the consumer. Professional staff in higher education might be said to have moved from a situation where they are not only responding to bureaucratic requirements, such as accountability regimes and institutional regulatory processes, but also to the needs of the student as customer, for instance, via the creation of student service centers and attention to the student experience as a whole. However, there are indications that they are doing more than this, in making their own, more active contribution to their institutions, for instance, by initiating developments such as learning support and study skills. In this context, Kallenberg (2016) sees a distinctive role for educational administrators as requiring different types of knowledge:

A distinction can be made between two types of support, namely pure administrative tasks (human resources; finance and control computerisation and automation, marketing and communication, facility management, legal affairs) and sector-specific tasks (educational and research support). (Kallenberg 2016, p. 181)

He goes on to suggest that educational administrators, with their dedicated sector-specific knowledge, could be referred to as a “fourth power” alongside specialist professionals, academic managers, and “third space” professionals. However, in the context of the chapters that follow, there is likely to be an overlap between, for instance, student support, program design, educational development, and academic practice, with individuals and teams working together in *Third Space* environments. This involves recognizing boundaries, but also opening up and using the space between discrete functions in productive ways. This space is likely to be characterized by a greater discursiveness, but also involve contestation and disruption, as shown later in this section in Linquist and Hallett’s chapters.

At the same time, the structures framing professional activity, as represented for instance in organization charts, have been overlaid by team-oriented approaches, as extended projects such as educational development demand input from different staff with a range of expertise. This increasing fluidity is further reflected in broader changes at the boundary between practitioners and clients in that, traditionally, clients are expected to enter the practitioner’s space to obtain advice. In a higher education context, this could include “central” space such as a student services office, as opposed to school or department space. In contemporary environments, however, the practitioner would be expected increasingly to enter client space, whether internally or in the community. Thus, on the one hand, the co-location of education developers in a central unit can help to create a community of practice in which they can share experience. On the other hand, it can also lead to a sense by

academic colleagues that they would prefer to have their “own” academic developer locally in a school or department, in the belief that such an arrangement leads to a better understanding of disciplinary needs, as shown later in this section by Linqvist, and Johnson, Wilson et al.

Tensions can also arise from the location of professional activity. For instance, quality assurance, an early example of an activity in which academic and professional staff work together in mixed teams, can sometimes be located within academic practice, sometimes within professional development, and sometimes within student services. Even when individual members of staff are outposted to support a department or school, this can in turn lead to issues about who “owns” the process:

The assertion that academic staff engage with quality only when forced to do so by the ‘professionals’ in the central quality office of a university or agencies such as the QAA is contested. . . because the academic is the subject expert, he or she is actually central to the concept of quality, in partnership with students. (Barnes and Bohrer 2014)

The location of activities can therefore affect their character, ownership, and perceptions of them by staff, students, and external partners. Thus, restructuring alone may not necessarily legitimize an activity unless synergy is created around it and individuals are able to navigate, and even modulate, the structures in which they find themselves, as well as communicating a cohesive identity to outsiders.

Shifts in the nature of being a professional in higher education can therefore give rise to a number of tensions and challenges. These include the extent of an individual’s autonomy when developing activities not specified in their original job description, and conversely, the implications for institutions of fewer boundaries on individuals, and ways in which it can be ensured that extended activities remain in the institution’s interests. Moreover, generational factors may come into play, in that younger people are more comfortable in extended roles and that they are likely to seek to develop a portfolio of activity so as to grow their careers that way. This in turn has implications for succession planning, for both institutions and line managers.

In summary, while the classic attributes of individual professions remain as shown on the left hand side of Table 1 (Whitchurch 2013, p. 105), there has also been a general movement towards looser, less elitist forms of professionalism, as shown in the right hand column. Such accounts of being a professional are more open-ended and likely to involve individuals in pushing the boundaries, adding to a

Table 1 Extending the boundaries of professionalism (Whitchurch 2013, p. 105)

Classic accounts of professionalism	Contemporary practice of professionalism
Pre-defined body of knowledge	Creating own knowledge base
Professional body as gatekeeper	Professional body as network
Qualifications as an accreditation mechanism	Qualifications as one aspect of portfolio
Adherence to professional codes	Work-based and on-the-job learning
Professional autonomy	Client orientation

portfolio of activity on an ongoing basis, developing new knowledge about their institution, including knowledge-in-practice, and engaging with clients.

The passage of time has also seen a shift from more procedural forms of activity by professional staff, traditionally described as “administration,” to a more active part in decision-making and resource allocation, more accurately described as “management.” This can be conceptualized in relation to the distinction between two broad categories of knowledge, “process knowledge” and “propositional knowledge” as articulated by Eraut (1994). The former involves the “deliberative processes” of acquiring, assimilating, and interpreting information in ways that are relevant to the specific organizational locale. In a university context, this could include case law and precedent in relation to student progress, or the creation and updating of procedures for the delivery of programs in a school or faculty. Such knowledge accrues primarily through custom and practice and is associated with organizational maintenance to meet, for instance, regulatory, legislative, and technical requirements. There is a sense, therefore, in which it is retrospective and associated more with the characteristics of “administration” focused on the documenting of standards, than of management, focused on policy and/or resource decisions, which may imply change.

“Propositional knowledge,” by contrast, is represented by “discipline-based theories and concepts . . . generalisations and practical principles” that can be applied to particular decisions and actions (Eraut 1994, p. 103). It is likely to involve the establishment of an evidence base that will assist with decision-making. As institutional development has assumed greater priority, the shift from administration towards management can therefore be seen in terms of the replacement of “process knowledge” by “propositional knowledge.” While the former emphasizes the maintenance of processes and standards, the latter is more likely to emphasize a critical analysis of data in ways that inform choices and decisions. Such knowledge is likely to include an understanding of market environments and reflect what Eraut (1994) and Friedson (2001) term an “elite” form of professionalism, going beyond mere technical competence as represented by “standard” forms. A stronger sense of agency by the individual, described in a following chapter by Hallett as going beyond “transactional” practices and relationships, is also associated with this. In turn, greater agency is likely to result in change, which may be disruptive, and requires people skills as well as technical skills. This is supported in the case material presented by Stoltenkamp et al. (2017) in relation to instructional design experts and more generally by Whitchurch and Gordon (2017).

Dissonance may also occur as a result of sensitivities as to whether or not individuals are seen as ‘managers,’ and this can lead to the practice of managing ‘without seeming to do so.’ Thus, potential credibility issues can arise for professional staff when they are effectively in a position of managing academic staff, even if not formally designated as their ‘manager,’ for instance in relation to educational design. A situation can also arise when roles are split across sites and even countries, in which individuals, professional or academic, may be answerable to multiple managers for different areas of activity, with the potential for identity strain and even conflict. This is demonstrated in this section by Botterill’s chapter and can lead

to a process of “splitting” as individuals find themselves working with different practices, which enables them “to deal with two contradictory things at the same time without either transcending or repressing that contradiction. . .” (Bhabha quoted in Mitchell 1995, pp. 5–6). As well as practical issues arising from local custom and practice, for instance, in relation to informal rewards and incentives, there may also be professional issues around, for instance, ensuring that different areas of work are coherent and congruent with overarching agendas.

The Development of *Third Space* Environments

These changes present a less secure framework than hitherto for institutional activity and for that of both professional and academic staff. As shown by the contributions that follow, this has led to developing understandings around the concept of *Third Space*, which is gaining currency in describing movements across professional and academic domains (Whitchurch 2013). Feedback at presentations given by the author suggests that in some quarters there is a sense that whether formally designated as professional or academic, as one participant suggested, ‘we are all *Third Space* now.’ This reflects the multiple agendas with which institutions are now involved and the mobility that is expected of both types of staff. Whitchurch (2013) went on to define three types of *Third Space*, all of which are represented in the chapters that follow:

- In *integrated* space, projects are explicitly recognized by the institution and embedded within organizational structures. This might be typified by, for instance, a central educational development unit. In relationships with academic staff, expectations are clearly established on both sides, and individuals may be able to use their *Third Space* status to advantage, working with both academic and institutional agendas.
- In *semi-autonomous* space, recognition is accorded by the institution to a specific project that has a measure of independence and autonomy from the institution, for instance by being fully or partly self-funded. This may be a transitional stage before full integration, for instance, an educational design unit.
- *Independent* space occurs in patches within mainstream structures and arises, at least initially, out of individual collaborations and networks on a temporary or one-off basis for a specific purpose, often remaining under the organizational radar. Such space is only likely to be recognized as being different from mainstream space by those working in it, and it may or may not become more established.

When considering issues of agency and recognition, it may therefore be appropriate to consider the context of a specific activity. As demonstrated in the following chapters by Botteril and Bisset, those working in developing fields such as online learning and educational design, particularly if in small teams at local level, might be seen as operating for the time being in *semi-autonomous* or *independent* space.

Because their projects are not yet embedded organizationally, they may struggle to gain recognition and feel valued. There may therefore be a time delay before such projects, and the individuals involved in them, are brought to maturity, and it may be helpful to take such contextual factors into account when considering the identities of *Third Space* professionals working in areas such as educational development.

Professional Development

Although credentialism is on the rise among educational development staff in relation to, for instance, the acquisition of higher degrees, there are also pressures for ‘just-in-time,’ work-based feedback, and development that can be incorporated as an integral part of day-to-day working. Thus, interventions that are identified ‘bottom-up’ are likely to be received more positively than those ‘required’ by an institution. This is demonstrated in the demand for peer observation, mentoring, and support networks discussed in chapters by Johnson, Wilson et al.; Silvey, Pejcinovic et al.; and Bisset in the following section of this book. This corresponds to the findings in Locke et al. (2016) and Whitchurch and Gordon (2017) in relation to academic staff. Similar issues are noted in Veles and Carter (2016), who by extension suggest that project and research skills in particular could be facilitated by the establishment of communities of practice, a term which recurs in this section (see for instance Johnson, Wilson et al.; Silvey, Pejcinovic et al.). As noted by Whitchurch and Gordon (2017), relationships with local line managers and mentors can have a disproportionate effect, positively and negatively, in raising awareness of opportunities and providing career direction by, for instance, facilitating conference attendance, promoting activities such as serving on a working group or attachment to a specific project, and giving encouragement to individuals to be proactive in promoting their skills and potentials. Likewise, the use of social media and online networks emerged as a supportive mechanism, particularly for early career staff who might feel isolated within their function or discipline, and where self-help appears to be the only immediate option. More specifically, a proactive (or in sociological terms, agentic) approach to the structures and circumstances that individuals find themselves in appears to be a critical element of developing a career in higher education today, again reflected in Hallett’s chapter. Thus, the following extract, written in relation to young academic staff trying to forge a career, would seem equally relevant to those on professional contracts:

It becomes critically important for young professionals to obtain relevant research skills, acquire useful... connections, and integrate themselves into international academic networks... It becomes important not only to be bright and productive but also to be fast, establishing oneself quickly in the field. (Finkelstein et al. 2015, p. 346)

This would appear to be essential for all types of staff if they are to compete successfully for senior jobs traditionally filled by academic managers (Shepherd 2016). Networks of all types are of increasing significance and support the extension

of relationships and knowledge (Veles and Carter 2016; Whitchurch and Gordon 2017). The notion of the “scholar-practitioner,” who engages in institutional research and practice, also has currency here (Streitwieser and Ogden 2016), and is likely to gain momentum as educational development professionals continue to acquire higher academic credentials.

Conclusion

It has been suggested that “new professionalism” implies a closer interaction with employing organizations, “requiring a shift in previous professional practice towards accepting organizational identity and change” (Broadbent et al. 1997, pp. 9–10). Although the emergence of new forms of professionalism has been noted in the wider literature, this does not fully capture the shifts experienced by higher education professionals in increasingly fluid conditions, as they contribute to the development of their institutions for the future. Understanding these shifts, and possible tensions arising, is likely to be critical to the development of rewarding careers for the future. Furthermore, despite an expanding literature on academic careers (for instance, McAlpine and Åkerlind 2010; Teichler and Cummings 2015; Yudkevitch et al. 2015), particularly for early career staff, this has not been replicated to any great extent for professional staff, or for those that see themselves as working between academic and professional domains. This monograph represents an important starting point.

As shown in the chapters that follow, being a professional in higher education today is likely to involve being able to work with multiple agendas, some of which may point in different directions, and accommodating the tensions that are likely to arise. Some contexts will be specific to individuals, but others are likely to be of general applicability. The location and ownership of professional activities, especially those bordering what are seen traditionally as academic domains, may well be subject to ongoing negotiation. Territorial attitudes may constrain team working, particularly in relation to roles that require specific qualifications and experience. Conversely, individuals who become too aligned with, for instance, the aspirations of a school or faculty, may be seen as ‘going native’ by an institution’s senior management team, and as departing from collective institutional strategy. Furthermore, the perceptions generated in others may be more significant than actual allegiances, notwithstanding the fact that individuals are likely to see themselves as focused on and motivated by their particular activity, as opposed to being aligned with specific agendas. This is especially the case when professional staff are portrayed as ‘managers,’ with associated perceptions of power and influence, and questions may be raised about the extent of individual autonomy. The way that individuals are able to work with, and find solutions to, multi-dimensional agendas, promoting institutional development as opposed to the maintenance of activity, is likely therefore to define the higher education professional of the future and the outcomes that they are able to achieve in contributing to their institutions’ profiles.

References

- Barnes, H., and J. Bohrer. 2014. Engaging professionally: Who does quality? In *Professional life in modern British higher education*, Bedford Way Papers, ed. B. Cunningham. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Broadbent, J., M. Dietrich, and J. Roberts. 1997. *The end of the professions?* London: Routledge.
- Callender, C., and P. Scott, eds. 2013. *Browne and beyond: Modernizing English higher education*, Bedford way papers. Vol. 42. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Cummings, W., and M. Finkelstein. 2012. *Scholars in the changing American Academy: New contexts, new rules and new roles*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Davis, A., M.J. van Rensburg, and P. Venter. 2016. The impact of managerialism on the strategy work of university middle managers. *Studies in Higher Education* 41 (8): 1480–1494.
- Department for Business, Education and Skills. 2016. *Success as a knowledge economy. Teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice*. London: Department for Business, Education and Skills.
- Duncan, S. 2014. Peripheral professionals? The place of teacher educators in higher education. In *Professional life in modern British higher education*, Bedford Way Papers, ed. B. Cunningham. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Eraut, M. 1994. *Developing professional knowledge and competence*. London: Routledge.
- Etzkowitz, H. 2008. *The Triple Helix: University-industry-government innovation in action*. New York: Routledge.
- Finkelstein, M.J., K.W. Iglesias, A. Panova, and M. Yudkevich. 2015. Future prospects for young faculty across the academic world. In *Young faculty in the twenty-first century: International perspectives*, ed. M. Yudkevitch, P.G. Altbach, and L. Rumbley, 321–350. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Friedson, E. 2001. *Professionalism: The third logic*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Graham, C. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff in learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. 34 (4): 437–452.
- Kallenberg, T. 2016. Interacting spheres revisited. Academics and administrators between dualism and cooperation. In *From here to there: Positioning higher education institutions*, ed. R. Pritchard, A. Pausits, and J. Williams, 177–197. Rotterdam: Sense.
- Krucken, G., A. Blumel, and K. Kloke. 2013. The managerial turn in higher education? On the interplay of organisational and occupational change in German Academia. *Minerva* 51 (4): 417–442.
- Locke, W., C. Whitchurch, H. Smith, and A. Mazenod. 2016. *Shifting landscapes: Meeting the staff development needs of the changing academic workforce*. York: Higher Education Academy.
- Marginson, S. 2013. The impossibility of capitalist markets in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy* 28 (3): 353–370.
- Marginson, S. 2016. *Higher education and the common good*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- McAlpine, L., and G. Åkerlind, eds. 2010. *Becoming an academic: International perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. 1995. ‘Translator translated’ (interview with cultural theorist Homi Bhabha). *Artforum* 33 (7): 80–84. <http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bhabha/interview.html> (1–19).
- Schon, D.A. 1995. *The reflective practitioner*. Aldershot: Arena.
- Scott, P. 1995. *The meanings of mass higher education*. Buckingham: SRHE/Open University Press.
- Scott, P. 2014. The death of the don. In *Professional life in modern British higher education*, Bedford Way Papers, ed. B. Cunningham. London: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Sebalj, D., A. Holbrook, and S. Bourke. 2012. The rise of ‘professional staff’ and demise of the ‘non-academic’: A study of university staffing nomenclature preferences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (5): 463–472.

- Sennett, R. 2004. *Respect: The formation of character in a world of inequality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Sharrock, G. 2012. Four management agendas for Australian universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (3): 323–337.
- Shepherd, S. 2016. No room at the top? The glass wall for professional services managers in pre-1992 English universities. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*. 21: 129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2016.1256844>.
- Stoltenkamp, J., V. de Heyde, and A. Siebrits. 2017. The third-space professional: A reflective case study on maintaining relationships within a complex higher education institution. *Reflective Practice* 18 (1): 14–22.
- Streitwieser, B., and A. Ogden. 2016. *International higher education's scholar practitioners: Bridging research and practice*. Oxford: Symposium Books.
- Szekeres, J. 2011. Professional staff carve out a new space. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 679–691.
- Teichler, U., and W.K. Cummings, eds. 2015. *Forming, recruiting and managing the academic profession*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Temple, P., ed. 2012. *Universities in the knowledge economy: Higher education organisation and global change*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Veles, N., and M.-A. Carter. 2016. Imagining a future: Changing the landscape for third space professionals in Australian higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. 38: 519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2006.1196938>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2013. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of third space professionals*. New York: Routledge.
- Whitchurch, C., and G. Gordon. 2017. *Reconstructing relationships in higher education: Challenging agendas*. New York: Routledge. forthcoming.
- Yudkevitch, M., P.G. Altbach, and L.E. Rumbley, eds. 2015. *Young faculty in the twenty-first century: International perspectives*. Albany: State University of New York Press.



Academic Development: A Space, But Is It an Identity?

3

Stephen Linquist

Contents

Introduction	24
Academic Development as Fragmented	24
Academic Development Under Erasure	27
Academic Development: Does the Past Inform the Future?	27
Academic Development: A Pedagogy of Navigating Fault Lines	30
Fault Line 1: Discipline X/Discipline Y	31
Fault Line 2: Expert/Vanguard	32
Fault Line 3: Centripetally/Centrifugally	33
Fault Lines and Fragmented Conceptions of Identity for Academic Developers	34
Final Words	35
References	36

Abstract

Academic development has been described as a fragmented enterprise (Rowland 2002; Webb 1992; Lee et al. 2008) as a means of recognizing the messy discursive terrain navigated by its subjects. These subjects are those persons commonly referred to as academic or educational developers, and they work under a banner which is conceived institutionally in response to the change agendas which have been assigned to the role(s) (Gibbs 2013). Given that academic development roles are typically associated with change, its fragmented status is a reflection of the multitude of discursive sites that academic development subjects must navigate in their everyday practice. I will be using Rowland's (2002) metaphor "fault lines" to describe common discursive binaries where academic development subjects are positioned through interaction with other members of the institution (e.g., teachers,

S. Linquist (✉)
University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
e-mail: stephen.linquist@utas.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_18

23

management, students, educational development colleagues). I will be arguing that academic development pedagogy can be reconceptualized as subject's (individual academic developer's) tactical responses to their discursive positioning(s).

The chapter will explore the concept of fragmentation in the form of a composite literature review and auto-ethnographic narrative. The literature review will be interrupted by a series of auto-ethnographic vignettes (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005) written from the perspective of an academic development subject who has worked in a variety of academic development positions at three Australian higher education institutions. These vignettes will recount instances of everyday practice performed under the banner of academic development; performed at various binary fault lines. For the intended readership of academic managers, academic teaching staff and persons employed as academic/educational developers; this chapter seeks to provide a perspective of academic development pedagogy as an identity performed navigating discursive fault lines.

Keywords

Academic development · Educational development

Introduction

Academic development is a term commonly used to categorize professional development activities in tertiary environments (Lee et al. 2008). Amundsen and Wilson (2012) contend that academic development activity relies upon three roles:

- (a) academic development staff
- (b) members of a faculty
- (c) researchers

They emphasize that a mix of these three roles in academic development are often performed by the one person (Amundsen and Wilson 2012; Bath and Smith 2004). This person is often employed or referred to as an academic developer. It is a multidisciplinary field (Rowland 2002) and the varying blend of activities performed under this banner is reflected in the diversity of titles used to institutionally label such persons, including Learning Designer (Jobslift Australia 2011), Educational Development Advisor (Gordon Institute of TAFE 2009), and Educational Advisor (Victoria University 2012). The literature referenced in this chapter is dominated by two titles "Academic Developer" and "Educational Developer" (Ling and Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development 2009), which I will be treating as interchangeable.

Academic Development as Fragmented

Academic development as fragmented infers that there is no definitive field of academic development and that it is simply an umbrella term to describe persons working in a myriad of educational support roles (Harland and Staniforth 2008). It is

more a community and/or an organizational position, than a profession defined by a codified set of practices. Harland and Staniforth (2008) coined the term “family of strangers” to illustrate this point, acknowledging that academic development is characterized by a purpose of responding to individual and institutional concerns. In light of academic development being considered a fragmented enterprise, it is problematic for those persons working under this banner to believe that their actions and words are being interpreted based on an objective “single” static identity as an academic developer.

As the practices performed under the banner of academic development are driven by a blend of individual, departmental, and/or institutional goals (Harland and Staniforth 2008; Ling and Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development 2009), there is contention regarding what values are shared across this “family of strangers.” Despite arguing that the field does not have a common set of values, Harland and Staniforth (2008) contend that academic developers share a commitment to assisting others. They drew this conclusion after asking a group of 20 academic developers situated across six nations to reply to a position paper they prepared proposing that academic development is fragmented structurally, operationally, ontologically, and epistemologically. This commonly shared mission of wanting to help others positions academic development as being susceptible of exploitation for personal and institutional interests. The risk is amplified when we consider it in parallel to a general trend of university management expecting centralized learning and teaching centers (where academic developers are commonly employed) to add more strategic value to the provision and delivery of qualifications (Holt et al. 2011).

In acknowledgment of the apparent disconnect between a history of assisting others and a growing expectation to provide institutional strategic input, it is timely to revisit Gosling’s (2003) contention that there needs to be greater analysis of the underlying values which inform the work of an academic developer.

[Academic Development] literature appears to be relatively undogmatic and apolitical, but if we scratch the surface we soon find values, ethics and political commitments. (Gosling 2003, p. 75)

Gosling (2003) advocates that adopting a philosophical approach to academic development would place emphasis on these elements which are particularly elusive, due to its fragmentary nature. The aim for incorporating such an approach would be to draw upon established philosophical traditions and theories to firstly accept the complex contextualized convergence of forces which shape academic development and secondly to make visible values which inform persons and work done under the banner of academic development.

Drawing upon Foucauldian poststructural thought, I will be treating identity as subjectivity where individuals (human subjects) cannot objectively divorce themselves from history and the culture they live within (Foucault 1972). The “self is fluid, understood only across categories” (Parkes et al. 2010, p. 168), where these categories are otherwise referred to as discourse; a fluid, historically situated series of written and spoken word acts which constitute subjects and knowledge. Discourse is relative to time and place (Cherryholmes 1988). One way of articulating the situated

nonstatic nature of discourse is to acknowledge the inevitable difference between Foucault's multiple descriptions of discourse as originally written and that which I am attempting to articulate. The words put to paper by Foucault were translated and later re-written by secondary authors which function as an available discourse that I have drawn upon in a particular cultural context and historical moment before re-writing into a discourse about Foucauldian conceptions of discourse.

In an attempt to present a timeline of the evolution in the descriptions Foucault made regarding discourse, Caldwell (2007) has generated four broad descriptors:

1. Discourse as statements bound by rules
2. Discourse as a series of discursive and nondiscursive acts
3. Discourse as power/knowledge
4. Discourse as discourse

These four descriptions of discourse are an attempt to articulate a progression, commencing with it being referred to as the use of language governed by rules, broadened from language to include actions, progressed to discourse acting as a form of power and knowledge and culminating in an understanding where nothing escapes discourse as it is a prerequisite to inform/construct knowledge. The categorization of knowledge produces inclusions and exclusions, thus producing normalized understandings, assigning others to being nonexistent (Bleiker 2003). Foucault refers to this collection of authoritative statements as "the archive" (Parkes et al. 2010). These are the discourse which is available, those which we exist within (Davies 2000). This poststructural concept of discourse enables emphasis to be placed on what is excluded as a means to resist the ways in which we are constituted as subjects within dominant discourse (Foucault 1991). For academic development subjects, locating binary fault lines may serve as a tactic to develop new understandings on how they are being positioned within discourse and to theorize how their pedagogy may be both a reflection of this positioning and a vehicle in strengthening dominant discourse.

This chapter will explore the concept of fragmentation of academic development in the form of a composite literature review and auto-ethnographic narrative. The literature review will be interrupted by a series of auto-ethnographic vignettes (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005) written from the perspective of an academic developer who has worked in a variety of academic development positions at three Australian Higher Education Institutions. These vignettes will recount instances of everyday practice performed under the banner of academic development. Britzman (2003, p. 254) describes ethnography practiced within poststructuralist thought as:

. . .not about capturing the real already out there. It is about constructing particular versions of truth, questioning how regimes of truth become neutralized as knowledge, and thus pushing the sensibilities of readers in new directions.

These "regimes of truth" that Britzman refers to are the discourse which are accepted as "true" within a given society (Foucault 1991). In this chapter, I will be producing small auto-ethnographic vignettes as a means to question how the academic development subject performs an identity, as a response to accepted norms. This identity as

“performed” would be commonly described as pedagogic acts or as academic developer pedagogy. For an intended readership of academic managers, academic teaching staff and persons engaged in academic development; this chapter seeks to serve as a response to Gosling’s (2003) call for a philosophical approach to academic development. It will draw upon a combination of literature and reflexivity to explore academic development as a fragmented identity which is performed through pedagogic acts.

Academic Development Under Erasure

Academic development expressed as a fragmented identity within the confines of poststructural thought could also be expressed as a regulatory ideal. Borrowing from the work of Foucault (1979), Butler (1999, p. 335) describes a “regulatory ideal,” as “a fiction that operates within discourses and which, discursively and institutionally sustained, wields enormous power.” A regulatory ideal functions both as a norm and as a series of regulated practices. I am drawing on this concept to contend that the term is under erasure. Writing under erasure is a tactic that was adopted by Derrida (1976), where he would present a word with a line through it, in recognition of the necessity to retain its use, while in parallel attempting to discourage use of the word to narrow conceptions of the phenomena being described. Lather (2003, p. 263) succinctly describes writing under erasure as “keeping something visible but crossed out, to avoid universalizing or monumentalizing it.”

I am adopting the practice of writing under erasure as ~~Academic Development~~ is an umbrella term, necessary to provide focus to a myriad of activities (conducted under the banner). It is a way of responding to Leibowitz’s (2014) rhetorical question “is there any point in attempting to define the term at all?” that was posed as a means of acknowledging the contestability of the term “academic development.” ~~Academic development~~ expressed as a regulatory ideal suggests that it is those pedagogic acts which are highly repetitious and visible, which serve as the norms that shape expectations of how ~~academic developers~~ are expected to “perform.” These pedagogic norms do not necessarily reflect what individual ~~academic developers~~ actually do. Instead, they function as a template of “performance” for persons working under the banner of ~~academic development~~. Conceptualizing ~~academic development~~ as a regulatory ideal enables it to be viewed as a performative template, more so than a representation of a codified set of practices. If ~~academic development~~ is to serve as a term to describe actions, it can be described as under erasure as there just is not another accessible term to describe our work. Expressing ~~academic development~~ as under erasure places attention on its contestability, multiplicity, and capacity to misrepresent or constrain the actions of persons/subjects employed under its banner.

Academic Development: Does the Past Inform the Future?

Academic Development is a product of its past. Academic developers are viewed through lenses informed by perceptions of what they have done, have been asked to do, and so on. Webb (1992, p. 351) draws a link between history, discourse, and

agency stating that “in Foucauldian terms we are part of an anonymous discourse which pre-dates our own arrival on the scene, and which moulds and constrains our agency as individuals.” Agency as a term is typically used to describe an individual’s (agent) capacity to freely act. Working within a poststructuralist worldview where subjects are constituted through a multitude of nonstatic historically situated discourse, there is an apparent rejection of agency as freedom. However, Davies (2000, p. 55) explains that a poststructural agency is enacted by the subject through a “capacity to recognize that constitution and resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted.” An available tactic for academic developers seeking to understand how they may be positioned by discourse is through locating dominant sources of history and exploring how these historical accounts serve and sustain the discourse in which the academic development subject is being positioned.

For academic development subjects in Australia seeking to locate an accessible historical account of where their “family of strangers” (Harland and Staniforth 2008) has come from, Lee et al. (2008) produced an oral history of academic development in the Australian higher education context. It is based on interviews with prominent academic developers, representing a continuum of developers who have worked in the field since its formative years in the 1950s. Some of these individually presented oral histories describe early academic development activity as being informal, performed by a collection of individual academics seeking to develop and extend their understanding of undergraduate teaching. In parallel, there was an acknowledgment of a post second world war discourse of student wastage, now commonly described as student attrition. This association between academic development and student retention (Lee et al. 2008) seemingly aligns with a perspective offered over two decades earlier by Moses (1985) who stated:

In many cases, it was the concern about teaching standards and failure rates or drop-out rates which prompted the establishment of (academic development) units and ensured their continuing support. (Moses 1985, p. 76)

The initial picture of academic development as being an informal activity may seem paradoxical when it is read in parallel with the aforementioned link with student wastage/attrition. For example, if we consider the discourse of student attrition within a contemporary higher education environment that is on the brink of deregulation, it can engender the painting of a picture that suggests academic development has always functioned as a centralized institutional enabler.

In the Australian Higher Education environment, academic development became a “distinctive” profession in the late 1960s (Manathunga 2011), and by the 1980s its main purpose was to “improve the quality of teaching and learning in a particular institution through advice, information, courses on teaching methods, evaluation, sometimes audio-visual services, and often research” (Moses 1985, p. 76). This short phrase indicates that a series of regulatory ideals had emerged, whereby academic developers had a series of replicable pedagogic acts, techniques, and spaces to draw upon. Even though Moses is referring to items such as slides and videos, her

description of academic development in the 1980s can be read within a contemporary discourse of blended learning which is promoted on grounds that it can facilitate improved teaching efficiency. Reusable educational resources are now commonly produced and distributed within the confines of a learning management system occupying a similar function to that once occupied by these analogue technologies. It also suggests that academic developers at this time were able to simultaneously occupy all three roles of academic development as outlined by Amundsen and Wilson (2012), as there is acknowledgment of informal and formal teaching roles being combined with research.

In reference to a North American higher education context, Sorcinelli et al. (2006) have attempted to articulate a five-tiered evolution of academic development. Four past stages include:

- Scholar – the provision of services to support academics/teachers scholarly/research competence.
- Teacher – early programs designed to foster teaching as a scholarly endeavor.
- Developer – emergence of centralized academic development units and acknowledgment of the academic/educational developer role.
- Learner – a broader view of teaching enables a shift from a singular focus on the development of the pedagogical/delivery expertise to incorporate understandings of how to support student learning (Ouellett 2010).

Despite academic development in North America enjoying a “different historical trajectory” to that in Australia (Manathunga 2011, p. 348), the five-tiered evolution of academic development as expressed by Sorcinelli et al. (2006) shows some parallel to the evolution of the academic development field as expressed through the aforementioned histories (Lee et al. 2008; Manathunga 2011; Moses 1985). It is problematic to interpret these stages in a linear manner in respect to an Australian context, as all of these stages represent different components of roles likely to be occupied by present academic developers. To complete their five tiered evolution of academic development, Sorcinelli et al. (2006) declared that academic development is currently in the age of the “networker.” It is where an academic developer has the task to “preserve, clarify, and enhance the purposes of faculty development (academic development), and to network with faculty and institutional leaders to respond to institutional problems and propose constructive solutions as we meet the challenges of the new century” (Sorcinelli et al. 2006, p. 28).

This description of academic development could be used to suggest that individuals employed as academic developers have the capacity to chart their own course on the basis that they build on the history which informs their identity and purpose. When academic development pedagogy is conceptualized as a suite of regulatory ideals, the actions of academic developers are written into history through being visible or operable within a discourse. Academic development pedagogy is not simply an array of observable techniques or processes, but tactical responses within discourse. The ways in which academic developers have previously worked (their pedagogy) will inevitably surface in historical accounts of academic development,

such as the one from Moses (1985). There is a risk that these accounts of academic development with their subtle references to pedagogy are blindly accepted and re-applied in the future when the technique is observed minus consideration of the discourse(s) which the pedagogic act serves. Acknowledging academic development as an identity performed, these subtle references to pedagogy can serve to solidify conceptions of academic development as a singular identity through the eventual repetition of pedagogy performed on the basis that these “are” the acts an academic developer is expected to perform.

Academic Development: A Pedagogy of Navigating Fault Lines

Does academic development labeled as a performance infer that an academic developer rationally performs the identity that he/she seeks to self-author? No. Persons working under this banner are constrained by a visible history of academic development. This history can be presented as a narrative which provides uniformity to an often messy and contradictory endeavor. It can also be referred to as a discourse of academic development. This discourse serves as a reference point to assess the work of individuals employed as academic developers. But “who” assesses the work of academic developers?

One might say that educational developers (academic developers) need to walk a tightrope between acquiring or maintaining ‘clout’ and influence on the administration on the one hand, and being seen as either an advocate of staff concern, or a neutral advising body on the other hand (Moses 1985, p. 83).

While this three-decade-old description of academic development terrain may resonate with persons employed under this banner, it is also problematic. Locating the position of the tightrope is difficult when many individuals in the institution are employed in roles where they act in the interests of both sides of this artificial divide. The fragmented nature of academic development is a reflection of the multitude of sites which an academic developer must navigate in their everyday practice. I will be using Rowland’s (2002) metaphor “fault lines” to describe these sites and to contend that it is at such binary fault lines where academic developers are positioned in discourse through interaction with other members of the institution (e.g., teachers, management, students, academic development colleagues). Davies and Harre (1990, p. 62) describe positioning as “the way in which the discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers in certain ways and yet at the same time is a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positions.” Positions are not static as multiple positions can be simultaneously occupied. They act as starting points for academic developers to critically reflect on the multiple functions of their pedagogy, which can be conceived of as a series of responses to discourse which appear to be functioning along a binary.

Three discursive binary fault lines will be explored in this chapter:

1. Discipline X/Discipline Y – A binary of contrasting subject disciplines
2. Expert/Vanguard – A pedagogy of leading versus responding
3. Centripetally/Centrifugally – A binary of local versus institutional

These three fault lines have been chosen as they are likely to feature in the working lives of most people working under the title of academic developer or educational developer. They are intended to serve as a starting point for academic developers to reconceptualize and/or critically evaluate their practice. For academic developers who reconceptualize their pedagogy as that of navigating discursive binary fault lines, it is anticipated that further artificial binaries will materialize. From this point, the task for the academic developer is to theorize how their pedagogic responses are a function of the artificial binary and to then determine how the binary can be flattened through problematizing its apparent on/off function.

Fault Line 1: Discipline X/Discipline Y

There is no direct path into academic development as there is not an established set of entry qualifications or vocational standards. Persons working the academic development sphere come from a range of disciplinary backgrounds (Bath and Smith 2004). For example, probable disciplinary backgrounds for developers engaged in facilitating blended learning include primary, secondary, and/or tertiary education, information technology, and visual and interactive design (multimedia). The breadth of prior skills and knowledge which is deemed credible by those in supervisory positions is indicative of a job without a dominant disciplinary base.

I was recently employed to work in a faculty as an academic developer and I have realized that my position description is a useless reference point in assisting me to describe what an academic developer is to faculty staff. A typical visit to the tearoom will play as follows:

Academic – Shakes Hands – “Hi, I’m (insert name), (insert academic level), in (insert discipline area or school).”

Academic Developer – “Hi, I’m Steve, I’ve just started working in the faculty as an academic developer.”

Academic – Nods Head – “Great, welcome (insert pause), settling in?”

Academic Developer – “Good thanks, just finding my feet, no complaints so far”

Academic – “I should know, but. . .what will you be doing in your position?”

Academic Developer – “I’m hoping to work with academics, assisting them to create and review curriculum, assessment tasks. . .to help them develop blended units that are based on the needs of the curriculum”

Academic – “Fair enough, sounds good. So what discipline are you from?”

Academic Developer – “I used to teach interactive design and I’m a qualified P-12 school teacher”

Academic – “Ah. . .(long pause . . . two fingers pressed against mouth)” do you know (insert person name), they teach in interactive design here at (insert institution name).

This brief vignette recounts my inability to refer to my discipline as academic development or the study of higher education, despite working for the past decade in a range of academic development roles. In parallel, the response I gave could be viewed as a tactic to resist positioning as an academic developer within an assortment of existing discourse. An academic development subject referencing their previous discipline (which may also be different to those claimed by colleagues) may also serve as a tactic to resist positioning based on the disciplinary backgrounds of the subject's colleagues in a teaching and learning center.

As academic development is not a new term, the commonly experienced vignette may infer that academic development is not being accepted as a discipline. However, it also may serve as recognition of academic development as being an interdisciplinary space (Manathunga 2007; Rowland 2003) whereby emphasis is placed not just on a subject's previous discipline, but the requirements of the tasks which the academic development subject is expected to perform. Manathunga (2006, p. 21) describes academic development as a "liminal space" where it acts as a "threshold between fixed identities." This metaphor extends the aforementioned position of academic development as a fragmented enterprise, as it not only acknowledges academic development being a "family of strangers" (Harland and Staniforth 2008) where there is a range of established disciplinary backgrounds; it also highlights the fluidity of academic development in relation to the tasks performed by its subjects.

I am using the term fluidity as a means of expressing the nonstatic array of agendas and tasks which individual academic developers are generally positioned to respond to. Academic development navigated at the fault line of discipline x/discipline y becomes uncomfortably necessary when it is viewed as a liminal space, as these legacy disciplines serve as largely fixed points of reference for academic developers to shift/cultivate discursive conceptions of their identity.

Fault Line 2: Expert/Vanguard

Webb (1996) originally presented the "expert/vanguard" binary within a context of discussing potential roles for academic developers in action research projects. However, this fault line can be applied more widely to explore discourse informing academic development pedagogy. The "expert" position refers to situations when the academic developer is requested to work with a teacher (or group) on the basis that they have specific knowledge or skills to offer. In contrast, the "vanguard" position refers to situations when the developer is the initiator of the engagement with the teachers. This binary elicits academic developers to ask "who wants me here?"

A course coordinator who is also the head of school contacted me requesting assistance to prepare a statement of curriculum philosophy and course learning outcomes for a course (qualification) the faculty had applied to offer the following year. After agreeing to his initial request, I was sent a meeting invitation for 25 min. Despite being dismayed at the time allocated, I located a template I had previously prepared for writing a statement of curriculum philosophy and attached this to a downloaded copy of the generic discipline learning

outcomes. Both these “templates” would enable me to provide the course coordinator with working examples accompanied by a process for producing each of these required items.

After presenting each of the templates and explaining how he would be able to use them, he asked me a series of questions which always started with “How/what do ‘you’ want me to do. . . ?” The production and/or distribution of these templates, used in this meeting as a response to the limited available time; enabled a shift of positioning of ~~me~~ as the expert called in to assist the teacher achieve their outcome. The outcome was now shared as success was now dependent on this teacher’s actions. I was now positioned as the vanguard attempting to accelerate this teacher’s production of course learning outcomes and a statement of curriculum philosophy. I called an end to the meeting after 17 min confident that he now had the tools to produce the products. On him leaving my office, I dryly asked whether the 17 min was an efficient use of his time.

Academic Developers work within a context of compliance (Rowland 2002) and managerialism (Land 2001; Manathunga 2007), where it can be difficult to determine “ownership” of an objective or task as it may have been repeatedly delegated or exist as a single line statement in an institutional plan. The expert/vanguard fault line is a discursive location that enables academic developers to explore how their pedagogic acts of response as “expert” can be quickly shifted toward positioning as “vanguard” acts of ownership, expressed through leading or demonstration. This small vignette is an attempt at highlighting how these acts of response (initially performed through a positioning as expert) in a culture of compliance necessitated an efficient response (in the form of templates), which subsequently enabled positioning of the academic development subject (I) as vanguard. I was now positioned as owning the process. Moreover, the course learning outcomes and statement of curriculum philosophy (produced as a result of the interaction) could now be used to assess the academic development subject’s performance.

Academic developers have been labeled as a community drawn together through a commonly shared value of assisting others (Harland and Staniforth 2008). The expert/vanguard binary is one means to assess how academic developer’s pedagogic acts of assisting others can be dramatically repositioned within institutional discourse of compliance and managerialism.

Fault Line 3: Centripetally/Centrifugally

Gillespie et al. (2010) categorize educational development services as being offered “centripetally” or “centrifugally.” This binary uses “location” as its basis for distinction. Centripetal activities are those which draw or require teachers to come to a location which is the domain of the educational developer (e.g., centralized training center). In contrast, centrifugal activities are those which are undertaken in the teacher’s domain (e.g., their office, classroom). This distinction has commonality with “vanguard/expert” (Webb 1996) as the space could be also used to describe “who” is initiating the activity. This binary can also be used to draw distinction on grounds such as standardization and customization. Centripetal activities such as a suite of advertised workshops could represent an institutionally mandated

standardized approach. For example, a central learning and teaching unit may offer a suite of workshops demonstrating highly performed tasks such as the authoring of intended learning outcomes or use of common features in a learning management system. Meanwhile, centripetal activities could represent a customizable approach as they are typically those which are just in time, highly contextual and driven by the teacher's self-perception of their needs.

I was walking along the corridor to the head of school's office. I had accepted an invitation for a 30 min meeting titled "professional development workshops." The calendar invite did not contain any other information or background. Once I reached the office, I was directed by the head of school's assistant to sit down and wait in a chair. Upon hearing a voice around the corner say "Steve, you can come in," I entered the office and exchanged greetings. The head of school explained to me that an external accreditation had recommended that all academic staff in the school need to participate in professional development related to assessment. He stated "they think we run too many exams and some of the staff don't know how to write rubrics. . .I need this sorted". I responded by saying that one option is to suggest that some of the academic staff complete the assessment related unit in the graduate certificate in higher education.

The head of school dismissed this idea explaining that the staff do not want to work with academic developers from the central learning and teaching unit. I said "really?" He went further to argue that the academic staff in the school do not want to have to attend workshops where they read about assessment. The head of school pointing at me and stated "this is why we have our own academic developer in the faculty, who understands our context." I asked the head of school "how does (me as academic development subject) facilitating a workshop for all staff in the faculty enable me to demonstrate that I understand their context?"

In this vignette, the "centripetal/centrifugal" binary served as a means for the faculty-based academic developer to maintain their status as the "go to" academic developer, despite there being a viable alternate professional development opportunity being facilitated by academic developers in the central learning and teaching unit. For the faculty based manager (head of school), the faculty-based academic developer was the only viable person to facilitate the professional development as he was based in the faculty. Despite arguing that the rationale was based on "understanding the discipline context," it is conceivable that this manager felt that he could ensure the professional development would occur as intended, if facilitated by the faculty academic developer. In addition to a managerial tension, use of this binary can enable emphasis to be placed on pedagogy as opposed to individuals. For example, the pedagogic site of the workshop as a regulatory ideal was associated with academic developers in the central learning and teaching unit and subsequently viewed as a performance expectation for the faculty based academic developer.

Fault Lines and Fragmented Conceptions of Identity for Academic Developers

Fragmentation is not something which should be viewed as a negative. It is representative of a discursive space (academic development) which is continually reshaped by partial re-readings of its history, such as the one presented in this chapter. These re-readings are uncomfortably necessary, as there is a risk that they engender

conceptions of academic development that may not resonate with the localized context within which the given academic development subject is situated. If we acknowledge a poststructural worldview where there is no objective truth (Parkes et al. 2010), the concepts drawn upon within academic development are inevitably “contested” (Gosling 2003; Webb 1996). Academic development subjects, who embrace the freedom of working under a banner that is contested and/or under erasure, will enjoy greater capacity to navigate/resist a binary discourse of agency. In such a discourse, pedagogic acts are scrutinized and enacted based on their capacity to function (or not) as regulatory ideals where the academic development subject grasps for normalized pedagogy. This dilemma is likely to be similar to that which solicited Rowland (2002) to argue that a mission for academic development pedagogy should be to create spaces for contestation to occur.

I have used this chapter to contend that one response to Rowland’s mission is to consider academic developer pedagogy as a collection of regulatory ideals. The conceptualization of discursive binary fault lines provides academic development subjects with a tactic to identify sites which engender normative pedagogy, expressed as a regulatory ideal. Exploring how these binaries are artificial is one way in which academic development subjects can re-conceptualize their pedagogy. Academic developer pedagogy can then be viewed as a tactical response, or as a means of navigating these discursive fault lines. Three binary fault lines have been briefly presented in an attempt to articulate the potential for academic developers to be positioned via discourse which goes beyond dialogue and predates interactions. Each discourse has been subsequently discussed, in an attempt at locating the multiplicity which problematizes the status of the discourse as a binary. This breaking apart of the binary provides opportunities for the academic development subject to develop new pedagogy and resist blind utilization of normative pedagogies.

I have attempted to reiterate the fragmented nature of academic development by eluding to “interrelationalities” (Ellsworth 2005) which exist between these three binaries. In essence, this trio of simple binaries is introductory reference points that an academic developer may elect to utilize, in order to locate oneself in a messy landscape of discourse. Reading these fault lines in conjunction with new fault lines will produce further “interrelationalities.” For example, a fault line expressing tension between developing the “program” or the “individual” (Ling and Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development 2009) may elicit a broadening of “location” as discussed in the “centripetal/centrifugal” binary to include a course or person as a “location.” For academic developers who are seemingly “watching their backs” (Bath and Smith 2004, p. 10), the challenge is to locate fault lines and consider how they may be positioned along these binaries and then consider “interrelationalities” with other fault lines.

Final Words

Academic development can be expressed as a fragmented enterprise to a point where the banner is under erasure. Academic development pedagogy conceptualized as a regulatory ideal is made visible through normalized repetitious acts and serves as a menu that subsequently feeds expectations and their pedagogic responses.

Alternatively, academic developer pedagogy can be reconceptualized as navigating discursive binary fault lines. This everyday pedagogy of tactical responses often “flies under the radar” in a higher education environment dominated by pedagogy that is highly visible in the form of prestructured workshops and in the highly accessible work performed by academic staff, such as the production of unit outlines, learning resources and assessment instruments. Academic development pedagogy expressed as navigating discursive binary fault lines provides academic development subjects with an opportunity to reconceptualize their practice and ultimately use this re-imagining of their pedagogy as a means to embrace the contestability of the banner that they are employed under.

References

- Amundsen, C., and M. Wilson. 2012. Are we asking the right questions?: A conceptual review of the educational development literature in higher education. *Review of Educational Research* 82 (1): 90–126. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654312438409>.
- Bath, D., and C. Smith. 2004. Academic developers: An academic tribe claiming their territory in higher education. *International Journal for Academic Development* 9 (1): 9–27.
- Bleiker, R. 2003. Discourse and human agency. *Contemporary Political Thought* 2 (1): 25–47.
- Britzman, D. P. 2003. *Practice makes practice a critical study of learning to teach*. From <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10594717>.
- Butler, J. 1999. *Gender trouble feminism and the subversion of identity*. From <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10054731>.
- Caldwell, R. 2007. Agency and change: Re-evaluating Foucault’s legacy. *Organization* 14 (6): 769–791.
- Cherryholmes, C.H. 1988. *Power and criticism: Poststructural investigations in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Davies, B. 2000. *A body of writing, 1990–1999*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Davies, B., and R. Harre. 1990. Positioning: The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20 (1): 43–63.
- Derrida, J. 1976. *Of grammatology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ellsworth, E.A. 2005. *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Foucault, M. 1972. *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Foucault, M. 1979. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. 1991. *The Foucault reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Gillespie, K. J., D. L. Robertson, and W. H. Bergquist. 2010. *A guide to faculty development*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.
- Gordon Institute of TAFE. 2009. *Teacher handbook*. <http://medusa.ballarat.edu.au/wordpress/taa2010group1/files/2010/04/tl-rd-8-teachers-handbook-2009.pdf>.
- Gosling, D. 2003. Philosophical approaches to academic development. In *The scholarship of academic development*, ed. H. Eggins and R. Macdonald, 70–79. Buckingham/Philadelphia: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Harland, T., and D. Staniforth. 2008. A family of strangers: The fragmented nature of academic development. *Teaching in Higher Education* 13 (6): 669–678.

- Holt, D., S. Palmer, and D. Challis. 2011. Changing perspectives: Teaching and learning centres' strategic contributions to academic development in Australian higher education. *International Journal for Academic Development* 16 (1): 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2011.546211>.
- Jobslift Australia. 2011. AO9 – Learning designer – Box Hill Institute of TAFE. From http://au.jobslift.com/job_ao9-learning-designer-box-hill-institute-of-tafe-melbourne-vic-1000492221.html.
- Land, R. 2001. Agency, context and change in academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 6 (1): 4–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440110033715>.
- Lather, P. 2003. Applied Derrida: (Mis)Reading the work of mourning in educational research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 35 (3): 257–270.
- Lee, A., C. Manathunga, and P. Kandlbinder. 2008. *Making a place: An oral history of academic development in Australia*. Milperra: HERDSA.
- Leibowitz, B. 2014. Reflections on academic development: What is in a name? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (4): 357–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2014.969978>.
- Ling, P., and Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development. 2009. *Development of academics and higher education futures*. Hawthorn: Swinburne University of Technology.
- Manathunga, C. 2006. Doing educational development ambivalently: Applying post-colonial metaphors to educational development? *International Journal for Academic Development* 11 (1): 19–29.
- Manathunga, C. 2007. “Unhomely” academic developer identities: More post-colonial explorations. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (1): 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440701217287>.
- Manathunga, C. 2011. The field of educational development: Histories and critical questions. *Studies in Continuing Education* 33 (3): 347–362. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037x.2011.613375>.
- Moses, I. 1985. Academic development units and the improvement of teaching. *Higher Education* 14 (1): 75–100.
- Ouellett, M.L. 2010. Overview of faculty development: History and choices. In *A guide to faculty development*, ed. K.J. Gillespie and D.L. Robertson, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Parkes, R.J., J. Gore, and W. Elsworth. 2010. After poststructuralism: Rethinking the discourse of social justice pedagogy. In *Social justice pedagogy across the curriculum: The practice of freedom*, ed. T.K. Chapman and N. Hobbel. New York: Routledge.
- Richardson, L., and E.A. St. Pierre. 2005. Writing: A method of inquiry. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln, 3rd ed. pp. 959–978. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Rowland, S. 2002. Overcoming fragmentation in professional life: The challenge for academic development. *Higher Education Quarterly* 56 (1): 52–64.
- Rowland, S. 2003. Academic development: A practical or theoretical business? In *The scholarship of academic development*, ed. H.M.R. Eggins, 13–22. Buckingham/Philadelphia: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Sorcinielli, M., A. Austin, P. Eddy, and A. Beach. 2006. *Creating the future of faculty development: Learning from the past, understanding the present*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Victoria University. 2012. Learning & teaching portal – Staff contacts. Retrieved 30 Aug 2012, from <http://tls.vu.edu.au/portal/staffindex.aspx>.
- Webb, G. 1992. On pretexts for higher education development activities. *Higher Education* 24 (3): 351–361.
- Webb, G. 1996. Theories of staff development: Progress and power. *International Journal for Academic Development* 1 (2): 59–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144960010208>.



Crossing Divides: Professional Development for Third Space Professionals

4

Vivien Silvey, Lacy Pejcinovic, and Tess Snowball

Contents

Introduction	40
Connecting and Learning About Teaching Through Fellowship	43
Learning Through Peer Observation	45
Developing Collaborative Practices	49
Crossing the Divide with Academic Colleagues	49
Crossing the Divide with Collaborative Projects	50
Crossing the Divide Through Collaboration Across the Sector	51
Conclusion	51
References	52

Abstract

The position of academic language and learning (ALL) staff varies widely throughout the higher education sector, with some working within academic areas and others working in the professional space. As a result of this variation, the role of ALL staff is often confused and misunderstood within universities, which leads to devaluation of the role's legitimacy. As third space professionals, it is imperative for ALL staff to work with research-led best practice in order to effectively communicate their role to the sector. Professional development can play a key part in this process. However, ALL staff frequently face a dilemma of how to resource professional development in a sector where the fiscal environment is restrictive. This chapter presents a series of case studies on professional development options and strategies for ALL staff at an Australian university. These include

V. Silvey (✉) · L. Pejcinovic · T. Snowball
Academic Skills and Learning Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT,
Australia
e-mail: academicskills@anu.edu.au; academicskills@anu.edu.au; academicskills@anu.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_6

39

participation in the university's Educational Fellowship Scheme (accredited by the Higher Education Academy) and an internal peer observation project that serves the joint purpose of training and mentoring new staff as well as providing ongoing professional development for experienced staff. Within the institution, we collaborate with professional and academic units to facilitate ours and others' professional development. Further, our collaboration and engagement with external professional bodies and the broader ALL community enable us to communicate our role both within our institution and externally. This chapter assesses the scope of these programs and activities to enable dialogue between third space professionals and academic staff. It provides recommendations for maintaining and utilizing sustainable professional development for ALL staff, with lessons for other professional learning support staff, in a resource-limited context.

Keywords

Academic literacies · Professional development · Third space · Peer observation · Educational Fellowship Scheme · Collaboration

Introduction

Universities have historically been divided between academic staff and nonacademic staff. Those categorized as nonacademic staff have had various labels including general staff, administrative staff, or, as is currently the trend, professional staff (Sebalj et al. 2012). Regardless of the label, this often arbitrary binary division has led to a prevailing “us” and “them” attitude (Whitchurch 2008). Despite this fact, today there are many staff whose roles cross and complicate the divide. Whitchurch (2008, 2009, 2010) identifies these as “third space professionals” and highlights that they often face legitimacy issues when working across the divide (Whitchurch 2009, p. 409). Professional development can provide opportunities for third space professionals to improve practice, enhance their professional skills, and potentially break down some of the divides within our institutions. However, the reality many of us face is that opportunities for professional development are constrained by the current fiscal realities of the higher education sector. In this chapter, we highlight how we, as a group of academic language and learning (ALL) advisers from the Academic Skills and Learning Centre (ASLC) at the Australian National University (ANU), have harnessed professional development (PD) opportunities to communicate legitimacy across third space divides and improve our practice in a sustainable way. We present and reflect on case studies of PD options that, we propose, offer strategies for other third space professionals across the sector.

ALL staff epitomize what it means to be a third space professional for two main reasons. The first is that we primarily focus on students' skills and literacies development rather than academic content. ALL staff play a pivotal role in assisting students to develop academic literacies and skills and collaborate with academic staff to embed academic development into curricula (AALL 2016). For example, ALL

staff work with individual students on their written assignments, collaborate with academics to provide embedded workshops about how to approach and prepare particular assignments, and offer a range of guidance on academic literacies and skills such as referencing, time management, essay writing, and so on, delivered across workshops, drop-ins, and booked appointments with students. The focus of ALL staff varies across the sector, as some advisers assist with English for academic purposes, others focus on particular cohorts of students, and a number work in centralized teams and others are located within specific faculties. Regardless of our different approaches, ALL teachers' work with students' academic literacies and skills is traditionally viewed as supplementary to academic content knowledge. This conception places ALL staff on the margins of academia (Chanock 2007, p. 273).

The second reason ALL staff belong in the third space is that our employment status varies widely throughout the sector, with some employed as academics and others categorized as professional or general staff. This variability mirrors Whitchurch's subcategory of third space professionals, the "blended professional" (Whitchurch 2008, pp. 283–284). In Whitchurch's categorization, such staff often have academic credentials (MA or PhD), experience in academia or external but related sectors, though are not "employed on academic terms and conditions" (Whitchurch 2010, p. 628). ALL staff have progressed from the 1980s and 1990s where small "teams" were primarily located in counselling centers or dispersed on an ad hoc basis across faculties (Craswell and Bartlett 2001; Milnes 2005). Their work was understood to be remedial, generic, individual, and distinctively separate from the curriculum (Green et al. 2005, p. 92). Most are now located in single administrative units or in smaller units embedded within faculties. Nevertheless, the issue of categorization in the organizational structure of institutions is still prominent. Recent statistics from the Association for Academic Language and Learning (2015) indicate that from across the Australian higher education sector, 44.9% of full-time equivalent positions, ALL staff are employed as academic staff (for a total of 202.5 staff) and 55.1% are employed as "general" (including the aforementioned labels, for a total of 248.1 staff). Despite the number of ALL staff in academic roles, most still experience misunderstanding of their work among academic staff (Velautham and Picard 2009, p. A-131).

As blended professionals, ALL staff work in ambiguous conditions and seek to utilize the advantages and complexities of both the academic and professional spaces they traverse. Despite their flexibility, blended professionals find they face legitimacy issues as they do not "belong" to either realm completely (Whitchurch 2009, p. 409). They rely much more on day-to-day relationship and authority building, rather than being able to fall back on preconceived and understood legitimacies attached to their "position in the organisation chart or specialist knowledge" (Whitchurch 2009, p. 409). The challenge that ALL staff face is to communicate their work in a shared language and to show that their work contributes to the three roles of "teaching, research, and service" (Bath and Smith, cited in Velautham and Picard 2009, p. A-131; Macfarlane 2011). Often this is a challenge because the ALL practice is

still very much focused on “skills development rather than subject content, [and] academics in the faculties sometimes find it difficult to understand its theoretical foundations” (Velautham and Picard 2009, pp. A-130–A-131). ALL professionals need to establish a way by which we can assert ourselves as “subject experts” in the context of pedagogy and show how we can contribute to enhancing student success.

Several scholars (Briguglio 2007; Chanock 2007; Craswell and Bartlett 2001; Green et al. 2005; Milnes 2005;) have engaged with the difficulty of arriving at an agreed identity for ALL staff. Are we a discipline, a “community of practice,” a “profession” (Milnes 2005)? Could ALL staff be understood as “para-academics” who specialize in only one area of the teaching/research/service triad (Macfarlane 2011, p. 59)? The answer to these questions seems to be determined by what kind of work ALL advisers do. Common across our work is a substantial element of teaching – whether this is large groups engaging in focused workshops on generic skills such as essay writing or in one-to-one consultations with students in which we provide personalized guidance. Most ALL staff also undertake varying amounts of research and publication, typically concentrating on the scholarship of teaching and learning (Chanock 2007). Having an ongoing debate about our identity forces ALL staff to think more carefully about how we are positioned alongside our academic colleagues. This in turn influences how we establish a dialogue and connection with academics to ensure that writing is viewed as “contextualized social practice” which is embedded “in the context of the particular discipline” (Catterall 2004, p. 38).

A shared language with academic staff is necessary to carry out our teaching and research roles, and one way to achieve a shared language is through PD. There is a distinct gap in ALL literature and in literature on PD which addresses what kind of and how to use PD to achieve this shared language for third space professionals such as ALL practitioners. While the importance of PD is well noted (Graham 2012; Webster-Wright 2009), the literature is significantly focused on programs and content (Trevitt and Perera 2009; Webster-Wright 2009) and models of PD (Dall’Alba and Sandberg 2006; Pill 2005) in non-ALL workplaces. Further complicating the gap in the research is the need for best-practice PD that spans variations across institutional ALL practices which will improve our ability to communicate our legitimacy. As outlined above, different ALL staff teach from different focal points, for instance, from the perspective of English language teaching, genre development, or cohort-specific teaching. Since the focus of ALL teaching varies so widely across the sector, there are no uniform formal qualifications or clear career development paths for ALL professionals. While some institutions require ALL advisers to have English language teaching qualifications such as certificates in teaching English as a second or additional language, others prefer staff to have qualifications in higher education teaching (e.g., graduate certificate or master of higher education). Some favor degrees in linguistics and languages, and others select staff based on their tertiary qualifications and teaching experience (AALL 2010). Given the diversity of ALL staff qualifications, identifying PD that not only bridges these differences but supports staff in communicating across boundaries is all the more crucial.

An added challenge is to identify sustainable PD in the current higher education fiscal environment where PD opportunities are increasingly difficult to fund. In order to engage in PD such as training opportunities, travel to conferences, meetings of the Association of Academic Language and Learning (AALL), and attending or hosting local PD events, ALL staff typically have to apply competitively for funding or pay their own way. Even allowing for the time and resources to accommodate informal PD can be difficult to justify. Finding alternative ways to fund and sustain good practice PD in this environment is therefore vital.

This chapter reflects on a range of PD options and strategies for third space professional ALL staff, using case studies from the ASLC at the ANU. ASLC is a central ALL support unit that assists students through a combination of one-to-one, group, and online teaching. For most of our group teaching, ASLC staff collaborate with academic staff to embed workshops within faculty subjects. ASLC has five full-time and a pool of casual ALL advisers. ASLC learning advisers hold a variety of academic qualifications coupled with teaching experience, and each of our advisers either has completed tertiary qualifications in education or has completed internal training in tertiary teaching.

Our chapter focuses on three key PD areas that have helped establish a shared language in our institution. These include participation in our university's Educational Fellowship Scheme (EFS), accredited by the UK Higher Education Academy; an internal peer observation of teaching (POT) project that serves the dual purpose of providing training for new staff and ongoing PD for experienced staff; and extensive internal and external collaboration that not only establishes relationships in the broader ALL community and higher education professional bodies but also furthers our legitimacy and communicates our alignment with the academic teaching framework. We argue that each of these PD strategies individually and in combination have improved our ability to work across the divides within our institution. Through our case studies, we provide examples of ways to provide and maintain sustainable PD for ALL staff, with lessons for other third space professionals in a resource-limited context.

Connecting and Learning About Teaching Through Fellowship

The Centre for Higher Education Learning and Teaching (CHELT 2015) at ANU provides a number of PD courses as well as ongoing workshops around teaching and learning. In 2014, CHELT adopted the Educational Fellowship Scheme (EFS) as a way to recognize staff's teaching skills and experience across ANU. Both professional and academic staff can access the EFS. The EFS is further detailed in this volume in Beckmann's (► Chap. 18, "Professional Staff, Professional Recognition: Bringing Learner Support Staff into the Fellowship of University Educators.") The EFS formally recognizes experience and contributions in teaching and learning across four descriptors of the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF) (HEA 2011).

These four descriptors encompass Associate Fellow (AFHEA), which recognizes an initial amount of experience with effective teaching practices and/or supporting learning; Fellow (FHEA), recognizing a more substantial range of effective teaching experiences; Senior Fellow (SFHEA), which acknowledges both significant experience with effective teaching and positive influence on peers' teaching; and Principal Fellow (PFHEA), which is awarded to those committed to promoting effective teaching at a strategic leadership level, typically with a national and international impact. ANU has an institutional subscription that represents a positive investment, so staff can engage in the scheme at no cost to themselves or their division. To do so, staff attend information workshops and then complete a formal application including a substantial body of reflective writing. The application includes two referee reports, and applications are assessed by two assessors who are existing EFS members at Fellow or higher level. Once a staff member is awarded fellowship, they are entitled to use post-nominal letters as recognition of their teaching and can participate in ongoing fellowship activities, which CHELT strongly promotes and facilitates across the university.

ASLC advisers have been early adopters of the EFS. All advisers (including our casual learning advisers) have participated in the scheme across the range of recognition levels. Engaging in this type of PD entails a number of challenges, particularly in regard to time commitment. Within the ASLC team, on average it takes two to four full days to prepare and write the application. For team members who complete the application in the time between teaching workshops and tutorials, it can take up to a few weeks or a semester to complete. Despite the substantial time commitment, all ASLC team members have joined the scheme in the space of two years.

One particular aspect of the EFS that has been of benefit to the whole team is the emphasis on pedagogy expressed through reflective practice. Specifically, reflective practice enhances staff understanding of teaching strategies, informed decision-making, and collaborative practices (Bolton 2010, pp. 5, 183; Brookfield 1995, p. 22; Ramsden 2003, p. 8). For our team, engaging with the EFS has formalized our reflective practice at the same time as gaining professional recognition. Encouraging our newer staff to apply for the AFHEA and to work toward the FHEA has enabled us to implement a culture of reflective practice and PD that starts early and is ongoing and as required by the HEA (HEA 2011, p. 7). As this chapter later examines, the EFS has prompted us to use the lessons learnt from reflective practice within our peer observation practices. Consequent to our team's reflective practice, we have tested new approaches in one-to-one and group teaching, adjusted methods and protocols on how we teach students at risk, and organized regular staff meetings to reflect and collaborate on specific pedagogical challenges.

Concerning the professional and academic staff divide, we have found that using the university-wide system of professional recognition has enhanced conversations with our academic colleagues and other teams. One issue that our center faces is the lack of opportunity to liaise outside of immediate involvement in embedded work. In our embedded work, we collaborate with academic staff to design and deliver specific workshops within their courses. Aside from these collaborations, we have

previously had few opportunities to discuss issues such as course design or student support with academics in larger forums such as education committees. This lack of opportunity is due not only to our teaching loads restricting available time (Chanock 2007) but also to our third space position. For example, since we are a central unit of professional rather than academic staff, we are usually not invited to faculty meetings. One benefit of joining the EFS is that members across the university are encouraged to attend a variety of events around pedagogy, the challenges we face in classes, and education policies. In these forums we have the opportunity to meet staff across the university whom we would not typically meet in other situations. Whereas typically institutional networking tends to occur in departmental silos, the EFS provides opportunities to transcend such divisions. These opportunities enable us to promote our services and to gain standing as teaching staff. For example, within these contexts we have worked with Academic Deans to discuss ways in which we can support a diverse range of students, run EFS workshops with professional staff from other third space areas, and liaise with new teaching staff about embedded workshops.

Further to this personal interaction with our colleagues across the university, CHELT encourages EFS Fellows and Senior Fellows to provide referee and assessment reports for both academic and professional staff applications. Through these verbal and written processes, the EFS enables us to engage in professional conversations with academic staff that build awareness of our shared language. For example, when preparing reports, we meet with applicants from other areas of the institution to discuss their teaching experiences and teaching philosophies. Through this conversation we gain mutual understanding of our approaches to teaching and learning. In a different manner, assessing applications offers viewpoints into how various staff envisage their teaching. Whereas typically discipline content is a cause for division between academic and ALL staff (Velautham and Picard 2009), the EFS assessments' focus on pedagogy facilitates a shared language. The assessment process is anonymized, yet this insight into the different ways people think of and approach teaching and learning means that we have a better understanding of the types of language and teaching philosophies that academic staff prefer to use. As Wright-Neville and Grossi (2015) emphasize, a key component of promoting embedded teaching is successful management of relationships between ALL and academic staff. This shared language has not only added to the perceived legitimacy of our teaching but has also strengthened our collaborations with academic staff.

Learning Through Peer Observation

The practice of peer observation of teaching (POT) is not new in higher education institutions and for ASLC is a core PD component as it allows us to uphold our professional responsibility to ensure quality control of our work. The literature variously refers to POT as peer observation, peer review, peer appraisal, and peer

development (Bell and Cooper 2013; Harris et al. 2008; Yiend et al. 2014). We use “observation” to avoid judgmental connotations and to indicate a more formative approach and informal process. POT has been used in higher education for decades, in a variety of forms including performance review or appraisal, as a stepping stone in promotion, and more recently as a process linked to reflective practice (Bell and Cooper 2013; Harris et al. 2008). It also forms part of the expectation that academics use the pedagogy of teaching and learning to improve student outcomes (Hutchings 1996). In their Australian Learning and Teaching Council supported handbook on peer review of teaching, Harris et al. (2008) argue that POT can provide a valid form of teaching evaluation which can supplement student evaluations. At ASLC, we employ an optional POT program to stimulate reflection and development of our resources and practices to meet students’ needs alongside the development of our professional practice. PD such as POT that is embedded in the professional’s particular academic context provides an opportunity to share and build on each other’s practices (Boud and Brew 2013; Knight et al. 2006, p. 320). It is often through the eyes of others that we are able to “make sense of our own practice in order to improve it” (Hutchings 1996, p. 225). Drawing on Harris et al.’s (2008) handbook, Table 1 summarizes the core principles that can be used to guide a higher education POT program.

In 2013 we introduced a peer observation process. The principles in Table 1 underpinned the ASLC POT. It was designed to be self-evaluative, reflective, and “a collaborative and embedded peer observation process that, informed by the literature, emphasises the importance of ongoing informal conversations to enhance our knowledge and practice as teachers” (Dalley et al. 2013). In our team’s preparation for the program, we agreed on a constructive approach to observing each other and to giving and receiving feedback. As such it was an integral part of ensuring research-led best-practice teaching as a way to enhance student learning (Lomas and Nicholls 2005).

The process involved paired observation of our one-to-one teaching. This began with a pre-observation conversation where colleagues discussed what they wanted to get out of the process, using a template with suggested topics to guide the observation and feedback (see Tables 2, 3 and 4). The process was intended to be as open as possible to allow for self-direction based on the nature of the pairing. Following this was the observation of a one-to-one consultation with a student, a post-observation conversation, and a written reflection. We then repeated the process with the roles reversed, creating a cyclical process (see Fig. 1). The cyclical nature of the POT is important due to the expectation that both the observer and observed benefit (Harris et al. 2008, p. 6). Typically, each staff member would observe and be observed once each semester.

While staff involved found the POT process to be rewarding and developmental, the main drawbacks were the considerable time involved in completing a cycle and its lack of flexibility concerning other teaching forms. Further, whereas the process was valuable for mid-career staff, we recognized that it required adaptation to suit both new staff, who need guided observation, and experienced staff, who desire more efficiency. With these issues in mind, we redesigned our POT program in 2015. Drawing on more flexible models and guides (Bell 2012; Harris et al. 2008), our

Table 1 Harris et al. (2008, p. 6)

Core principles of peer review of teaching	
1.	Has the enhancement of teaching and learning as its primary purpose
2.	Is a fundamental tool for the evaluation and development of teaching, complementing feedback collected from students
3.	Recognizes university teachers' shared professional responsibilities for monitoring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning
4.	Acknowledges and capitalizes on the educative expertise and judgment of university teachers in their fields
5.	Provides feedback that affirms good practice as well as suggests areas in which development might be helpful

Table 2 Template for teaching activity checklist

Checklist form
Planning/organization/content
Teaching strategies/resources
Presentation/class relationship/class management
Assessment and monitoring of students
Additional comments and suggestions for future development

Table 3 Template for option to identify particular topics

Identified topics			
Reviewee:		Reviewer:	
Date:		Unit:	
Activity type:			
Topic:			
Topic:			

Table 4 Template for free response – no particular topic or activity identified

Free response			
Reviewee:		Reviewer:	
Date:		Unit:	
Activity type:			

revised POT program encompasses the idea that while guided observation is valuable for new staff, observing in itself is an important learning tool for experienced staff. This is what Thomson et al. (2015, p. 1061) refer to as “just watching,” which allows the observer to focus on what they think is important and relevant and can lead to a range of changes in teaching practice. Another element of our program is the use of professional conversations in the form of dialogues, which are efficient and valuable for reflection (Pilkington 2013). Table 5 outlines the elements of our modified POT program.

Fig. 1 ASLC peer observation cycle – between colleagues of similar experience

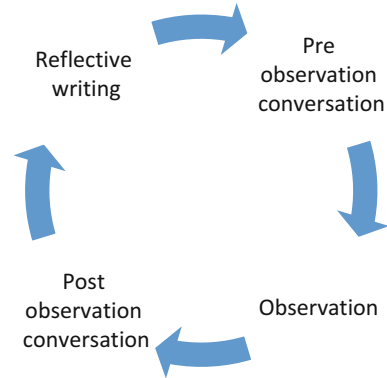


Table 5 Adapting a POT model to work with staff at different levels of experience

Flexible approach to POT	
1.	New staff participate in “guided” observation of an existing staff member’s teaching (one-to-one or group), followed by a collegial conversation and reflective writing
2.	Mid-career staff may choose the existing POT program using the cycle in Fig. 1
3.	Later career staff may choose a less formal approach relying on “just watching” and a conversational feedback mechanism

This model reflects the importance of recognizing the particular needs of our new staff involved in this PD. It allows them to become familiar with the content delivery and encourages them to reflect on pedagogical practices. Encouraging reflective writing also assists in applying for EFS fellowship. The model’s flexibility can incorporate all of our teaching activities, such as preparation, generic course delivery, embedded teaching, one-to-one consultations, and drop-ins. Staff members can choose the peer observation mode that best suits their own developmental purposes. It is intended as nonjudgmental and constructive, using the “critical friend” principle (Bell and Cooper 2013; Lomas and Nicholls 2005). Importantly, the process is informal; is not linked to any other university processes, i.e., underperformance or promotion; and is developmental, regardless of career stage.

We have found that the revised POT’s efficiency is sustainable and financially justifiable, as reflective practice leads to a more self-aware team with a commitment to a culture of collaboration, improvement, and innovation. Through POT, we learn to communicate about our teaching and learning in an honest and developmental manner which has improved our practices by helping to encourage consistency in the way that we teach. One direct outcome has been the development of single, coherent, whole-of-practice core curriculum. The curriculum we devised encompasses the range of support we offer to students including our one-to-one and group teaching. It was our PD practices that enhanced our ability to undertake the redesign of learning outcomes, learning activities, workshops, and linked resources. Having

a core curriculum directly contribute to the ease with which we can communicate our role to those elsewhere in the university.

Developing Collaborative Practices

Having discussed our internal PD practices, we now turn our attention to the importance of PD in fostering engagement and collaboration with the wider community both within our institution and across the sector. These collaborations are important in enhancing our practice but also through helping us to communicate our roles to our community.

Crossing the Divide with Academic Colleagues

An essential element of our work is communicating the value of embedded ALL teaching within disciplinary settings. As discussed earlier, the level of ALL staff engagement with academics differs between faculties. Engagement might include inviting an ALL adviser being invited to conduct a guest lecture or workshop or working collaboratively to design and scaffold activities that enhance students' learning of academic skills. In order for ALL practitioners to develop strong and productive relationships with academic colleagues, we need to be able to communicate our purpose, our academic contribution, and the services we offer to our academic colleagues in the broader university (Briguglio 2007; Catterall 2004). The PD outlined above, EFS and POT, sets each staff member up with these communication approaches and effective teaching strategies which can be adapted to the wide variety of academic disciplines across the university. Our embedded practice requires us to be open about our teaching and constantly observed by our academic colleagues. Our POT program has enabled our team to improve the culture of openness regarding our teaching practices and has provided a language in which to receive and give constructive feedback. It has helped us to develop a single "voice," anchored in a core curriculum, through which we can communicate with academics.

We have had positive outcomes as a result of our enhanced communication and collaborations with academic colleagues. One significant and quantifiable outcome has been a marked increase in the number of embedded workshops we provide. In 2015 there was a 31% increase in number of embedded workshops from the previous year, followed by an 18% increase in 2016. Figure 2 below shows the marked increase in the number of attendees we reached at these embedded workshops. This increase is particularly apparent in Business where ASLC had previously had little collaboration. This partnership with Business led to the ASLC being awarded a Deputy Vice-Chancellor's recognition award at the end of 2015. The PD discussed in this chapter likely influenced these positive outcomes. The center was able to meet increased demand and exceed expectations, while presenting a uniform purpose that communicated our legitimacy.

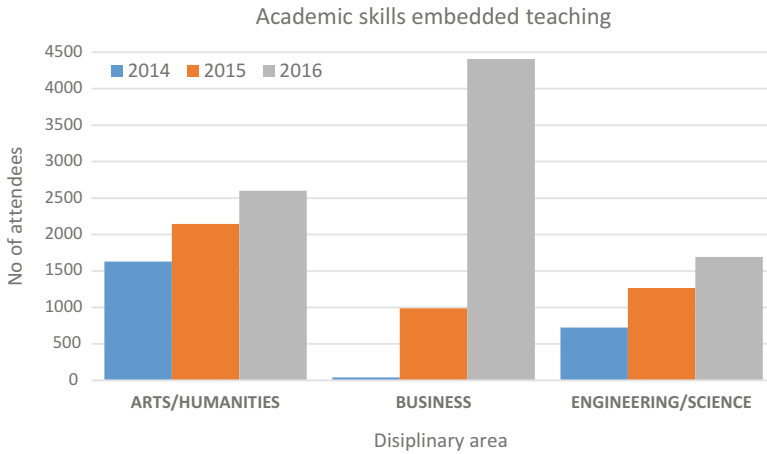


Fig. 2 Increase in numbers of attendees at embedded academic skills workshops in three main disciplinary areas between 2014 and 2016

Crossing the Divide with Collaborative Projects

Collaborative short term on ongoing project work provides a number of opportunities for staff to communicate with colleagues and develop professionally. This type of work has been recognized in the literature as a key characteristic of the third space (Whitchurch 2008; Veles and Carter 2016). It is common in the sector to have teams which bring together different professional staff who might also be considered third space professionals and who share common issues in gaining legitimacy across the institution (Whitchurch 2008). Working together on a common goal enables the sharing of practice and enhanced opportunities for peer learning across areas of expertise. For ASLC one such example is ASLC's collaboration with professional units who support and develop online educational resources. This is an area of prime importance, as collaboration between teaching staff and designers will contribute to the quality of resources. We have developed a close working relationship with ANU Online which has provided us the opportunity to create educational resources together. In particular we cocreated a Moodle site on how to use Turnitin to write with academic integrity that has institution-wide reach. The mutual sharing of knowledge and skills not only led to an excellent educational outcome, it also increased our awareness of each other's institutional roles.

Collaborative projects also provide the opportunity for professional staff to work closely in multidisciplinary teams including academics. At ASLC we have developed a close relationship with the ANU academic development unit, CHELT, with whom we share a common interest and concern in pedagogy. Forging a close tie between these two units has brought PD benefits to ASLC staff involved, many of which were described earlier in this chapter. The close relationship around the EFS has opened up areas of opportunity in terms of visiting other institutions and providing workshops.

Crossing the Divide Through Collaboration Across the Sector

Just as it is important to work across disciplines and areas of expertise within the university, it is also important to collaborate with the sector by participating in professional associations and conducting research. Professionalism in the university sector has had an associated rise in membership with professional associations (Kolsaker 2013; Veles and Carter 2016). Whereas professional associations do not usually serve to provide accreditation, for professional staff they provide the opportunity to develop communities of practice (Chalmers and Keown 2006; Veles and Carter 2016). Additionally, they can provide the opportunity to provide communities of research (Veles and Carter 2016) which brings with it the opportunities to participate in conferences and publish papers, two important components of ongoing PD. Within the sector there are numerous opportunities to do this on an ongoing basis.

At ASLC we have gained a number of significant benefits from our involvement with two associations: our professional association, AALL, and the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA). As ALL practitioners, AALL has offered us the opportunity to participate in national conferences, workshops, and symposiums, as well as conduct research and publish papers. More importantly, AALL has fostered the development of a support network through our local branch where we meet with colleagues and share pedagogical practice and knowledge. Likewise, HERDSA also has local branches that provide similar opportunities for networking. HERDSA has the added advantage of including a wider range of academic and professional staff. At ASLC we have participated in our local HERDSA branch by attending and hosting meetings and workshops. Both these associations have provided opportunities for us to visit other institutions, learn from other colleagues, and participate in workshops on a variety of professionally oriented topics. Local branch meetings have provided excellent PD opportunities that involve very little cost or resourcing.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have outlined a range of PD activities that ASLC staff undertake both formally and informally within a restrictive fiscal environment. These activities require the institution's support, both in recognizing the time required and in supporting institutional recognition and training opportunities. While this cost is not insignificant, we argue that the day-to-day resourcing of the majority of the activities we perform is manageable and provides a range of benefits, such as improved practice and legitimacy. PD activities that recognize the importance of collegial networks, be they within the team or across the divides, provide many opportunities for staff. In particular, they can be helpful for third space staff who have to cross disciplinary and expertise divides as part of their daily work.

A number of the activities that we have discussed in this chapter can be applied to a variety of workplace environments. POT, for example, is flexible enough to suit

staff in different career stages and involved in different teaching and learning areas in higher education. Finding opportunities to collaborate across teams in developing projects or working on areas of interest can be encouraged and supported with the mutual benefit of the teams involved. While not all universities currently participate in schemes such as the EFS, institutions are increasingly moving toward recognition schemes of some kind which give opportunities for staff members to reflect on and be recognized for their teaching experience and, more importantly, to share their practice with others. Crossing divides within universities can be a challenging task for third space staff. However, commitment to ongoing PD aids us in our collaborations with academic and professional staff, as it builds legitimacy and brings recognition to the value of our work.

References

- AALL. (2010). *Association for academic language and learning position statement*. Association for Academic Language and Learning. Retrieved July 2017, from <http://www.aall.org.au/who>.
- AALL. (2015). *Academic Language & Learning (ALL) centres/units—Australian universities*. Association for Academic Language and Learning. Retrieved January 2016, from <http://aall.org.au/sites/default/files/table1aAALLtableALLcentresNov2015.pdf>.
- AALL. (2016). Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL). Retrieved January 2016, from aall.org.au.
- Bell, M. 2012. *Peer observation partnerships in Higher Education*. 2nd ed. Milperra: Higher Educational Research and Development Society of Australasia.
- Bell, M., and P. Cooper. 2013. Peer observation of teaching in university departments: A framework for implementation. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (1): 60–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2011.633753>.
- Bolton, G. 2010. *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. London: Sage Publications.
- Boud, D., and A. Brew. 2013. Reconceptualising academic work as professional practice: implications for academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (3): 208–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2012.671771>.
- Briguglio, C. 2007. The three Rs: Academic Language and Learning (ALL) Advisers getting down to basics with academic colleagues. *Journal of Academic Language & Learning* 1 (1): A10–A17.
- Brookfield, S. 1995. *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-Boss.
- Catterall, J. 2004. The language and academic skills advisor in the teaching partnership: What should be our role? In *'In the future. . . ' Refereed proceedings of the 2003 biannual Language and Academic Skills in Higher Education*, ed. K. Keller-Evans and P. Zeegers, 37–42. Adelaide: The Student Learning Centre, Flinders University. Retrieved January 2016, from <http://www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/LAS2003%20BIANNUAL%20CONFERENCE.pdf>.
- Chalmers, L., and P. Keown. 2006. Communities of practice and professional development. *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 25 (2): 139–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370500510793>.
- Chanock, K. 2007. What academic language and learning advisers bring to the scholarship of teaching and learning: Problems and possibilities for dialogue with the disciplines. *Higher Education Research and Development* 26 (3): 269–280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360701494294>.
- CHELT. (2015). Centre for Higher Education, Learning and Teaching (CHELT). Retrieved January 2016, from <https://services.anu.edu.au/business-units/centre-for-higher-education-learning-teaching>.

- Craswell, G., and A. Bartlett. 2001. Changing identities: LAS advisers. In *Proceedings of the 2001 LAS conference, changing identities: Language and academic skills advisers*, ed. B. James, A. Percy, J. Skillen, and N. Trivett. Wollongong: University of Wollongong. Retrieved January 2016, from <http://learning.uow.edu.au/LAS2001/selected/craswell.pdf>.
- Dall'Alba, G., and J. Sandberg. 2006. Unveiling professional development: A critical review of stage models. *Review of Educational Research* 76 (3): 383–412. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543076003383>.
- Dalley, H., T. Do, & S. Milnes. (2013). Talkin' 'bout teachin' in 1-1 tutes: Developing an informed and informal peer review process. In *11th biennial conference of AALL: New Students, new learning: New challenges?* Melbourne: RMIT. Retrieved January 2016, from <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/a5wbjmsod461.pdf>.
- Graham, C. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (4): 437–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.696326>.
- Green, W., S. Hammer, and R. Stephens. 2005. Locating learning advisers in the new university: What should be our role? In *LAS profession and practice : Refereed Proceedings of the Language and Academic Skills in Higher Education Conference 2005*, ed. S. Milnes, G. Craswell, and A. Bartlett, 87–98. Canberra: The Australian National University. Retrieved January 2016, from <http://www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/las2005/hammgreensteph.pdf>.
- Harris, K.-L., K. Farrell, M. Bell, M. Devlin, and R. James. 2008. *Peer review of teaching in Australian Higher Education: A handbook to support institutions in developing and embedding effective policies and practices*. Carlton, Victoria: Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Retrieved from http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/research/teaching/docs/PeerReviewHandbook_eVersion.pdf.
- HEA. (2011). *The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning*. The Higher Education Academy (HEA). Retrieved January 2016, from www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/ukpsf_2011_english.pdf.
- Hutchings, P. 1996. The peer review of teaching: Progress, issues and prospects. *Innovative Higher Education* 20 (4): 221–234.
- Knight, P., J. Tait, and M. Yorke. 2006. The professional learning of teachers in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 31 (3): 319–339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600680786>.
- Kolsaker, A. 2013. Relocating professionalism in an English university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (2): 129–142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2013.861053>.
- Lomas, L., and G. Nicholls. 2005. Enhancing teaching quality through peer review of teaching. *Quality in Higher Education* 11 (2): 137–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538320500175118>.
- Macfarlane, B. 2011. The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the para-academic. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65 (1): 59–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2010.00467.x>.
- Milnes, S. 2005. LAS and its disciplinary ambitions. In *Critiquing and reflecting : LAS profession and practice : Refereed proceedings of the Language and Academic Skills in Higher Education Conference 2005*, ed. S. Milne, G. Craswell, and A. Bartlett. Canberra: The Australian National University. Retrieved January 2016, from <http://www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/las2005/milnes.pdf>.
- Pilkington, R. 2013. Professional dialogues: Exploring an alternative means of assessing the professional learning of experienced HE academics. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (3): 251–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2012.717225>.
- Pill, A. 2005. Models of professional development in the education and practice of new teachers in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education* 10 (2): 175–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251042000337936>.
- Ramsden, P. 2003. *Learning to teach in Higher Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Sebalj, D., A. Holbrook, and S. Bourke. 2012. The rise of 'professional staff' and demise of the 'non-academic': A study of university staffing nomenclature preferences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (5): 463–472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.715994>.
- Trevitt, C., and C. Perera. 2009. Self and continuing professional learning (development): issues of curriculum and identity in developing academic practice. *Teaching in Higher Education* 14 (4): 347–359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510903050095>.

- Velautham, L., and M. Picard. 2009. Collaborating equals: Engaging faculties through teaching-led research. *Journal of Academic Language & Learning* 3 (2): A130–A141.
- Veles, N., and M.-A. Carter. 2016. Imagining a future: Changing the landscape for third space professionals in Australian higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 38 (5): 519–533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2016.1196938>.
- Webster-Wright, A. 2009. Reframing professional development through understanding authentic professional learning. *Review of Educational Research* 79 (2): 702–739. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308330970>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of Third Space professionals in UK higher. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: a comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418.
- Whitchurch, C. 2010. Some implications of ‘public/private’ space for professional identities in higher education. *Higher Education* 60 (6): 627–640. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10734-010-932>.
- Wright-Neville, C., & V. Grossi. (2015). ‘We’ll see how it goes...?’ *Uncertainties in negotiating support between language advisors and academics*. Paper presented at Critical Intersections: The 12th Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning, Wollongong. Abstract retrieved from <http://www.aall2015uow.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AALL2015-UOW-abstracts-booklet.pdf>.
- Yiend, J., S. Weller, and I. Kinchin. 2014. Peer observation of teaching: He interaction between peer review and developmental models of practice. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 38 (4): 465–484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2012.726967>.



Role of Educational Developers in Aligning Diverse Learning and Teaching Styles in a Transnational University in China

5

Dawn Johnson, James Wilson, Jianmei Xie, and Henk Huijser

Contents

Introduction	56
Educational Development: Academic Discipline? Service Delivery? or Both?	57
Shifting Boundaries	59
Educational Development in a Chinese Context	59
Institutional Context at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University	60
Methodology	63
Survey Analysis: Perceptions of the Role of Educational Developers at XJTU	64
CPS Program Participants	64
PGR Program Participants	65
Recommendations and Suggestions	67
Conclusion	67
Appendix 1	68
Appendix 2	68
References	69

Abstract

The role of educational developers (or academic developers) has become increasingly important in national and transnational contexts, in parallel with efforts to elevate the status of learning and teaching in higher education. In this chapter, the role of educational developers in driving institutional learning and teaching agendas is explored, with a specific focus on a transnational and interdisciplinary context in China. The case study will be drawn from experiences at Xi'an

D. Johnson · J. Wilson · J. Xie
Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou, China
e-mail: dawn.johnson@xjtlu.edu.cn; james.wilson@xjtlu.edu.cn; xjmxie@sina.cn

H. Huijser (✉)
Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, QLD, Australia
e-mail: h.huijser@qut.edu.au

Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU). The status of educational developers as professional staff is analyzed, as well as its consequent impact on their ability to drive learning and teaching strategies in a transnational context with high levels of diversity among staff backgrounds and a high turnover of academic staff. The data for the case study is drawn from interviews with educational developers and a survey with a range of academic staff at XJTLU. Based on the analysis, a set of recommendations that are transferable is provided and will benefit educational developers working in transnational contexts.

Keywords

Educational developers · Academic developers · Professional staff · Transnational education · Chinese higher education · Learning and teaching in higher education · Teaching assistants · UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) · Certificate of Professional Studies · Postgraduate Research Skills Development

Introduction

The role of educational developers has become increasingly important in national and transnational contexts, running parallel with efforts to elevate the status of learning and teaching in higher education (Gardner 2016). In China, this is reflected in a long-standing concern with improving the “quality” of education (Seah 2011). Within the university focus on research, teaching, and professional service, research has long trumped the other two in terms of status and still does in many cases. This is to some extent historically and structurally embedded in universities and therefore difficult to change. Evidently, career advancement as an academic is directly tied to research output and ability to attract research income, and teaching has long been a poor second cousin in this process (Nunn and Pillay 2014). Whereas concerted efforts have been made in recent years to change this, driven to an important extent by educational developers, especially in the British and Australasian contexts (Kek and Hammer 2015), there appears to be scant investigation into the identity of educational developers in China and their impact on learning and teaching enhancement.

In this chapter, the role of educational developers in driving institutional learning and teaching agendas is explored, as well as the complexities involved in that mission, with a specific focus on a transnational and interdisciplinary context in China. The chapter starts with a discussion of relevant literature, followed by an overview of the institutional context, and the factors that impact on it. This includes the various organizations or professional bodies, both Chinese- and UK-based, which frame the policy environment and the everyday practice at Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU).

XJTLU is a joint venture between Xi’an Jiaotong University in China and Liverpool University in the UK. The university is based in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, and was founded in 2006. It is relatively unique in China, in that it merges two different higher education systems. This means that XJTLU is an international collaborative Chinese University (rather than a satellite campus of a UK university)

and is the only university in China with dual degree awarding powers: from the Chinese Ministry of Education and from the University of Liverpool. As such, upon completion of their studies, students will be awarded a University of Liverpool degree and an XJTLU degree (from the Chinese Ministry of Education). While this creates exciting opportunities, it also creates potential challenges, especially as they relate to culture and differences in educational traditions. XJTLU, as an English Medium of Instruction (EMI) Institution in China, offers a degree which is partly UK-designed and needs to comply with UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) requirements, and partly contextualized, making it distinguishable from the “home” degrees in terms of format and content (Eland and King 2015).

After framing the theoretical and overall context, the practice of educational development in the XJTLU context is explored, by presenting two sets of data that are drawn from the authors’ experiences. An analysis, based on interview data, follows the status of academic developers and its impact on their ability to drive learning and teaching strategies in this transnational context, which is characterized by high levels of diversity among staff, specifically in terms of cultural and educational backgrounds, and a relatively high turnover of academic staff. At XJTLU, educational developers are currently “professional staff,” according to their contracts, rather than academic staff, while teaching assistants are on casual academic contracts (as PhD and master’s students). In this chapter, the implications are discussed of perceptions of educational developers as professional staff by academic staff, and resulting implications for their own sense of identity, both of which gain an added urgency in a Chinese context.

In terms of learning and teaching, people at XJTLU come together from very different pedagogical backgrounds in a higher education institution that strives to be unique and needs to strike the right balance between two educational systems. Based on this analysis, a set of recommendations is provided that are transferable and will benefit academic developers working in transnational contexts.

Educational Development: Academic Discipline? Service Delivery? or Both?

Before exploring the role of educational developers in the XJTLU context, it is important to establish the terminology used, as educational developers have different titles and different job descriptions in different higher education contexts. For example, they are sometimes called “academic developers,” sometimes “staff developers,” sometimes “curriculum developers,” and sometimes “professional developers” (Clegg 2009; Kek and Hammer 2015). This diversity in terminology is important, as it not only reflects the ways in which educational developers are viewed in particular contexts, and thus their status, but also their effectiveness in driving institutional learning and teaching agendas, i.e., what they do. The latter is indeed their primary role: the enhancement of learning and teaching across universities, which involves assisting academic staff in improving their teaching practice. Rowland (2007, p. 9) refers to educational development as “a site of creative doubt and contestation.” Similarly, Grant (2007) argues that “[educational] developers work in zones marked by uncertainty and ambiguity. One

response to the uncertainties about who we are and our place in the academy is to assert and defend a particular identity” (p. 35). This identity as “educational developers” is in itself not straightforward, as there is much variety between different institutions in where educational developers are positioned. For example, are they generally seen as “academics”? Or are they “service providers” or “professional staff” in an administrative role? Or a combination of these? In each case, this raises questions about skills and qualifications and indeed about disciplinary backgrounds (Carew et al. 2008). Moreover, it has a serious impact on the way educational developers see themselves and on the way they perceive their own effectiveness. According to Little and Green (2012), educational developers often occupy a “betwixt and between” space in the university environment, sometimes on the margins, sometimes in the center, and anywhere in between, both in terms of their identity and in terms of their location in the university structure. This ambiguous identity of educational developers will be further explored in this chapter.

Many educational developers come from specific disciplinary backgrounds and do not have qualifications in educational development, since such qualifications currently do not exist. Rather they have morphed into the role from a disciplinary base and have degrees in history, media studies, social science, and education and specializations therein, but not a degree in educational development. Some would argue that this is now changing, and that educational development can be seen as a discipline in itself, or indeed should be seen as a discipline in itself. For example, Carew et al. (2008, p. 52) note that during the past 15 years, educational development has emerged as:

... a fledgling academic discipline from its practice-based past. A new discipline is initially characterised by confusion and diversity; next comes paradigmatic agreement where adherents to the field discuss shared foci, problems and practices to negotiate a loose but recognisable Community of Practice (Lave and Wenger 1991). Finally, the discipline emerges as a recognisable academic field with clarity of intentions, terminology, goals and practices.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that educational development is an emerging discipline, particularly in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand (Hicks 2005; Knewstubb et al. 2015), through organizations such as the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), and the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) or at the very least a community of practice (Wenger 1999). However, even if there is now a recognizable community of practice of educational developers who recognize each other as performing similar roles and having similar (academic?) identities, there is still a very wide variety of ways in which educational developers are positioned within different universities. For example, while they are in some universities part of centralized learning and teaching enhancement centers, in others they are part of a range of other administrative units, for example, academic quality units or human resources departments. In yet other university contexts, educational developers are embedded in faculties. Similarly, some are on academic contracts, while others are on administrative contracts. The latter is a particularly pressing issue if, as an educational developer, you see yourself as a change agent among academics (Hick 2005), because in that context it matters for your status (and thus your effectiveness) whether you are seen as a fellow academic (or peer) or as an

administrator (or “enforcer of policy”). This can become an even more urgent issue in cross-cultural contexts such as XJTLU.

Shifting Boundaries

In a transnational university such as XJTLU, one key characteristic is that academic staff (and to a lesser extent professional staff) come from a wide variety of educational and cultural backgrounds, as noted above. However, in an increasingly globalized higher education environment, it could be argued that such diversity has increasingly become the norm. Killick (2016), for example, argues that “the internationalisation of the learning and teaching landscape is now so prevalent, so varied, and so important that we need to professionalise the international academic” (p. 5). Of course this immediately raises questions of who “we” are and who the “international academic” is, and indeed it raises the question of what “professional” means in different cultural contexts, as even that is often contested. This is what Stefani (2015) alludes to in her discussion of educational development in a Saudi Arabian context: “the most challenging aspect of working in Saudi Arabia is not in sharing [educational] development practices, but rather in understanding culturally different conceptions of leadership” (p. 14). Jin and Cortazzi (2006) talk about “cultures of learning” in this respect, with specific reference to a Chinese context. This is relevant to our case here, as it raises the question (again) of whether educational developers are “leaders” in learning and teaching or “enforcers” of learning and teaching policy and ensuring compliance, which may be a culturally based perception. If the former is the case, then the status of those who are meant to be leading becomes very important, especially in cultural contexts where status equals currency, so whether educational developers are seen as academics or as professional staff gains saliency. Of course this is the case in all university settings to some extent, but it becomes more salient in some cultural contexts than in others. Perhaps “enablers” would be a more appropriate term than “leaders” in this respect. So how does this play out in the Chinese higher education environment and in particular in an explicitly transnational university such as XJTLU? Furthermore, how do different regulatory requirements (e.g., UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Chinese Ministry of Education, Jiangsu Province Ministry of Education) relate to each other in a transnational university? These interactions can be potentially contradictory, so they are often dependent on highly complex negotiations to bring two distinct systems into some degree of alignment. At XJTLU, educational developers play a crucial part in managing this complexity, as they work across the institution, and help academic staff to negotiate variations in different systems.

Educational Development in a Chinese Context

There is limited existing literature on the role of educational developers in the Chinese context. However, there is some potential confusion around the terminology in this respect. For example, “educational developers” at XJTLU, who focus on the

Postgraduate Research (PGR) Skills Development Program, are equivalent to “researcher developers” at its British partnership institution, the University of Liverpool; its Chinese equivalence is not commonly used in China. The PGR Program is an interesting example, as it provides teaching skills training (for teaching assistants) as well as research skills training. Thus, there is a level of overlap between “educational development” and “researcher development” in this context. In general, the role of “educational developer” is not a stand-alone position in Chinese universities, but is rather embedded in a variety of roles within institutions, for example, an officer based in a Unit of Teaching Affairs, a trainer working in a Center for Teacher Development, and a manager who has staff training responsibilities but is based in a Human Resources Office (Teacher Excellence Center, Jiangnan University 2015). Moreover, many full-time academics, especially those in social science subjects, also act as educational developers taking up the responsibility for educational service among their peers (Harris et al. 2008). In other words, if situated in a Department of Education at a Chinese university, “educational development” could be regarded as an academic discipline; but if viewed as a job responsibility, “educational development” may be embedded across the university and fragmented as different aspects of professional service delivery. The downside of this ambiguity is that “education” is viewed as an academic discipline, and educational developers situated in education faculties are therefore seen as “academics,” while those outside of academic faculties and working in central units (e.g., the Academic Enhancement Center at XJTLU) are often classed as “administrative staff” or “professional staff.” This will likely have a significant impact on the professional identities of educational developers or those who are tasked with “educational development” duties as part of their administrative roles (Cortazzi and Jin 2002). It will also have a significant impact on how educational developers are perceived in universities in China or, in this case, at a transnational university (XJTLU).

Institutional Context at Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Before discussing this study in detail, it is important to explain the specific context of Xi’an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU), in particular the specific factors that impact on the role of educational developers. As mentioned, XJTLU is a new pioneering international university based in the city of Suzhou on China’s east coast. XJTLU was founded in 1996 by Xi’an Jiaotong University China and the University of Liverpool UK as a joint venture. As an independent Sino-Foreign cooperative university, it aims to capture the essence of both its prestigious parent universities, and it is the first and only one of its kind approved by the Ministry of Education in China.

XJTLU’s aspires “to become a research-led international university in China and a Chinese university recognized internationally for its uniqueness” (XJTLU website n.d.). XJTLU makes it its mission “to cultivate technical and managerial professionals with international perspectives and competitive capabilities, contribute its expertise in business and technology to economic and social development, undertake research in areas where humanity faces severe challenges and explore new models

for higher education that will exert influence on the development of education in China and the world” (XJTLU website [n.d.](#)). The university’s mission statements include a strong focus on international research as well as a variety of global educational issues. This internationalized approach is demonstrated in that around 70% of the university’s teaching staff are non-Chinese.

In this context, the key document from an academic development perspective is the university’s academic strategy (2011–2016), which highlights as one of its key objectives the enhancement of learning and teaching. This is supported by the Institutional Principles and Regulations document which clearly identifies the “quality of teaching” (B4, p. 8) as a primary focus and one that shall be maintained, reviewed, and, where possible, enhanced. The institutional vehicle to ensure this quality is adherence to the UK QAA framework.

XJTLU has a clear value-driven commitment to the Continuing Professional Development for all staff involved in teaching and the support of learning at the institution. The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) (Higher Education Academy 2015) has become central to this commitment and has provided a clear framework for the development of XJTLU’s Certificate in Professional Studies in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CPS) Program. The UKPSF provides a benchmark of learning and teaching-related professional skills against which the quality of learning and teaching is measured at XJTLU. It is seen as fundamental in the future development and implementation of an overall institution-wide Professional Standards Framework (PSF) scheme that will meet the needs of all teaching staff at XJTLU, including its Postgraduate Research (PGR) students who work as teaching assistants (TAs). The TAs are a mixture of international and Chinese PhD and master’s students. Also, non-academic professional support staff who play an important role in the enhancement of learning and teaching across the institution fall under this category.

XJTLU’s educational developers are based in a central unit called the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC), which is responsible for both the CPS Program and the PGR Program, as well as a whole range of other learning- and teaching-related initiatives and training, including technology-enhanced learning. The AEC’s Programs are closely aligned with their equivalents at the University of Liverpool (UoL), in particular the PGR Program, as XJTLU’s PGR students are in effect UoL students because XJTLU does not currently have postgraduate degree awarding powers in China.

Faculty staff from different educational systems bring with them diverse perspectives of learning and teaching and a range of learning and teaching styles that are challenging for educational developers (Mellors-Bourne et al. 2015; O’Mahony 2014). At XJTLU a critically reflective approach towards teaching is encouraged as it is believed that teachers will discover the worth of their teaching in this way. The CPS Program and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops continually expose teaching staff to these dimensions with a view that they will adopt them in their own teaching environments. Educational developers at XJTLU use the critically reflective assessments that are part of the CPS Program and peer review of teaching as important measures of evidence that is being implemented. Brookfield (1995, pp. 46–47) has identified that critically reflective teachers are “excellent teachers who continually hone their personalised” authentic voice. “[. . .] Vigilant critical reflection delivers several boons:

inspirational self-assuredness, the regular achievement of teaching goals, and motivated, critically reflective students.” This is the reason why critical reflection is a crucial part of the assessment in the CPS Program at XJTLU.

However, within the XJTLU context, this brings with it a number of issues that we need to account for when encouraging this approach. Firstly, Chinese students are typically responsive to a rote learning style as one of the key features of the Confucian learning approach, and memorization begins in kindergarten (Starr 2012, p. 17). As such reflective practice is often very new to them, and not necessarily a style of learning they easily engage with, even if it is part of a traditional Confucian learning tradition (Jin and Cortazzi 2006). This then makes it hard to firstly engage Chinese colleagues in workshops and secondly for them to then transfer these new teaching skills to their own classrooms when their students only want to be told what to do and are reluctant to be independent learners themselves. Secondly, as noted, XJTLU employs diverse faculty staff from all over the world who bring with them differing perspectives and understandings of teaching and learning. They are also primarily research-driven as XJTLU promotes itself as a research-led international university in China, and as such, an emphasis on research over learning and teaching tends to be predominant across the institution. Thirdly, many faculty staff have never taken a pedagogically focused course with the exception of language teachers, and as such, engaging them in reflective practice is challenging for many of them. Fourthly, teaching staff who attend AEC’s workshops sometimes explicitly ask to be “spoon fed” in terms of what they need to do to pass the assessments, and engaging them in an interactive, facilitated workshop can be challenging. Fifthly, as the CPS Program is mandatory at XJTLU for new academic staff, they sometimes view the workshops as wasting their important time and irrelevant to their actual contracted duties. On the other hand, many faculty staff are young academics in the early part of their careers, and some are very keen to enroll in the CPS Program and to become a Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellow. Nevertheless, many faculty staff have never worked in a UK higher education environment or equivalent, that is, they have not encountered the stringent quality assurance systems that are required and, as such, they tend to find it difficult to grasp and understand the ideologies of Continuing Professional Development from a learning and teaching perspective.

Challenging as it may seem, the aim is to encourage colleagues to continually reflect on their practice, and educational developers as facilitators must lead by example, and building professional respect is thus a key part of that role. In a cultural context in which professional status and titles are very important, the status of educational developers as either academic or professional administrative staff matters.

One way of gaining respect is “by association,” and one of the key strategies that educational developers employ at XJTLU is to involve and invite faculty teaching staff to discuss their own learning and teaching practice as exemplars. The motto here is that learning from peers is most effective (Boud et al. 2001), rather than all learning and teaching related professional development emanating from a central place. A community of practice approach is therefore central to the philosophy and practice of educational developers at XJTLU.

An example of innovative practice, by a faculty member who subsequently presented to peers as part of a CPS Program workshop, was one in which she developed a strategy to ensure that formative feedback became more effective in improving student performance and developing independent learning skills by encouraging student self-evaluation and reflection. Initially informed by the concept of “feedforward” (Duncan 2007), she designed a new initiative requiring students to read feedback in class and use the resulting action points to set goals for their next essay. A further exercise to encourage students to review their goals and state whether they had achieved them was intended to close the “feedback loop.” In this way, formative evaluation became assessment *for* learning, rather than assessment *of* learning (Boud and Falchikov 2006). Thus, in order to facilitate the approach, a feed-forward form was designed specifically focusing on language errors. When students received their feedback, students were required to identify their most common errors, using the error codes, and write them on their feed-forward form. When they received the first draft of the assessed essay without feedback, they then used the feed-forward form to review their common errors and try to find examples of similar errors.

This is just one example demonstrating the use of best practice exemplars as a central element of AEC’s educational development strategy, as it firstly draws on peer learning principles and secondly builds trust and professional respect across disciplines. Specific events and initiatives at XJTLU, such as the Annual Learning and Teaching Colloquium and the Teaching Development Fund, are based on the same principles.

Methodology

The data for the case studies are drawn from interviews with educational developers, including educational technologists, and selected academic staff from faculties and a survey with a range of academic staff at XJTLU, including a sample of master’s and PhD students who are teaching assistants.

In order to get a sense of the success of this approach, two anonymous surveys were conducted with open-ended questions about the role of educational developers at XJTLU. One of the surveys was targeted at academic staff enrolled in the CPS Program, while the other was targeted at PGR students/teaching assistants.

The CPS Program-focused questionnaire was sent out by email to 50 academic teaching staff at XJTLU and was open for 1 month. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Questions used can be found in Appendix 2. Fifteen respondents filled in the survey, and 12 of these were valid responses. The response rate was roughly 25% which is on the low side, but this may be explained by the fact that the survey was sent out during an intensive period of assessment, marking, and moderation processes. However, it is an eternal challenge to find a “right” time for surveys.

The PGR Program-focused questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was sent out by email to 53 teaching assistants (TAs) at XJTLU and was open for 1 month. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Eleven respondents filled in the survey and 10 of these were valid responses. The response rate was roughly 20%. The full reasons for this

somewhat low response rate are unknown, but it may be partly explained by the fact that the survey was distributed 1 week before the Chinese New Year. Bearing in mind that about two thirds of our TAs are Chinese postgraduates, we actually sent a follow-up email reminder to all respondents during the Chinese New Year (16 days after the survey had been distributed the first time) in order to increase the response rate. This may seem culturally inappropriate at first sight, but it is in fact quite common for Chinese academic staff to continue working for some periods over the Chinese New Year holiday period, especially for research-active staff, which explains our rationale behind the timing of the survey.

Survey Analysis: Perceptions of the Role of Educational Developers at XJTLU

The analysis of questionnaires completed by participants produced some interesting, if somewhat predictable, results.

CPS Program Participants

The survey questions targeted at those enrolled in the CPS Program (see Appendix 2) asked how participants perceived the support they received from educational developers in their teaching. Many respondents cited the CPS Program itself as the most effective way of driving learning and teaching strategies within the institution, but a small number referred to initiatives to support learning and teaching more generally delivered specifically at departmental level. General comments included:

The CPS workshops are really useful. It helps me to think quite a lot about the teaching practice. For some aspects, it opened my eyes. I think they are great, especially for the new teaching staff without much teaching experience.

Having educational developers around is, of course, useful in any teaching context. Someone should be there to guide and assist with the professional development of academic staff.

Learning technologies and in particular the use of XJTLU's virtual learning environment (VLE) called ICE (integrated communication environment) were mentioned by several respondents. This is interesting because it is the learning technologists in AEC who seemed to be perceived as most directly relevant and of practical use to staff's immediate teaching context, as in the following example:

Yes. They provide a source external to the department that helps us improve our approach to teaching and learning, keep up with new developments, find out and stay consistent with what's going on in the rest of the uni's teaching practices etc. The educational technology support is especially relevant and helpful.

This may be partly due to the fact that the general educational developers are mostly concerned with broader approaches to learning and teaching approaches, while the learning technologists can support staff with specific learning technology applications.

There were some interesting responses to the question of whether educational developers' support was considered appropriate and useful for the Chinese context. In response, there was a request from several academics to run mandatory workshops intended to explicitly explain what is expected of a "UK-led university." This is an interesting point since the university is a partnership between a Chinese university (Xi'an Jiaotong) and a UK university (UoL). Clearly the perception of this partnership has been interpreted in this case as being somewhat one sided. This perception may also be substantiated in a clear message from the questionnaire of a need for AEC to deliver more workshops focusing on "working in a Chinese context." This is explicitly reflected in the following responses:

The theory is universal, however, more input from Chinese teachers and Chinese students into how their education system works and effects their learning would be helpful.

Whatever 'the Chinese context' means is very subjective, but yes. With staff and students from all over the world and from a variety of academic cultural backgrounds it's important to have the AEC as a kind of lightly guiding centre. The makeup of the AEC staff also reflects this diversity.

I think that the university as a whole is still struggling with the concept of the Chinese context. This is probably because the question of how to train 'critical thinking' is a puzzle world wide.

It would seem crucial within this particular context to know about not only the nature of the educational experience of our students but also the quality of that experience. A key challenge emerging from the interviews involves how a greater emphasis can be developed on understanding how quality can be enhanced and assured, while testing the success of this in relation to the student experience. Some of the respondents mentioned in this respect that the AEC had a part to play in working with students at XJTU. This is currently not the case, except of course for postgraduate students, who are simultaneously employed as teaching assistants. The next section addresses their perceptions of the educational developers at XJTU.

PGR Program Participants

Overall, the TAs had positive perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the role that the educational developers play in supporting TAs' teaching and research practice. General examples include:

I believe that the AEC has a crucial role to play in developing professional skills for the teaching assistants.

They provide good TA training for us and let us know what the important things are for TA jobs and some useful skills for TA tasks.

It is worth noting that the participating TAs identified a need for receiving more pedagogical training directly related to their own majors (subjects/disciplines). Surprisingly, the majority of the respondents also considered the teacher training that the educational developers delivered relevant to their own research (i.e., their PhD projects). However, one respondent wrote:

Some practices are not really relevant, it depends on the major so it would be better to provide major-related practices in future.

This shows that this respondent answered the question from the discipline (subject) point of view, but at the same time, s/he may have misunderstood the broader influence of the teaching training and that of research training provided by educational developers, the impact of which on their practice is likely to be more subtle.

Given the TAs including both local (Chinese) and international master's and doctoral students, the authors had predicted that the respondents may come up with very diverse opinions about whether the educational developers' support fits the Chinese context. The responses turned out to be mixed. On the one hand, half of the respondents agreed that the XJTLU educational developers had provided them with support appropriate for a Chinese context (i.e., the XJTLU setting) because, e.g., "*in our school more than half numbers of students are Chinese, our TAs have to understand their Chinese students*"; on the other hand, some did not consider it suitable mainly because of, unexpectedly, the learning styles of Chinese students whom the TAs have taught:

No. Not really, as Chinese Students are not interactive at all. Some support on how to make classes more interactive would be very useful.

Regarding what the educational developers can do in the future to enhance TAs' future practice, the respondents largely focused on suggestions at the practical level, which related mostly to TA training policies at the university and departmental levels, and to administrative, legitimate and procedural matters. In other words, such suggestions focused on the nonacademic matters more than those relating to the academic and research improvement that educational developers could facilitate for them in the future. This may be partly due to the participants not being particularly clear on what the potential support that educational developers could offer them would consist of. Again, this is partly related to the position of educational developers as professional staff in a central unit and thus relatively removed from teachers' immediate faculty-based teaching context. Nonetheless, some participants mentioned the professional (teaching) guidance they wanted to receive in the future, for instance, "weekly feedback between AEC and TAs might be helpful for enhancing practices and solve random problems encountered."

Arguably, the main outcome from these questionnaires is, in fact, a series of further questions. Transnational education in general establishes new teaching and learning environments and new roles for academics. This diversity tends to create

a need to embrace more flexible and more culturally relevant teaching approaches, underpinned by varied pedagogies.

In sum, the analysis of the survey shows a complex transnational environment, which is characterized by diverse needs, both in terms of skills, knowledge, and educational backgrounds and in terms of cultural backgrounds. Add to that a context in which there is a high turnover of particularly international academic staff, and it becomes clear that the roles of educational developers are considerably varied.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the above discussion of the context and the analysis of the surveys, the following key recommendations and points have emerged for educational development in a transnational context (in this case with a focus on China). The central theme is captured by the terms peer learning and communities of practice.

Firstly, it is important to carefully consider the institutional positioning of educational developers – i.e., central unit, faculty-embedded, or a combination of the two – and their subsequent potential to influence change in learning and teaching and the promotion and encouragement of good practice. Related to the first point, it is important to recognize that educational developers are essentially “change agents” and have particular relevance and importance in a rapidly changing higher education landscape in China. Secondly, it is recommended to integrate faculty-based teachers into the educational development process – i.e., as exemplars, guest spots in workshops, and learning and teaching champions. This process can be stimulated by establishing and implementing communities of practice to facilitate more direct linkages between educational developers and faculty-based teaching staff. Special events can then draw attention to good learning and teaching practice – e.g., the Annual Learning and Teaching Colloquium. Furthermore, it is crucial that at an institutional level, innovative practice is seen to be explicitly supported in the form of funding – i.e., Teaching Development Fund and Teaching Conference Fund. Thirdly, raising the status and reward for “teaching” as opposed to “research,” by engaging with and embedding the UKPSF and rewarding them with a Higher Education Academy Fellowship upon completion of the CPS Program, is suggested as a promising way to engage academic staff. Finally, it is important to raise the profile of educational development and what support educational developers can offer, with a specific emphasis on the academic nature of their role. Importantly, this should happen internally and externally with fellow practitioners across Asia, thereby nurturing a cross-institutional practice-based community of practice.

Conclusion

As discussed in this chapter, the role of educational developers is crucial in the support and enhancement of learning and teaching pedagogy across the university. Whether the title of educational developer is appropriate and whether the role of educational

developers within an institution is seen as professional and administrative, or academic, are a continuing debate across the wider community of “educational developers” and the “field” of educational development. What stands out from our perspective as educational developers in a transnational university is that they play a crucial role as change agents through our facilitation, consultation, and championing of both the practice and the scholarship of learning and teaching. However, at XJTU there is an additional need to seriously consider the Chinese context in which they work and develop programs that allow for reflection on this context so that international staff are supported to engage with and understand the underlying philosophies and complexities of learning and teaching styles in China. This is a message that may apply to educational developers in other transnational settings as well.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire about AEC (Academic Enhancement Center) educational developers’ support at XJTU – PGR (Postgraduate Research) Skills Development Program/TA (teaching assistant) Program:

1. How do you think the role of AEC educational developers, who run the PGR Program, supports you in developing your professional skills (in particular in the form of TA training)?
2. Do you think the support is relevant to your research or profession, in particular your work as a TA?
3. Do you think the support is appropriate for a Chinese context, and is it useful? Why? Or why not?

What other support could the AEC educational development team give you that would help you enhance your practice at XJTU (in particular your work as a TA)?

Appendix 2

Questionnaire about AEC educational developers’ support at XJTU – CPS (Certificate of Professional Practice in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) Program:

1. How do you think the role of AEC educational developers, who run the CPS and CPD Program, supports you in developing your professional skills?
2. Do you think the support is relevant to your research or profession, in particular your work as a lecturer?
3. Do you think the support is appropriate for a Chinese context, and is it useful? Why? Or why not?

What other support could the AEC educational development team give you that would help you enhance your practice at XJTLU (in particular your work as a lecturer)?

References

- Boud, D., and N. Falchikov. 2006. Aligning assessment with long-term learning. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 31 (4): 399–413.
- Boud, D., R. Cohen, and J. Sampson, eds. 2001. *Peer learning in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Brookfield, S. 1995. *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Carew, A., G. Lefoe, M. Bell, and L. Armour. 2008. Elastic practice in academic developers. *International Journal for Academic Development* 13 (1): 51–66.
- Clegg, S. 2009. Forms of knowing and academic development practice. *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (4): 403–416.
- Cortazzi, M., and L. Jin. 2002. Cultures of learning: The social construction of educational identities. In *Discourses in search of members: In honor of Ron Scollon*, ed. D.C.S. Li, 47–75. New York: American Universities Press.
- Duncan, N. 2007. “Feed-forward”: Improving students’ use of tutors’ comments. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 32 (3): 271–283.
- Eland, J., and S. King. 2015. You’ve internationalised me, now support me: Building and supporting a global academic community – who, how, what, when and why. *Educational Developments* 16 (3): 6–9.
- Gardner, M. 2016. Innovation in learning and teaching is too important to cut. *The conversation*. Retrieved 14 October 2016 from <http://theconversation.com/innovation-in-learning-and-teaching-is-too-important-to-cut-58629>
- Grant, B. 2007. The mourning after: Academic development in a time of doubt. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (1): 35–43.
- Harris, K., K. Farrell, M. Bell, M. Devlin, and R. James, eds. 2008. *Peer review of teaching in Australian higher education: A handbook to support institutions in developing and embedding effective policies and practices*. Carlton: Centre for the Study of Higher Education.
- Hicks, M. 2005. Academic developers as change agents: Caught in the middle. Paper presented at *HERDSA conference: Higher education in a changing world*, 3–7 July, University of Sydney.
- Higher Education Academy. 2015. UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). Retrieved 17 October 2016 from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf>.
- Jin, L., and M. Cortazzi. 2006. Changing practices in Chinese cultures of learning. *Language, Culture & Curriculum* 19 (1): 5–20.
- Kek, M.Y.C.A., and S. Hammer. 2015. Theorising academic development as an academic discipline? Exploring academic developers’ ways of research. In *Theory and method in higher education research*, ed. M. Tight and J. Huisman, 235–255. Wagon Lane: Emerald Publishing.
- Killick, D. 2016. *Internationalization and diversity in higher education: implications for teaching, learning and assessment*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Knewstubb, B., M. Hall, I. Elgort, and A. Gilbert. 2015. So similar and yet so different: Five issues for academic developers in a New Zealand university. *Educational Developments* 16 (3): 9–13.
- Lave, J., and E. Wenger. 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Little, D., and D. Green. 2012. Betwixt and between: Academic developers in the margins. *International Journal for Academic Development* 17 (3): 203–215.
- Mellors-Bourne, R., E. Jones, and S. Woodfield. 2015. *Transnational education and employability development*. Heslington: The Higher Education Academy.
- Nunn, R., and A. Pillay. 2014. After invention of the h-index, is there a place for the teaching track in academic promotion? *Higher Education Research & Development* 33 (4): 848–850.

- O'Mahony, J. 2014. *Enhancing student learning and teacher development in transnational education*. Heslington: The Higher Education Academy.
- Rowland, S. 2007. Academic development: A site of creative doubt and contestation. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (1): 9–14.
- Seah, W.T. 2011. Ten years of curriculum reform in China: A soft knowledge perspective. In *Education reform in China: Changing concepts, contexts and practices*, ed. J. Ryan, 161–184. Milton Park: Routledge.
- Starr, D. 2012. China and the Confucian education model: A Universitas 21 position paper. Retrieved 10 March 2016 from <http://www.universitas21.com/article/educational/details/145/position-paper-on-the-confucian-education-system>
- Stefani, L. 2015. Is our academic practice transferable across cultural boundaries? A leadership case from Saudi Arabia. *Educational Developments* 16 (3): 14–16.
- Teacher Excellence Centre, Jiangnan University. 2015. *Jiangsu province higher education institutions teacher development annual conference: Conference proceedings*. Wuxi, December.
- Wenger, E. 1999. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- XJTU. n.d.. Vision and mission. Retrieved 10 March 2016 from <http://www.xjtu.edu.cn/en/about-us/mission-statement.html>



Role of Educational Designers in Higher Education Institutions

6

Donna Bisset

Contents

Introduction	72
Literature Review	73
Methodology	78
The Role of the Researcher	78
Limitations	78
Case Studies	79
Case Studies	80
Case Study 1	80
Case Study 2	80
Case Study 3	81
Case Study 4	82
Reflections on Case Studies	83
Conclusion	85
Appendix A: Questionnaire	86
Background	86
Current Position and Recent Restructure	86
Interactions	86
Research	86
University Strategy and Policy	87
Technology	87
Other Institutions, Professional Bodies, and Influencers	87
References	87

Abstract

With many universities undertaking rapid curriculum development, and the rapid development of the technology underpinning new, more student-centered

D. Bisset (✉)
La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: d.bisset@latrobe.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_14

curriculum design, the role of an educational designer is evolving. In past, more content-focused approaches to curriculum development, many universities employed dedicated production teams, and many designers operated in prescriptive production and technology support positions that resulted in a mediated experience for academic staff with teaching technologies. The role of educational designers in the new environment is changing to support a more sustainable practice, with a focus on building capacity in academic staff to navigate their own relationship with technology. It calls for designers, in many cases, to surrender their expertise and to work with academic staff, modeling their approaches and processes for adopting technologies. The transition of educational designers is further evident in how they work around the blurred boundaries of “classic” curriculum expertise and in their increased strategic agency within the institution. This chapter explores how interactions, the adoption of new pedagogies, technologies, and curriculum renewal strategies, give rise to the tension between academic and professional identities and suggests a third space in which educational designers now practice.

Keywords

Educational design · Instructional design · Cross-boundary professional · Collaborative adoption · Academic developer

Introduction

Much has been written about the political, technical, pedagogical, and transdisciplinary changes affecting universities. Ray Land describes the opportunities in the sector for emergent roles for academic developers and professionals, “as new academic identities and roles have grown in response to the spaces opened up” (Land 2004, p. 3) by the changes. Barnett suggests that “all universities have, in a sense become corporate universities – run as businesses and engaging – so far as they can – with the business world” (Barnett 2014, p. 147). For Barnett the fluidity in the postmodern university facilitates a “dissolution of identity structures” (Barnett 2014, p. 150). This chapter explores how interactions, the adoption of new pedagogies, technologies, and curriculum renewal strategies, give rise to the tension between academic and professional identities and suggests a third space in which educational designers now practice.

Australian universities now operate in an environment of massification and globalization as the sector moves from an elite system of higher education to a model of mass access. In response to the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley et al. 2008), recommending major reforms to the “financing and regulatory frameworks for higher education” (Bradley et al. 2008, p. xi), the Australian government has set participation targets for low socioeconomic status students. This has increased the number of students attending universities, who would not previously have attended higher education institutions, to produce more graduates to meet the “demands of a rapidly moving global economy” (Bradley et al. 2008, p. xi). Along

with this increasingly heterogeneous student population, the “pervasive influence of technologies and pressure to produce work-ready graduates” (Gosper and Ifenthaler 2014, p. 2) has propelled a pedagogical shift and comprehensive curriculum change. With many universities undertaking rapid curriculum development, and the rapid development of the technology underpinning new, more strongly student-centered curriculum design, the role of an educational designer is evolving.

Literature Review

Studies in Australia in both the mid-1990s and 2000s have discussed educational design, primarily as instructional design (Allen 1996; Bird 2004; Campbell et al. 2005; Morgan et al. 2007; Roberts et al. 1994). Yet there is little in the recent literature. It is, therefore, timely to revisit the literature and the role and identity of the educational designer, with an explicit focus on how the role is developing and the factors shaping this change.

Educational design is defined variously from institution to institution. A review of position descriptions indicates, in most institutions, the role is associated with the integration of technology to support curriculum design. It traverses the technical and pedagogical, with many educational designers arriving at their profession from varied educational and professional pathways, including teaching, technology-related roles in web and multimedia design, and library and academic positions. In turn this has influenced the nature of the role, its function, and description.

Educational design could be viewed as operating at the intersection of research, theories, and practice in instructional design and academic development, yet these professional orientations are themselves also fluid and evolving. As Campbell, Schwier, and Kenny argue, “instructional design has long debated the nature of instructional design practice” (Campbell et al. 2005, p. 242). Further, while some universities have recognized the convergent nature of roles in educational design and academic development, acknowledging the “common theoretical foundations in student learning theory” (Morgan et al. 2007, p. 156), designers and developers mostly constitute an ill-defined professional group that nonetheless have a vital role to play in strategic initiatives (Bird 2004, p. 123).

It is difficult to align previous research without making some arbitrary decisions. In this chapter the role of instructional designer is viewed as part of the evolutionary history that may describe the functional role of an educational designer but does not necessarily describe the path many educational designers have taken to arrive at their position or account for other influences that affect the realization of the role. The identity of the instructional designer is itself also constructed from background, experience, and research, as designers “draw on institutional culture, professional literature, professional organisations and reflection to understand their boundaries of practice” (Shwier et al. 2004, p. 77). The role of the academic developer is considered where the role of the educational designer may be informed by similar organizational pressures, requirements, and interactions and where historically there have been recognized common functions of both roles.

Currently educational design is performed under a number of occupational titles including, but not restricted to, instructional designer, educational designer, educational developer, e-learning designer, e-learning developer, online learning designer, online learning developer, educational technologist, and academic developer. These various descriptions reflect the varied “orientations, approaches and theoretical frameworks” (Bird 2004, p. 123). For Morgan et al. (2007), education design is interchangeable with instructional design (p. 21).

Instructional design is founded in the disciplines of psychology and media and communications, although Reigeluth (1983) indicates the lack of any well-articulated media and communication models or theories (p. 27). The behaviorist learning theories of Skinner and Thorndike (Campbell et al. 2005, p. 245), together with the cognitive orientations developed by Bruner and Ausubel (Reigeluth 1983, p. 27), see instructional design as “concerned with understanding, improving and applying methods of creating instruction” (Reigeluth 1983, p. 8). Gravemeijer and Cobb extend this description with the inclusion of “tools” where instructional design can be seen as a practice that “focuses on the instructional tasks and tools as potential means of support” (Gravemeijer and Cobb 2006, p. 22).

Rapid growth in the development and use of digital technologies to support and deliver instruction in the 1990s lead to change in the nature of work of instructional designers (Reiser 200, p. 63). McKenney, Nieven, and van der Akker suggest that in educational design, at this point, emerges the “technical-professional perspective concerned with methods of the curriculum development process” (McKenney et al. 2006, p. 68). Simultaneously the 1990s saw a cultural shift from a more systematic practice toward social constructivism, where an educational designer can “reflect his or her values and belief structures, understandings, prior experiences, and construction of new knowledge through social interaction and negotiation” (Campbell et al. 2005, p. 246). The new personal efficacy of the designer (Reiser 2001, p. 63) suggests a more transformative role emerging as they become “agents of social change at the personal, relational and institutional level” (Campbell et al. 2005, p. 242).

This transformative role could be seen to correspond with Whitchurch’s cross-boundary professional, where the individual uses “boundaries to build strategic advantage and institutional capacity, using rules and resources of more than one type of space to construct their identity” (Whitchurch 2008a, p. 377). The cross-boundary professional at an institutional level provides a complementary context for the transdisciplinary nature of the role at an academic level. The working context of transdisciplinary partnerships for the educational designer connects “the coordination of disciplines and interdisciplines with a set of common goals towards a common system purpose” (O’Reilly 2004, p. 725). In these partnerships, knowledge is constructed through temporary networks created for a specific purpose, reflecting the project-based approach to curriculum development increasingly employed at universities.

Whitchurch identifies this as a third space “characterised by mixed teams of staff who work on short-term projects, such as bids for external funding and quality initiatives” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 386). It is the emergent territory between the professional and academic where mixed identities operate in a place for

experimentation, embracing a certain “organizational messiness” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 388). For others it is a “postcolonial space of contestation and transculturation” where staff engage in critical and creative conversations (Manathunga 2007, p. 31). Little and Green suggest rather than seeing this as a transitioning state, it is a state of permanence “that denotes a cultural hybridity” (Little and Green 2012, p. 214). This cultural hybridity is also expressed in a tension between the professional and the academic aspects of the role of the educational designer. It is where the designer may be operating as an “unbounded professional” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 383), extending their roles beyond their position descriptions.

Table 1 presents a comparison of definitions of educational/instructional designers and developers, organized in chronological and professional order, to provide some reference points that may demarcate and connect design and development practice.

The comparison suggests staff development, curriculum design, creating teaching and learning resources, research, and evaluation may be the common ground of designers and developers, while the outlying activities of policy development, or participation in the development of the Graduate Certificate, are less well articulated. Academic development, in the representations in the table, is more commonly

Table 1 Educational/instructional designer/developer responsibilities

Roles	Activities, responsibilities, and orientations
7 (+4) Roles of the instructional designer (Source: Roberts et al. 1994, p. 81)	Professional development ^a
	Curriculum design ^a
	Pedagogical advice
	A “critical eye”
	Assessment strategy advisor
	An evaluator
	Editor (advisor on writing)
	Advisor on media use
	A surrogate student
	Research ^a
	Consultation ^a
Activities of instructional designers (Source: Allen 1996, p. 22)	Staff development
	Developing curriculum
	Conducting task and skill analysis
	Determining instructional strategies
	Defining instructional goals
	Writing performance criteria
	Piloting instructional materials
	Designing CBL materials
	Desktop publishing of learning materials
	Editing
	Conducting instructional design research
Project managing	
Information mapping	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Roles	Activities, responsibilities, and orientations
Frequency of core activities of design and development (Source: Bird 2004, p. 129 ^b)	Staff development
	Curriculum design
	Designing teaching and learning activities
	Designing individual units, programs, and courses
	Designing objectives/learning outcomes, assessment tasks
	Designing for online, print, CD-ROM
	Production
	Academic: research
	Academic: teaching
	Project management
	Role of educational designers/developers (Source: Morgan et al. 2007, p. 157)
Curriculum development (Ed)	
Staff development resources (Ed&Ad)	
Unit and course reviews (Ed&Ad)	
Foundation program (Ed&Ad)	
Graduate certificate (Ed&Ad)	
Seminars (Ed&Ad)	
Policy development (Ed&Ad)	
Peer review teaching (Ad)	
Staff development programs (Ad)	
(Ed = educational design Ad = academic developer)	
Roles of an academic developer (Source: Fraser 2001, p. 58 ^c)	A resource linker
	A process consultant
	A catalyst
	An information provider
	An evaluator
	A module writer
	A critical friend
	A researcher
	A collaborative researcher
	Publicist
	Committee member
A lobbyist	
Orientations of an academic developer (Source: Land 2001, p. 6 ^d)	Professional competence (professional development)
	Entrepreneurial (fosters innovative practice)
	Romantic: ecological humanist (concerned with the personal development and well-being)
	Interpretive hermeneutic (engages through “intelligent conversation” with colleagues)
	Internal consultant (observational/evaluative/ advisory)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Roles	Activities, responsibilities, and orientations
	Managerial (concerned with achievement of institutional goals and missions)
	Discipline specific (development as “situated learning” within a disciplinary community of practice)
	Modeler-broker (working alongside colleagues to demonstrate innovation)
	Vigilant opportunist (takes advantage of topical developments and opportunities)
	Researcher (uses compelling educational research evidence)
	Political strategist: investor (aligns development with agencies most likely to yield dividends)
	Reflective practitioner (fosters culture of self-or-peer evaluative, critical reflection)

Table 1 has been reorganized into core themes/roles/tasks and does not necessarily reflect the order or order of importance of the initial lists

^aRoberts et al. (1994) saw the list as primarily applying to production of instructional materials and omitted other roles of research, consultation curriculum design, and staff development (p. 82) included here

^bCollapsed from original source into core categories

^cCollapsed from original source

^dDescriptions condensed

denoted in terms of the developers’ relationship to the institution and interactions. While the orientations of an academic developer, described in the last row of the table, align least with the other studies, they may be a better way of understanding educational design, to imagine a way of “making sense of a given situation or set of tasks that subsequently informs and influences action” (Land 2001, p. 4). The orientations allow for a more flexible response to the complexity or, to return to Barnett (2014) briefly, the “supercomplexity” (p. 146) that universities, and by implication designers and developers, operate within.

Boud (2006) describes academic development as operating within corporate policy, where human capital theory informs the role as part of the corporate agenda, through activities like quality assurance (p. 4). Others see academic development as a fault line or a state of “unhomeliness” between disciplines, where “academic developers are particularly vulnerable to being colonised by neoliberal discourses” (Manathunga 2007, p. 29) of university managerial agendas. Educational designers, especially those located in central units, can be perceived to be advocates of institutional policy and strategies. It would, however, be simplistic to describe the role of the educational designer as one colonized by management imperatives, as they are not “journeymen workers directed by management, but act in purposeful, value based ways with ethical knowledge, in social relationships and contexts” (Campbell et al. 2005, p. 243).

Methodology

This study employs an ethnographic methodology to explore the shared sociocultural contexts, perceptions, and behaviors of a group of educational designers within a central department of a large metropolitan university. Each of the designers interviewed is the focus of a case study. Although there is overlap recognized between ethnographic and case study methodologies, the ethnographic approach here is used to explore the way in which the structure and culture are shared by the group, which Creswell notes “may or may not be present in a case study” (Creswell 1998, p. 66). For the purpose of this research, the cases are considered as the object which “situates the case within its setting” (Creswell 1998, p. 61).

The sequential methods used to collect data for the studies include:

- Unstructured participant observations over a period of one year and reflection of a participant-researcher to inform the research question, questionnaire, and interviews
- Structured questionnaire to determine how background, current position, day-to-day interactions with colleagues and networks, university strategy, and technology influence performance of the role (Appendix A)
- Semi-structured, open-ended interview to follow up on responses in the questionnaire and explore the richer context of how the participants construct meaning.

The case studies have been constructed to “preserve the meaningful relations that the respective person deals with in the topic of the study” (Flick 2015, p. 184) and to express the distribution of perspectives of the participants. Quotes have been selected where they are most poignant of the change or tension in the role.

The Role of the Researcher

As an educational designer, and manager of an educational design team, I have observed the changing nature of practice within a new organizational structure, new strategic imperatives accelerating pace of curriculum (re)design, and a sectoral focus on enhanced usability of technology. I have reflected on what this might mean for educational design, and how it might describe new capabilities required for the role, and how designers are navigating this transition. Boud et al. suggest that productive reflection in professional practice can bring “changes in work practice to enhance productivity together with changes to enhance personal engagement and meaning in work” (Boud et al. 2006, p. 5). Further, reflection has been useful in this research as a way of understanding “one’s own position and the position of others in the research” (Costly et al. 2010, p. 30).

Limitations

There is a certain amount of subjectivity of the participant-researcher as my particular interest “in what and how the project is researched and developed will influence

what is studied and emphasised, and the way it is evaluated” (Costly et al. 2010, p. 33). It is also true that “people in the same situations construct reality in differing ways” (Costly et al. 2010, p. 33), and I have tried to present these differing narratives, allowing participants to read and veto their case studies as a true reflection of their own alternative constructions.

It is also recognized that there is an imbalance in the relationship between the researcher and the participants. To this end, participation in the research was on a volunteer basis with some members of the team participating and others electing not to. Ethical implications of this aspect of the project were considered, and ethics approval was sought and approved through the University Human Ethics Committee (UHEC).

It could also be argued that the case studies themselves, while highly illustrative of this particular institutional context, may not necessarily describe culture and behavior at other institutions. Although the case studies are “bounded by time and place” (Creswell 1998, p. 61), the context is broadly applicable in the way in which the external environment is influencing a sector-wide response to change, which, in turn, is influencing the nature of the role of educational designers. It is also expected that the reader will determine what is applicable to their own context (Reis n.d., para. 3).

Case Studies

The four educational designers interviewed for this study are part of a centralized learning and teaching unit. As a result of a recent restructure, two of the designers migrated from faculty-based positions, one designer was located within the previous central learning and teaching center, and the fourth was newly recruited to the university sector. Educational design is supported through the central unit, although there are two college-based educational technology support teams. The educational designers support consultations; large-scale strategic curriculum redevelopment projects supporting blended learning, student success, and retention; and fully online course development across the university. They work alongside academic developers with roles distinguished along a professional/academic divide. Developers are academic appointments, while designers are professional appointments. The teaching of the Graduate Certificate and research, as the defined responsibility of developers, mainly separates the designers’ and developers’ remit. There is, however, much shared ground in professional development, curriculum design, and evaluation, although each brings a different focus.

The strategies, and the recent restructure, are seen as major initiatives to change the culture and processes of the institution to respond to the sectoral pressures defined in the introduction of this chapter. It is the lived experience of the recent restructure, implementation of new strategies, and the attempt to define prescriptive design and development positions that give these case studies a timely relevance. The changing context of the interactions the designers undertake helps to understand how that defines the role, as Boud and Hager note “as the practice evolves, so does the professional identity of the practitioner” (Boud and Hager 2012, p. 23).

Case Studies

Case Study 1

With a Bachelor of Applied Science, the educational designer, who informs the first case study, originally worked as a photographer in a university and moved into a multimedia development role supporting academic staff and coordinating a multimedia production team involved in diverse technology-assisted educational programs. Most recently he has been employed as an educational designer, a position held at this university for the past six years. During this time, he notes the transition of the role from a technological to a pedagogical focus.

When does one call oneself an educational designer? Learning technologist, learning designer what is the difference? I suppose my role and attitude shifted when the pedagogy and learning outcomes were seen as more critical than the process and technology. This shift in my role occurred about six years ago.

Although having held the position of educational designer for the past six years, it has in fact been two iterations, with the current role commencing in 2015, within the restructured central learning and teaching unit. The change has resulted in a more consultative approach for the educational design team with less focus on providing production services and more capacity building to promote self-efficacy.

With the current model I am conscious of building in a design that builds capacity within the academic and handing them onto Ed Tech Support for future support. This is different to my previous role whereby there was no backup support team, and I contributed to most of the build.

In this role the designer works closely with academic developers on curriculum projects and determines as need requires the extent to which he might “stray” into academic development territory. While the designer attends and presents at conferences, he does not feel that research is an expectation of a professional role. The designer works within the strategic goals of the university; however, he interprets them for academic staff to align to common goals.

The designer collaborates with colleagues and professional organizations to maintain their understanding of technology development and leverages this networked knowledge of educational technologies at the curriculum level.

In this space you can't really claim to be an expert because it's continually changing, so what worked in the past doesn't necessarily work now. The environment is changing, cohorts are changing. In that sort of collaboration, there's no expert in the room we learn together.

Case Study 2

The designer who informs the second case study holds a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in professional writing with two vocational educational and training (VET) diplomas in vocational education and training design and development. He has a rich professional

background, having been employed as an instructional/educational designer for seven years in the VET sector. Prior to that he held positions in industry including broadcasting, radio, telecommunications, and as an editor and content producer.

The transition for this designer, having only been recently employed at this university, has been one associated with the move from the VET to the university sector. Like the designer in our first case study, he is required to work closely with the academic development team and respond to the capabilities of the academic developer in design projects, informally moving between design and development as required.

Sometimes you have to take the lead or at least be prepared to take the lead. Other times this can be quite a nice process where you bounce off each other. Almost like dancing. It works really well when the developer is open to sharing and when they don't get too overly concerned about barriers or boundaries.

Research in this case is also an informal process, particularly where technology is concerned, and he perceives that this may not be as highly valued as traditional research.

I guess you could say it is informal research. Whether this is seen as important or not I don't really know. I know how important it can be.

Broad strategic learning and teaching goals of the university guide fulfillment of the role. The designer, however, seeks a balance when working with academic colleagues, separating themselves from the strategies and policies of the institution, while simultaneously driving strategic outcomes.

You also have to nurture and protect the academic from a lot of the background 'noise' that happens with projects so that they don't become part of the internal issues that you are trying to solve.

Personal networks are an extremely important buffer and extend the expertise of this designer not only with educational technologies but also the broader context of the institution.

They have a huge influence. Their expertise is varied and complements my skills and knowledge. I have learned a lot from other educational designers particularly within this context. The sharing of past experiences, old courseware issues and habits of academics is extremely helpful.

Case Study 3

The educational designer in case study three holds tertiary qualifications in Science and Engineering and has previously worked in a faculty-based role as a multimedia designer for five years, moving to the central learning and teaching unit in 2015.

He perceives the central role requires more diverse expertise and is less personal. For this designer the move has a resultant loss of disciplinary context for the environment in which he operates.

We deal with a larger cohort of staff from multiple disciplines. There is more overarching project management/coordination. School and department level activities were simpler as the subjects were from the same discipline and smaller cohort of staff, so there were many similarities. My new role includes a broader range of disciplines without as much tacit knowledge of the discipline providing the ability for more context when providing educational design advice specific to a subject or course.

He now regularly collaborates with the team to draw on their collective expertise.

Our team has come from roles in various disciplines so I'm regularly drawing on the knowledge of my colleagues when I don't have experience in their previous school, faculty or discipline.

The designer also comments on the more scheduled nature of the work with less informal drop-ins. This is accompanied by a shift in the requirements of the role, blurring the boundaries between academic development and educational design.

There's definitely areas where we cross over and need to collaborate. At the same time there is a handover point. The edges are blurry.

He has participated in joint research projects in the past, mostly in the role of technical advisor, and finds research is not intensively encouraged but certainly not discouraged.

This designer works in a position that is directly funded by a strategic initiative and is more keenly focused on direct outcomes of the strategy than other designers in these case studies, citing most of their work as directly attributed to one or more goals.

He employs a just-in-time strategy to guide the adoption of technology, upskilling on an as-needed basis.

I'm involved with too many technologies for it to be feasible to be at the forefront of all of them. As my role makes me focus on each technology I upskill 'just-in-time' to deliver the outcome and iteratively increase foundational and specialist knowledge of each technology and its applications.

Case Study 4

The designer who informs case study four has an Honors Degree in English and is currently undertaking study in the Graduate Certificate of Higher Education. Within the sector he has been employed in a central unit in varied positions including as a faculty-based e-learning administrator and from 2015 as an educational designer in the central learning and teaching unit.

In my previous role, there was more of an assumption that what I did was toward the support of teaching academics and (indirectly) their students. This could be aligned with larger strategic goals – where those existed. In my current role the fulfilment of my role seems much more about fulfilling the needs of individuals in management.

This designer feels the move from a faculty-based to central unit has an associated loss of agency to support academic staff. Yet they also note an evolution of their role moving from support to peer and from designer to developer.

Where I have been able to interact in a more collaborative and ‘development’ way of practice – in developing subjects and ways of investigating course content – I’ve felt more of a colleague than I have previously perhaps.

He notes the challenges of working in a team that has defined academic developers and educational designer roles, where designers may be seen as functional rather than pedagogical experts.

There is a real discomfort amongst some about straying from a purely functional view of our role with technology – as if an expertise in tools could exist apart from the contexts in which they are to be used.

There is a challenge with how the role of ed designer and ed developer has been conceived – as if there is a clear natural distinction between the two roles.

This division is also seen to be played out for this designer in research, where participation and mentorship are self-determining exercises.

While internal networks are important for the designer, in keeping up with technological developments, notable too are personal efficacy and experience using technology, as well as understanding what is happening in other universities and educational bodies and institutions.

The best example, or the best method for spreading practice and the culture or using technology is to create and be able to explore different examples and contexts. That is, it involves volition and agency – and connects with people’s interests and gives them some degree of control or mastery.

Reflections on Case Studies

Although only a small sample, the case studies represent the distinct voices of four practitioners in similar roles within one kind of institutional conception of educational design. While there is “absence of shared professional identity, professional career path, or theoretical underpinnings” (Bird et al. 2007, p. 23), some key themes are emerging:

1. There is a clear transition from embedded disciplinary to “generalist” or trans-disciplinary practitioner.
2. There are shared functions of the role of academic development in institutional agency.
3. There is a transition away from exclusive technical expertise to collaborative expertise.

Educational background in the case studies is shared equally across science and arts disciplines although there is less disciplinary alignment through educational background. Context may have an effect on disciplinary identification with one designer reporting their loss of disciplinary context in migrating to a central unit. Bird et al. (2007) warn of the dangers of embedded designers becoming siloed within one discipline but also note there are critics of the central generalist model of the role (p. 31). For Klein (2004) though, the centralized model supports design which can be described in its “complexity, hybridity, non-linearity, reflexivity, heterogeneity and transdisciplinarity” (cited in Bird et al. 2007, p. 32). In these case studies, we see evidence of a more collegial, transdisciplinary connection evolving.

Background in multimedia and media production is a common thread in these studies, and it may be here that we see the most likely foundations of the designer. However, it could also be the historical legacy of instructional design and an institutional demand that may be less likely to play out in the future. In more content-focused approaches to the development of online and blended teaching models, many universities employed dedicated production teams, and many designers operated in prescriptive production and technology support positions that resulted in a mediated experience for academic staff with teaching technologies. It is a structure which many universities, including the one in which these designers are employed, are now shifting away from, with the development of curriculum that supports active learning for students.

While the literature may make less of a distinction between instructional and educational design, the case studies indicate a shift in practice from what would have been described as more traditional instructional design. There is application of a more sustainable approach that focusses on building capacity in academic staff to navigate their own relationship with technology, allowing them to make the connections with technology and bring their disciplinary knowledge to the design of the online learning experience.

Along with the requirements to have more of the curriculum in the blended and online modes, developments in technology itself call for us to review the way we consider technical expertise as part of the role of an educational designer. Online curriculum is now easier to develop without the need for specialist multimedia or coding skills. Paradoxically it is harder to navigate the technology options and identify the multiplicity of technologies to match pedagogical need. It calls for designers, in many cases, to surrender their expertise and to work with academic staff, modeling their approaches and processes for adopting and using technologies.

There has been a reliance on the “early adopter” (Rogers 2003, p. 22) in the adoption of technologies within higher education institutions. The just-in-time nature of adoption identified in the case studies could be explained more by the collaborative adopter rather than the early adopter. Kozma (1985) identified the collaborative adopter as one who identifies the need as an individual in the organization or group and “supports the need for a balance between faculty autonomy and organisational considerations” (Kozma 1985, p. 317). The case studies also suggest that networking is an extremely important strategy for the designers and a foundation for collaborative

adoption, leveraging and building the shared knowledge of the team and creating an environment where innovation is more transferable and sustainable.

The transition of the designers in this study is further evident in how they work around the blurred boundaries of “classic” curriculum expertise and in their increased strategic agency within the institution. While some designers felt restricted by the arbitrary institutional division of role, other responded according to the need of the situation and efficacy of themselves and of the developers.

The transitions identified can be seen in the context of Whitchurch’s third space between the academic and professional. The educational designers in this study are operating in a domain “colonised primarily by less bounded form of professional” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 377). Here the individual pursuit of the unbounded professional eclipses the cross-boundary professional concerned with building strategic advantage and institutional capacity. As unbounded professionals, the designers are operating beyond their position descriptions and historical fulfillment of the role. So although these case studies are bounded, the individuals are not.

Conclusion

While no one theory or historical perspective provides a definitive description of an educational designer, in these case studies, it is the institutional response to change that could be seen to be driving the transition to a cross-boundary professional. Although there is also evidence of the unbounded professional in the educational designer with “less regard for organisation structures and boundaries” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 381). Whereas Barnett sees the Habermasian framework for communication action (Barnett 2014, p. 146) “losing ground to the postmoderns and post-historians” in the university, Whitchurch offers in the unbounded professional an approach that “might be said to reflect Habermasian communicative actions” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 381) where the individual is “oriented to reaching an understanding.” Here we return to the idea of the orientations of Land where, in different contexts, the practitioner assumes different dimensions (Land 2001, p. 4). Bird et al. (2005) argue against “grand narratives” (p. 22) in favor of accommodating the heterogeneity of the educational designer. There is however something of a fixed understanding in institutions of the educational designer as technical-professional. This research supports the findings in the literature that educational designers are professionals with a personal capacity and efficacy for operating in ambiguous, collaborative, and transdisciplinary contexts. Further this research provides the foundation for an argument that there is less need for technical expertise as a foundation for the role. Lastly the research extends Whitchurch’s third space and, for educational designers, suggests that it is not just a tension between academic and professional identities, but within each of those identities, there are tensions and transitions. It is the space rather than any particular occupational title that best informs educational design practice.

This has implications for the way educational designers are recruited and how selection criteria are designed which demonstrate capabilities that look beyond the

technical foundations and experience often implied in the role. Educational designers themselves need support and professional development to identify and articulate the way in which their professional interactions at the personal, relational, and institutional level bring different dimensions to the role.

Acknowledgments I would like to thank my colleagues at La Trobe University Learning and Teaching for their invaluable input, discussions, and feedback on this chapter.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Background

What is your educational background?

Can you give a brief overview of your work experience? (How long have you been and educational designer, where have you worked, and what other positions have you held.)

Current Position and Recent Restructure

Has your title changed as a result of the new structure?

Where were you based before?

How is the fulfillment of your role different from where you were?

How have you found the transition? Are there any challenges?

Do academic staff perceive your role in the same way in current role compared to previous?

Interactions

How much do other education designers influence how you work or perceive your role?

How do you negotiate that working relationship with academic developers on curriculum projects and workshops?

How do your interactions with academic influence your role?

Research

What research are you interested in? What informs your practice and what areas are you interested in contributing to?

Do you get a chance to produce papers, articles, or conference presentations?

Do you feel research for educational designers is encouraged?

University Strategy and Policy

How important is the university strategy to your work?

Do you feel pressure to fulfill strategic goals or are you comfortable with the strategies you are working on?

How important are the key initiatives of, e.g., student retention, students' success, and graduate employability, and how much do they affect your work?

What is your relationship to policy? Are you involved in policy development?

Technology

What technologies do you work with?

How do you keep up with the technological changes?

Do you feel pressure to constantly be at the forefront of latest developments?

How do you work with academic staff to introduce new technology use in teaching and learning?

Other Institutions, Professional Bodies, and Influencers

Are you a member of any professional organizations associated with your role?

How much do you take note of practice in other universities, advice of professional bodies, and other influencers?

References

- Allen, Miles. 1996. A profile of instructional designers in Australia. *Distance Education* 17 (1): 7–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158791960170103>.
- Barnett, Ronald. 2014. *Thinking and rethinking the University: The selected works of Roland Barnett*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.
- Bird, Jenny. 2004. Professional naval gazing: Flexible learning professionals into the future. In *Beyond the comfort Zone: 21st ASCILITE conference*, ed. Roger Atkinson, Clare McBeath, Diana Jonas-Dwyer, and Rob Philips, 123–133. Perth: ASCILITE. <http://www.ascilite.org/conferences/perth04/procs/bird.html>. Accessed 26 Jan 2016.
- Bird, Jenny, Chris Morgan, and Meg O'Reilly. 2007. Exploring the tensions in educational and instructional design in Australian Universities. In *Instructional design: Case studies in communities of practice*, ed. M. Keppell, 19–35. New York: Information Science Publishing.
- Boud, David. 2006. Situation academic development in professional work: Using peer learning. *International Journal for Academic Development* 4 (1): 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144990040102>.
- Boud, David, Peter Cressey, and Peter Docherty. 2006. *Productive reflection at work: Learning for changing organisations*. New York: Routledge.
- Boud, David, and Paul Hager. 2012. Re-thinking professional development through changing metaphors and location in professional practices. *Studies in Continuing Education* 34 (1): 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2011.608656>.

- Bradley, Denise, Peter Noonan, Helen Nugent, and Bill Scales. 2008. *Review of Australian higher education: Final report [Bradley review]*. Canberra: DEEWR. <http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/44384h>. Accessed 9 Oct 2016.
- Campbell, Katy, Richard A. Schwier, and Richard F. Kenny. 2005. Agency of the instructional designer: Moral coherence and transformative social practice. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 21 (2): 242–262. <http://ajet.org.au/index.php/AJET/article/view/1337/707>. Accessed 1 Feb 2016.
- Costly, Carol, Geoffrey Elliot, and Paul Gibbs. 2010. *Doing work based research: Approaches to enquiry for insider-researchers*. London: Sage.
- Creswell, John W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. London: Sage.
- Flick, Uwe. 2015. *Introducing research methodology*. London: Sage.
- Fraser, Kym. 2001. Australasian academic developers' conceptions of the profession. *International Journal for Academic Development* 6 (1): 54–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440110033706>.
- Gosper, Maree, and Dirk Ifenthaler. 2014. Curriculum design for the twenty-first century. In *Curriculum models for the 21st century*, ed. Maree Gosper and Dirk Ifenthaler, 1–14. New York: Springer Science and Business Media.
- Gravemeijer, Koeno, and Paul Cobb. 2006. Design research from a learning design perspective. In *Educational design research*, ed. Jan van der Akker, Koeno Gravemeijer, Susan McKenney, and Nienke Nieveen, 17–51. London: Routledge.
- Kozma, Robert. 1985. A grounded theory of instructional innovation in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education* 56 (3): 300–317. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1981736>. Accessed 24 Feb 2016.
- Land, Ray. 2001. Agency, context and change in academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 6 (1): 4–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440110033715>.
- Land, Ray. 2004. *Educational development: Discourse, identity and practice*. Maidenhead: SRHE/Open University Press.
- Little, Deandra, and David Green. 2012. Betwixt and between: Academic developers in the margins. *International Journal for Academic Development* 17 (3): 203–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2012.700895>.
- Manathunga, Catherine. 2007. “Unhomely” academic developer identities: More post-colonial explorations. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (1): 25–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440701217287>.
- McKenney, Susan, Nienke Nieveen, and Jan van der Akker. 2006. Design research from a curriculum perspective. In *Educational design research*, ed. Jan van der Akker, Koeno Gravemeijer, Susan McKenney, and Nienke Nieveen, 67–90. London: Routledge.
- Morgan, Jenny Bird, and Meg O'Reilly. 2007. Educational design and Southern Cross University Australia: A case study. In *Instructional design: Case studies in communities of practice*, ed. Mike Keppel, 153–169. New York: Information Science Publishing.
- O'Reilly, Meg. 2004. Educational design as transdisciplinary partnership: Supporting assessment design for online. In *Beyond the comfort Zone: 21st ASCILITE conference*, ed. Roger Atkinson, Clare McBeath, Diana Jonas-Dwyer, and Rob Philips, 724–733. Perth: ASCILITE. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/perth04/procs/orielly.html>. Accessed 25 Jan 2016.
- Reigeluth, Charles M. 1983. *Instructional design theories and models: An overview of their current status*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.
- Reis, Rick .n.d. Strengths and limitations of case studies. <http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/tomprof/posting.php?ID=1013>. Accessed 15 Oct 2016.
- Reiser, Robert. 2001. A history of instructional design and technology: Part II: A history of instructional design. *Educational Technology Research and Development* 49 (2): 57–67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02504928>.
- Roberts, D.W., K. Jackson, J. Osbourne, and A. Somers Vine. 1994. Attitudes and perceptions of academic authors to the preparation of distance education materials at the University of Tasmania. *Distance Education* 15 (1): 70–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0158791940150106>.

- Rogers, Everett. 2003. *Diffusion of innovations*. 5th ed. New York: The Free Press.
- Shwier, Richard A., Katy Cambell, and Richard Kenny. 2004. Instructional designers' observations about identity, communities of practice and change agency. *Australian Journal of Educational Technology* 20 (1): 69–100. <http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet20/schwier.html>. Accessed 1 Feb 2016.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2008a. Beyond administration and management: Reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 30 (4): 375–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/136008008023830421>.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2008b. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of the third space professional in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>.



Crossing Boundaries: Projects, Discourses, and Visibility in the Third Space

7

Meaghan Botterill

Contents

Introduction	92
Understanding Organizational Groups in Context	93
Groups in Organizations	94
Groups and Discourses	94
Embedded Intergroup Relations Theory	95
Parallel Processes: A Fractal Theory of Relationships	96
Universities as Intergroup Domains	96
Third Space Professionals	97
Projects, Discourses, and Visibility in the Third Space	99
Discourses, Parallel Processes, and Visibility in the Third Space	100
Conclusions	105
References	105

Abstract

Universities are large and complex organizations that comprise many groups. Traditionally, these groups account for academic and professional staff. However, the changing nature of work in universities has seen new roles, identities, groups, and relationships emerge, including a new group, third space professionals (Whitchurch, *Reconstructing identities in higher education: the rise of Third Space professionals*. Routledge, Oxon, 2013). These staff span organizational boundaries and work in blended capacities with academic colleagues.

Due to the rise in blended and online learning environments, many online resource development projects are interdisciplinary collaborations between third

M. Botterill (✉)
RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia
e-mail: meaghan.botterill@gmail.com

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_17

91

space professional and academic staff. This chapter explores how discourses, as artifacts of group boundaries, power relations, affective patterns, and parallel processes, affect visibility in a university and how these systemically privilege some groups and marginalize others. This makes it difficult for professional staff working with academics in the third space project domain to receive appropriate recognition and kudos for their work, including their contributions to student learning outcomes. Overall, the professional and vocational staff in the research felt that their discourses were undervalued and lacked status and visibility compared to those of their academic colleagues.

This chapter draws on a qualitative research study conducted at an Australian university that explored interdisciplinary collaboration between professional and academic staff working in the third space project domain. Understanding the changing nature of group relationships in universities, including in interdisciplinary project-based teams, can help to provide insights into enhancing collaboration and improving organizational and student educational outcomes.

Keywords

Intergroup collaboration in universities · Embedded Intergroup Relations Theory · Third space professionals · Interdisciplinary project based teams · Universities as workplaces

Introduction

The changing nature of work in knowledge intensive organizations, such as universities, has given rise to new roles, identities, groups, and relationships. Traditionally, the two dominant groups in universities have been academic and professional staff, and at times, relationships between these groups have been problematic (McInnis 1998; Coaldrake 2000; Whitchurch 2008). However, the recent rise in blended and online learning environments, which has transformed the design and delivery of tertiary education (Kirkwood and Price 2005; Gétrudix Barrio et al. 2007), has also resulted in substantial increases in specialist para-academic and professional support services (Blackmore et al. 2010; Macfarlane 2011). For example, many universities now have central or faculty-based specialist groups or services, such as learning design units or academic development groups. These groups comprise new or reconceptualized disciplines, such as educational design, web design, communication/graphic design, multimedia development, and audio/video development (Botterill and de la Harpe 2010). These services increasingly work in interdisciplinary project-based teams, defined here as “a group of people from different disciplines who consciously try to co-ordinate and integrate their expertise in the pursuit of a common goal” (Botterill and de la Harpe 2010, p. 79). These services collaborate with teaching staff colleagues on specific projects to create online learning resources and experiences for students, for example, websites, interactive, and multimedia resources.

Project-based work is now common in many organizations, as is the increasing use of project-based teams to undertake specific projects that span organizational boundaries (Prencipe and Tell 2001; Whitchurch 2006). Projects are designed

around time-based, short-term, fluid activities (Prencipe and Tell 2001) to produce one-time outputs, such as a new product or service, and therefore they are separate from the normal ongoing operational, repetitive aspects of daily business life and practices. Within universities, Celia Whitchurch (2006) argues that this new project domain has encouraged boundary crossing and therefore has created a new group of professional staff which she calls third space professionals (Whitchurch 2008, 2009, 2013). These staff increasingly have academic qualifications at master's and PhD levels and specific areas of specialization. Third space professionals span organizational boundaries and often work in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary project teams, on broad-based, long- and/or short-term projects (Whitchurch 2013).

This chapter draws on empirical research from a much larger qualitative PhD study that explored what helped, hindered, and facilitated collaboration in three university-based, online resource development projects (Botterill 2013). Using an organizational development theory, embedded intergroup relations theory (EIRT) (Alderfer 1987), as the central theoretical and analytical framework, the research explored team members' experiences of working on the projects and how group boundaries, power differences, affective patterns, cognitive formations, (discourses) and leadership behaviors affected interdisciplinary collaboration within the context of a university as a workplace. Overall it is found that the permeability of both psychological and physical group boundaries, that is, how open or closed the boundaries were to being crossed, had a significant impact on the success (or not) of the projects. In universities, there are many physical and psychological group boundaries, such as campuses, organizational structures, and employment awards, and these implicitly – and on occasions explicitly – affect group legitimacy and visibility as some groups are privileged over others.

This chapter explores how discourses affect visibility in a university and how they systemically privilege some groups and marginalize others. This makes it difficult for professional staff working with academics in the third space project domain to receive appropriate recognition and kudos for their work, including their contributions to student learning outcomes. This chapter presents a brief overview of embedded intergroup relations theory (Alderfer 1987), followed by an exploration of universities as intergroup domains. It then provides an overview of current research on third space professionals. Finally, it draws on the three online learning resource development case studies described in the research, to explore projects, discourses, and visibility in the third space project domain. Understanding the changing nature of group relationships in universities, including in interdisciplinary project-based teams, can help to provide insights into enhancing collaboration and improving organizational relationships and student educational outcomes.

Understanding Organizational Groups in Context

This section presents a brief overview of the key theoretical constructs that underpin this chapter to better understand projects, complexity, and visibility in the third space project domain. It discusses groups in organizations, groups, and discourses, embedded intergroup relations theory, parallel processes, universities as intergroup domains, and third space professionals.

Groups in Organizations

Interdisciplinary project-based teams comprise individuals from different organizational groups with different areas of specialization and expertise who collaborate to achieve a common goal. This section gives an overview of the different types of groups found in organizations.

It is widely acknowledged that universities are large and complex organizations (Hoare et al. 1995; Bess and Dee 2008), with large numbers of groups (and sub-groups) embedded in their contexts. According to Clayton Alderfer, the two main groups in organizations are identity and organizational groups, and people represent multiple groups in their interactions with others. Alderfer states:

In any transaction with others, each individual – whether intending to or not – represents multiple identity (i.e., gender, race, family, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc.) and organization (i.e. program, work group, hierarchy, profession, etc.) groups. Which groups a person represents depends on which people representing which other specific groups are present and on the relationships among those groups. (2011, p. 173)

As indicated above, identity groups are those into which people are born and over which they have little control. However, organizational group membership, on the other hand, is generally voluntary, such as through employment, and it comprises both task and hierarchical group memberships. Task group membership is a function of a person's primary work activities, and these people tend to develop common organizational views across time. Hierarchical group membership is based on position, authority, decision-making autonomy, and so forth and determines who has access to privileges, status, and power (Alderfer 1987).

Research on hierarchy in contemporary knowledge-based organizations has identified that authority relations exist on a number of formal and informal levels (Lundholm et al. 2012). Formal authority relations – verticalization – exist through vertical organizational hierarchy, as depicted in organizational structures, charts, and reporting lines and reflect hierarchical group membership. However, there are also more informal horizontal authority relations – horizontalization – which are based on knowledge and expertise reflecting task group membership, thus leading to expert authority (Barley 1996; Olsen 2006; Lundholm et al. 2012). While hierarchical groups represent verticalization, task group membership is likely to produce horizontalization and expert authority. In interdisciplinary project-based teams, there are likely to be mixes of identity, task, and hierarchical groups producing both verticalization and horizontalization in terms of power and authority relations.

Groups and Discourses

Discourses encompass ways of knowing, thinking, and doing that reflect people's inherent views, values, and orientations. In organizations, discourses underpin group memberships and who has access to power, privilege, visibility, and rewards.

Discourses are the manifestation of group membership, and they mediate relationships with other groups, as well as with existing social structures, such as class or organizational structures (Botterill and de la Harpe 2010). According to James (Jim) Gee (1992, p. 3), “‘Discourses’ [. . .(with a capital ‘D’). . .] are ways in which people coordinate and are coordinated by language, other people, objects, times, and places so as to take on particular socially recognizable identities.” They are inextricably linked with our notions of self and identity, and they play a major part in what we view as normal and natural, such as ideologies, and they are thoroughly value-laden (Gee 2001). Just as Alderfer differentiates between identity and organizational group membership, Gee distinguishes between primary and secondary discourses. According to Gee (1992), primary discourses are acquired through identity group membership, such as in the family’s natural sociocultural setting, and they determine who we view as “people like us,” while secondary discourses are those into which people are apprenticed outside the home, e.g., through schooling, and they are the basis of organizational group memberships. Exploring discourses and relationships between and among groups embedded in organizations, and in interdisciplinary project-based teams, can help to understand the dynamics that operate between the whole and its parts.

Embedded Intergroup Relations Theory

Embedded intergroup relations theory (EIRT) (Alderfer 1987, 2011) is the central theoretical and analytical framework used in the research. It is an open systems theory that explores how natural – or real – groups interact in context, with a primary focus on groups in organizations (Alderfer 1987, 2011). In this chapter, it provides a theoretical framework to explore the dynamics that operate in interdisciplinary project-based teams between third space professional staff and academic and vocational teaching staff.

Within EIRT, intergroup relations refers to “activities *between* and *among* groups” (Alderfer 1987, p. 190, original emphasis), and it asserts that groups are never isolated but are always embedded in social systems. EIRT posits that there are five interdependent properties, or lenses, that are “characteristic of intergroup relations regardless of the particular groups or the specific setting where the relationship occurs” (Alderfer 1987, p. 203). These lenses are group boundaries, power relations, affective patterns, cognitive formations – Alderfer’s equivalent of discourses – and leadership behaviors. EIRT has been used to explore many complex organizational issues and settings, including improving race relations, gender, and diversity in organizations (see Alderfer 1994; Alderfer and Tucker 1996).

Group boundaries is the first property of EIRT. Group boundaries can be both psychological and physical, and they regulate interactions between groups. Boundary permeability is important as it determines what gets into and what is excluded from systems (Alderfer 1980, 1987; Transportation Research Board 2005). Alderfer identifies three states of boundary permeability: overbounded in which the boundaries are too tight often leading to elitism and group think (Janis 1972), underbounded in

which the boundaries are too loose often leading to turmoil and chaos, and optimally bounded where groups thrive in relation to the environments and vitality is high (Alderfer 1980, 2011). However, groups are never isolated, and group boundaries can exist on many levels in organizations, and they can have both positive and negative effects on collaboration in project-based teams.

Parallel Processes: A Fractal Theory of Relationships

As groups and systems interact with each other, the views, values, and orientations, including behaviors and cognitions, of the broad organization can be unconsciously absorbed and replicated at a team level. This can affect interdisciplinary project-based teams as they are embedded within normative organizational structures.

As groups are ubiquitous in all social systems, including universities, relationships between and among groups at an organizational level can be unconsciously replicated at a subgroup – or team – level through what is termed group-level parallel processes. Parallel processes is an unconscious phenomenon whereby the dynamics found in any system reflect those of the suprasystem above, as well as the subsystems below, including broader systemic, environmental, and intergroup relationships (Alderfer 1987, 2011). For example, research is afforded more privilege than (academic) teaching in terms of broader political and socioeconomic agendas and suprasystems, such as governments, and this dynamic is reproduced in subsystems, such as in universities, as research is afforded more status than academic teaching. Thus, “a system can face reinforcing or conflictual pressures as the outside affects the inside, and the inside, in turn, affects the outside” (Alderfer 1987, p. 210).

Parallel processes occur among and between groups in organizations, and “group level parallel processes. . .are likely to have intrapersonal and interpersonal effects” (Alderfer and Simon 2002, p. 420). This can therefore impact on interpersonal relationships between different team members, and this has particular significance for interdisciplinary project-based teams, as by their nature, they comprise people from different organizational groups.

Universities as Intergroup Domains

Universities, like all complex systems, contain large numbers of groups embedded in their contexts. The two dominant organizational groups in universities are academic and professional staff, and both contain many subgroups. However, new identities and ways of working have challenged strong and fiercely contested academic and disciplinary group boundaries (Becher and Trowler 2001) that have historical power relations and affective patterns between ingroups and outgroups.

The economic rationalist reforms of the higher education (HE) sector in Australia from the late 1980s onward have irrevocably changed the nature of universities as organizations (Marginson and Considine 2000). Universities, as medieval-based institutions, had once been autonomous domains, but the reforms have reshaped

“the political economy of the universities, university government relations, internal governance and political culture, and academic work” (Marginson and Considine 2000, p. 113). This has resulted in substantial increases in professional staff in universities and increased academic workloads. Academic staff have been required to do more administrative work, for example, to comply with external compliance and quality assurance requirements, and they do not feel they receive enough support (McInnis 1998; Coaldrake 2000; Larkins 2012).

The growth in professional staff in universities reflects the increasing complexity of universities as businesses. Professional staff now account for more than 50% of the Australian university workforce (Larkins 2012; Graham 2013), and they are found in areas such as IT, marketing, financial and asset management, compliance, quality assurance, research support, and fund-raising services (Marginson and Considine 2000; Larkins 2012). These roles represent areas of specialization which are required to keep universities functioning (and financial) behind the scenes. However, these roles are often considered to be ancillary to the core business of education.

Relationships between academic and professional staff groups have been problematic, and there has been a recognized and, at times, a bitter divide between academic and professional staff in Australian universities and universities more broadly (McInnis 1998; Coaldrake 2000; Marginson and Considine 2000; Whitchurch 2008). Academic groups do not feel they receive enough support, even though there have been large increases in professional staff and administrative roles in universities. On the other hand, professional staff often feel that their work is invisible and that they are only perceived as working in administration or management (Dobson 2000; Dobson and Conway 2003; Szekeres 2004, 2006). This has created “fear and loathing” (Dobson and Conway 2003) between professional and academic staff and a “them and us” mentality (Dobson 2000).

Traditionally academic and professional staff identities have been premised on how they relate to three domains: knowledge domains, institutional domains, and sector domains (Whitchurch 2006). However, with the increasing use of teams and project-based work in universities, Whitchurch (2006) argues that there is now a new domain – the project domain. This domain comprises hybrid or multi-professionals who work in cross-functional areas and seek to “facilitate organisational learning and development, to generate an atmosphere in which academic colleagues feel more empowered to do things differently” (Whitchurch 2006, p. 168). This new domain can promote collaboration between academic and professional staff working in interdisciplinary project-based teams, but it also challenges the permeability of traditional group boundaries, power relations, and affective patterns.

Third Space Professionals

Third space professionals regularly cross group and organizational boundaries. However, recognition and visibility of their inputs in interdisciplinary project-based teams can be problematic. However, as discourses emerge and change, there are opportunities to acknowledge and legitimize third space professionals' contributions to student learning outcomes.

The changing nature and increasing complexity of work in universities has created new roles, identities, and relationships and resulted in a blurring of the boundaries between academic and professional staff. Whitchurch (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013) contends that there are now four professional staff identities:

- Bounded professionals who work within clear structural boundaries (such as function, job description)
- Cross-boundary professionals who actively use boundaries for strategic advantage and institutional capacity building
- Unbounded professionals who disregard boundaries to focus on broadly based projects and institutional development
- Blended professionals who are dedicated appointments spanning professional and academic domains. (Whitchurch 2009, p. 408)

Whitchurch also argues that the increased fluidity resulting from crossing organizational boundaries, combined with the new project domain, has given rise to a new group of professional staff, third space professionals. These staff increasingly have academic qualifications at master's and PhD levels and specific areas of specialization. Third space professionals span organizational boundaries and often work in interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary project teams, on broad-based, long- and/or short-term projects (Whitchurch 2013).

So far, Whitchurch's research has focused on senior executive roles in UK, US, and Australian universities. In Australia, Carroll Graham (2010, 2012, 2013) has applied the third space framework to professional staff working in more junior roles, such as HEW 6–9, including in new learning spaces, both physical and virtual. She argues that those positions that traditionally would have been thought of as bounded, such as IT support officers, are moving toward the *third space*, while blended positions, such as educational designers, now occupy the third space, and she concludes:

That the changes to professional identity...are concurrent with changes to the technology used in our institutions, is not coincidental. The use of technology to facilitate student learning requires staff with new skill sets and with higher levels of formal qualifications. As well as the technical skills to implement and support technology-enabled learning environments, professional staff need to have a solid understanding of the values and mission of their institution, and of pedagogical imperatives, to maximise the effectiveness of their support for student learning. (2013, p. 69)

The increasing use of interdisciplinary project-based teams to develop online student learning resources enhances opportunities for academic and professional staff to work collaboratively in the third space project domain. However, there is a need to better understand and acknowledge the contributions professional staff make to student learning outcomes (Graham 2013). And this is nothing new. In 1995, the *Higher Education Management Review* found:

It is also the case that, in a number of areas of university activity, the boundary lines between academic and general staff are becoming increasingly blurred. This is occurring in both

directions, as academic staff perform a range of administrative duties and general staff – through their areas of expertise – play a key role in “academic” areas such as the use of multimedia in course delivery and design. This blurring of boundary lines underlines the importance of teamwork between academic and non-academic staff. However, the development of such teamwork is not likely to be assisted if the non-academic staff do not perceive their role as being valued as highly as that of their academic colleagues. (Hoare et al. 1995, p. 76)

So what is hindering an ability to recognize and value professional staff’s expertise in interdisciplinary project-based teams when developing digital learning resources and thus their contributions to student learning outcomes? The following section presents research of staff reflections of working on three online resource development projects undertaken at an Australian university.

Projects, Discourses, and Visibility in the Third Space

This section explores the ways in which parallel processes and discourses – as artifacts of group boundaries, affective patterns, and power differences – affected third space professional staff working in interdisciplinary project-based teams. It highlights issues surrounding status, validity, visibility, and recognition of third space professionals’ work along with their areas of expertise and along with their contributions to student learning outcomes.

This chapter is based on a qualitative, collective case study of three online resource development projects that explored what helped, hindered, and facilitated collaboration in interdisciplinary project-based teams in developing online learning resources (for a full account, see Botterill 2013). The research was conducted at an Australian university, fictitiously called public university (PU), which like most universities, offers a range of courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree levels, as well as some certificate courses that fall within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. The three projects were selected based on a set of criteria that required them to be funded by the university’s Learning and Teaching Grant Program, to have a web-based finished online learning resources, and to use a university online development service, and there had to be a mix of teaching staff and professional staff. In all, there were 17 semi-structured interviews conducted with the academic, professional, and in one project the vocational staff, who all worked on the projects. The participants were asked questions about their experiences of working on the projects specifically relating to group boundaries, power differences, affective patterns, discourses, and leadership behaviors, to determine how these were experienced and affected collaboration in the teams.

Table 1 provides the participants’ pseudonyms, identity, and organizational group memberships and the projects on which they worked. In all there were four academic staff, seven professional staff and three vocational staff. The academic staff were from different faculties and on academic awards; the professional staff were all members of the same educational multimedia and design service, Service X (SX), employed on Higher Education Worker (HEW) awards; and the three vocational

Table 1 Participants' identity and organizational group membership details

Name	Title	Award	Age group	Years at PU
Andrew	Senior lecturer (Project A)	Academic	45–54	11–15
Emma	Lecturer (Project B)	Academic	45–54	0–5
Shirley	Senior lecturer (Project B)	Academic	55–64	16–20
Robyn	Lecturer (Project C)	Academic	45–54	0–5
Lauren	Senior graphic designer (Project A and B)	HEW	35–44	5–10
Ben	Senior web developer (Project A and B)	HEW	45–54	0–5
Cate	Senior graphic designer (Project C)	HEW	35–44	11–15
Jack	Web developer (Project A and C)	HEW	35–44	0–5
Helen	Graphic designer (Project B)	HEW	25–34	6–10
Peter	Senior multimedia coordinator (Project C)	HEW	55–64	21+
Gavin	Multimedia coordinator (Project B)	HEW	45–54	16–20
Karen	Educational designer (team leader) (Project C)	VA	45–54	11–15
Michelle	Educational designer (Project C)	VA	55–64	11–15
Diana	Web and multimedia developer (Project C)	VA	45–54	6–10

staff, known as V-group, were located in the Students Division and were on appropriate vocational awards (VA), but they were an anomaly as the rest of the Students Division were professional staff.

The following discussion focuses on Alderfer's fourth lens, *cognitive formations*, or discourses, to see how a university as a workplace values different discourses as a reflection of group boundaries, power differences, affective patterns, and leadership behaviors. In doing so, it highlights issues surrounding the recognition of professional staff contributions in the third space project domain and how these staff contribute to the values and mission of their institutions.

Discourses, Parallel Processes, and Visibility in the Third Space

This discussion explores how the different academic, professional, and vocational teaching staff felt that their discourses were viewed and valued within the university and within the project teams. Overall, the professional and vocational staff felt that their discourses were undervalued and lacked status and visibility compared to their academic colleagues.

Discourses are ideological and affect and reflect group memberships and underpin affective patterns, and they have inherent power relations, based on power differences due to access to scarce resources. These power differences extend across all levels and functions in universities, and they are generally determined by organizational group memberships – both task and hierarchical. They help to create ingroups and outgroups, including those who have access to scarce resources and those that don't. Discourses are extremely powerful, and within universities, they are

also affected by parallel processes that give tacit status and hierarchy to some discourses, while others are marginalized; for example, the status given to hard sciences as opposed to soft sciences, research activities as opposed to teaching activities, and academic staff as opposed to professional staff and, in PU's case, vocational staff.

In response to questions around power differences and discourses, all participants identified status as a scarce resource in universities, and status is important as it helps to determine both the visibility of groups and the legitimacy of their discourses. Research was seen as having the highest status, followed by academic, professional, and finally vocational roles. According to Emma (academic, Project B):

I think the academic role is more highly valued than the service role in this particular case. But I think there's another sub-category within that, the research role is valued more highly than the teaching role.

This privileging of research over academic teaching results in parallel processes. Over the past 20 years or so, government funding policies have decoupled research and teaching funding in universities with increases in dedicated funding for research and decreases for teaching on a per student basis (Coaldrake and Stedman 1999). However, while there was a divide noted between the status afforded to research activities and academic teaching, there was consensus that academics (and their associated discourses) are viewed and valued more highly in the university than those of their professional and vocational staff colleagues. For example, "I think in the university, the academics are the ones that are viewed highly. People like myself are probably lower down on the scale of things" (Diana, web and multimedia developer, Project C).

In general, the professional and vocational staff in the study felt that there was little recognition and institutional respect shown for their professional skills, expertise, and associated discourses, and the following discussion highlights:

- The status and acknowledgment of professional staff's areas of specialization and expertise
- The invisibility of professional staff's work and their contributions to student (learning) outcomes
- The status and legitimacy of different types of knowledge in universities

The Status and Acknowledgment of Professional Staff's Areas of Specialization and Expertise

Within universities, parallel processes ensure that academic staff's discourses and areas of expertise and specializations are acknowledged externally through publications and research outputs which are valuable for university rankings. However, as there were no imperatives for professional staff to produce research outputs at PU, they did not feel that their areas of expertise had status, nor were acknowledged or respected, at an organizational level, although they did feel that they were respected within the project-based teams. For example, in SX they felt that their high levels

of technical and professional expertise in complex programming and visual communication design were respected, and this gave them high levels of expert authority in the projects.

In this research, SX felt that their professional discourses and practices were lower in status than those of their academic colleagues. Firstly, there was consensus among the participants that support/service roles were regarded as “very low status. . .and that’s what you fight with all the time. . .I think all the people in the non-academic and [vocational] teaching areas fight overall for everything” (Karen, team leader and educational designer, Project C). Cate (senior graphic designer, Project C) similarly described these sentiments:

I think any support service in the university gets treated as a bit – not as a second rate citizen, but very much you know, I don’t think an academic would regard them as equal.

It was also highlighted that support services lacked status even though they have significant areas of specialization. As Ben stated (web developer, Projects A and B), “technical roles are not viewed – not respected – to the extent that they should be, and this group [SX] has people who have very high technical skills.” Andrew (academic, Project A) saw that there is a paradoxical relationship in terms of power and status in relation to the role of the technician, which he described in terms of actor network theory (ANT):

It is interesting what Latour says about the technician and the role of the technical within the socio-technical processes and how it’s generally regarded as lesser.

Historically, technical roles have been relegated subordinate status because technicians have been seen as operators at “empirical interfaces,” that is, they transform routine inputs into standardized representations (outputs) using sophisticated technologies, techniques, and bodies of knowledge (Barley 1996). However, while it is acknowledged that they often have high levels of professional expertise, they are not seen as “artisan[s] involved in the design of things. . .[they merely provide]. . . standardized solutions to a finite set of puzzles” (Nespor 2012, p. 5). Thus, this produces ambivalence as to whether technicians are servants or experts (Barley 1996).

However, websites are recognized as complex systems (Smith and Newell 2004), and in both projects (A and B), SX were responsible for the design and development of technically complex online learning resources, which had complex backend database, design, and interactivity requirements. In these projects, both Andrew and Emma, the academic leads, had previously tried to develop the online learning resources themselves, but they acknowledged they lacked the required capabilities, with Emma stating her attempt was “somewhat crude and amateurish from a design perspective and a little bit clunky. And it was a lot of work to put all that content together.” This is why both Andrew and Emma applied for LTG funding to develop the online learning resources to enhance and support their students’ learning opportunities.

This leads to the second point, the lack of visibility that service/support staff have in universities, including in having their contributions to student learning outcomes, for example, as third space professionals, acknowledged.

The Invisibility of Professional Staff's Work and Their Contributions to Student (Learning) Outcomes

The divide between academic and professional staff and the invisibility of professional staff's work in relation to university outcomes did arise in the study. As previously mentioned, professional staff often feel that their work is invisible, and they are only perceived as working in administration or management (Dobson 2000; Dobson and Conway 2003; Szekeres 2004, 2006). In this research, Cate (Project C) commented that professional support services are "invisible in the sense of – in terms of outcomes, particularly positive outcomes." Support services, like SX, often work in the third space in unbounded and blended capacities, creating online learning objects and resources for students in interdisciplinary project-based teams with academic colleagues. However, it is often the case that academics do not feel the need to acknowledge or attribute work done by professional staff, nor give kudos for it. Once again, according to Cate:

And that's happened on multiple times where someone has been openly opened-mouthed that we would deserve to get kudos. You know, even though, we had to build something for them that was actually very, very complicated and there's no way they could've done it themselves. But their attitude was well – yeah, but if I had an afternoon with the software, I could. Well, like no you couldn't.

Power in professional areas is based on hierarchy, recognition, and kudos, and these are particularly important as professional staff more readily align their identities with the institution in which they work (McInnis 1998; Coaldrake and Stedman 1999; Whitchurch 2008). However, as Cate highlights above, there is little acknowledgment of ownership and attribution from academic staff, and this makes it difficult for professional staff contributions to student learning outcomes – especially when working in third space interdisciplinary collaborations – to be recognized or acknowledged.

While this may be a reflection of the status afforded to technical roles and their associated discourses and disciplinary practices in universities, it may also reflect the ambivalence as to whether "technicians" are servants or experts (Barley 1996). However, while these roles do have high levels of technical specialization, they also have high levels of professional skills, and these types of projects are still third space interdisciplinary collaborations. Moreover, with the continuing investment in blended learning, eLearning systems, and the need for online learning resources, these types of projects will continue to rise. This supports Graham's contention (2012, 2013) that there needs to be greater acknowledgment of the positive contributions third space professional staff make to student learning outcomes. However, this is unlikely to happen unless there is greater institutional respect for the discourses, skills, and professional practices of these staff. This therefore leads to the third factor, the status and legitimacy of different types of knowledge, and their associated discourses, in university contexts.

The Status and Legitimacy of Different Types of Knowledge in Universities

The discourses (and discourse practices) of academic groups were seen as having higher status in the university, and this was particularly evident in Project C. This was the only project that contained all three organizational groups – professional, vocational, and

academic – and it was plagued by levels of organizational complexity. Michelle (educational designer, Project C) commented on the importance of the Robyn's (academic, Project C) role in the team, as her discourses and organizational group memberships gave "her some authority that perhaps we wouldn't have, because we are only shit-kickers from the Students' Division". Along with V-group's status as "shit-kickers," Michelle commented on the status afforded to Robyn's theoretical/academic discourses in the university compared to V-group's, and thus her role on the team was:

Michelle: To bring an academic presence and knowledge – her knowledge, her expert knowledge – which she does have in this area. Because she's done years of research in this area so it was useful. . . But we knew the stuff from our own experience, the same stuff in a different way.

Interviewer: Which one do you think the university values more?

Michelle: Hers. That's why we needed her.

In universities, discourses that produce (and reproduce) theoretical knowledge – and publish (and republish) it as research outputs – are privileged over those that are based on applied knowledge, which is often produced in the context of application, often referred to as Mode 2 knowledge (see Gibbons et al. 1994). However, while Mode 2 knowledge production may be the basis for transdisciplinary industry ventures (as revenue-generating partnerships), this has not trickled down within universities to recognize other types of knowledge produced in the context of application, for example, in the process of working with students.

Both the professional and the vocational staff groups in this research felt that their discourses, and related discourse practices, were not viewed and valued as highly as those of their academic colleagues, even though they were working in interdisciplinary project-based teams to develop online learning resources for students. Overall, they felt there was very little recognition of the positive contributions they make to student learning outcomes.

In these projects, people felt their disciplines and associated discourses were all highly valued in the teams. However, this was not always the case in the broader organizational environment, particularly for professional and vocational staff. Returning to the Higher Education Review which identified:

This blurring of boundary lines underlines the importance of teamwork between academic and non-academic staff. However, the development of such teamwork is not likely to be assisted if the non-academic staff do not perceive their role as being valued as highly as that of their academic colleagues. (Hoare et al. 1995, p. 76)

Thus, from an organizational perspective, there needs to be greater recognition and support for skills and the areas of expertise third space professional staff have and of the ways in which these staff contribute to successful student learning outcomes (Graham 2012, 2013). This will be hard to achieve unless there is greater institutional recognition and respect for the discourses, skills, and professional practices these staff contribute.

Conclusions

Universities are complex knowledge-intensive organizations that comprise many groups embedded in their contexts. The move to blended and online learning environments has seen a rise in interdisciplinary collaboration in the third space project domain between professional and academic staff. However as this chapter has shown, there are issues surrounding the status, visibility, and legitimacy of different types of knowledge and discourse in universities.

Discourses, as artifacts of group boundaries, power relations, affective patterns, and parallel processes, affect visibility in a university, and this was evident in the research. Overall, the professional and vocational staff felt that their discourses were undervalued and lacked status and visibility compared to their academic colleagues. This makes it difficult for professional staff working with academics in the third space project domain to receive appropriate recognition and kudos for their work, including the ways in which they contribute to student learning outcomes.

Failure to acknowledge the positive contributions third space professional staff make to institutions and twenty-first-century student experiences and educational outcomes can hinder effective collaboration, especially if different types of knowledge and discourses are privileged over others. Different discourses and areas of specialization need to be respected, not only within a team but also within the broader organizational contexts in which they are embedded. This provides legitimacy for the work of all groups, not just those who represent higher status groups.

References

- Alderfer, C.P. 1980. Consulting to underbounded systems. In *Advances in experiential social processes*, ed. C.P. Alderfer and C.L. Cooper, vol. 2, 267–295. London: Wiley.
- Alderfer, C.P. 1987. An intergroup perspective on group dynamics. In *Handbook of organizational behavior*, ed. J.W. Lorsch, 190–222. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Alderfer, C.P. 1994. A white man's perspective on the unconscious processes within black–white relations in the United States. In *Human diversity: Perspectives on people in context*, ed. E.J. Trickett, R.J. Watts, and D. Birman, 201–229. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Alderfer, C.P. 2011. *The practice of organizational diagnosis: Theory and methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Alderfer, C.P., and A.F. Simon. 2002. Nonresponse rates to organic questionnaire items as evidence of parallel processes during organizational diagnosis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Science* 38 (4): 416–435.
- Alderfer, C.P., and R.C. Tucker. 1996. A field experiment for studying race relations embedded in organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 17: 43–57. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1379\(199601\)17:1<43::AID-JOB732>3.0.CO;2-#](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199601)17:1<43::AID-JOB732>3.0.CO;2-#).
- Barley, S.R. 1996. Technicians in the workplace: Ethnographic evidence for bringing work into organization studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41: 404–440.
- Becher, T., and P.R. Trowler. 2001. *Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines*. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Bess, J.L., and J.R. Dee. 2008. *Understanding college and university organization: Dynamics of the system*. Sterling: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

- Blackmore, P., J. Chambers, L. Huxley, and B. Thackwray. 2010. Tribalism and territoriality in the staff and educational development world. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 34 (1): 105–117.
- Botterill, M. 2013. *Behind the screen: Intergroup collaboration in developing university-based online learning resources*. PhD, RMIT.
- Botterill, M., and B. de la Harpe. 2010. Working successfully in university interdisciplinary teams: Learning from embedded intergroup relations theory. In *Interdisciplinary higher education: Perspectives and practicalities (International perspectives on higher education research)*, ed. M. Davies, M. Devlin, and M. Tight, vol. 5, 75–96. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Coaldrake, P. 2000. Rethinking academic and university work. *Higher Education Management* 12: 7–30. <https://doi.org/10.1787/hemp-v12-3-en>.
- Coaldrake, P., and L. Stedman. 1999. *Academic work in the twenty-first century: Changing roles and policies*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, Higher Education Division.
- Dobson, I. 2000. ‘Them and us’ – General and non-general staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22: 203–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713678142>.
- Dobson, I., and M. Conway. 2003. Fear and loathing in university staffing: The case of Australian academic and general staff. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 15 (3): 123–133.
- Gee, J.P. 1992. *The social mind: Language, ideology and social practice*. New York: Bergin & Gravey.
- Gee, J.P. 2001. Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 44: 714–725.
- Gértrudix Barrio, M., M. Carmen Gálvez de la Cuesta, S. Álvarez García, and A. Valle. 2007. Design and development of digital educational content. In *Computers and education*, ed. B. Fernández-Manjón, J. Sánchez-Pérez, J. Gómez-Pulido, M. Vega-Rodríguez, and J. Bravo-Rodríguez, 67–76. Netherlands: Springer.
- Gibbons, M., C. Limoges, H. Nowotny, S. Schwartzman, P. Scott, and M. Trow. 1994. *The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: SAGE.
- Graham, C. 2010. Hearing the voices of general staff: A Delphi study of the contributions of general staff to student outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 32: 213–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600801003743315>.
- Graham, C. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34: 437–452. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.696326>.
- Graham, C. 2013. Changing technologies, changing identities. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 17 (2): 62–70.
- Hoare, D., G. Stanley, R. Kirkby, and P. Coaldrake. 1995. *Higher education management review: Report of the committee of inquiry*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Janis, I.L. 1972. *Victims of groupthink: A psychological study of foreign-policy decisions and fiascoes*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kirkwood, A.T., and L. Price. 2005. Learners and learning in the 21st century: What do we know about students’ attitudes and experiences of ICT that will help us design courses? *Studies in Higher Education* 30: 257–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070500095689>.
- Larkins, F.P. 2012. Trends in non-academic staff for Australian universities 2000 to 2010. from http://www.lhmartinstitute.edu.au/userfiles/files/HE%20Trends%20-%20Uni%20Gen%20Staff%203_FLarkins_original_updated270612.pdf.
- Lundholm, S.E., J. Rennstam, and M. Alvesson. 2012. Understanding hierarchy in contemporary work. In *Reinventing hierarchy and bureaucracy – from the bureau to network organizations*, Research in the sociology of organizations, ed. Thomas Diefenbach and Rune Todnem By, Vol. 35, 113–140. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Macfarlane, B. 2011. The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the para-academic. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65 (1): 59–73.

- Marginson, S., and M. Considine. 2000. *The enterprise university: Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. Cambridge/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- McInnis, C. 1998. Academics and professional administrators in Australian universities: Dissolving boundaries and new tensions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 20 (2): 161–173.
- Nespor, J. 2012. Devices for educational change. In *Researching education through actor-network theory*, ed. T. Fenwick and R. Edwards, 1–22. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Olsen, R.K. 2006. A change from leadership (vertical powerstructure) to leadingship (horizontal powerstructure) at work. Retrieved 16 Oct 2012, from <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/OlsenLeadershipLeadingship.pdf>.
- Prencipe, A., and F. Tell. 2001. Inter-project learning: Processes and outcomes of knowledge codification in project-based firms. *Research Policy* 30: 1373–1394. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333\(01\)00157-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(01)00157-3).
- Smith, J.A., and W.H. Newell. 2004. An interdisciplinary approach to web design. *Issues in Integrative Studies* 22: 112–140.
- Szekeres, J. 2004. The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26 (1): 7–22.
- Szekeres, J. 2006. General staff experiences in the corporate university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 28 (2): 133–145.
- Transportation Research Board. 2005. *e-Transit: Electronic business strategies for public transportation. Volume 7: The successful adoption of web-based collaborative software*, TCRP Report. Vol. 84. Washington, DC: Transportation Research Board.
- Whitchurch, C. 2006. Who do they think they are? The changing identities of professional administrators and managers in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 28: 159–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800600751002>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62: 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the “Blended Professional” in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58: 407–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9202-4>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2010. Optimising the potential of third space professionals in higher education. *ZFHE* 5: 9–22.
- Whitchurch, C. 2012. Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of third space professionals. In *Universität in Zeiten von Bologna: Zur Theorie und Praxis von Lehr- und Lernkulturen*, ed. B. Kossek and C. Zwiauer, 317–340. Gottingen: V&R Unipress.
- Whitchurch, C. 2013. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of Third Space professionals*. Oxon: Routledge.



Intersecting Work Practices: Design Work Practices in a Large-Scale Strategic Project

8

Rhonda Hallett

Contents

Introduction	110
Educational Designers in Higher Education	111
Academic Developers in Higher Education	112
Educational Development in Higher Education	112
Method	113
Approach and Framework	113
Context, Data Collection, and Analysis	115
Data Collection	117
Analysis	118
Findings and Discussion	119
First Level Analysis: “Boundedness”	119
Second Level Analysis: “Blurring”	120
Discussion	121
Continuities and Divergence in Practice	121
Change Agency and Leadership	122
Conclusion	123
References	125

Abstract

This chapter examines the work practices of educational designers and developers in a large-scale strategic curriculum renewal project at an Australian university in 2015. As in other institutions within Australia and internationally, this large-scale project required the input of designers – variously described as “instructional designers,” “educational designers,” and “learning designers.” In the project under study, designers worked in close proximity with developers to achieve the

R. Hallett (✉)
La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: rhallett@latrobe.edu.au; R.Hallett@latrobe.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_27

109

redesign of 130 subjects in the first year of a 3-year strategy. The work practices of designers represented a disruption to “traditional” development practices, as this work entailed engagement with learning theories and pedagogy – areas traditionally associated with educational development work in that context. Alternatively, the work of developers in the project entailed engagement with design principles and the use of educational technologies – areas at the core of educational design. In either scenario, there appeared to be encroachments into both fields of practice: by educational designers into educational development practices, and by developers into educational design practices. These sites of encroachment – or “blur” points – were the analytic focus of educational development and design work practices in the project. The outcomes are reported with reference to notions of agential practice in both practice domains as a means of mapping current trends in work practices of educational developers and designers.

Keywords

Educational designers · Academic developers · Project management · Large-scale strategic projects · Bounded · Un bounded · Cross bounded · Third space

Introduction

This chapter reports an analysis of the work practices of educational developers and designers in a large-scale strategic curriculum renewal project in an Australian university. The analysis aimed to uncover current trends in the work practices of educational designers, an emergent group of professionals in higher education, in relation to educational developers whose work practices are relatively more stabilized.

The interest in educational design practice arises from its connection to the critical role it now plays in the success of strategic initiatives in higher education aimed at “digitizing” academic programs of study, and by association, academic work practices influencing the formation of academic identities (Henkel 2005; Harris 2005; Archer 2008; Trede et al. 2012). The emergence of this group can be read as a manifestation of the “third space” phenomenon identified by Whitchurch (2008, 2009, 2012), which describes the emergence of professionals in higher education who work in a space between traditional academic and administrator roles. Though not initially studied by Whitchurch (2008) educational designers appear to occupy this space in the context of their work to “digitize” curriculum. More specifically, in centrally located teaching and learning centers where they are increasingly located to participate in strategic projects, educational designers typically occupy a “third space” between academics and professional staff. In the context of the study described here, educational designers held nonacademic positions, while educational developers occupied academic positions as lecturers and senior lecturers. This emerged as an issue for educational designers whose work in the project did not include project management undertaken by the project team nor educational development undertaken by academics: they occupied an ambiguous space between these roles.

This chapter takes up Whitchurch's (2012) idea of the "third space" to investigate the work practices of educational designers working on large-scale strategic projects in centrally located teaching and learning centers. In doing this, it responds to a call in the emerging literature about design practice in relation to teaching and learning. This is in relation to more nuanced investigations into varied roles undertaken by designers in different institutions (Gray et al. 2015). The location and intent of this work is of interest to the field as it has potential to build current understandings about educational designer work in large-scale strategic projects which are increasingly the focus of their work. As such, it has applicability to other institutional contexts.

Educational Designers in Higher Education

A brief review of the available literature describing the work of educational designers identifies and maps the emergence of an occupational group seeking professional status through codification of knowledge used in practice. Most recently, Gray et al. (2015) provide an outline of attempts since the early 1990s to identify and define "what is actually done" by educational designers in practice, and by doing this, trace the emergence of this occupational grouping. These attempts, they observe, fall into two categories. The first category starts with models of instructional design and attempt to map knowledge and skills used to enact these. However, a number of studies identify that these are lineal models that do not capture the complexity of work undertaken by designers who are required to adapt and engage in problem solving "on the ground" (Verstegen et al. 2006; Schwier et al. 2007; Branch and Kopcha 2014). A relatively recent study by Reigeluth (2013), for example, is typical of recent observations that designers' work was less lineal and more unpredictable than instructional design models suggest. The second category of studies investigates conceptual frameworks rather than instructional design models. In these, notions of the novice–expert continuum are discussed with reference to conceptual frameworks. Studies by Ertmer et al. (2008, 2009a, b), Cross (2011), Robinson (2012), quoted by Gray et al. (Ibid.), and Ritzhaupt and Kumar (2015) can be read as explorations of what expertise as a designer means in practice. The study by Ertmer et al. (2008, 2009b), for example, provides details about attempts to establish threshold professional standards for novices in the field through investigations into what designers bring to their roles and how they can be prepared for them.

A key theme in this work is the emergence of professional identities. A seminal work in 2004 identified that educational design is a "profession that knows itself, but is struggling for identity and acceptance in the larger educational community" (Schwier et al. 2004, p. 96). A follow-up study investigating agentic action among 20 Canadian educational designers in higher education over a 3-year period (2004–2007) concluded that although practice was enacted in a "zone of moral coherence" between these domains, a "technical discourse" that effectively "deskills" work persisted in shaping identities (Schwier et al. 2007, p. 8).

This trend towards "moral coherence" in practice was confirmed in a more recent study of designers in higher education (Moskal 2012). However, it also identified that though leadership and change agency was a feature of work among educational

designers, these aspects are typically unrecognized in institutional roles, irrespective of their location in the organization (Ibid., p. 104). This lack of recognition of their identities as change agents and leaders suggests that the observation made by Schwier et al. (2004) earlier still holds: “that instructional designers recognise that they have a role to play in the changes currently underway in education, but less understanding of how to express that role forcefully and demonstrate leadership” (p. 97). Agential practice and its link to identity positions as leaders and change agents framed the investigation of the “third space” occupied by educational designers in the strategic project under study.

Academic Developers in Higher Education

A brief review of academic development literature in higher education identifies the evolution of work as an academic practice over the last 30 years, with developers working as academics focused on the teaching aspect of academic work. In this literature, the term “academic development” is most commonly applied to academics with these roles.

A key theme in this literature is teaching development as a legitimate field of academic practice, and by extension, of developers as “real” academics. There is broad agreement that its epistemological foundations are in learning and teaching theories, and it is supported by a broadly agreed set of related theories that frame academic learning in context (Boud and Brew 2013). However, the literature also identifies evolution of practice over a long term, with it described over the past 15 years in particular as diverse (Land 2004), increasingly strategic to institutional goals (Blackmore and Blackwell 2006), and fragmented (Carew et al. 2008). Work practices have undergone a significant shift in this period, with a movement towards practice underpinned by theoretical frameworks away from transactional service-focused practices (Carew et al. 2008). This has amounted to the disruption of traditional practices in the field (Martensson 2015). These newer work practices include moral and ethical dimensions (Peseta and Grant 2011; Peseta 2014), and working more with academics as partners (Debowksi 2014). Recent thinking about academic development which argues for the incorporation of organisational and work-based learning theories into practice, suggests a shift in the epistemological foundations of the field (Boud and Brew 2013).

Ontologies underpinned by these emergent epistemologies continue to evolve. Though arguably “unhomely” (Manathunga 2007) and “betwixt and between” the disciplines (Little and Green 2012), agency in academic development practice now defines developers and their work as academics working with other academics (Di Napoli and Clement 2014). Though debate continues about identity positions as academic developers (Kinash and Wood 2013), these identities are increasingly shaped by professional values and ethical positions adopted in new more fluid practices needed to support academics to respond to demands for change (Donnelly 2015).

Educational Development in Higher Education

An issue related to the theme identified in the literature above concerns the use of “educational development” to also describe development of teaching in higher

education. The term in this literature is used interchangeably with “academic development” to describe activity in the field. For example, a recent review of progress in the field over the past 13 years uses the term “educational development” in relation to work aimed at changing teaching in higher education during that period (Knapper 2016). Similarly, a study investigating diversity of the field, and in particular the diversity of roles in it, identified that the term “academic development” is used interchangeably with “educational development” and “faculty development,” depending on the international context (Fraser and Ling 2014). In that study, Fraser and Ling argued for development to be an academic role on the grounds that it is easier to engage with academics as peers in the process of supporting change. Further, they argued that scholarship inherent in academic work is essential to the ongoing development of the field (Ibid., p. 240). However, the study highlights the growing diversity of roles and particularly the growth of non-academic appointments, suggesting that the descriptive terms of “educational developer” and “academic developer” are being used to describe work practices undertaken by non-academics. This is confirmed in ongoing discussions about the “definitional quagmire” (Leibowitz 2014, p. 359, quoted by Linder and Felten 2015) that the term “academic development” represents in contemporary work practices in the field.

The term “educational development” described work undertaken by academic appointments in the project described in this paper, while “educational design” described work undertaken by nonacademic appointments. However, the “blur points” emerging in the work of these two groups in the strategic project prompted the investigation described below. These points suggest more fluid work practices “on the ground” than formal role descriptors indicate. A working hypothesis informing the investigation related “blurred” working practices to professional identity formation and maintenance for developers and designers in the project and beyond. Further, it was hypothesized that these “blur” points locate the emergence of hybridized identities among educational designers who drew on skills and knowledge and ways of working as an academic to enact their roles in the project.

Method

Approach and Framework

A framework focusing on *practice* after Schatzki (2001) was developed to explore the proposition that educational designers in the project were hybridizing practice, and by extension, their identities. This followed an analysis of studies in the literature above revealing two broad approaches into the work of designers. The first is broadly described as “sociological” and aims to investigate broad trends as a way of describing the emerging nature of work. A study by Wakefield et al. (2012), for example, investigates newspaper advertisements and draws generalizations from these about the nature of work required of designers. The second approach has roots in psychological research and is focused on individual accounts of practice, and generalizing from these about the nature of work. Case studies were, for example, generated in studies by Schwier et al. (2004), and Moskal (2012), and are examples

of this approach. The unit of analysis in these studies is knowledge and skills, and the aim is to identify professional standards for this occupational grouping.

As indicated above, the unit of analysis in this investigation is *practice*. This approach accepts that individual experiences are located within broader processes, and as such avoids dichotomizing the focus of investigations on either the individual or the broader process as is the case in existing studies quoted above. Recently proposed as a means of reconceptualizing academic development practice informed by investigations into “the social and cultural practices of academics themselves” (Boud and Brew 2013, p. 209), the approach also offers a means of rethinking design practices by offering insights into the cultural practices of designers. As a framework for the study, it represents a movement away from a focus on personal attributes (including discrete knowledge and skills) to a focus on relationships between material aspects in a situated activity comprising practice (Schatzki 2001). For example, how educational designers resolve problems that require nonlinear and formulaic responses is the focus, not skills per se. As such the framework locates this investigation as a workplace study which takes account of social and cultural practices of occupational groups, in this case, designers in higher education.

Four categories of “Boundedness” across a spectrum comprising the “Third Space” between traditional academic and professional work identified and described by Whitchurch (2008) are incorporated in the study framework. These range from “Bounded” practices at one end of a spectrum to “blended professionals” at the other, and are related to professional identities structured by boundaries and rules where agential practices are limited in “Bounded” practices, to identities characterized by agential practices drawing on academic and nonacademic practices in “Blended” practices. Between these, “Cross-Boundary” and “Unbounded” professional identities were identified, the former characterized by the active use of boundaries for strategic advantage and institutional capacity-building, and the latter by a disregard for boundaries so that broadly based projects and institutional development could be achieved. These practice/identity characteristics were used in the analysis of designer practices adopted in the large-scale strategic project.

From within this framework, the practices of educational designers were investigated in the context of the strategic project and, specifically, their work in close proximity with educational developers in the redesign of subjects. The key question in this investigation was:

- *How “Bounded” were instructional designer practices/identities in the strategic process irrespective of assigned roles?*

Related questions were

- *What were the boundaries of practice between instructional designers and educational developers during the process of subject redesign?*
- *Where and how did practices overlap?*

Context, Data Collection, and Analysis

Overview

The large-scale strategic project at an Australian university delivered 130 subject redesigns in blended mode over a 7-month period from July to December 2015. The project team comprised eight educational developers with academic level appointments as lecturers or senior lecturers, and five educational designers. Owing to compressed timeframes and a need to upscale rapidly, additional educational design support was obtained from a large-scale external provider who was contracted to deliver content production, design development, and skills development in the use of educational technologies used in the design process. Later in the project, additional education design support was also obtained from two externally located individuals and three small-scale companies. Coordinated from a central unit, educational design work was allocated to external providers in 110 subjects, with the remaining 20 subjects allocated to educational designers in the centrally located unit.

Project work was arranged so that educational developers provided continuity for up to 15 subject teams who were given buy-out of their time for 150 hours, while also working in close partnership with designers on individual subjects. Developers oversaw design implementation, in addition to providing broader curriculum and professional development-related advice and support. Professional development was broad-ranging and included developing understandings of learning theories, teaching practices, and pedagogically relevant educational technology selection for the design. This last part, the identification of pedagogically relevant educational technologies for context, was undertaken in collaboration with educational designers. Developers also supported the implementation of strategies aimed at evaluating the impact of the project as a whole.

Educational designers, whether located in the central unit or subcontracted, worked with multiple educational developers on subject redesigns rather than the same educational developer throughout the process. The work of educational designers located in the central unit was differentiated from the external providers by work on “crisis” subjects during the life of the project, where design was incomplete, unsatisfactory, or requiring local knowledge. This team also undertook follow-up of subjects when the project was formally completed in December 2015. Comprising diverse yet complimentary skill sets such as production expertise and expertise in the use of tools enabling the production of e-portfolios, this team filled “gaps” in provision and ensured consistency of design approach across the whole suite of subjects.

Project Work Flows

A five-stage process framed this work (See Fig. 1). Project management of subject redesigns was not explicitly identified in the work of either designers or developers, but was formally located in the work of project coordinators

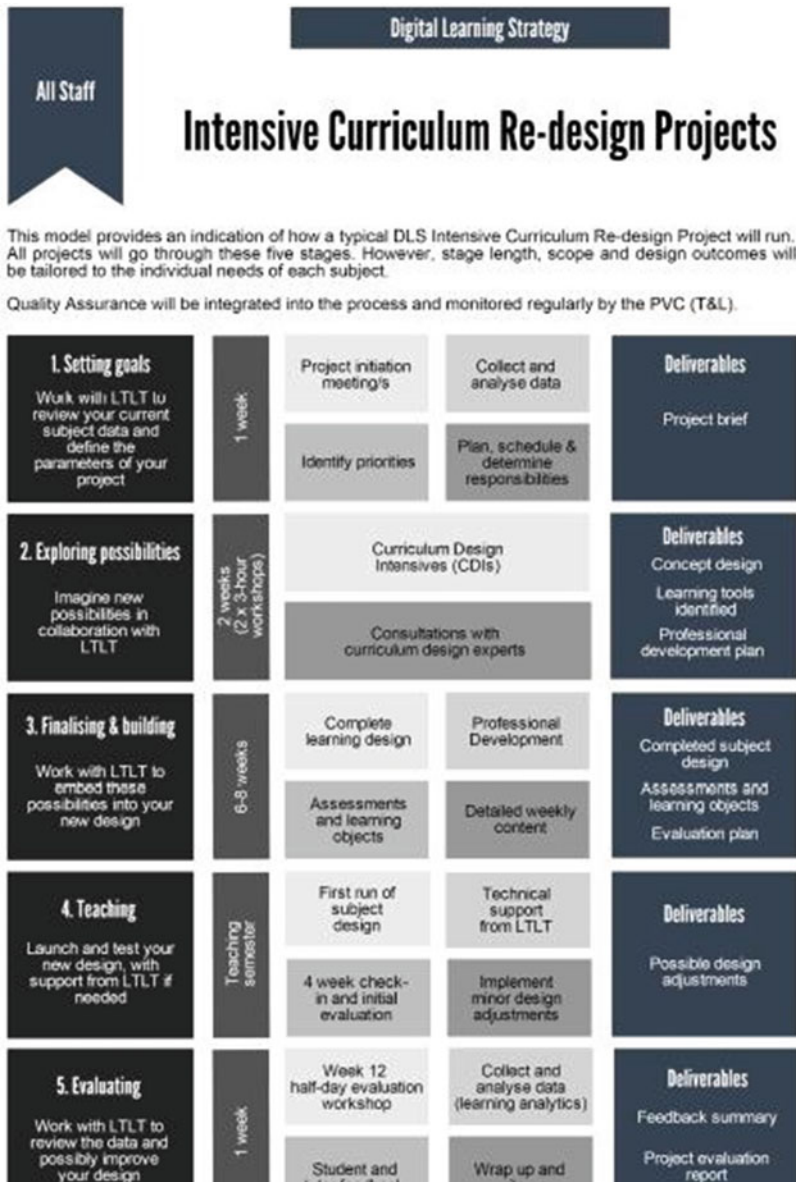


Fig. 1 Curriculum design intensive process

supporting the redesign process. It was, however, closely related to the work of educational developers who engaged with academics in all but the first stage of the process (the “on-boarding”) where administrative aspects of their participation was dealt with. Educational designers had most intensive engagement in Stage 3 when two cycles of student activities (arranged by week or topic) were

exemplified in a “build” as an exercise in skills-building for academics. This stage aimed to ensure that academics could continue the build in their own time. Educational developers facilitated engagement of educational designers in support for academics needing further skills development in Stage 4 as needed. Educational developers were also responsible for Stage 5, “checking in” during the first teaching period following redesign and facilitating educational design support to resolve implementation issues as required. In both of these stages, educational developers and designers worked closely together. As a consequence, there was “blurring” in terms of knowledge and skills about design and the broader educational process.

“Blur” Points

Though there was some “blurring” in terms of skills and knowledge between educational designers and developers in Stages 4 and 5, it was most intense in Stage 2 when the design concept was developed in consultation with academics. In this stage, conceptual framing of the design was allocated to external providers identified in the process in educational designer roles working alongside educational developers who facilitated and supported the process. However, these external providers identified as “learning designers” with responsibility for developing the design concept, rather than educational designers who could advise about the practicability of the design in terms of the educational technologies identified, and the capacity to bring them into the design. This had an impact on the roles and responsibilities of both educational developers and designers in the process.

- First, it repositioned educational developers as facilitating and supporting the engagement of academics and thus towards project management.
- Second, it positioned educational designers as implementing designs which they had no input into: in short, towards a more traditional “techie” instructional design role.

These “blur” points in the process are key sites for investigation of “boundedness” in practices of educational developers and designers in this study. As identified above, it was hypothesized that these sites would reveal “blurring” of roles and practices as well as identities.

Data Collection

The findings are based on analysis of project documentation developed before, during, and after the conduct of the project. This documentation includes: notes of fortnightly meetings held with the center-based educational development and instructional designer team, weekly meetings with external contractors and individual contractors, fortnightly meetings with project coordinators and formal reports

prepared for the Project Steering Committee, as well as key documents outlining roles and responsibilities of educational developers, instructional designers, and project coordinators. Project tracking resources such as spreadsheets developed by project coordinators, similar tools developed by educational developers and educational designers (if available), and records of activities in each subject redesign recorded in a central site were also gathered and included in the data collection.

All of this documentation excluding some of the spread sheets developed by educational developers or educational designers was accessible to the researcher who was the Project Leader. All documentation was anonymized.

Analysis

The analysis focused on identifying roles and responsibilities adopted by educational designers in practice, as opposed to formally ascribed roles. These were viewed in relation to roles and responsibilities adopted by educational developers and project coordinators in the project. Drawing on the work of Moskal (2012) the data sources were interrogated for evidence of agentic practice and leadership across five domains: flexibility, moral purpose, relationship building, time and project management, and ongoing professional development. Aspects of each of these dimensions were identified based on Moskal's work to facilitate analysis not only of educational design work but the work of educational developers and project coordinators. Though developed to judge leadership and agentic practice in educational design work, these descriptors were also used to analyze the work of others engaged in subject redesigns. The same descriptors enabled analysis of "blurring" between educational designers' work and the work of educational developers in the project.

Notions of "boundedness" identified by Whitchurch (2008) were then considered in relation to this evidence of agentic practice and leadership. The fourth descriptor in Whitchurch's rubric – Blended professionals – was removed from consideration as this describes dedicated roles and appointments aimed at bridging the academic/professional boundaries within institutional settings. The only role in the project that was considered to be in this category – and is out-of-scope of the investigation – was the role of Program Manager of the University's Digital Learning Strategy (DLS) of which the subject redesigns were an element.

A key aim of the analysis was to discern interpretation of formal roles into practice "on the ground" by educational designers in relation to others engaged in the project. Two levels of analysis were conducted as outlined below:

Levels of Analysis

Level 1: "Boundedness"

1. Extent of "Boundedness" for designers at key stage of the project identified (Whitchurch 2008)
2. Designer project roles as per project RACI (who was responsible, accountable, consulted, and informed) mapped against aspects of leadership and agentic practice (Moskal 2012)

3. Dimensions of leadership and agentic practice mapped to types of “Boundedness” for designer roles

Level 2: “Blurring”

4. Extent of blurring at “blur” points (especially stage 2)
5. Analysis of dimensions of leadership (Moskal 2012) evident in designer practices “on the ground”

Findings and Discussion

First Level Analysis: “Boundedness”

As indicated in Table 1 below, the analysis of project documentation and reporting identified evidence of “Bounded” and “Cross-bounded” practices among designers as a group, with the most concentrated into a “Bounded” practice. Bounded practices among external designers were more prominent where leadership and agentic practice was either not required or confined to the specific requirements of the prescribed role. In the case of center-based designers, there was evidence of movement beyond a Bounded practice, in the aspects of relationship building, professional development, and flexibility. This part of the analysis identified more variation in “Bounded” practice than previously described by Whitchurch (2008), and a more porous practice between “Bounded” and “Cross-bounded” descriptors than previously described (identified in the table by dotted lines). In terms of Whitchurch’s description of “Cross-bounded” practice, the analysis suggests that this too is a continuum, with the practices identified among centrally- located designers at the lower end of the “Cross-boundary” spectrum.

In terms of leadership, the overall pattern for designers in both categories was variable. Not unexpectedly externally located designers had limited opportunities to exert leadership in the context of the subject redesigns. On the other hand, there is

Table 1 Extent of “Boundedness” in educational design practices

Leadership and agentic practice					
	Flexibility	Moral purpose	Relationship building	Project management	Ongoing PD
Bounded	–	Designer (E) Learning designer (E) Designer (C) Developer (S)	Designer (E) Learning designer (E)	Designer (E) Learning designer (E) Designer (C)	Developer (S)
Cross-bounded	Designer (C) Developer (C)	Developer (C)	Designer (C) Developer (S) Developer (C) Coordinator (C)	Developer (S) Developer (C) Coordinator	Designer (C) Developer (C)
Unbounded					

Key: C center based, E external, S secondment

evidence of some leadership among centrally located designers, but it is uneven. This reverberates with findings by Schwier et al. (2004), suggesting that this group is still not sure how to exert leadership beyond the immediate context of a subject redesign, though it is beginning to do this.

Turning briefly now to developers, analysis of the aspects of design practice across the five dimensions identified limited evidence against the “Flexibility” descriptor, but a movement towards “Cross-bounded” practice in the other dimensions. However, there was variability in this pattern with respect to secondments, with more bounded practices in relation to time management, flexibility, and ongoing professional development. With regard to project coordination, there was only evidence of practice against these dimensions in relation to time management and relationship building, where they appeared to be closer to “Cross-bounded” practices. Overall, despite this being an area outside of the core expertise of developers and project coordinators, the analysis suggests that there was agentic practice and leadership in design practice by others than designers themselves in those areas that are now identified as indicators of a more mature practice in educational design (Campbell et al. 2007; Moskal 2012). However, these areas also resonate with the proposed aspects of educational development work as it is emerging in response to the changing conditions of academic work and the growing awareness of the need for supporting digital academic identities (Decuypere and Simons 2014). So, though the analysis identified leadership by designers in these areas of practice focused on the use of educational technologies, it also identified emergent leadership by others engaged in the design process in this area of practice. None of the analysis pointed towards “Unbounded” practices or related identities for any group involved in the subject redesigns.

Second Level Analysis: “Blurring”

The second level analysis revealed “blurring” of educational design practices in work undertaken by developers, project coordinators, and learning designers at each stage of the five-step project process. As indicated in Table 2 below, the five domains of flexibility, moral purpose, relationship building, time and project management, and

Table 2 Extent of blurring: Aspects of design practices

Stage	Learning designer	Coordinator	Designer	Developer
1		R		
2	M, R	T	F, R, T	M, R, T, O
3	R, T	T	F, T, O, R	T, R, M, O, R
4		T	T, R, F	T, R, M, O
5		T	T	T, R, M

Key: *F* flexibility (technical skills development), *M* moral purpose (intent to improve student learning), *R* relationship building (persuading academics to change practice), *T* time and project management (managing high demand for design as specific times), *O* ongoing PD (keeping abreast of emerging technologies)

ongoing professional development related to leadership and agentic practices identified by Moskal (2012) were varyingly concentrated at different stages in different roles.

As anticipated, overlapping occurred in Stage 2, between designers, developers, learning designers and coordinators, with time management, relationship building and moral purpose common practices across the roles. In Stages 3 and 4, overlapping practices between designers and developers focused on time management and relationship building. However, as indicated in the table, developers sustained more practices associated with other aspects of leadership and agentic practice into Stages 3 and 4. These patterns identify that the full range of leadership and agentic practices were not adopted by designers, suggesting that narrow ‘techie’ definitions defined practices and identities (Campbell et al. 2007; Moskal 2012).

The patterns also suggest that “on the ground” practices for designers in this project were fragmented, with leadership of design dispersed across developer and to a lesser extent, coordinator and learning designer roles in project stages. As indicated by the shading in Table 2, the relative depth of leadership exerted by designers, developers, coordinators, and learning designers varied at each stage of the project. Though designers were engaged in leading aspects of design at all stages, it was less intense and integrated in their work than the work of developers and to a lesser extent, learning designers and coordinators. As the leadership aspects are interrelated (Moskal 2012), the dispersal of leadership across these aspects appears to have had highest impact on designers, where there was less evidence of all aspects in their work.

The analysis also identified leadership of skills development in the use of educational technologies (the flexibility aspect) and assisting academics to meet deadlines (the management aspect) as prominent features of designer practice. As outlined in Table 2, the flexibility aspect was exclusive to designer work practices. However, leadership of other aspects, including the leadership of design as a moral purpose and building relationships with academics (beyond building technical skills), was undertaken by developers in Stages 3 and 4. For example, developers initiated meetings with academic leads to rethink issues as they arose, or suggested alternative solutions when projects encountered “blockers” in Stages 3 and 4 three times more frequently than designers. This lack of some aspects suggests that work “on the ground” for designers did not entail decision-making and other activities associated with the emergence of designer expertise (Gray et al. 2015).

Discussion

Continuities and Divergence in Practice

When the findings of both levels of analysis were considered, patterns of agentic practice and leadership in relation to “boundedness” identified divergent epistemological and ontological aspects of educational development and educational design practice as well as areas of convergence. Divergence was identified in the epistemological foundations of both practices, where these were broadly distinguished by different foci identified in literature relating to both occupational groupings:

educational development on learning theories (Boud and Brew 2013) and educational design on design theory (Moskal 2012). However, convergence was identified in the combined focus of educational developers and designers on key aspects of the design process, moral purpose, and relationship building with academics. Continuities and divergences in educational development and educational design are identified in these common and overlapping aspects of practice.

Continuities and divergences in educational development focus on the moral purpose and relationship building aspects of leadership as expressed in the project. On one hand, continuities are found in the connection between leadership in relationship building with academics for a moral purpose (to improve student learning) in the project and working as a change agent to support professionalism in teaching and scholarship (Di Napoli and Clement 2014). This focus on professionalism is a key aspect defining educational developers as academics (Ling and Fraser 2014). On the other hand, divergences are found in the narrowed focus on the project goals and the less explicit promotion of change towards professionalism and scholarship. Opportunities for locating and relating the subject redesign process to issues of scholarship and professional practice in relation to teaching were limited because of time and operational constraints. In Stages 3 and 4, for example, the focus of developer agentic action was on enabling academics' access to skills development by designers in the use of the institution's Learning Management System (LMS) and related technologies rather than broader issues relating to professional practices in teaching. Developers expressed frustration with this aspect of the project, and through various means (mainly additional meetings) attempted to open up spaces for academics to engage in discussions about their development as academics during the project. This lack of opportunity to engage in dialogue with academics about their broader practice represented discontinuities with educational development practice which is broadly focused on using dialogue to stimulate reflection as a means of changing practice (Ibid.).

Change Agency and Leadership

Patterns of agentic practice and leadership by designers also identify change agency focused on skills development in the content of the project in Stages 3 and 4 where there was cross over with educational development roles in relation to the relationship, skills-building, and moral purpose aspects. However, opportunities for engagement with academics beyond purely "transactional" purposes was limited. There was evidence of attempts to use stages 3 and 4 as opportunities to engage in dialogue about practice by educational developers, but these were limited because of the need to keep to project schedules. There was less evidence of these attempts amongst educational designers. This pattern identifies a focus on "transactional" practice in the project overall, with a particularly strong focus on 'transational' activities amongst designers in particular. This pattern of activity between developers and designers suggests that the project processes positioned designers to adopt 'transactional' practices underpinned by 'techie' discourses observed in earlier studies

despite efforts to change these practices (Schwier et al. 2004; Lynch 2006; Kenny et al. 2005). This was especially where designers have limited context knowledge and limited scope as in the case of externally located designers whose work was restricted to Stage 3 where roles were identified as “Bounded”. In the case of centrally- located designers, overlapping relationship building and moral purpose aspects of leadership with developers in Stages 3 and a lesser extent in Stage 4, suggests orientations to change agency and a broadening interest in the role.

These patterns suggest that awareness of and confidence in the role as change agents among designers is growing, despite earlier observations that it is largely unrecognized either by institutions or designers themselves (Schwier et al. 2004). Further, it confirms more recent studies that, identify leadership and change agency as a feature of work among designers (Moskal 2012). The findings suggest that these aspects of work mark a divergence from more traditional “techie”-focused educational design work, and a convergence towards aspects of traditional educational development work.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the proposition that the intersecting work practices of developers and designers in a large-scale curriculum reform project in an Australian university would uncover current trends in the work of these groups in higher education. In particular, it was proposed that this investigation would identify evidence of markers of professionalism – such as agency and leadership – among designers who are an emergent professional grouping in higher education. This focus on designers and design work is important as this professional grouping is increasingly identified as critical to the success of strategic initiatives in higher education aimed at “digitizing” academic programs of study, and by association, academic work practices.

The changing role and identity of this group can be read as a manifestation of the “third space” phenomenon identified by Whitchurch (2012), which describes the emergence of professionals in higher education who work in a space between traditional academic and administrator roles. Though not initially studied by Whitchurch, educational designers appear to occupy spaces between academic and nonacademic roles. In the context of their work to “digitize” curriculum, they often occupy a “third space” between these roles. More specifically, in centrally located teaching and learning centers where they are increasingly located to participate in strategic projects, they typically occupy a “third space” between academic developers and professional staff, including project managers. The findings of this study shed light on the space this occupational grouping is located in relation to these academics, and the work they have traditionally done. Three broad conclusions can be drawn from this study.

First, the findings suggest that designers are occupying a “third space” in universities, between academic roles and professional staff. Further the first level of analysis identifies that there is a higher likelihood of designers moving from

“Bounded” practices into “Cross-boundary” roles if they are located in a central unit where there is collective effort and opportunities for form communities of practice as predicted by Gray et al. (2015). Although there were few instances of Unbounded practice identified among designers in the study, it is likely that Unbounded practices would be adopted in this context if support mechanisms were developed to enable this.

Second, the findings identify that the “third space” occupied by designers is located between academic developers and professional staff in the broad area of teaching and learning rather than design per se. This confirms the broad trend identified in recent studies towards a wider focus for educational design (Moskal 2012). The analysis of the overlapping roles suggests that this process of enculturation to teaching and learning theories and practices is enhanced for designers if they are working in close proximity with developers. The findings suggested that designers, though interested in expressing leadership, were still unsure about how to go about it, confirming the observation of Schwier et al. (2004) that there is still uncertainty about the role and what it entails. It is worth noting that designers also occupy a “third space” in relation to academics in general. This is unlike academic developers, who identify themselves as academics. The data suggests that proximity to developers whose identities are consolidated around their knowledge of broader educational processes (and who locate curriculum development in wider frameworks) supports designers in establishing their practice dimensions and identities. This, however, does not suggest that designers “become” developers or adopt similar roles. The mapping of intersecting practices suggests as yet unfulfilled potential to develop practices in each of the five domains identified by Moskal (2012).

Third, in relation to overlapping roles in the context of strategic projects (and the consolidation of educational design practice above), the findings suggests that some educational design practices are widely adopted, especially in a large-scale strategic initiative with compressed time scales as in the case discussed here. The intersecting practices mapped, for example, identified designers, developers, and project managers engaged in what could be widely described as “design” work. Indeed, it could be argued that in large-scale projects, knowledge of basic design theory and practices is essential for everyone engaged in the process. However, the mapping also identified the “build” stage (Stage 3) was the sole domain of designers whether located in the center or externally. This suggests that they key area of specialization in design practice is located in this function and that this is potentially the site for further development of epistemological and ontological understandings. This suggests strong alignment with evolution of the field and ongoing efforts to establish standards for professional practice (Ertmer et al. 2008, 2009a; Kenny 2006).

To conclude, the study confirms the emergence of designers as “third space” professionals in higher education, with the work of this group consolidated through active engagement in large-scale strategic institutional projects that bring them into close working relationships with educational developers.

References

- Archer, Louise. 2008. Younger academics' constructions of 'authenticity', 'success' and professional identity. *Studies in Higher Education* 33 (4): 385–403.
- Blackmore, Paul, and Richard Blackwell. 2006. Strategic leadership in academic development. *Studies in Higher Education* 31 (3): 373–387.
- Boud, David, and Angela Brew. 2013. Reconceptualising academic work as professional practice: Implications for academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (3): 1–14.
- Branch, Robert, and Theodore Kopcha. 2014. Instructional design models. In *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology*, 77–87. New York: Springer.
- Carew, Anna, Geraldine Lefoe, Maureen Bel, and Lenore Armour. 2008. Elastic practice in academic developers. *International Journal for Academic Development* 13 (1): 51–66.
- Cross, Nigel. 2011. *Design thinking: Understanding how designers think and work*. New York: Berg.
- Debowski, Shelda. 2014. From agents of change to partners in arms: The emerging academic developer role. *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (1): 50–56.
- Decuyper, Mathias, and Maarten Simons. 2014. An atlas of academic practice in digital times. *Open Review of Educational Research* 1 (1): 116–143.
- Di Napoli, Roberto, and Mieke Clement. 2014. The agency game in academic development: Compliance and resistance. *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (1): 4–11.
- Donnelly, Roisin. 2015. Values informing professional practice in academic professional development. *International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education (IJTIE)* 4 (1): 548–556.
- Ertmer, Peggy, Donald Stepich, Cindy York, Anne Stickman, Xuemei Wu, Stacey Zurek, and Yuksel Goktas. 2008. How instructional design experts use knowledge and experience to solve ill-structured problems. *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 21 (1): 17–42.
- Ertmer, Peggy, Cindy York, and Nuray Gedik. 2009a. Learning from the pros: How experienced designers translate instructional design models into practice. *Educational Technology* 49 (1): 19–27.
- Ertmer, Peggy, Donald Stepich, Sarah Flanagan, Aslihan Kocaman-Karoglu, Christian Reiner, Lisett Reyes, Adam Santone, and Shigetake Ushigusa. 2009b. Impact of guidance on the problem-solving efforts of instructional design novices. *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 21 (4): 117–132.
- Fraser, Kym, and Peter Ling. 2014. How academic is academic development? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (3): 226–241.
- Gray, Colin, Cesur Dagli, Muruvvet Demiral-Uzan, Funda Ergulec, Verily Tan, Abdullah A. Altuwajiri, Khendum Gyabak, Megan Hilligoss, Remzi Kizilboga, Kei Tomita, and Elizabeth Boling. 2015. Judgment and instructional design: How ID practitioners work in practice. *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 28 (35): 5–49.
- Harris, Suzy. 2005. Rethinking academic identities in neo-liberal times. *Teaching in Higher Education* 10 (4): 421–433.
- Henkel, Mary. 2005. Academic identity and autonomy in a changing policy environment. *Higher Education* 49 (1–2): 155–176.
- Kanuka, Heather. 2006. Instructional design and elearning: A discussion of pedagogical content knowledge as a missing construct. *E-Journal of Instructional Science and Technology* 9 (2): 1–16.
- Kenny, Richard, Zuo Chen Zhang, Richard Schwier, and Katy Campbell. 2005. A review of what instructional designers do: Questions answered and questions not asked. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology* 31 (1). <https://doi.org/10.21432/T2JW2P>. Accessed 31 Oct 2017.
- Kinash, Sally, and Kayleen Wood. 2013. Academic developer identity: How we know who we are. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (2): 178–189.
- Knapper, Christopher. 2016. Does educational development matter? *International Journal for Academic Development* 21 (2): 105–115.

- Land, Ray. 2004. *Educational development: Discourse, identity and practice*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Leibowitz, Brenda. 2014. Reflections on academic development: What's in a name? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (1): 1–3.
- Linder, Kathryn, and Peter Felten. 2015. Understanding the work of academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 20 (1): 1–3.
- Ling, Peter, and Kym Fraser. 2014. How academic is academic development? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (3): 114–126.
- Little, Debra, and David Green. 2012. Betwixt and between: Academic developers in the margins. *International Journal for Academic Development* 17 (3): 203–215.
- Lynch, Kathleen. 2006. Neo-liberalism and marketisation: The implications for higher education. *European Educational Research Journal* 2 (5): 1–16.
- Manathunga, Cathryn. 2007. “Unhomely” academic developer identities: More post-colonial explorations. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (1): 25–34.
- Martensson, Katarina. 2015. Academic development – Old habits or disruptive practice? *International Journal of Academic Development* 20 (4): 303–305.
- Moskal, Tami-Maree. 2012. Instructional designers in higher education. Doctoral thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Accessed 29 Nov 2017. tmoskal@me.com, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehseddaddiss/121/>
- Peseta, Tai. 2014. Agency and stewardship in academic development: The problem of speaking truth to power. *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (1): 1–3.
- Peseta, Tai, and Barbara Grant. 2011. Working imaginatively with/in contradiction. *International Journal for Academic Development* 16 (1): 1–4.
- Reigeluth, Charles. 2013. *Instructional design theories and models: An overview of their current status*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.
- Ritzhaupt, Albert, and Swapna Kumar. 2015. Knowledge and skills needed by instructional designers in higher education. *Performance Improvement Quarterly* 28 (3): 51–69.
- Robinson, Mark. 2012. How design engineers spend their time: Job content and task satisfaction. *Design Studies* 33: 391–425.
- Schatzki, Theodore. 2001. Practice theory. In *The practice turn in contemporary theory*, ed. T.R. Schatzki, K. Knorr-Cetina, and E. Von Savigny, 1–14. New York: Routledge.
- Schwier, Richard, Katy Campbell, and Richard Kenny. 2004. Instructional designers' observations about identity, communities of practice and change agency. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology* 20 (1): 69–100.
- Schwier, Richard, Katy Campbell, and Richard Kenny. 2007. Instructional designers' perceptions of their agency: Tales of change and community. In *Instructional design: Case studies in communities of practice*, ed. M.J. Keppell, 1–18. Hershey: Information Science Publishing.
- Trede, Franziska, Rob Macklin, and Donna Bridges. 2012. Professional identity development: A review of the higher education literature. *Studies in Higher Education* 37 (3): 365–384.
- Verstegen, D.M.L., F. Barnard, and A. Pilot. 2006. Which events can cause iteration in instructional design? An empirical study of the design process. *Instructional Science* 34 (6): 481–517.
- Wakefield, Jenny, Scott Warren, and Leila Mills. 2012. Traits, skills, & competencies aligned with workplace demands: What today's instructional designers need to master. In *Proceedings of society for information technology & teacher education international conference*, ed. P. Resta, 3126–3132. Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference, Mar 05, 2012 in Austin, Texas, USA ISBN 978-1-880094-92-1 Publisher: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), Chesapeake, VA
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2009. The rise of the *blended professional* in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education Policy and Management* 62 (4): 377–396.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2012. Expanding the parameters of academia. *Higher Education* 64 (1): 99–117.

Part II

Concepts, Practice, and Representation



Responding to a Changing Higher Education Sector: The Role of Professional and Support Staff

9

Natalie Brown, Carina Bossu, and Brian Denman

Contents

Introduction	130
Fostering Collaboration for Quality Online Learning	133
Providing a High-Quality Student Experience	133
Providing Employment Opportunities for Underrepresented Groups	134
Effective Organizational Structures and Support	135
Using Data	135
Conclusion	136
References	137

Abstract

This chapter discusses some of the contemporary challenges and driving forces for change in the higher education sector globally. Five unique case studies are introduced to illustrate how individual universities are capitalising on their professional staff to address and respond to a fast changing higher education system. These cases, from five different universities, are explored within a scholarly context providing a critical exploration of the professional staff and the contexts in which they work. The chapters provide some key implications for higher education in the current climate of change.

N. Brown · C. Bossu (✉)
University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
e-mail: natalie.brown@utas.edu.au; carina.bossu@utas.edu.au

B. Denman
University of New England, Armidale, NSW, Australia
e-mail: bdenman@une.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_32

129

Keywords

Professional and support staff · Professional staff in higher education · Higher education · Change in higher education · Globalization in higher education · Technology enhanced learning and teaching in higher education · Increased participation in higher education

Introduction

The origins of modern universities as institutions of higher education can be traced back to medieval Europe when they emerged as permanent, autonomous, and organized communities of students and teachers recognized for scholarly expertise (Perkin 2007). Since that time, there has been a growth of the sector across the world with current figures of over 18,500 universities and other institutions of higher education identified worldwide (World Higher Education Database 2018). Even though there has been substantial change since universities were first established, much of this has been evolutionary with many of the characteristics and traditions of early universities surviving into the modern day (Yale University 2018). It has been argued by many that some of the biggest changes to the sector have been in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (Keller 1983; Boud 2013). These disruptions have had a direct impact on university staff and the roles in which they undertake.

A major factor impacting on universities is growth. More equitable access to higher education together with the changing workforce requirements have seen a phenomenal increase not only in numbers but also in diversity of the student cohort. Across the globe, universities have moved from educating the “elite,” which included only 4–6% of the population (Robertson 2010), to aim for increasing participation in higher education to up to 40–50% of the general population (Bradley et al. 2008). In more recent times, this has been described as “massification” of the sector (Tight 2017). However, the phenomenon of growth is not new. In 1973, Martin Trow outlined the high rate of growth in higher education particularly across Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s (Trow 1973). His essay discussed many of the issues arising through growth that remain familiar to universities today; provision of infrastructure, catering for a diversity of students and ensuring high-quality staff and staff-student interactions with increasing scale (Tight 2017). A corresponding increase in university staffing has also been noted, with a slightly higher proportion of this increased staffing being professional staff, at least in the Australian context (Larkins 2012). Professional staff are employed across the growing higher education sector, with major growth in the areas of information technology (IT), marketing and recruitment, and other roles that would be ancillary to learning and teaching. Approximately one third of these staff work in academic organizational units to support the academic enterprise broadly. A significant growth in employment in the student services area has also been noted; however, this is in relative terms and from a proportionally smaller cohort of staff (Larkins 2012).

Becoming larger as a sector has also resulted in increased need for funding (public and from industry) flowing to higher education institutions. The accountability agenda that goes hand in hand with public funding has also led to a proliferation

of quality assurance agencies that promote standards at national, institutional, and disciplinary levels and an expectation that data is collected, used and drawn upon to evidence achievement against performance indicators set by outside bodies. Accountability is also keenly sought within universities, particularly against key performance indicators and for efficiency gains (Lewis et al. 2005; Robertson 2010). Correspondingly this requires not only support for the development and delivery of quality education but increasing demands to collect, analyze, and use data for both reporting, quality improvement and efficiency.

Growth is not only restricted to local or even domestic students, with universities now being seen as major contributors to the economy through international education. In 2016 Universities Australia has put education export earnings at \$21.8 billion AUD (Universities Australia 2017b). Universities UK have put a figure of £10.8 gross income from international students in 2014–2015 and a creation of 206, 600 jobs across cities and towns in the UK (Universities UK 2017).

As well as being significant as “service exporters,” universities are therefore also important contributors for local communities by “providing local employment opportunities, research, industry collaboration, [and] building vital infrastructure” (Universities Australia 2017a, para 1). Indeed, as publicly funded institutions, there is an increasing expectation of universities to contribute to local economies and regional development. This can be through linking industry with research and innovation (Lawton-Smith 2003), creation of human capital through learning and teaching and research transfer (Goldstein and Renault 2004), and job creation. Public universities have moved from working in a tight knit community of scholars to embracing a wide range of stakeholders and moving from a teaching and research focus to having a role in “economic expansion, social development, better forms of political organization and governance, plus providing education for more students, and developing and transferring technology to industry” (Goransson et al. 2009, p. 83).

Another factor affecting contemporary higher education institutions is globalization. Globalization and cross-border higher education has indeed pressured higher education institutions to shift from domestic and national education to more international, globalized, competitive, diversified approaches for higher education (Daniel et al. 2007). Cross-border higher education, which is “clearly a manifestation of globalisation” (Daniel et al. 2005, p. 2), has been encouraged by the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) embraced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, which openly defined higher education as a service whose policies should be opened and established by international trade rules (Daniel et al. 2007; Knight 2006). Indeed, cross-border higher education has reached dimensions not previously imagined in the educational landscape, both in developed and developing countries. This shift has impacted the higher education system in multiple ways, from the need to develop stratified quality assurance systems that incorporate a diverse range of degrees offered in multiples sites and possibly in different languages to academic mobility and the employment of a different professional staff workforce capable to provide support to this an increasingly diverse academic and student cohort.

Even though technology-enhanced learning and teaching (TELT) is relatively new to the long history of traditional university learning, it has already impacted on the way

universities operate today. In many universities around the world, TELT plays a key role in how learning and teaching is designed, developed, and delivered. Also, the increased adoption of these technologies, to deliver a whole range of courses, through the media of radio, correspondence, TV and more recently online courses, have had considerable impact across the sector. This has not only opened university study for students who were previously excluded through disability, caring responsibilities, isolation, or needing to work or travel long distances, but has also given students an unprecedented choice of university without needing to relocate (Rajasingham 2011). However, critics argue that TELT in general, and online and distance learning in particular, has also opened up the market for shadow education, as well as ghost writers and novel ways to cheat, plagiarize, and mimic scholarly works (Bray et al. 2007).

With opportunity to build student load so too has come increased competition between universities, both within countries and across international boundaries putting the spotlight on quality of offerings. This is coupled with rising student expectations of quality, especially where fees are increasing (Mercer 2018). The rise of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has also captured the attention of the media and broader public and has forced a rethink by many universities on their models of curriculum, and how they might compete with high quality, openly accessible courses (Yuan and Powell 2013). As well as increasing accessibility to education, MOOCs by nature of their public profile have sharpened up design and quality of online offerings. Flexible, well-designed courses accessible anywhere, anytime, and from any device are now becoming the expectation (Brown et al. 2013). Whether or not the forecast disruption has resulted from MOOCs, the open education moment has arguably provided an impetus for unprecedented innovation in learning and teaching and opened the way for greater use of personalized learning and learning analytics (Yuan and Powell 2013; Brown 2017).

TELT, online and distance education have also influenced the way other sectors of the university perform their jobs. Today, most universities have a dedicated information technology (IT) department responsible for managing, acquiring, maintaining, and supporting students and academic and professional staff across the institutions in the use of TELT. The affordances and disruptions brought by these technologies can be evident on the daily tasks performed by professional and support staff in higher education today. Still, many professional staff do not have the digital literacy skills required to take full advantage of the technology available to them. The latest *NMC Horizon Report* (Adams Becker et al. 2017) argues that being digitally literate is more than obtaining isolated technological skills. It is about “generating a deeper understanding of the digital environment,” which can then be adapted and adopted to new context and learnings (Adams Becker et al. 2017, p. 22). “Due to the multitude of elements comprising digital literacy, higher education leaders are challenged to obtain institution-wide buy-in and to support all stakeholders in developing these competencies” (Adams Becker et al. 2017, p. 22). An institution-wide approach to digital literacy would be of great benefit to professional staff, so that they can better perform their jobs and support students and academics.

This chapter introduces five unique case studies that illustrate how individual universities are capitalizing on their professional staff to address and respond to a

fast changing higher education system. These five cases are the following chapters within the *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education* book. They are explored within a scholarly context, providing a critical exploration of their contributions to higher education research and identifying some of their implications for higher education institutions in the current climate of change.

Fostering Collaboration for Quality Online Learning

Universities have been pressured to keep pace with changes in technology as well as meet current students' demand, and employees' expectations. With more higher education providers within the sector, and the emergence of fully online universities, increased competition has seen rising expectations of students in terms of student experience, quality teaching, and the use of current and innovative technology (Mercer 2018). This has resulted in transformational changes in the way tertiary knowledge is delivered and advanced and a consequent need to examine the ways in which universities, and more particularly their staff, respond to these changes. In order to meet these demands, it is no longer possible to assign teaching only to those who are known to have formal qualifications in that field of study or discipline. The boundaries between some professional and academic roles have become increasingly blurred, creating subcategories of professionals performing academic duties and academics performing nonacademic duties (Whitchurch 2008). Ensuring both professional and academic staff to stay in contact with new and innovative developments in designing and delivering courses is an imperative if institutions are to rise to the challenge of meeting technological changes in the industry.

This changing nature of teaching, in particular the rise of technology-enhanced learning and teaching, has seen new positions that support teaching. McCluskey and Lane use a case study of a relationship between an academic and a digital media specialist to explore the challenges and opportunities of these types of collaborative working relationships through the lens of cultural history activity theory. Their work also raises issues around different types of professional development – to both support collaboration – but also to retain currency in their own area of practice, which might fall outside what is traditionally considered for university staff. The case study allows identification and reflection on some assumptions that have been traditionally made around the higher education workforce, especially those that involve a binary classification of professional and academic.

Providing a High-Quality Student Experience

The issue of quality of educational life on campus cannot be underestimated. Researching positive and negative impacts of residential life, campus life, extracurricular activities, and the university's relationship with the community-at-large may affect one's sense of community and have potential for either increasing or diminishing student ability to experience academic success. With graduate attributes

and employability increasingly impacting on curriculum development and consequently on graduates, universities should provide both curricular and cocurricular support to students so that they can be better informed and prepared. Opportunities for students to participate in volunteer or paid positions that will enhance their experience and add to their employability are increasingly being offered by universities. In addition, the use of peer learning and mentoring programs in higher education have been established as an effective learning strategy, with students gaining confidence in their own ability and taking control of their own learning (Ramsden 2003; Biggs 2003). Besides being designed to support student learning, these programs also assist to improve students' overall experience, "their capacities to succeed and continue on to complete their chosen degree, and the development of student's generic graduate attributes" (Skalicky and Brown 2009, p. 1).

The chapter by Fuglsang, Pedersen, Skalicky, and Preston specifically addresses the employment of students in the higher education sector. In response to a growing emphasis on employability of students, the authors describe a coherent approach to employment as an important component of the student experience that includes volunteering, work placements, and on-campus employment. While there are very well-identified benefits for students who are employed on campus (and for the universities that employ them), the focus is on developing an approach to employment that is consistent and high quality from recruitment through to support and continuing development of the student employees. The case study example that is examined in depth is one where student employees are working in peer-to-peer programs. Underpinning the peer programs is a well-developed framework, called Developing and Supporting Student Leadership (DaSSL) Framework, to guide design, implementation, and evaluation of the programs. The authors raise the critical importance of training for student employees, in particular first aid and mental first aid training, and professional learning in dealing with challenging behaviors. This framework also aims at assisting students in identifying and recognizing the development and refinement of employability skills.

Providing Employment Opportunities for Underrepresented Groups

As discussed above, universities have expanded to meet increasing participation in higher education by a growing diversity of students. However, higher education has still a long way to go, as there are still minority groups that are underrepresented within the higher education globally (Bradley et al. 2008). The chapter by Andersen addresses employment and career pathways for Indigenous Australian professional and support staff in the higher education sector. In her chapter, Andersen exposes the reality that Indigenous Australians are underrepresented both as students and as employees of higher education. Using the University of Tasmania as a case study, she highlights the need for Indigenous employment to encourage and support students and the effectiveness of programs where there have been Indigenous staff in supportive roles. Andersen has identified the shortcomings of contract positions dependent on funding arrangements for providing pathways and career options

especially for Indigenous Australian employed in professional staff roles, which is exacerbated due to the kinds of responsibilities they have, encouraging and supporting students. Nevertheless there has been some success in the adoption of traineeship and cadetship programs for Indigenous staff within the university environment. This is particularly successful when paired with Tasmania's Indigenous employment strategy for strong leadership.

Effective Organizational Structures and Support

A university functions through its personnel. Organizational achievement and effectiveness are a function of the professional maturity of its staff, and by means of effective communication and consultation, a direct relationship between professional maturity and quality exists. University management must analyze the specific nature of its quality need, reject any temptation to apply recipes proven in other educational systems or environments, and plan an appropriate strategy to which both academic and professional staff are willing to commit to important decisions and developments that occur in their workplace and the university as a whole. Important topics for university employees to consider include attention to increasing transparency in aligning the university's budget with its strategic plan, including the devolving structures that are currently in place. Re-structuring 'cost centre silos' (Wenger 2000) can allow for greater opportunities for cross-disciplinary inquiry and collaboration to occur. New organisational structures that create efficiencies and effectiveness, whilst enhancing collaboration, succession planning and transparency, will potentially make greater contributions to an institution's success in the current climate of rapid change in the higher education sector.

The chapter by Flutey, Smith, and Marshall explores different ways in which professional staff who support university functions can work differently. The Virtual Central Support Unit at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) aims to provide a seamless support service that overcomes issues of isolated and disconnected organizational structures. The benefits of the structure are not only to those who are receiving the services; the model also promotes collaboration and sharing of expertise more easily across the whole institution. The model has required staff to develop new skills, and this professional development has enabled staff to gain a broader perspective of the institution's function. The model has been reviewed against the seminal work of Johnson and Johnson (1994) who identified conditions for effective collaboration. The authors have also considered contemporary organizational structures, such as that employed by Spotify and the supply chain model devised by Gattorna (2010). These models are useful comparisons as the model is continually refined.

Using Data

Internationally, there is a demand for increased transparency in institutional operations and emphasis on quality standards, quality assurance, and assessment. This has resulted in greater attention being paid to data to drive all aspects of university

planning and evaluation in addition to analyze performance at the level of student and institution. While the promise of rich data sets is immense, purposeful use very much depends on data literate consumers and users of the data (Adams Becker et al. 2017).

Laskovsky and O'Donnell have examined the increased prevalence and use of data in universities, and the specific professional development needs that accompany this trend. This is both for those (predominantly) professional staff who gather the data and those who use the data (both professional and academic). Using an established framework, they identify key understandings and skills necessary to collect, engage with, analyze, and use data to drive decision-making and practice. Their work underlines the importance of professional development for those professional staff engaging with data, so that they can better understand the purpose of what they do, are able to visually interpret the data, and realize effective ways in which data could be used. For those using the data, understanding the visualizations and critical engagement with data – including identification of shortcomings – also needs to be addressed in professional development. This chapter provides an excellent example of the continuing professional learning that is required by professional and support staff and how new ways of working (such as the present emphasis on data) will continue to raise new professional learning needs that must be responded to for an effective and efficient workforce.

Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining the historical beginnings of the higher education systems in place today. It discusses some of the contemporary challenges and the forces that are driving rapid change in higher education sectors globally. The pressures facing universities currently involve increasing student diversity, higher targets for participation in higher education, globalisation and the impact of the use of technologies for learning, teaching together with the need to provide professional development to build capacity in the use of these technologies. The authors have explored five cases that comprise this section to provide insights into the diverse range and importance of the roles that professional and support staff play within their organisations and how they can contribute to address and respond to a constantly changing higher education landscape. It has been noted that staff are a university's greatest resource, and their sense of ownership on important decisions and consultation are critical to their well-being and performance. Their contribution must be further recognized by the university community as a whole. Demiray (2012) argued that stronger leadership within universities is required so that the roles of a range of people not previously seen are recognized and better connected to educational practices – including administrators, marketing, finance, and IT staff.

The chapters in this section of the *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education* book by no means address all the challenges and changes occurring across the higher education systems. Rather, they open a dialogue and extend

conversation in an emergent scholarly space. By rigorously documenting and critically examining both original research and personal experiences within a broader scholarly framework, these chapters extend our knowledge and contribute to a growing evidence base for the expansion of theory and practice.

References

- Adams Becker, S., M. Cummins, A. Davis, A. Freeman, C. Hall Giesinger, and V. Ananthanarayanan. 2017. *NMC horizon report: 2017 higher education edition*. Austin: The New Media Consortium. Retrieved from <http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2017-nmc-horizon-report-he-EN.pdf>.
- Biggs, J. 2003. *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: The Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) and Open University Press.
- Boud, D. 2013. Forward. In *Capability and quality in higher education*, ed. J. Stephensen and M. Yorke. London: Routledge.
- Bradley, D., P. Noonan, H. Nugent, and B. Scales. 2008. *Review of Australia higher education: Final report*. Canberra: DEEWR.
- Bray, N.J., M.S. Harris, and C. Major. 2007. New verse or the same old chorus: Looking holistically at distance education research. *Research in Higher Education* 48: 889–908.
- Brown, N. 2017. *Global connectivity, open resources, personalised learning – how technology is changing higher education*. Keynote presentation at International Conference on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia February, 1–2. Retrieved from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1qdUx9-qCkGUVBibnJmTENxTgc/view>.
- Brown, N., G. Kregor, and G. Williams. 2013. *Technology enhanced white paper*. University of Tasmania. Retrieved from http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/439013/Technology-Enhanced-Learning-and-Teaching-White-Paper-Academic-Senate-15-November-2013.pdf.
- Daniel, J., A. Kanwar, and S. Uvalić-Trumbić. 2005. Who’s afraid of cross-border higher education? A developing world perspective. In *International network of quality assurance agencies in higher education (INQAAHE) – Presentation*. Retrieved from <http://www.col.org/colweb/site/pid/3617>.
- Daniel, J., A. Kanwar, and S. Uvalić-Trumbić. 2007. Mass tertiary education in the developing world: Distant prospect or distinct possibility? In *Article submitted to the Europa world of learning – commonwealth of learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.col.org/colweb/site/pid/4605>.
- Demiray, U. 2012. The leadership role for Turkey in regional distance education. *Asian Journal of Distance Education* 10 (2): 14–35. <http://www.AsianJDE.org>. ISSN 1347-9008.
- Gattorna, J. 2010. *Dynamic supply chains: How to design, build and manage people-centric value networks*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Goldstein, H.A., and C.S. Renault. 2004. Contributions of universities to regional economic development: A quasi-experimental approach. *Regional Studies* 38: 733–746.
- Goransson, B., R. Maharajh, and U. Schmoch. 2009. Introduction: New challenges for universities beyond education and research. *Science and Public Policy* 36 (2): 83–84. <https://doi.org/10.3152/030234209X4068722>.
- Johnson, R.T., and D.W. Johnson. 1994. An overview of cooperative learning. In *Creativity and collaborative learning*, ed. J. Thousand, A. Villa, and A. Nevin, 2. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.
- Keller, G. 1983. *Academic strategy: The management revolution in American higher education*. Baltimore: JHU Press.
- Knight, J. 2006. *Higher education crossing borders: A guide to the implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for cross-border education*. (ED-2006/WS/61). Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001473/147363E.pdf>.

- Larkins, F. 2012. Trends in non-academic staff for Australian Universities 2000 to 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.lhmartinstitute.edu.au/insights-blog/2012/06/90-trends-in-non-academic-staff-for-australian-universities-2000-to-2010>.
- Lawton-Smith, H. 2003. Universities and local economic development: An appraisal of the issues and practices. *Local Economy* 18 (1): 2–6.
- Lewis, T., S. Marginson, and I. Snyder. 2005. The networked university? Technology, culture and Organisational complexity in contemporary higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 59 (1): 56–75.
- Mercer, S. 2018. *Seven global key challenges faced by universities and their leadership teams*. UK: Deloitte. <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/psges/public-sector/articles/seven-key-challenges-faced-by-universities.html>.
- Perkin, H. 2007. History of universities. In *International handbook of higher education*. Springer International Handbooks of Education, ed. J.J.F. Forest and P.G. Altbach, vol. 18, 159–205. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ramsden, P. (2003). *Learning to teach in higher education* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Rajasingham, L. 2011. New challenges facing universities in the Internet-Driven global environment. *European Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.eurodl.org/index.php?article=430>.
- Robertson, S.L. 2010. *Challenging facing universities in a globalising world*. Bristol: Centre for Globalisation, Education and Societies, University of Bristol. <http://susanleerobertson.com/publications/>.
- Skalicky, J., and N. Brown. 2009. *Peer learning framework: A community of practice model*. University of Tasmania. Retrieved from http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/334106/Peer-Learning-Framework_UTAS.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Tight, M. 2017. Mass higher education and massification. *High Education Policy* 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-017-0075-3>.
- Trow, M. 1973. *Problems in the transition from elite to mass higher education*. Berkeley: Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.
- Universities Australia. 2017a. *Key facts and data*. Retrieved from <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/australia-universities/key-facts-and-data#.WokO1INubX4>.
- Universities Australia. 2017b. Australia's education exports at a record high. Retrieved from <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/media-releases/Australia-s-education-exports-at-record-high#.WpTo3ehuZeU>.
- Universities UK. 2017. The economic impact of international students on the english regions. Retrieved from <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/International-students-now-worth-25-billion-to-UK-economy—new-research.aspx>.
- Wenger, E. 2000. Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization* 7 (2): 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840072002>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008. Beyond administration and management: Reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 30 (4): 375–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800802383042>.
- World Higher Education Database. 2018. International association of universities' worldwide database of higher education institutions, systems and credentials. <http://whed.net/home.php>.
- Yale University. 2018. About Yale: Traditions and history. Retrieved from <https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/traditions-history>.
- Yuan, L., and S. Powell. 2013. *MOOCs and open education: Implications for higher education*. UK: JISC Centre for and Educational Technology and Interoperability standards. Retrieved from http://www.thepdfportal.com/moocs-and-open-education_101588.pdf.



Employing Students as Support Staff in Higher Education: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations from Careers Professionals

10

Sally Fuglsang, Kristin Warr Pedersen, Jane Skalicky, and Julie Preston

Contents

Introduction	140
Employment of Students at the University of Tasmania	142
UTAS Peer Programs	144
Lessons Learnt: Opportunities from Challenges	147
Conclusion	151
References	151

Abstract

Recently, there has been greater emphasis by higher education institutions on graduate employability, recruitment, and retention and the professionalization of students through work experience (Dumbrigue et al., *Keeping students in higher education: successful practices and strategies for retention*. Routledge, London, 2013; Mourshed et al., *Education to employment: designing a system that works*. McKinsey Center for Government. http://www.compromisorse.com/upload/estudios/000/222/Education-to-Employment_FINAL.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017, 2012). Institutions are developing strategies to address these priorities and challenges, with a particular focus on the provision of a holistic student experience that involves opportunities such as volunteering, work experience, and on-campus student employment. This chapter focuses on a strategic approach to employing students as support staff in higher education in ways that meet the needs of the institution from a human resources perspective, as well as the needs of students in terms of their developing graduate employability.

S. Fuglsang (✉) · K. W. Pedersen · J. Skalicky · J. Preston
University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
e-mail: Sally.Fuglsang@utas.edu.au; Kristin.Warr@utas.edu.au; Jane.Skalicky@utas.edu.au; Julie.Preston@utas.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_22

139

On-campus employment provides benefits to students and institutions, including making links between employment and curricular experiences and embedding the articulation of employability skills into the student experience. The focus of this chapter is on the development of a consistent and quality approach to student employee recruitment and support to ensure on-campus student employment extends beyond a traditional recruitment and training support process to include a specified and holistically supported professional learning process from advertisement through to exiting of student staff in higher education.

Employing a critically reflexive framework to staff experiences and evaluations of a suite of peer programs employing students in on-campus support roles, the authors outline a number of processes and identified challenges and opportunities. A number of lessons are discussed that highlight the ways career development and learning can remain at the heart of on-campus employment.

Keywords

On-campus employment · Peer programs · Graduate employability · Student staff · Professional identity · Careers education · Student employment

Introduction

In the last decade, students have increasingly been playing a role as support staff across a range of functions in the higher education sector. There has been particular emphasis on the inclusion of peer leadership positions for students to contribute to priorities around increasing retention and the success of fellow students. This has been in response to a number of priorities including the less inspiring reality of tightening budgets and the more positive benefit that students can act as partners in the co-creation of learning spaces (Shook and Keup 2012). Students can provide insights into the living culture of a higher education institution and act as ambassadors for the university in which they work. In addition, contemporary sector-wide priorities in higher education include emphasis on graduate employability and the professionalization of students through work experience (Mourshed et al. 2012; Dumbrigue et al. 2013). This has enabled students taking on support roles as staff in higher education to effectively allow universities to provide work experiences that both value add to the student experience and the organization.

Critical to enabling students to be effective support staff in higher education requires the provision of opportunities for these students to develop more than a broad base of discipline-specific skills but also to identify, demonstrate, and effectively transfer a broader range of skills and competencies relevant to any workplace. Traditionally this has been provided through the opportunities seen to support a holistic student experience that might include volunteering, involvement in clubs and societies, or contributions to the broader institutional community through on-campus employment opportunities (Shook and Keup 2012). Recent years have seen an increased emphasis around the provision of on-campus student employment to enhance the overall student experience, develop graduate employability, offer

supplementary income while studying, provide cost-effective support across the institution, and contribute to student retention and academic success (Kuh et al. 2011; Mitchell and Kay 2012).

Students who are employed on-campus can become more connected and familiar with their fellow students, as well as university staff and systems. Such connections allow them to build, strengthen, and extend meaningful social and professional networks, in effect creating mutual benefit to themselves and the reputation of the institution (Shook and Keup 2012). Development of professional networks through on-campus employment teaches students to more readily identify professional opportunities for change and progression within an organization – a skill which is increasingly essential in a rapidly changing workplace (Lipsky and Kapadia 2015). Additionally, research has shown that network building through on-campus employment can also provide a strong sense of belonging and self-efficacy, which are key drivers of student motivation and persistence and enable positive academic outcomes (Freudenberg et al. 2010; Tinto 2015).

This chapter explores the experience of one higher education institution in Australia, the University of Tasmania (UTAS), which has recently strengthened its focus on the provision of on-campus employment opportunities to enhance the student experience. The range of on-campus employment opportunities for students will be explored; however, a particular focus will be on the employment of staff in peer-led programs, as it is these roles that best situate the student staff member in a support role for learning and teaching. Moving beyond description of these opportunities, the authors draw on the work of Brookfield (1998) and Skalicky et al. (2016), as they apply a critically reflective framework to evaluate and plan strategies and activities associated with supporting students in on-campus roles. Brookfield's four lenses of critical reflection guided the authors to consider their collective personal experiences, stakeholder and peer feedback through formal evaluation of services, and relevant literature. This critically reflective process was then grounded in the Developing and Supporting Student Leadership (DaSSL) framework. The DaSSL framework was developed by Skalicky et al. (2016) as part of an international learning and teaching project aimed to build the capacity of higher education institutions to support the development of student leaders employed in on-campus roles. The DaSSL framework provides a set of Good Practice Principles and Guidelines based around five integrated domains of good program design – purpose, people, positioning, practice, and progress. The framework guides users through a self-assessment to identify strengths and areas for improvement in each of the five domains. Those areas identified for improvement are then provided with resources and a step-by-step tool for planning actions to develop those areas in an integrated way. The Good Practice Principles and Guidelines provide a standard to which the self-assessment can be benchmarked. The open education resource used to access the DaSSL framework was used to guide the critical reflection and self-assessment of the on-campus employment opportunities offered at UTAS. This chapter identifies and discusses a series of opportunities and challenges to supporting on-campus student employment in support roles highlighting a number of lessons learned.

Employment of Students at the University of Tasmania

UTAS is considered a midsized, regional higher education provider, offering undergraduate, postgraduate, and research-focused educative experiences to almost 34,000 students in campus-based, online, and blended modes of study. As the only higher education provider in the island state of Tasmania, the institution is committed to providing high-quality teaching and research programs across a broad range of degree areas. Currently, Tasmania has an unemployment rate of 6.3% which is above the national rate (6.1%) with a much higher rate of 15.1% in the 15–24-year-old bracket (Department of Employment 2016). The Tasmanian population between 22 and 34 years that hold a bachelor degree or higher is 22% which is 10% lower than the national rate (Department of Employment 2013). The realization of these statistics has led to state-wide strategies and collaborations to increase the articulation of students from senior secondary to university as well as providing pathways for nontraditional students developed by the university and supported by all tiers of government.

With a state population of just over half a million, UTAS is Tasmania's third largest employer (University of Tasmania 2014). The University employs almost 6,000 staff, and over half of those are employed on a casual, contract basis. A basic survey of individual service departments across the University in 2015 revealed that of those casual staff, around 1,400 were also enrolled as students at the time of their employment. A follow-up survey conducted midyear in 2016 revealed that over 2,000 staff members were currently enrolled as students. It is noted that this number includes staff members who had chosen to enroll in further education simultaneous to their employment. Those employees identified primarily as students (i.e., more than a 50% student load) fulfil a broad spectrum of roles from sessional tutors, laboratory assistants, administrative roles, through to baristas at the campus cafes. A number of specifically designed student roles are also offered as degree-enhancing experiences. These include peer mentoring roles, student union representatives, and student ambassadors.

The University's Student Experience Strategy (2016–2020) affirms the positive impact employment has on student learning and graduate outcomes (Hall 2013; Coates 2015). The Strategy (2016–2020) articulates a number of actions the University will take to enhance the student experience, including highlighting "the value of participation in the holistic student experience through volunteering, overseas experiences, employment, and work-integrated learning" and the graduate experience through "supporting the student to transition to employment and work-based opportunities" (University of Tasmania 2016, pp. 5–6). In 2016, the University committed to increasing opportunities for student on-campus employment across the institution, with the aim of ensuring a significant amount of UTAS students would have access to employment that would enhance both their individual UTAS experience and the broader culture of the institution. The commitment to this goal was articulated in each letter of offer to new students in 2016. As part of this commitment, 32 of the most prestigious scholarship offers made to new students in 2016 were accompanied by an on-campus job opportunity. This offer recognizes

the role that part-time employment can play in enhancing a student's university experience, specifically in supporting the development of graduate capabilities (Muldoon 2009).

To support an increase of student employment opportunities in 2015, UTAS strategically expanded its career service to target efforts increasing on-campus student employment. The incorporation of a new student employment team raised the profile of on-campus employment opportunities while ensuring career development education was recognized as a key aspect and responsibility of the institution. The new student employment team are responsible for coordinating the recruitment, training, and support for student employees across a wide variety of on-campus positions. The student employment team consists of one manager with extensive experience in coordinating and supporting peer-led programs, along with two staff members with broad human resources experience both internal and external to the University. A strategic alliance was formed with the Human Resources (HR) department of the University to ensure consistent and equitable student recruitment processes across the institution. In addition to streamlining and quality assuring the paperwork associated with recruitment to include identified opportunities for student employees, the student employment team also now cross-lists positions advertised through HR on the UTAS online jobs' portal for students. This connection has allowed the student employment team to engage in conversations regarding resource development, such as position descriptions for peer and graduate recruitment positions. This relationship is also driving conversations about student employment conditions as part of the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, which is currently under negotiation.

An important distinction between the function of the student employment team and HR is the educative function the team is able to provide in the student employment process through their being situated within central career services. Through the provision of career education services for all students, the University provides targeted support to students applying for, and evidencing, experience in part-time work in on-campus roles. These supports include online modules, workshops about job readiness and evidencing skills in resume and job application presentation, peer review of job application packages, and career conversations to help guide students into pathways as their awareness of their skills, interests, and motivations is discovered. An important addition to the existing suite of educative supports was the establishment of a student leadership development program and recognition scheme in 2016 that rewarded the contributions of student leaders in on-campus peer leadership roles. In the UTAS context, HR services continue to provide student employees with a platform through which they are recognized as employees, and the addition of the student employment team linked to a central careers service has prioritized the needs of these staff members as students who are learning and gaining experience as part of their full educational package.

There are also critical points of complement allowed by the relationship between the University's HR team and the student employment team. For example, HR addresses engagement and participation rates with specific cohorts through a number of programs and initiatives designed to promote and support diversity in the

workplace. These include promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students through close collaboration with the University's Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education and the University's Aboriginal Leadership Group. This is supported by the University being a signatory of the Racism Stops with Me campaign and the Recognise Charter. The University also promotes gender equity through the Ally Network and the Athena SWAN Charter. The student employment team adheres to and complements these university commitments. The University has a diverse student population, and the employment of students in on-campus positions enables this to be reflected in the staff population. In 2016, of the 120 students employed as peer leaders within centrally funded peer programs, 33.64% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which is in line with that of the general university staff population. The University's central careers service delivers work-ready preparation programs, designed to engage minority student cohorts, to support engagement in employment on-campus and beyond. These programs are open to all students studying at the University. Shook and Keup (2012) found that programs that specifically further cultural connections through peer interactions, leadership, and mentorship, such as the UTAS work-ready program for international students, have a positive influence on the perseverance of students from minority groups. To ensure on-campus student employment continues to have diversity as a core value, the team uses the Good Practice Principles and Guidelines of the DaSSL framework (Skalicky et al. 2016) to guide the recruitment and training processes of all on-campus student employment it is responsible for, with particular attention to the centrally coordinated peer-led programs.

UTAS Peer Programs

UTAS has had a purposeful focus on peer-led programs to promote student leadership opportunities across a broad range of support roles in higher education. Over the last decade, UTAS has established and grown peer-led roles for students with an intentional structure of support for the students taking up these roles. This has included attention to the organizational design of central support services to include, develop, and support peer programs and their coordinators to ensure professional learning, support, and recognition for students are provided at every level of involvement of peer-led programs. The establishment of the Peer Learning Framework (Skalicky and Brown 2009) as an organizing principle led to the institution being recognized as a leader in the peer-led space, eventually leading to the DaSSL framework that now organizes the full suite of peer-led programs at UTAS around the Good Practice Principles and Guidelines. The DaSSL framework has enabled peer-led program coordinators at UTAS to adhere to principles of good program design and explicitly plan for and evaluate student leadership development and diversity as core components of supporting the development of student leaders through on-campus employment.

At UTAS, students are employed to support their peers in a range of ways, including academic development, enrolment assistance, building social networks,

and assisting with identification and articulation of employability skills through job application support. These broad roles recognize the positive influence of “near peers” – those with experience of the institution – on fellow students throughout their university careers (Arendale 2014). Importantly, UTAS offers a suite of peer-led programs that have been designed to complement each other, provide holistic support to students, and enhance their university experience. With peer programs providing services across the areas of student learning, student administration, retention and transition, student engagement, and career education, student staff and coordinators of those programs are invited to work more closely with colleagues in existing peer-led programs. Shared information and training sessions promote further cross fertilization of the programs, and the streamlined recruitment practices between the programs allow the student employment team to identify and recommend pathways for students to engage in on-campus roles across the range of programs on offer.

Peer programs at UTAS began in 2007 when the internationally accredited Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) program was introduced. This program identifies units, predominantly first year units, that are challenging for students, through high attrition and failure rates, and trains students that have been successful in that unit to deliver supplemental instruction study sessions for all students enrolled in the specific unit. These collaborative learning opportunities enable the consolidation of unit content and the development of discipline-specific study skills. This was followed in 2009 with the establishment of the Student Learning Drop In (Drop In) peer program, a generic academic and study skill service, to complement the discipline-specific nature of PASS. Drop In mentors are successful students who are trained to work with their peers to develop their academic and study skills.

Two new programs were developed and implemented in 2013 (Student Success and Community Friends and Networks): one in 2015 (Roving Information Officers) and two more in 2016 (Career Peers and International Peer Leaders). Student Success Leaders are trained in communication skills and basic well-being strategies and are aware of referral services and University programs and procedures. They contact students at specific times during their university calendar, for example welcome calls prior to commencement, to engage with students and refer them on to appropriate service teams within the University. The Community Friends and Network’s Student Engagement Leaders provide a diverse range of social activities on campus that are designed to build connections between international and domestic students and a sense of belonging across the University community. The Roving Information Officers are employed in the lead up to orientation and the first few weeks of semester to work with fellow students to resolve basic enrolment and administrative issues. Career Peers provide mentoring sessions to develop students’ articulation of employability skills, assist in job searches, and guide their peers through the employment process. The latest addition to the suite of peer program roles, the International Peer Leaders, is faculty based and provides a drop in referral service as well as organizing events to enable greater social interaction between domestic and international students and liaise with staff to provide specific skill workshops. While all the individual programs have specific purposes, they all aim to assist with student transition, develop student leadership, build self-efficacy, foster

social networks, and cultivate a greater sense of belonging to the University and the wider Tasmanian community.

The authors recognize there are a number of other peer-led roles available on campus including tutoring and sessional teaching; however, the focus of this chapter is on centrally coordinated peer programs that apply the DaSSL framework to their design and evaluation. The value of the DaSSL framework as an organizing principle for these programs is in ensuring support of student staff working as professional support staff in higher education. UTAS peer programs are intended to provide students, who are employed as professional staff, with a number of opportunities including financial income, ability to make links to the curriculum, building social and professional networks, understanding of the tertiary education as a workplace, and the opportunity to develop employability skills. To ensure a clear and consistent approach to the development, delivery, and evaluation of peer programs at UTAS, in 2015 the recruitment and quality assurance of all centrally funded peer programs was supported by the establishment of the peer program manager role.

The peer program manager, with the assistance from the student employment team, works to ensure better consistency of responsibilities and pay scales across all peer program employment opportunities at the institution. One of the first tasks undertaken by this manager was a focused analysis of the paid roles occupied by students in the central portfolio. It was observed that often, pay scales were determined not by the level of duties required of a role but instead by the budget allocated to peer roles in each individual budget center. Additional factors included the type and length of the contract required for an individual to fill a particular role. An added challenge identified were the inequities in how much training and support was provided to different roles and the differing extent to which student employees on casual contracts were paid to attend trainings and professional development activities related to their roles. The risk of not having properly trained student employees is quite high when placing them in situations where they are asked to work with a diverse range of peers who may present a range of challenges. Training in mental health first aid and dealing with difficult behaviors are of key importance to all staff in the higher education sector, and if student employees are not provided with professional learning in these areas, the risk to those employees and the students they work with can increase.

Prior to the introduction of the peer program manager, individual peer program coordinators were responsible for the recruitment, induction, and exiting of student staff. This was in addition to their responsibilities in the coordination of the program and required a knowledge about HR processes that was often outside of the incumbent's skill set. The centralization of recruitment to the student employment team has allowed for the development of a process that meets the needs of all stakeholders that is transparent and equitable. The coordinators, who have specific program knowledge, are still part of the selection process, but from advertisement to offer, the process is overseen by a dedicated student employment team member with human resource management experience. An appreciation of the student life cycle ensures that the timing of the recruitment process is, where possible, flexible and considerate in expectations of student staff. Importantly, a centralized recruitment process has

allowed the identification of pathways for student staff to engage with a broad range of applicable peer professional support roles. Students are made aware of opportunities in other programs, and program coordinators can be notified of skills developed by student staff in complementary programs, which can and does shape subsequent recruitment processes.

To date, evaluations of peer programs have been conducted on an individual basis. These evaluations have identified a number of benefits for stakeholders of on-campus employment of students. Among those is recognition of the links that can be made between on-campus employment and curriculum, which can authenticate and allow for the development of employability skills and leadership skills as transferable learning from the curriculum to the workplace. Student staff members have identified their own development of academic skills and consolidation of content from their degree, as well as network building, belonging, and self-efficacy through their on-campus employment experience. Programs such as PASS, which at UTAS is centrally coordinated, are purposely designed to align with curriculum and deliver faculty and discipline outcomes. The programs develop and validate employability skills through curriculum-situated support roles with an academic enrichment focus. PASS tutors are required to revise and consolidate understanding of their discipline as well as relevant study skills. This can lead to heightened engagement with their studies through a deeper understanding of their own learning and the growth of skills such as critical thinking and communication (Skalicky and Caney 2010). Similarly, Drop In mentors engage with learning theories and share learning skills and strategies and have commented in reflections on how the heightened self-awareness of this activity has enhanced their own engagement with their studies leading to improved academic outcomes (Fuglsang and Newman 2012). These results are supported by studies of similar programs in the United States (Lipsky and Kapadia 2015). The peer program manager will next be focusing on centralizing the evaluation of these programs and their impact on employability of graduates. This integrated approach will help to ensure consistent and comparable data is collected to inform the ongoing development of both individual and pathway-related planning between the programs.

Lessons Learnt: Opportunities from Challenges

The introduction of a consistent and quality student recruitment process through the student employment team has led to an increasing interest to provide more on campus student employment opportunities across the institution. The University had not anticipated the level of interest for support in recruiting students for on-campus employment; this increase in opportunities has identified a need for institution-wide policies and professional development for the staff who are involved in employing students. The centralization of student employment has enabled the breadth of expertise within the team to work together to develop and embed resources and services into each phase of the employment process for students. However, the team recognizes the need to develop resources for staff, such as a recruitment pack, which would guide them through the process of recruitment, on-

boarding and ongoing professional development for students as staff. Such a resource pack would provide for a consistent and transparent process where students and supervising staff are informed and supported through every stage of the recruitment process. In addition to the HR-related support for staff hiring students, the student employment team has also developed a set of online modules to enhance application preparation for students applying for roles. These resources are complemented by information sessions, drop-in services, and workshops to support the application process further.

Following a high level of activity in supporting the recruitment of students to on-campus employment, the authors were able to critically reflect on and analyze the impediments and factors for success in this space. The key challenges identified in the provision of on-campus student employment relate to the consistency and equity of recruitment, roles, and remuneration practices, addressing the perceptions of nonstudent staff about the inclusion of student staff in the workplace, the professional development and supervision of a revolving cohort of student employees, and ensuring the identification and transferability of employability outcomes for students in staff roles. The authors recognize that these challenges may be unique to the UTAS context; however, it is likely that other higher education institutions would face similar challenges, and it is the purpose of this discussion to unpack these for the potential value within the sector. Importantly, this section is drafted to not only highlight the challenges identified but to also draw out the opportunities that these challenges present in progressing support for student staff in higher education.

As outlined above, the student employment team in its inaugural year has led the establishment and rollout of a consistent recruitment process across the peer programs at UTAS. However, historical interpretations of the individual roles have presented challenges to providing consistent pay scales and employment benefits to students occupying different roles on campus. Student employees at UTAS are primarily employed on a casual, or temporary, basis through short- to medium-term contracts. Often casual contracts require student employees to log and claim pay for the number of hours worked, with a set number of hours prenegotiated for particular tasks. As a large organization, UTAS operations and key functions occur out of a number of separate administrative units, each one organizing their own casual workforce and identifying roles to fulfill the needs of that workforce. As a result, student employee roles, responsibilities, pay scales, and benefits can vary significantly. This reality is a driving motivation for negotiating a student staff clause in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

The economic driver for hiring students presents a potentially significant challenge if student employees are wrongly perceived as the cheaper option, both in terms of their rate of pay and the comparable time commitment a budget center must make for the long-term employment of a student versus a traditional employee. Research has demonstrated that students provide a high-quality and cost-effective form of labor (Shook and Keup 2012). This perspective has dominated the sessional teaching domain, with PhD students frequently being hired as sessional tutors, markers, and lecturers on a casual basis and at a significantly lesser rate than a contracted or permanent academic staff member would attract. The inequities in the

casualization of the academic workforce has notably impacted more than student employees; however, without the full recognition of student employees as a particular type of employee in things like institutional Enterprise Bargaining Agreements, this cohort can become more vulnerable to exploitation.

The objectives of a higher education institution to hire student employees must be clearly articulated and understood by staff across the institution. Statements surrounding the University's purpose of offering entry-level employment opportunities to students (including internships and work-integrated learning opportunities) will not only protect student staff but may also alleviate some of the fears associated with job security that are felt among professional staff on casual tenure. As a regional institution in a state that has the second highest unemployment rate in the country (ABS 2016), the hiring of student employees for less hours and at a lesser rate than similar duties had once attracted can often attract ill will from existent, nonstudent staff. This experience has been of particular challenge to UTAS in recent years, as the institution has undergone a chain of workplace restructures that have resulted in a workforce reduction particularly to administrative and support positions. As a result, the positive goal of hiring student employees to enhance job readiness skills and work experience opportunities has met with some tension.

Addressing the challenge of the perception of why higher education institutions are hiring students as professional staff must be recognized and mitigated through clear communication about the rationale and benefits to graduate employability provided by on-campus student employment opportunities. Yorke (2004) defines employability skills as "a set of achievements – skills, understandings, and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (p. 8). While academically supported work experiences offer opportunities for students to demonstrate application of employability skills, examples derived from real employment arguably have greater impact. The "real-world" experience gained through actual employment is seen to set a student apart from other graduates who have focused only on their degree (Skalicky and Caney 2010). Through the provision of a holistic student experience that involves on-campus employment, higher education institutions are increasingly recognizing graduate employability as a whole-of-institution responsibility and accepting accountability and social responsibility as an employer engaged in developing work-ready graduates.

UTAS strives to act as a model employer and offer an educative aspect to the employment process. As an educational service provider and employer, the University respects a duty of care to its students who are engaged in on-campus employment. The student employment team promotes and supports engagement with educational opportunities, while ensuring the student life cycle is considered through timing of recruitment and rostering. A number of studies (Astin 1984; Rochford et al. 2009; Tinto 2015) suggest full-time study with up to 30 h per week can be achievable but is not ideal for the student's academic success, and there is potential for disengagement with studies. Research has suggested that up to 15 h of employment can lead to improved engagement and academic achievement, through application of improved time management and organizational skills developed through experience in the workplace (Astin 1984).

Kulm and Cramer (2006) suggest on-campus employment may alleviate stressors of off-campus employment and note that students employed on-campus achieved higher levels of academic success. In contrast to the potentially limiting impacts of an additional time burden on study performance, Mitchell and Kay (2012) report that 89% of students employed on-campus during their degree “felt more engaged” with their institution. As discussed, stronger engagement between the student and their institution has a positive impact on retention and graduate success. On-campus employment has the added advantages of students being supported by an employer who is aware of the requirements of student study loads, is more flexible, and can match work to the study load cycles of student life. Centralized opportunities for employment on-campus at UTAS allow students to work around their study loads, enable them to enhance their experience at the university, as well as heighten their employability through applying their content knowledge with experience in a workplace.

The DaSSL reflection tool requires consideration of how elements of good program design work together. Critical reflection on the recruitment processes of students on campus at UTAS alongside consideration of the purpose of on-campus employment revealed the tendency (albeit well intentioned) for student employees identified as top performers to be rehired into positions as they become available. This approach is not unlike other recruitment and hiring practices in other organizations in the “real world,” where top performers are identified and placed in new positions within an organization. However, if the aim of the higher education institution in hiring student employees is to build student experience and capacity to develop graduate attributes, providing these opportunities to as broad a range of students as possible would arguably be the best approach. In addition, all student employees are dividing their time between work tasks and study, which can result in either a large number of students sharing small sections of workload hours or a high staff turnover rate indicative of short-term contracts to accommodate semester long roles. One of the challenges of a high turnover workforce worth considering is the potentially significant amount of support that is required to supervise student employees. This challenge can be overcome if the workload for supervising staff is considered and adjusted according to the needs of those undertaking supervisory tasks, and training for supervising staff is also offered.

An additional consideration highlighted through the critical reflection process was the realization that student staff were often unaware of the importance of the development and articulation of a professional identity achieved through their on-campus role. In particular, student staff were not always aware of, or found it hard to articulate, the benefits and skills they gained through their on-campus employment experiences. Arendale and Hane (2016) suggest that students do not always value the opportunity or see the relevance and transferability of skills acquired through on-campus employment. Through the introduction of a recognition program that is now clearly articulated through the ongoing professional development and exit interviews with student staff, the student employment team at UTAS is hopeful that they are enhancing job satisfaction and performance and even increasing their overall satisfaction with their undergraduate experience (Lipsky and Kapadia 2015; Skalicky and Caney 2010).

To address this challenge the student employment team has redeveloped the Position Descriptions and templates for recruiting student staff to highlight the

learning outcomes of each role. In addition to clearly articulating these potential outcomes for incumbents, this process also recognizes that in many roles we are seeking the potential to develop a skill, rather than it needing to be fully present in the applicant. Referral of unsuccessful applicants to resources, both human and online, has also encouraged students to build their skills and, on occasion, realize their development through subsequent successful application. The development of a comprehensive induction and training program for successful applicants, with sessions focusing on articulation of experience, skills, and qualifications into their resume on completion of a role, has further highlighted to students the value of evidencing and articulating their developing skills in their on-campus roles.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed one university's experience with growing and strategically supporting the development of graduate employability through the provision of on-campus employment for students as support staff in higher education. Using a self-guided critical reflection framework, the authors have explored the key challenges and opportunities in providing on-campus employment through peer program roles at the University of Tasmania. The formation of a designated student employment team has been instrumental in ensuring the success of on-campus student employment as an educative experience for all involved. The development of consistent, transparent, and equitable recruitment practices, supported by well-informed and developed educative resources, has ensured that on-campus employment is more than a financial benefit. The authors have recognized the value of clear articulation about the rationale and function of student staff roles in institutional policies and processes, including Enterprise Bargaining Agreements. They have described the approaches taken to ensure professional learning is existent in the recruitment processes for student staff and their supervisors. Consideration was also given to ways to best assist student employees to articulate the benefits and professional learning they achieve through on-campus employment. Importantly, this chapter has highlighted the role that student staff can play in supporting learning and teaching in higher education with particular attention to the value of the student staff population who are in the unique position of viewing the institution through a service recipient lens as well as an employee lens. When these opinions are sought and valued, it enables the institution, and programs within, to be more informed, agile, and responsive to the broader student population.

References

- Arendale, David. 2014. Understanding the peer assistance learning model: Student study groups in challenging college courses. *International Journal of Higher Education* 3 (2): 1–12.
- Arendale, David, and Amanda Hane. 2016. Peer study groups as catalyst for vocational exploration. *Journal of Developmental Education* 39 (2): 26–27.
- Astin, Alexander W. 1984. Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel* 25: 297–308.

- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. National estimates trend estimates. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Previousproducts/6202.0Main%20Features2Apr%202016?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=6202.0&issue=Apr%202016&num=&view=>. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Brookfield, Stephen. 1998. Critically reflective practice. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* 18 (4): 197–205.
- Coates, Hamish. 2015. Working on a dream: Educational returns from off-campus paid work. *Journal of Education and Work* 28: 66–82.
- Department of Employment. 2013. Regional education, skills and jobs plan, Tasmania, 2012–2014. Australian Government. https://docs.employment.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/resj_tasmania.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Department of Employment. 2016. Labour Force Region (SA4) – Unemployment rate by State and Territory, Australian Government. http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/LFR_SAFOUR/LFR_UnemploymentRate. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Dumbrigue, Cecille, David Moxley, and Anwar Najor-Durack. 2013. *Keeping students in higher education: Successful practices and strategies for retention*. London: Routledge.
- Freudenberg, Brett, Craig Cameron, and Mark Brimble. 2010. The importance of self: Developing students' self-efficacy through work integrated learning. *The International Journal of Learning* 17 (10): 479–496.
- Fuglsang, Sally and Stephen Newman. 2012. Student learning drop in: Opening up our service and adapting our culture (University of Tasmania). Paper presented at Student Peer Learning & the AALL professional: Evolution, Equity & Innovation Students Supporting Student Learning (SSSL) Symposium. 2012: Victoria University. Association of Academic Language & Learning (AALL) & VU College, www.aall.org.au/sites/default/files/SSSL%20Symposium%202012%20eBook_0.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Hall, Stacey L. 2013. Influence of campus recreation employment on student learning. *Recreational Sports Journal* 37: 136–146.
- Kuh, George D., Jillian Kinzie, John H. Schuh, and Elizabeth J. Whitt. 2011. *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. Washington DC: Josey Bass.
- Kulm, Tracy L., and Sheran Cramer. 2006. The relationship of student employment to student role, family relationships, social interactions and persistence. *College Student Journal* 40: 927–938.
- Lipsky, Sally A., and Malika Kapadia. 2015. Effects of work experiences for academic peer educators. *Synergy* 6: 1–11.
- Mitchell, Gaon and Judie Kay. 2012. Leveraging work integrated learning through on-campus employment: A university-wide approach. 2012 Australian collaborative education network national conference. http://acen.edu.au/2012conference/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/87_Leveraging-work-integrated-learning-through-on-campus.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Mourshed, Mona, Diana Farrell, and Dominic Barton. 2012. Education to employment: Designing a system that works. McKinsey Center for Government. http://www.compromisorse.com/upload/estudios/000/222/Education-to-Employment_FINAL.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Muldoon, Robyn. 2009. Recognizing the enhancement of graduate attributes and employability through part-time work while at university. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 10: 237–252.
- Rochford, Céire, Michael Connolly, and Jonathan Drennan. 2009. Paid part-time employment and academic performance of undergraduate nursing students. *Nurse Education Today* 29: 601–606.
- Shook, Jaime, and Jennifer Keup. 2012. The benefits of peer leader programs: An overview from the literature. *Directions for Higher Education* 2012 (157): 5–16.
- Skalicky, Jane and Natalie Brown. 2009. Peer learning framework: A Community of practice model. University of Tasmania. http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/334106/Peer-Learning-Framework_UTAS.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Skalicky, Jane, and Annaliese Caney. 2010. PASS student leader and mentor roles: A tertiary leadership pathway. *Journal of Peer Learning* 3: 24–37.
- Skalicky, Jane, Kristin Warr-Pedersen, Sally Fuglsang, van der Jacques Meer, Phillip Dawson, Sally Rogan, Raphael Pereira and Robert Nelson. 2016. Developing and Supporting Student Leadership (DaSSL). www.dassl.edu.au/. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.

- Tinto, Vincent. 2015. Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* 19 (3): 254–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025115621917>.
- University of Tasmania. 2014. Annual report 2014. University of Tasmania. Available from http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/735072/Annual-Report-2014-web-version-with-amended-Org-Chart-6-August-2015.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- University of Tasmania. 2016. Student experience strategy 2016–2020. University of Tasmania. http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/807994/Student-Experience-Strategy-2016-2020.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2017.
- Yorke, Mantz. 2004. *Employability in higher education: What it is – What it is not*. York: Higher Education Academy.



Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education: Data and Decisions

11

Jonathan Laskovsky and Jonathan O'Donnell

Contents

Introduction	156
Using Data	157
The <i>Leiden Manifesto</i> as a Guide to Best Practice	158
Using and Presenting Data	162
Data Usage	162
Data Visualization	163
Training	167
Conclusion	169
References	170

Abstract

This chapter provides advice on using data to guide decisions within Higher Education settings. It discusses the current debate around research data collection and use in universities and draws upon the Leiden Manifesto to provide advice pertaining to these issues.

It discusses why administrative staff need to understand data usage in their institutions. It defines data usage broadly, as covering all major tasks that staff engage in when handling spreadsheets. It argues that without a broad understanding of how to collate and handle data, staff are at risk of not fully understanding the data that they are working with.

It argues that data must be presented well for people to be able to make full use of it. To do this, it presents several examples, as well as points toward resources where readers can investigate data visualization further.

J. Laskovsky (✉) · J. O'Donnell
RMIT University, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: jonathan.laskovsky@rmit.edu.au; jonathan.odonnell@rmit.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_7

155

Finally, it explores the consequent requirement for universities to provide better training for staff in all aspects of data use. It looks at Research Bazaar as a novel and compelling model for providing face-to-face technical training in an engaging and supportive way.

Keywords

Data · Higher education · Data visualization · Training · Excel · Professional development · Data-driven decisions · *The Metric Tide* · *Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics*

Introduction

There is a serious debate in the Higher Education sector at the moment concerning the level of scrutiny and expectation placed on academics (Pitt and Mewburn 2016; Maclean 2016). As the main gatekeepers of data in universities, administrators need to be cognizant of this debate. In particular, they should understand how the collection and use of data to measure performance can have profound implications for academics' careers. This issue is pertinent to the authors who are both research administrators and whose experience within the sector frames this chapter.

The two major works that underpin this debate are the *Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics* (Hicks et al. 2015) and *The Metric Tide* (Wilsdon et al. 2015), the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) report on the role of metrics in research assessment and management. While these documents both refer to research data, the underlying principles discussed in this chapter apply to **all** the data that universities collect and use.

As *The Metric Tide* (Wilsdon et al. 2015) points out, one of the characteristics of modern universities is the volume and variety of data that they collect. As well as discussing qualitative (descriptive) data and quantitative (numerical) data, this chapter addresses both the systematic and the ad hoc use of data. Systematic data is generally collected at the request of external agencies via regular structured processes. Ad hoc data (also referred to as "administrative by-product data") refers to data collected on a day-to-day basis as part of administrative processes. This kind of data is usually ephemeral and may have meaning only for the person(s) working with it. These different types of data represent the different ends of the data spectrum. Administrators often find that systematic, policy-level data is not directly useful to their day-to-day work, while the data that they collect themselves is often too idiosyncratic to be useful to anyone else (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Professional and academic staff are sometimes reluctant to engage with this disparate data. Barriers to data use include perceived difficulties in accessing appropriate data, the additional time required to source appropriate data, and a lack of training in correct data usage (Choo et al. 2008; Bergeron et al. 2013).

This chapter calls for the considered use of quantitative data complemented by qualitative and expert reading of that data, so that all evidence can be considered

with an informed, in-depth understanding of the issues at hand. Perceived barriers aside, using data to drive decision-making can eliminate bias, increase transparency, and improve the quality of decisions. Greater engagement with data means that staff are more likely to:

- Find the right data for any given problem.
- Understand the complexities of that data and how it should (and should not) be used.

This leads to two interrelated issues:

- Understanding data usage
- Understanding data visualization

Both of these issues relate to a lack of suitable staff training and development. Engagement with data assumes a level of competence in data skills that is often lacking. Most universities have basic online tutorials, but there is often very little formal training which is surprising given the prevalence of spreadsheet work within professional staff duties. The importance placed on collecting and analyzing data in Higher Education administration makes the lack of development in this area all the more concerning.

The second issue, data visualization (DataViz), is important because it enables staff to take data and present it in ways that are clear (Moore 2017). This is critical when data is used to make decisions under significant time pressures. The discussion below outlines why professional staff should be aware of DataViz principles that can be incorporated into working habits. This will enable them to present data in ways that illuminate, rather than obfuscate, the discussion.

Using Data

As research administrators, the authors have access to research data on what every academic at their university has published, the students they have supervised, the grants they have applied for, the funding they have won, and how they have spent those funds. This data is available for every individual, school, department, college, faculty, research center, and group. This research data is just a tiny fraction of all the data collected by the university. Student data, finance data, staff data, and library data – we are drenched in data.

At the same time that sector-wide systems are gathering increasing quantities of data to drive policy decisions, decision-makers (such as university senior managers) and administrators often ignore it in their day-to-day decision-making. The pressure of short deadlines, the perception that it is difficult to access data, and a desire to avoid complex negotiations often drive ad hoc decision-making based on qualitative data or no data at all. Hunches, past experience, and advice from colleagues are all

examples of qualitative data that can be powerful but can also be biased and arbitrary and lack transparency. Too many day-to-day decisions are made this way, and it will require strong action to break these habits (Ghoshal 2005; Kroll and Forsman 2010).

Both qualitative and quantitative data should be used to drive rational, evidence-based decision-making at universities. Recently the authors have found that tools are emerging that allow all staff to gain appropriate access to policy-level data. The authors' university has recently introduced web-based tools that provide a dashboard view of university-wide data. At the same time, techniques allowing ephemeral data to be shared more widely are also beginning to appear. Cloud-based data storage systems (e.g., Google Drive) allow ephemeral data to be shared across administrative silos in ways that were not previously possible. It also allows administrators to link these two types of data together and use them to guide decisions.

This higher level of sophistication of data usage is available, but cannot be capitalized on unless staff have a correspondingly higher level of training. The proliferation of data allows for new possibilities but also makes it more difficult to understand what kinds of data are available, how they can be used, and what they mean. Administrators have a key role to play in changing data practices. As both custodians and consumers of data, they need to be willing to say, "I'll check the data and get back to you on that." In our experience, most administrative staff are not afraid that working with data means they will need to work harder; they are concerned that the process of gathering the data, analyzing the data, and presenting the data will take longer.

The *Leiden Manifesto* as a Guide to Best Practice

The *Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics* was developed in 2015 by a group of bibliometric scholars who were concerned that "easy-to-use and potentially misleading metrics for evaluative purposes have become a routine part of academic life." Through a consultative process, they developed ten principles for collecting, analyzing, and using data to evaluate research in universities (De Rijcke 2014; Hicks et al. 2015).

1. Quantitative evaluation should support qualitative, expert assessment.
2. Measure performance against the research missions of the institution, group, or researcher.
3. Protect excellence in locally relevant research.
4. Keep data collection and analytical processes open, transparent, and simple.
5. Allow those evaluated to verify data and analysis.
6. Account for variation by field in publication and citation practices.
7. Base assessment of individual researchers on a qualitative judgment of their portfolio.
8. Avoid misplaced concreteness and false precision.
9. Recognize the systemic effects of assessment and indicators.
10. Scrutinize indicators regularly and update them (Hicks et al. 2015).

These ten principles provide an excellent framework to discuss the best use of data in Higher Education administration generally, not just in research administration.

Present Both Qualitative and Quantitative Data: Principles 1, 2, and 7

Administrators should manage the decision-making process in a humanistic and equitable way. To do this they should understand what data is available so that they can present both qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative data is attractive because it provides an illusion of certainty. Qualitative data is attractive because it provides a sense of “the personal.” In both cases, reliance on one type of data alone can give a false sense of understanding (Petticrew and Roberts 2003). In research, for example, the main measure of quality is the clarity and astuteness of the ideas presented. This is an extremely difficult judgment to make through quantitative data and a surprisingly easy one to make through qualitative data (Bormmann and Hans-Dieter 2008; Bormmann 2011). Despite this, universities continue to try to judge research performance through quantitative measures.

When a decision-maker says “Prof. Example is doing quite well this year,” they are making a qualitative, expert assessment. However, the basis of the judgment is not transparent and may be biased. If the qualitative judgment is supplemented by a review of quantitative performance data, then it is a much more informed and transparent decision. This does not mean that the decision-maker should cede responsibility to the data. Professor Example cannot be reduced to a series of numerical indicators (student satisfaction scores, publication metrics, etc.), especially not for the purposes of comparison with other academics. There needs to be a balance of qualitative and quantitative judgment (Bonnell 2016).

This applies at a structural level as well. If the aim of a data collection process is to understand the relative performance of academic departments, the mission or objectives of each department should be considered when defining what “performance” means. A School of Art will have very different measures of success to a School of Education, even though they may be located in the same faculty or college of a university. Those differences should inform the selection of data and the criteria used to compare different departments.

Administrators should clearly understand the purpose of the data and that data needs to fit the purpose for which it is intended. It should be collected for a specific purpose, and that purpose should be defined before the collection or consideration of the data. When data is drawn from material that is regularly collected (e.g., for government reporting), it should be considered in that light. Is it the right data for the current purpose? It should be supplemented by data collected for the specific purpose of this task. Otherwise there is a strong temptation to shape the decision-making process to match the type of data that is readily available, rather than collecting the right data for that decision.

Retain for Review: Principles 4, 5, and 8

While the rationale for decision-making may be clear to all participants at the time, the data that sits behind those decisions often isn’t transparent to all. To maintain open, transparent, and simple processes, administrators should archive the material

that sits behind the final decision: the background to the decision-making process, the description of the data, and how it was gathered and analyzed. Transparent decision-making requires transparency around the development of the rationale, through the process of data collection and decision-making to the dissemination of results. Mechanisms for collecting, combining, filtering, and evaluating data need to be clear enough for all participants to understand and critique. Otherwise the work put into making the process open and transparent is wasted. Documenting and publishing the rationale and the data along with final decisions assist in making the process transparent. It has the added advantage of providing future administrators with a worked example of how particular decisions have been made in the past.

All data contains errors or is not perfectly aligned to the decision-making process for which it is being used (Messner and Garrison 2006). The best way to protect against errors and inaccuracy in data is to allow people to review their own data and the associated analysis. This strengthens openness and transparency of the processes that use that data. This is particularly true when data sets are combined. Small differences in definitions for each data element will decrease the comparative value or precision of the total data. For the most part, well-informed decision-makers can cope with the differences as long as they know and understand them. Otherwise, there is a strong chance they will have a false sense of the level of precision or completeness of the data.

For example, “staff member” can be defined as an actual person (head count) or the equivalent of a person (effective full-time staff unit). It can be restricted to those employees who are on continuing contracts (permanent or tenured staff) or to also include those who are on limited term contracts or those who are paid by the hour (sessional, casual, or adjunct staff). All of these differences matter, particularly when you are combining data sets about staff members.

Administrators should understand the limits of their data and be able to inform decision-makers of the potential dangers of combining data sets.

In the experience of the authors, one of the main barriers to allowing staff to verify data and analysis is a fear that it will make the decision-making process more complex and take longer. The counterargument is that using unverified – possibly incorrect – data risks making the decision quicker but wrong. When presented in these terms, most decision-makers see the value of verification. To do this well, administrators should provide a clear plan and timeline that shows how staff will be provided with access to the data and the analysis for verification purposes.

Account for Culture: Principles 3, 6 and 9

Indicators change the system through the incentives they establish. These effects should be anticipated. This means that a suite of indicators is always preferable – a single one will invite gaming and goal displacement (in which the measurement becomes the goal). (Hicks et al. 2015, p. 431)

Administrators and decision-makers should think carefully about the implications of the indicators that they choose. Some perverse effects can be anticipated and avoided. For example, a metric that only counts the number of research outputs,

without any qualitative judgment about quality, encourages staff to produce outputs as quickly as possible, without any regard for quality. Others may not be anticipated so easily. One of the unintended consequences of a complex set of indicators may be that nobody can actually understand how a decision has been made.

Decision-making can often be quite siloed. For example, while there is often a lot of discussion of the interplay between research and teaching, most decisions related to research or teaching happen quite separately. It is important to understand the differences between these domains (Hattie and Marsh 2004). It is also important to understand that the people involved are both teachers and researchers and tailor decision-making accordingly. It is worth understanding the different variations in the people, groups, or structures that you are evaluating and building that understanding into your evaluations processes, data selection, and analysis.

In particular, administrators should be aware of, and open to, the possibilities of data in other languages. More and more universities are becoming international organizations with campuses in multiple countries or operate across multiple languages. These languages encode cultural and regional differences. Most data will be produced in the predominant official languages of the country that funds the university. For example, there are significant biases in English-language data about research, to the distinct disadvantage of research undertaken in other languages (Salager-Meyer 2008; Fitzgerald 2013).

One way to account for culture is to take a pluralistic approach to data collection and actively seek both quantitative and qualitative data prepared in different languages. Though this makes the decision-making process more onerous, it will result in richer, more robust decisions. It may require, for example, an administrative network that spans the various regions and groups and a willingness to take the time to understand the nuances of different data practices.

Update as Required: Principle 10

Administrators should provide advice on the implications of new data-driven processes, as well as critically reviewing past and existing processes for unintended consequences.

Research missions and the goals of assessment shift and the research system itself co-evolves. Once-useful metrics become inadequate; new ones emerge. Indicator systems have to be reviewed and perhaps modified. (Hicks et al. 2015, p. 431)

Administrators should be cognizant of changes in the data landscape and the wider requirements that drive their need for good quality data. In the research area, for example, most universities are under pressure to demonstrate public value for their funding. Alternative metrics (altmetrics) have emerged to supplement traditional metrics such as citations. Altmetrics seek to provide a measure of outreach and public communication through mapping the sharing of research papers through social media and other nontraditional forums. While they are unreliable indicators for comparing performance, they provide valuable insights into the audiences for research (Finch 2016).

This section has given an overview of issues surrounding using data to drive decision-making. Using data to move away from snap decisions based on gut instinct toward more informed, measured strategies is a commendable idea, yet it is underpinned by an assumption that data presented to inform decisions is presented to staff in ways that can be easily understood. Lurking underneath this assumption are two interrelated issues within the Higher Education sector: understanding data usage and data visualization.

Using and Presenting Data

Data usage is important because a balanced use of data requires an element of criticality which (in turn) requires an understanding of how data works. DataViz is important because it takes the data used to drive those decisions and presents it in ways that can be quickly and accurately understood (Moore 2017). These two issues are at the core of this discussion in part because they relate to a wider discussion of training (which will be addressed later on), but mostly because the distinction between the two is often ignored, to the detriment of the sector.

Data Usage

Skills in data usage – like many administrative skills within academia – are often assumed or taken as a given. Frequently the position descriptions of Higher Education professional staff make no direct reference to data, yet it would be difficult to find a professional Higher Education job that does not require a basic understanding of Excel. (Excel is used here and throughout as a proxy for spreadsheets as it is the most common spreadsheet software used within the sector.)

In part, the issue is systemic. There are very few formal Excel qualifications or frameworks associated with professional staff jobs, and although there are often references to a “relevant undergraduate or postgraduate degree,” there is very rarely formal certification required. However the issue is also semantic. Data skills are often an assumed skill set. Sometimes, they are contained within other language such as “analytical thinking” or “critical analysis,” which assumes that skills in data are subsumed by these terms (Chen and Zhang 2017).

The “hard skill” of manipulating figures compliments the “soft” analytic skill of understanding what those figures represent, so assuming data skills are covered by broader terms like critical analysis is, in part, correct. Both skills are complementary and should be combined to create a well-rounded data skill set. In an interview, Ronnie Ellen Kramer and Tim Hill argue that there needs to be a balance; “Currently there is a movement in higher education to develop the whole person – complete with both hard and soft skills” (Parker 2011, p. 16). This is commendable. Quantitative and qualitative skills are both important, but combining these skills within position descriptions or overemphasizing the “soft” skill side can be problematic because it masks varying levels of competency in the “hard” skill that exist among professional staff. This informality of language and lack of specific qualifications in data mean that

the Higher Education workforce in Australia does not have formal training in an area that increasingly is fundamental to the sector. The pervasive nature of data means that the sector can no longer rely upon such a casual approach to data usage. Staff may not need to write complex formula, but most professional staff would benefit from increased training in this area. Moreira (2010, p. 3) makes the point that:

(w)e need to be more competent than we were in previous decades in order to use and take ownership of information and digital technology. This training or, if you will, literacy of individuals in the multiple languages and codes. . . that information employs, should be a recurring, continuing goal throughout the education system.

Moreira's article may emphasize this point with respect to training students, but it applies equally to professional staff. The rise of data (both in terms of volume and pervasiveness) warrants a genuine discussion about whether the basics are sufficient anymore. As Laurie N. DiPadova-Stocks (2015) says: "A virtual tsunami of false information and fabrications quickly turns into an ocean of data, requiring critical thinking skills and attention to the legitimacy of information."

This discussion is, of course, not limited to Excel. The increase in data collection has resulted in a proliferation of databases. The Leiden Manifesto reminds us that the data stored in these systems is always slightly different. Often the data exists but not always in forms that are available to decision-makers in an organized manner. Staff that lament the lack of data available to drive decisions are often unaware that much of this data is available to them (Guan et al. 2002). In order to increase the compatibility and usefulness of different data sets, management information programs (e.g., Business Objects, SciVal, or Pure) combine different data sets in a "data warehouse." With training, staff can access a set of data that compiles individual staff employment histories, the number of students they taught (and in which units), how much money those students pay to study those units, which rooms they are taught in, and so on (Guan et al. 2002). Being able to unite multiple data sets together makes management information programs incredibly powerful.

This development only emphasizes the need for a better understanding of data as a key skill. All of these examples are not only predicated on access to and use of that data, but that the staff know how to read, manipulate, and present data in meaningful ways. If they cannot do so, much of their work is wasted. Despite this, data visualization is largely ignored in universities.

Data Visualization

DataViz seeks to make the message of the data clearer, easier to read and, therefore, more meaningful to the reader. As the name suggests, it relies on the visual to communicate messages about the data, tapping into the high level of attention that humans give to the visual (Munzner 2014; Evergreen 2014). By presenting data in a visual way, good DataViz enables the reader to grasp the message being conveyed quickly and easily. It also allows the viewer to find patterns and even "analyze data

when they don't know exactly what questions they need to ask in advance" (Munzner 2014). This makes DataViz a key skill for presenting data to inform decisions.

DataViz is less likely to be found on a professional staff member CV, yet it is an absolutely crucial part of a good data skill set. Even Excel has a skills base and common understanding that towers over the lack of training and development in DataViz. To effectively visualize data, there are a few key principles (see Evergreen 2014 (esp pp. 9–19)):

1. Knowing the desired **message**
2. Deciding the best **format** to convey that message
3. Applying solid **design** principles of color, accessibility, and clarity to data, to achieve the above

Message

The message is important because it is extremely rare that data will simply be presented in abstraction. When data is presented to managers or a committee, this is often in the context of driving a decision or conclusion about the issue that data represents. If good DataViz principles are applied, the message will be clear, and the discussion can focus on the merits of the decision, instead of the foundation of that decision (including error margins, etc.; see Munzner 2014, p. 43).

Format

Once the message is clear, deciding which format will best convey that message is key. Excel provides a large number of charts and infographics that could potentially be used. Each format is best used for a particular purpose, but their different uses and strengths are often not adequately explained. This is not completely Excel's fault – improved skills training in this area would go some way to address this, and there are a number of online resources available to assist with this decision. See, for example, Fig. 1 – a screenshot of Juice Analytics' incredibly helpful Chart Chooser page: or the example from the authors of the Extreme Presentation blog who have a page about how to choose your relevant DataViz (Fig. 2):

Unfortunately, standard Excel charts provide pitfalls for any unwary user. Some examples highlighted by John Peltier (2011) include:

- Three-dimensional (3D) charts that complicate without adding clarity
- Too many options without any real guide about their effectiveness
- Standard formats and colors that frustrate the reader or obfuscate rather than illuminate

As Peltier explains, 3D charts (for example) rarely clarify and often distract from the central point of the information being presented. Likewise, the option to choose between cones, cylinders, and pyramids to represent a column graph does not help to clarify the data being presented. These are ways to make the data appear more **interesting**, when what is really needed is to make the data **clearer**. Choosing the right format for the right data is a huge step toward clarity.

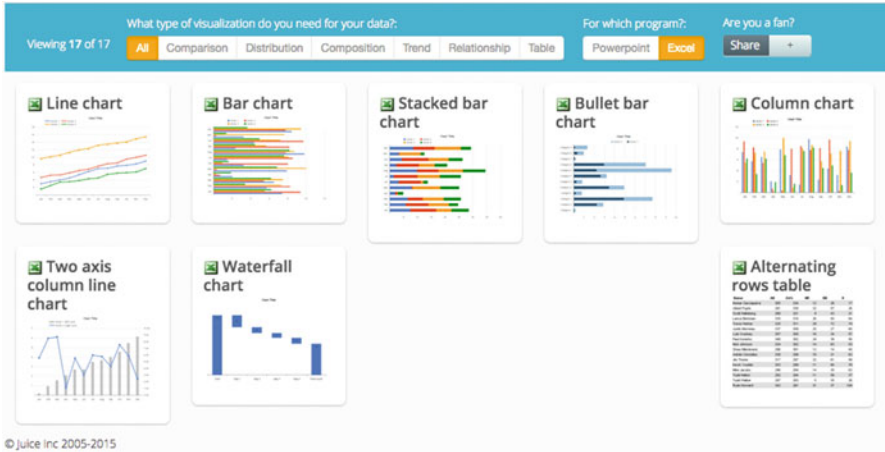


Fig. 1 Chart Chooser from Juice Analytics (Juicy Analytics n.d.; Hilburn 2012 – published with permission)

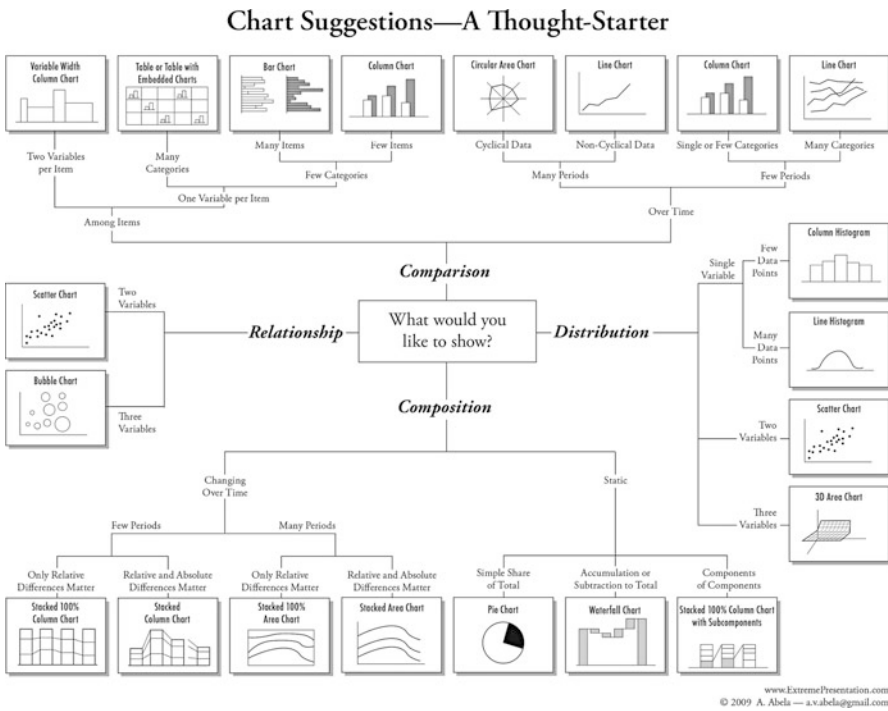


Fig. 2 Chart Chooser from *Advanced Presentations by Design* (Abela 2008, p. 99 – published with permission)

Design

Perhaps staff are reluctant to engage with DataViz because of a perceived engagement with “mere” aesthetics, as though data can only be presented at either end of a spectrum – with dry numbers that don’t engage the reader at one end or confusing charts or meaningless data art on the other. Whatever the reason, there are a number of simple principles that can (and should) be followed to ensure that DataViz is engaging, clear, and arresting. One such principle is to **visually emphasize what matters**. Once the message is clear, what needs to be emphasized can be made bigger, bolder, and brighter; detail that is less relevant can be de-emphasized (Steele and Iliinsky 2010). Another principle is **move away from default formats**. Take your visualization away from default chart settings and color pallets (Evergreen 2014) to more nuanced aesthetics or beauty designed to visually arrest (Munzner 2014).

The Results

DataViz focuses on clarity rather than style. These principles aid the reader to understand the message being conveyed, and any visualization that sacrifices clarity for aesthetics has clearly not fulfilled its function. When DataViz is used well, the results are often incredibly richer than tabular information. Consider the following “before and after” examples of the financial report from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Figure 3 is the standard presentation of information as a table of figures.

Bill & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position

December 31, 2014 and 2013

(In thousands)

Assets	2014	2013
Cash	\$ 26,867	18,085
Prepaid expenses and other assets	15,668	11,983
Beneficial interest in the net assets of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Trust (notes 3 and 4)	43,440,032	40,472,654
Program-related investment assets, net (note 5)	149,639	114,840
Property and equipment, net (note 6)	688,656	692,646
Total assets	\$ 44,320,862	41,310,208
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable	\$ 85,220	82,105
Accrued and other liabilities	53,393	47,097
Grants payable, net (note 8)	5,757,160	5,143,677
Program-related investment liabilities (note 5)	37,757	75,944
Total liabilities	5,933,530	5,348,823
Net assets – unrestricted	38,387,332	35,961,385
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 44,320,862	41,310,208

See accompanying notes to the consolidated financial statements.

Fig. 3 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation “before” (Image courtesy of Stephanie Evergreen)

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Consolidated Statements of Financial Position
 December 31, 2013 and 2014

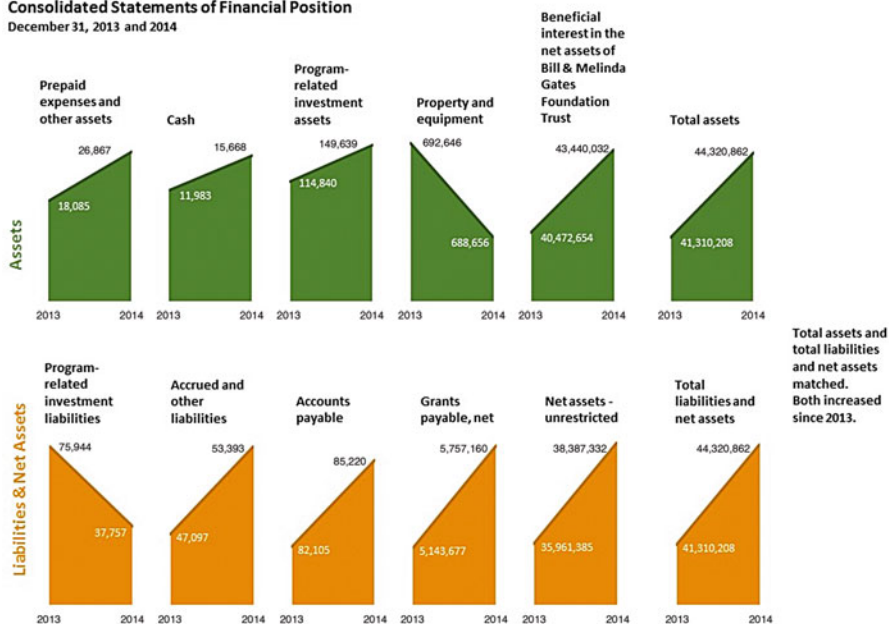


Fig. 4 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation “after” (Image courtesy of Stephanie Evergreen). The improvement in clarity and ease of interpretation here is clear

Figure 4 provides the same information. However, by visualizing the data, trends immediately become apparent.

There is a danger that data and charts are perceived to hold absolute truth (c.f. Leiden Manifesto #8). This simply emphasizes the need for a better understanding across the sector of how data is used and how it can or should be represented. These are powerful tools, but they require knowledge development and training to be used well and widely.

Training

Roberts (2008) warns us that “[i]t has been proposed that the key to the continued viability of institutions of higher education in light of increased competition in the global marketplace will be their adoption of learning technologies that increase flexibility, access and convenience (Smith and Oliver 2000)” (Roberts 2008, p. 2). However, in the experience of the authors, training in relation to information technology (IT) packages in the Higher Education sector is often done poorly, if at all. Most universities provide basic online tutorials rather than formal Excel training, and when training is provided, it is often difficult for staff to find the time to attend. This is a major concern, given the frequency with which most professional staff use

the program. Interactions with data are so commonplace within modern Higher Education administration; the lack of development in this area is concerning.

As a result, Excel skills are often built up over time through on-the-job experience and exposure to a variety of data sets and usage. This is a useful way to learn as it is much easier to see the importance and implications of data when there is some real-world significance for your day-to-day occupation. In other words, applicability and relevance create better learning outcomes. As Towler et al. (2014, p. 221) write, “trainees learn best when they are actively engaged and motivated to learn (Colquitt et al. 2000).” This can be achieved through establishing an effective training environment that ensures instruction is relevant, enjoyable, and seen as useful.

Barriers

There are a number of impediments or barriers to training: time, access, feelings of guilt about the work left undone, or impending deadlines being neglected. Likewise, the quality and relevance of previous training affects staff willingness to attend future training (Facteau et al. 1995). These are just some of the common reasons training often gets pushed back – left to a time when professional staff think they will not be busy.

Meanwhile, training has also fundamentally changed within the Higher Education sector. Previously, the trainer held all of the knowledge, and the attendee left a session trying to remember everything that had been discussed, usually accompanied by a large handbook – almost immediately rendered out of date. Now, with the pervasiveness of the Internet, there are entire YouTube channels devoted to most software packages. The question “how to use Excel” returned over 200 million hits from Google (27 April 2016). Resources and forums like MrExcel (www.MrExcel.com) have pages of data, guides, and forums devoted to almost any Excel-related issue. So where, then, does this leave the question of training staff?

Higher Education institutions can build upon these resources by providing a context-specific dimension to standard “in the room” training. By augmenting standard training to specific examples in areas that staff work with, the training becomes more relevant and more easily retained, and staff are more likely to see the practical application. This means moving away from tired examples of monthly sales quarters when staff are really interested in student numbers. It is not that professional staff cannot transpose that example to a relevant context, but rather that thinking about questions and related issues is harder to do out of context.

Technology is being adapted in student curriculum, but often not in staff training (both professional and academic). Training in a digital age is obviously a difficult issue. Technology moves quickly, and institutions (Higher Education and otherwise) are often structurally unable to react as quickly. As Juan de Pablos-Pons tells us (2010, p. 8), “the impact of technologies on traditional universities has not been revolutionary because the usual structures have not disappeared.” Despite structural resistance, DataViz training should be prioritized because while IT packages may change rapidly, the principles guiding DataViz do not; they are just as easily applied to Excel as they are to Google Sheets, Numbers, Gephi, or any other data presentation software and thus represent a significant long-term innovation.

The Future

Adapting learning to the constantly shifting landscape of IT is an incredibly challenging task, and some headway is being made. For example, online tutorials are an attempt to bring training and workshops into the digital age. However, universities should also look for inspiration at the innovative work being done in digital learning. With the number of data science MOOCs on the rise (e.g., *Analyzing and Visualizing Data with Excel*, offered by Microsoft on EdX; *Analyze Text, Discover Patterns, Visualize Data*, offered by Illinois Urbana-Champaign on Coursera; *Data Science Orientation*, offered by Microsoft on EdX), the number of potential avenues for competency training is now greater than ever. Alongside this, forums such as Research Bazaar (ResBaz) provide grassroots-driven movements focused on training and development in the area of research technology and data (Research Bazaar 2016). At ResBaz, participants train one another in new research technologies. It is an example of an innovative data-focused conference that recognizes the need for meaningful, engaging development. Data Carpentry (<http://www.datacarpentry.org/>) runs on a similar principle of grassroots-driven training, albeit aimed at staff with little computational experience. All of the above indicates that while the current situation relating to training of data-related competencies within Higher Education is less than ideal, there are a number of complementary approaches. The success of programs like ResBaz shows that (1) staff are willing to engage in training in data and, given the right circumstances, even be enthusiastic about it and (2) innovation in learning is rewarded.

Software evolves quickly, but the underlying principles of data usage and DataViz transcend software packages and updates. This means that a more serious engagement with data and DataViz skills training are not only required but also immensely valuable to universities and their staff. Not everyone is a fan of Excel, but professional staff are being tasked with using data more and more. Therefore training staff in data usage and manipulation is essential and should be a fundamental part of workplace planning. It is also clear that Higher Education institutions should seek to augment rather than replicate current training offerings. Online modules are a good start, though these should be complemented either by highly relevant formal training or innovative ways of learning (such as ResBaz).

Senior managers need to know what they are being shown, what it means, the data behind it, and how to read it quickly and efficiently. This is precisely the function of DataViz, and Higher Education institutions have a clear imperative to train professional staff in this area.

Conclusion

Higher Education administrators have access to more data than ever before and are producing more data than ever before. Each university produces a large amount of strategic, well-constructed data. In the course of daily tasks, administrators are often collecting and collating ephemeral task-related data. Administrators should strive to use all this data to improve their own decisions and the recommendations that they make to others.

In doing so, they should follow best practice by understanding and adhering to the Leiden Manifesto. In particular, they should seek to define goals before collecting data (rather than letting the existing data shape decisions) and combine both qualitative and quantitative data in making decisions or recommendations.

If data is going to influence decisions, the real challenge is to present it in a way that can be quickly and accurately understood by all who read it. Both data literacy and DataViz are required because they enable staff to take the raw data and present it in a way that is clear and convincing. Ultimately, professional staff need to find better ways to work and communicate with data. This means training staff in its use, showing them the impact that good DataViz principles can have, and then using that clean, well-presented data to drive informed decision-making.

Training for professional staff should at least include some basic DataViz principles that they can incorporate into their daily duties. When staff are asked to run a report, the data they present in that report should be able to speak for itself and illuminate rather than obfuscate the discussion.

If data is to be the backbone of our decision-making, then Higher Education institutions need to provide training that is both comprehensive and engaging, so that they can quickly and easily manipulate and present that data in the most effective way possible. If staff are expected to swim rather than sink in this ocean of data, then a more professional understanding of data usage as part of core Higher Education business operations is required.

References

- Abela, Andrew. 2008. *Advanced presentations by design: Creating communication that drives action*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 'Types of Data Sources'. In *Directory of Family and Domestic Violence Statistics*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4533.0Chapter52011>.
- Bergeron, Pierrette, Lorna Heaton, Chun Wei Choo, Brian Detlor, Dany Bouchard, and Scott Paquette. 2013. "Knowledge and information management practices in knowledge-intensive organizations: A case study of a Québec public organization." In *Proceedings of the annual conference of CAIS/Actes Du Congrès Annuel de l'ACSI*. <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ojs/cais-acsi.ca/index.php/cais-ascii/article/view/200>
- Bonnell, Andrew. 2016. Tide or tsunami? The impact of metrics on scholarly research. *Australian Universities Review* 58 (1): 54–61.
- Bormmann, Lutz. 2011. Scientific peer review. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 45 (1): 197–245. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aris.2011.1440450112>.
- Bormmann, Lutz, and Daniel Hans-Dieter. 2008. What do citation counts measure? A review of studies on citing behavior. *Journal of Documentation* 64 (1): 45–80. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410810844150>.
- Chen, H.L., and Y. Zhang. 2017. Educating data management professionals: A content analysis of job descriptions. *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 43: 18–24.
- Choo, Chun Wei, Pierrette Bergeron, Brian Detlor, and Lorna Heaton. 2008. Information culture and information use: An exploratory study of three organizations. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 59 (5): 792–804. <http://onlineibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/asi.20797/full>.

- Colquitt, Jason A., Jeffrey A. LePine, and Raymond A. Noe. 2000. Toward an integrative theory of training motivation: A meta-analytic path analysis of 20 years of research. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 85 (5): 678–707. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.85.5.678>.
- De Pablos-Pons, Juan. 2010. “Higher education and the knowledge society. information and digital competencies” in information and digital competencies in higher education [online monograph]. *Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC)* 7 (2). <https://doi.org/10.7238/rusc.v7i2.976>.
- De Rijcke, Sarah. 2014. The Leiden Manifesto in the making: Proposal of a set of principles on the use of assessment metrics in the S&T indicators conference. *The Citation Culture*, Sept 15, 2014. <https://citationculture.wordpress.com/2014/09/15/the-leiden-manifesto-in-the-making-proposal-of-a-set-of-principles-on-the-use-of-assessment-metrics-in-the-st-indicators-conference/>. Accessed 21 May 2016.
- DiPadova-Stocks, Laurie N. 2015. Higher education shaping the unscripted future: The imperative to affirm human values in transformative times. In *Transformative perspectives and processes in higher education*, ed. Amber Dailey-Hebert and Kay S. Dennis. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-09247-8>. ISBN 978-3-319-09246-1.
- Evergreen, Stephanie. 2014. *Presenting data effectively*. London: Sage Publications.
- Facteau, J.D., G.H. Dobbins, J.E. Russell, R.T. Ladd, and J.D. Kudisch. 1995. The influence of general perceptions of the training environment on pretraining motivation and perceived training transfer. *Journal of Management* 21 (1): 1–25.
- Finch, Adam. 2016. Altmetrics in research evaluation: Strengths, weaknesses and the Australian picture. International Network of Research Management Societies 2016 Congress, Melbourne (11–15 Sept 2016).
- Fitzgerald, John. 2013. Same bed, different dreams. *Inside Story*, October 31. <http://insidestory.org.au/same-bed-different-dreams/>. Accessed 21 May 2016.
- Ghoshal, Sumantra. 2005. Bad management theories are destroying good management practices. *The Academy of Management Learning and Education* 4 (1): 75–91. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMLE.2005.16132558>.
- Guan, Jeff, William Nunez, and John F. Welsh. 2002. Institutional strategy and information support: The role of data warehousing in higher education. *Campus-Wide Information Systems* 19 (5): 168–174.
- Hattie, John and Marsh, Herbert W. 2004. One journey to unravel the relationship between research and teaching. In *Research and teaching: Closing the divide? An International Colloquium*, Marwell Conference Centre, Colden Common (pp. 18–19). [https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/hattie/docs/relationship-between-research-and-teaching-\(2004\).pdf](https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/hattie/docs/relationship-between-research-and-teaching-(2004).pdf). Accessed 14 Oct 2016.
- Hicks, Diana, Paul Wouters, Ludo Waltman, Sarah de Rijcke, and Ismael Rafols. 2015. Bibliometrics: The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics. *Nature (Comment)* 520, 7548: 429–431. <https://doi.org/10.1038/520429a>.
- Hilburn, Ken. 2012. Introducing chart chooser – V2! *Juicebox*. <http://www.juiceanalytics.com/writing/introducing-chart-chooser-v2>. Accessed 19 May 2016.
- Juicy Analytics. n.d. *Chart chooser*, <http://labs.juiceanalytics.com/chartchooser/index.html>. Accessed 12 May 2016.
- Kroll, Susan and Forsman, Rick. 2010. A slice of research life: Information support for research in the United States, OCLC Research. ISBN: 1-55653-382-9. <http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2010/2010-15.pdf>. Accessed 14 Oct 2016.
- Maclean, Kate. 2016. Sanity, ‘madness,’ and the Academy. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien.*, April, n/a – n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12264>.
- Messner, Marcus, and Bruce Garrison. 2006. The literature of journalism pertaining to public agency databases. In *Ver 1.0 Workshop Proceedings*, 44–66. Santa Fe, New Mexico: Institute of Analytic Journalism.
- Moore, J. 2017. Data visualization in support of executive decision making. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Information, Knowledge, and Management* 12: 125–138.

- Moreira, Manuel. 2010. "Why offer information and digital competency training in higher education" in *Information and digital competencies in higher education* [online monograph]. *Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC)* 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.7238/rusc.v7i2.976>.
- Munzner, Tamara. 2014. *Visualization analysis and design*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Parker, Anne. 2011. Soft skills: A case for higher education and workplace training. *T+D* 65 (11): 16. <https://www.td.org/Publications/Magazines/TD/TD-Archive/2011/11/Soft-Skills-a-Case-for-Higher-Education-and-Workplace-Training>. Accessed 4 May 2016.
- Peltier, John. 2011. *Excel 3D charts: Charts with no value* <http://peltiertech.com/excel-3d-charts-charts-with-no-value/>. Accessed 12 May 2016.
- Petticrew, Mark, and Helen Roberts. 2003. Evidence, hierarchies, and typologies: Horses for courses. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 57 (7): 527–529. <http://jech.bmj.com/content/57/7/527.short>.
- Pitt, Rachael, and Inger Mewburn. 2016. Academic superheroes? A critical analysis of academic job descriptions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 38 (1): 88–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1126896>.
- Research Bazaar. 2016. University of Melbourne. <http://melbourne.resbaz.edu.au/ResBaz2016>. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Roberts, Cynthia. 2008. Implementing educational technology in higher education: A strategic approach. *The Journal of Educators Online* 5 (1): 1–16.
- Salager-Meyer, Françoise. 2008. Scientific publishing in developing countries: Challenges for the future. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*., English for Research Publication Purposes 7 (2): 121–132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2008.03.009>.
- Smith, Janice, and Martin Oliver. 2000. Academic development: A framework for embedding learning technology. *International Journal for Academic Development* 5 (2): 129–137. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440050200734>.
- Steele, Julie and Noah Iliinsky. 2010. *Beautiful visualization: Looking at data through the eyes of experts*, O'Reilly Media ISBN: 978–1449379865, Sebastopol, Canada.
- Towler, Annette, Gamze Arman, Timothy Quesnell, and Lisa Hoffman. 2014. How charismatic trainers inspire others to learn through positive affectivity. *Computers in Human Behaviour* 32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.12.002>.
- Wilsdon, James, Liz Allen, Eleonora Belfiore, Philip Campbell, Stephen Curry, Steven Hill, Richard Jones, et al. 2015. *The metric tide: Report of the independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment and management*. Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4929.1363>.



Role of Australian Indigenous Support Staff in Higher Education 12

Clair Andersen

Contents

Definition of Terms	174
Introduction	175
Indigenous Australian Professional Staff in Higher Education	177
Growing the Australian Indigenous Professional Workforce	178
Indigenous Australian Professional Staff at the University of Tasmania (UTAS)	181
Professional Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Staff Capacity Building at UTAS	182
Changes to Improve Indigenous Student Experiences at UTAS	183
Restructure of Riawunna Centre	186
Conclusion	187
References	188

Abstract

This chapter addresses the role and participation of Australian Indigenous support staff at the University of Tasmania and more broadly in Australian universities. The inclusion and support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, their professional advancement, and career opportunities, along with their contribution to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous student outcomes, are discussed. The importance of strong Indigenous leadership is affirmed; as well as Aboriginal Employment Strategies to drive change, enhance outcomes for Indigenous Australians and break the cycle of disadvantage, by developing culturally inclusive courses and learning environments.

C. Andersen (✉)

University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia

Division of Students and Education, Curriculum and Quality, TILT, UTAS, Hobart, TAS, Australia

e-mail: Clair.Andersen@utas.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,

University Development and Administration,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_24

173

Keywords

Indigenous professional staff · Indigenous professional staff in higher education in Australia · Support Staff in higher education · Indigenous Higher Education Officers · Student Services Officers · Indigenous Liaison Officers · First Australians · Indigenous Australians · Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples · Higher Education Employment

Definition of Terms

Access or enabling programs	Provide a pathway for people wishing to gain entry to higher education (typically at the bachelor's degree level), by providing one or more courses focused on foundation and/or preparatory skills.
Bridging education	Are short and/or intensive courses that assist students to meet course entry requirements and/or are offered as remedial courses to help address skill gaps.
Mabo Day (3 June)	Commemorates the High Court of Australia's landmark Mabo decision in 1992, which legally recognized that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a special relationship to the land – that existed prior to colonization and still exists today. This recognition paved the way for land rights or native title.
National NAIDOC Week	NAIDOC stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. Predominately, NAIDOC Week is held in the first week (a Sunday to Sunday) of July. It is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, and achievements and is an opportunity to recognize the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and society.
National Reconciliation Week	Is celebrated across Australia each year between 27 May and 3 June. The dates commemorate two significant milestones in the reconciliation journey – the anniversaries of the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision.
National Sorry Day	Is an Australia-wide observance held on 26 May each year. This day brings people together to share steps toward healing for the Stolen Generations,

their families, and communities. Stolen Generations refer to Indigenous Australians who were forcibly removed from their families and communities. This was carried out under federal, state, and territory laws and policies from the 1800s to the 1970s.

Special or alternative entry

The two main pathways into university are applications through a tertiary admission center (state-centralized) or applications direct to the university. Special or alternative entry is used by students who do not transition directly from high school and/or who lack an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score.

Introduction

Australia's First Peoples, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (herein Indigenous Australians), have occupied Australia for more than 50,000 years (<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-indigenous-cultural-heritage>). However, in 1788 Britain assumed Australia's First Peoples did not claim ownership of the land and designated the continent as terra nullius, as an empty un-owned land. This was incorrect, as there were hundreds of nations, each with their own languages, laws, and governance, and each knew their own country and its boundaries (AIATSIS 1996). This ownership was finally recognized in 1992, by the Mabo decision, which rejected the idea of terra nullius (AIATSIS n.d.). Current Australian laws now recognize that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples occupied and possessed areas of land and sea, which were inherited and passed on to subsequent generations.

Even so, the consequences of more than 200 years of British colonization have caused Indigenous Australians much pain, as they have faced dispossession of their lands, removal of their children, and language and culture loss and currently have the poorest health and education outcomes in the nation (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation 1999; COAG 2008; Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet 2015; ABS 2016; AIHW 2017). However, as resilient people, they are actively working toward rebuilding their lives and reviving and maintaining their languages, cultures, and communities. They are seeking "A LIFE of opportunity and dignity, free from discrimination and disadvantage, a basic human right" (HREOC 2003 p. 1), which the Australian Human Rights Commission works toward progressing.

According to the 2011 Census, which reported on *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, there are approximately 669,900 Indigenous

Australians or 3% of the total Australian population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). These populations are not homogeneous and have significant demographic, social, and cultural differences (Australian Demographics Statistics 2011). In contrast to the wider Australian population, the Indigenous population is a young and growing one. Almost 40% of Indigenous people are aged below 15 years, compared with around 20% of the non-Indigenous population within the same age bracket (ABS 2013).

Despite the fact that the numbers of young Indigenous Australians are increasing, they are underrepresented in universities across the nation (Bradley et al. 2008; Wilks and Wilson 2015). The *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People* (Behrendt 2012) indicates that in 2010, only 1.4% of the total students enrolled in universities in Australia were Indigenous Australians. As Dreise et al. (2016) have argued “targeted programs and coordinated efforts at local levels” (p. 2) are effective for improving school attendance; the same focused effort needs to apply in higher education, and Indigenous staff are essential to undertake this work. Indigenous Australians are, however, also underrepresented among staff in higher education, comprising 0.8% of all full-time equivalent academic staff and 1.2% of general university staff (UA 2014). The Behrendt Review also reported low levels of participation in university governance and management by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, along with significant underrepresentation in higher degree research completions (DIISRTE 2012). The underrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in higher education, as both students and staff, continues to contribute to high levels of social and economic disadvantage (Andersen and Walter 2014).

While it is very important to strongly encourage Australian Indigenous students to enroll into university degrees and pathway programs, the focus should also be on improving their retention and completion rates and the quality of their engagement and experiences at university during their higher education journey (Andersen et al. 2008, 2016). An access and equity focus alone will not lead to social justice for Indigenous Australians within the higher education system, as universities in Australia continue to be places of white habitus where race capital ensures reproduction of white privilege. The only way to change this scenario is to have more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved at all levels of university business. The IHEAC Report (2007, p. 53) highlights the importance of increased representation of Indigenous staff in all roles across higher education institutions:

Indigenous students are more likely to succeed where there is a visible and thriving Indigenous community on campus with a critical mass of Indigenous academics, researchers and professional staff. This provides cultural security, academic relevance and role models and promotes community engagement and identity.

Also, according to Miller et al.’s (2008) report, universities that had a visible Indigenous presence on campus, involved the Indigenous community in governance, colocated Indigenous academics and Indigenous support services, engaged

Indigenous staff in professional development, and had the support of their Vice-Chancellors to develop Indigenous leadership and actively support their Indigenous staff to complete postgraduate qualifications were more likely to have strong Indigenous leadership and higher levels of Indigenous employment within the university, produce greater awareness of Indigenous perspectives, impact more positively on their students, and have better student outcomes overall.

This chapter will outline the roles of Australian Indigenous support staff within Australian universities in general and in particular at the University of Tasmania. It will highlight the importance of these professionals in improving the participation and success of Australian Indigenous students in higher education, including their future perspectives and employment. Future actions and recommendations to increase and further support the Indigenous professional workforce within higher education in Australia will also be discussed.

Indigenous Australian Professional Staff in Higher Education

This section focuses specifically on Indigenous professional staff in support roles. These roles may include Support Staff, Indigenous Higher Education Officers, Student Services Officers, and Indigenous Liaison Officers and other similar positions and titles. Staff in these positions are key to attracting, retaining, and supporting Australian Indigenous students throughout their higher education studies (DET 2012).

The work of these professionals includes running high school outreach programs, involvement in arranging school visits to campus, staff and student visits to schools, discovery days, science camps, university application, enrollment, and scholarship sessions as well as student leadership seminars and residential camps. These activities are important to build relationships with potential students and to introduce them to the university campus, as well as to meet current students and staff, to create an interest in and learn about university life (CSIRO 2015). An example of such activities is the Year 12 Leadership Seminar at the University of Western Australia, which help facilitate a smooth student transition into university degrees, providing knowledge of facilities and services, so students are familiar with the campus and have the opportunity to meet fellow students before coming to university.

This transitional work has been well received by Year 12 students and their teachers, as it is vital to provide a sense of cultural capital in students as highlighted by Bourdieu (1984), who urged that “all means have to be used to give all children the experience that children from well-off social groups have” (cited in Grenfell 2004, p. 90).

In addition to this outreach and engagement with school students, Indigenous Australian professional staff contribute significantly to positive student outcomes by providing welcoming and enabling environments within universities (DEEWR 2011). Indigenous support staff provide student support services, assist with accessing alternative entry pathways, and promote enabling courses (Fredericks et al. 2015). Staff are also actively involved in mentoring, governance, and community engagement roles (DET 2012; Devlin 2009; Kinnane et al. 2014). Some

outcomes of these activities include improving participation and academic success for Indigenous students (Graham 2012, 2013).

Indigenous staff also play an important role in bringing non-Indigenous and Indigenous students together through social and cultural events on campus. These events help to enrich students' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through film evenings, seminars, guest lectures, workshops, and community lunches. They also include marking and celebrating important Indigenous national events such as National Sorry Day (26 May), Mabo Day (3 June), National Reconciliation Week (27 May to 3 June), and National NAIDOC Week (first week of July), which are vital to counter the whiteness of universities (Moreton-Robinson 2000, p. 240). Cultural awareness sessions and workshops have also been delivered to university academic and professional staff. These sessions have proven to be a "powerful, enjoyable and very moving [experience] and is a must for all University staff and students, and all members of the...community in general" (UTAS staff member, personal communication).

To promote a positive sense of cultural identity in education settings, Indigenous students require respect for and affirmation of Indigenous' culture (Dockery 2013). As a way to improve their sense of identity further, the case can be made that resources and activities to support this should be incorporated into curricula wherever possible. This points to an important contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff can make within universities. It must also be noted that the responsibility for creating and supporting respectful cultural environments should not be the task of Indigenous staff alone. In fact, the Behrendt Review (2012) argues that in order to promote and encourage Indigenous students' well-being and identities, universities should involve all staff, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous professional and academic staff, in the process of building respect and understanding across the organizations, instead of relying on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to do this work.

Strong Indigenous leadership in the coordination of programs, commitment and stability of staff involved, continuous assessment and evaluation of existing programs, partnerships with key stakeholders, mentorship of students, and role modeling are all key ingredients to reach and support Indigenous students successfully. Kinnane et al. (2014) affirm there is significant scope for increasing and strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' transitions into higher education by building on the programs and services within the university Indigenous Education Units who are leading this work.

Growing the Australian Indigenous Professional Workforce

Professional staff in universities usually do not have the clearly defined paths for career advancement that are available to academics (Harvey and Stiff 1985; LH Martin Institute 2012; Universities -Public Service Association 2012). In addition to this factor, Indigenous professional staff have faced many other challenges within the university workplace. Some of these challenges include taking on responsibilities

outside their job description (Group of Eight, Submission 16, p. 8) and facing personal and structural racism (According to the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). As indicated by an Indigenous member survey, 71.5% of respondents had experienced direct racist attitudes, and 55.3% had experienced discrimination and racist attitudes from colleagues (NTEU 2011, p. 4). Additionally, while the work of Indigenous professional staff plays a key role in attracting and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to study at university, their employment is generally precarious, consisting mostly of short-term contracts (6–12 months), renewed annually, with few permanent ongoing appointments (NTEU 2016). These workplace conditions contribute to high turnover of staff, which impact on the ability of Indigenous professional staff and universities to bring about sustainable and significant changes within the higher education sector in Australia. Universities need to focus on retaining and recruiting Indigenous staff through the provision of stable employment opportunities.

At this time when more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are studying at university with an increase of 20.8% from 2001 to 2011 (CreativeSpirits. Info 2017), we are in a good position to encourage current students to consider future employment in the sector. The National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy (NIHEWS), drafted by this author in consultation with the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) and Universities Australia (UA), provides a guide for universities to develop employment strategies and targets and highlights the key role that traineeships, cadetships, and graduate placements can play in attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in universities (IHEAC 2011).

Examples of traineeship include a program developed by Charles Sturt University, which recruited 26 Indigenous trainees, who completed Certificate III or IV as part of a 3–4 year traineeship. Also, the Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal Education at the University of Tasmania recruited two trainees each year during 2009–2013, who completed a traineeship and went on to employment in several areas of the university. During a similar period, the University of Western Sydney recruited 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees and cadets in a range of positions including business administration and human resources. A further ten cadetships, six traineeships, and five jobs were filled in 2011, increasing the Indigenous staff employed from 15 in 2007 to 40 in 2011 at this university (Andersen 2013). Traineeships and cadetships are important pathways for attracting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to work in universities and assist in breaking down barriers, as they allow the appointees to become familiar with the university environment and culture which is often seen as an alien, unwelcoming white space.

Once appointed, further effort is required to retain these employees, and this can be achieved through professional development, mentoring support, and career planning. Craig Sams (2012) affirms that Indigenous talent management and career development are paramount to retaining Indigenous staff and that more attention is needed on retention than recruitment in organizations. Also, the appointment of full-time senior Indigenous staff, either professionals or academics, could assist with

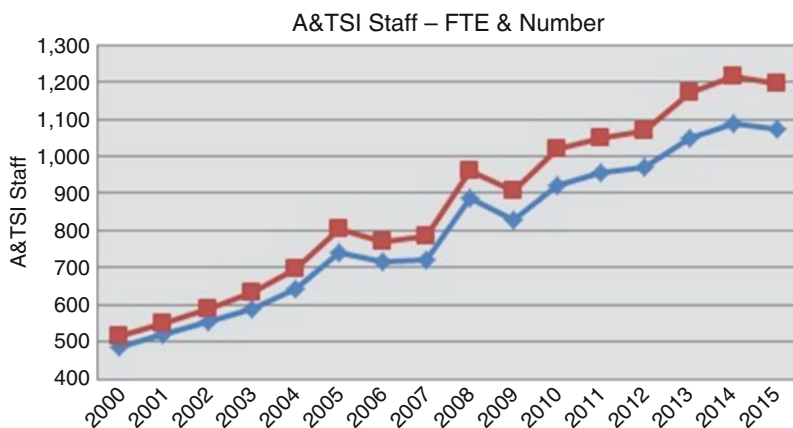
mentoring and career development of junior Indigenous staff. These positions and additional collaboration with non-Indigenous professional and academic staff must be institutionally supported in order to retain staff and avoid Indigenous staff being overloaded.

Another mechanism to enhance professional development are the Indigenous Staff Scholarships. The scholarships are part of the Australian government's plan to improve education outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education (Australian Government 2013). Since 2004 the Indigenous Staff Scholarships program has awarded 33 scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people already employed in universities to take a period of 12-month study leave (DEEWR 2011, p. 34). This opportunity has enabled staff to complete degrees and participate in postgraduate studies. Unfortunately, only five scholarships are offered each year, which limits the opportunities and access to this particular program. Trudgett et al. (2016) also affirm the need for greater opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait staff working in universities to complete doctoral studies, in order to reach equity and enable increased Indigenous academic engagement and contribution.

Graham (2013) suggests that the work of professional staff in general is key to assist students to meet their learning outcomes. He recommends that managers and supervisors should recognize and value the contributions of professional staff to the core business of learning and teaching, as it is the combined effort of both professional and academic staff that is required (Graham 2013). Also, a more flexible approach to workload distribution and career progression is needed, and by recognizing the importance of their contribution, "professional staff gain prosocial and intrinsic motivation, leading to significant job satisfaction and improved performance" (Graham 2013). These recommendations if implemented would similarly improve the working lives of Indigenous professional staff, as many feel undervalued and unwelcome in their institutions.

Graham (2013) also indicates job satisfaction impacts on retaining staff, so providing conditions in which professional staff gain satisfaction from their work is important as they contribute to improved student outcomes and well-being. Through contributing to the inclusion of Australian Indigenous content in teaching programs and within the orientation programs for university staff, Indigenous staff have the opportunity to share their knowledge, to see it valued and recognized within the sector to enrich learning for all, and also to enhance their own job satisfaction.

Despite the attempts to recruit and retain increased numbers of Indigenous Australian professionals within the higher education workforce, data from the Federal Government's university staffing (DET 2015) for 2015 (see Table 1) indicates that the number of Indigenous staff has fallen for the first time since 2006 (NTEU 2016). The main loss was in the professional staff, which dropped from 819 to 796 between 2014 and 2015. The large drop in 2008 and 2009 was due to changes in government and funding, while recent mainstreaming agendas at a number of universities have seen Aboriginal Education Centers absorbed into the other areas of the university that has resulted in reduced Indigenous staff numbers. This is true for

Table 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff – full-time equivalent and number

Red line – “actual number” of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed in the sector
 Blue line – “full-time equivalent” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

Source: <http://www.nteu.org.au/atsi/article/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-staff-numbers-drop-for-the-first-time-in-10-years-18303>

the Riawunna Centre at the University of Tasmania, which had eight staff (seven professional and one academic), compared to 16 before the restructure (UTAS, IHES 2012). This loss of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff offers universities the opportunity to revisit the many restructuring programs currently underway and investigate how these are impacting on Indigenous staff numbers at their universities.

The next section is a case study of the University of Tasmania to examine in detail the work of its Indigenous center, efforts to increase Indigenous employment, and the development of mechanisms to enhance participation and success of Indigenous students at the university, all of which reflect the broader activity across the sector in Australia, and highlights the future work required.

Indigenous Australian Professional Staff at the University of Tasmania (UTAS)

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) is the only university in the state of Tasmania, with over 2500 academic and professional staff, approximately 28,000 students, along with over 1200 honorary staff and volunteers (UTAS Annual Report 2015). According to the 2011 Census, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Tasmania represented 4% of the total population, an increase of 05% since 2006. At UTAS, however, the number of Indigenous Australians employed by the university decreased during the same period, following also a national trend explored above. In 2009, there were a total of 27 Indigenous staff (5 academics and 22

professional staff positions) employed at UTAS in a diverse range of areas, including Accommodation Services, Asset Management Services, Australian Maritime College, Riawunna Centre, Central Science Laboratory, Cradle Coast Campus, Rural Health, Sociology and Social Work, Human Resources, Financial Services, Architecture and Design, Geography and Environmental Studies, Menzies Research Institute, Morris Miller Library, and International Services. By 2012, this number had fallen to 18 Indigenous staff (4 academics and 14 professional staff positions). This reduction in numbers was largely due to the lack of ongoing appointments at the university as a result of funding constraints causing staff to seek more secure employment outside the university, in place of short-term contracts.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are significantly underrepresented as employees at UTAS, and an increase in Aboriginal employment is needed to reach parity with the state's total population (NIHEWS 2011). As the only university in the state of Tasmania, UTAS is in a unique position to capitalize on the ability to mentor, provide career advice, and manage the progress of Aboriginal students throughout their studies to transition into employment within UTAS upon graduation.

The majority of Aboriginal staff at UTAS have historically been located in the Riawunna Centre for Aboriginal Education. The Centre is situated in the two main campuses of the university: in Hobart and Launceston. In addition, there are Indigenous support staff located at the Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie. In the past, the Riawunna Centre operated across the university providing policy and academic input to disciplines as well as student support. The Centre has also been active in growing the number of Indigenous Australian employees at UTAS through the development and implementation of Aboriginal Employment Strategies.

Professional Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Staff Capacity Building at UTAS

Past UTAS Aboriginal Employment Strategies (AES) 2003–2006, 2008–2010, and 2011–2013 had some success in recruiting, retaining, and developing professional staff members within the operational structure of the Riawunna Centre. A revised Aboriginal Employment Strategy is awaiting endorsement, and there is scope in the next Enterprise Bargaining (EB) Agreement to ensure alignment with the Aboriginal Employment Strategy. Both need achievable and realistic targets for professional staff, including traineeships and cadetships which are an important pathway into ongoing employment at the university, along with commitment by UTAS to allow growth and an increase in the overall capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professional staff members. The part-time Indigenous Employment Coordinator based in the HR has some capacity to do this through maintaining regular contact with Indigenous staff members. However, the position requires appropriate resourcing to support professional development and training opportunities for Indigenous employees at UTAS.

In terms of capacity building, a number of past Riawunna trainees progressed into other professional fields at UTAS, based on their experience and skills gained in the Centre. All Riawunna staff were encouraged to take advantage of UTAS professional development opportunities, including studying a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) free subject each semester. Staff undertaking further studies were entitled to study and exam leave time. There were also other professional development and training opportunities offered to Indigenous staff that were tailored specifically to each individual (e.g., Intensive Summer School). There is also a general willingness among the university's units and faculties to take on Indigenous trainees and cadets. However, this goodwill needs to be nurtured and supported centrally. Also, currently there is no mechanism in place to retain Indigenous graduates as UTAS employees, but there have been conversations about exploring the possibility of graduate placements to address this annual loss of expertise.

The current UTAS Staff Agreement (2013–2016) outlines key areas for improving retention and to lift the representation of Aboriginal staff at the university to parity with the Tasmania's population. One of the areas is to increase Aboriginal staff appointments at all position levels, including growing their involvement in university governance and management. Another strategy to retain existing and attract new Indigenous staff to the university would be to include specific and appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in faculties, schools, and business unit performance agreements so that individual employees would have the chance to excel at their levels and that university units would have the opportunity to contribute to the university's aim to attract Indigenous staff.

Changes to Improve Indigenous Student Experiences at UTAS

During 2012 and 2013, the Faculty of Arts was restructured, providing an opportunity to relocate the Riawunna Centre in the Division of Students and Education to enable broader cross university reach of its programs and services. There was some apprehension about this change and a fear that the Centre would lose its autonomy and Indigenous leadership. To address these concerns and as a consequence of the National Review of Indigenous Higher Education (Behrendt 2012), it was timely to explore how other universities were responding to the Review's recommendations. To do this, visits to ten Indigenous Higher Education Centers or institutes were undertaken by the Director of Riawunna to inform future developments at UTAS.

Two sites were visited in 2012 to provide insights for the proposed changes at UTAS. These were Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development at Melbourne University, and the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education at University of Western Sydney. In 2013, visits to the following eight universities were undertaken:

1. Latrobe University, Bundoora Campus, Melbourne, Victoria
2. Institute for Koori Education (IKE), Deakin University, Melbourne, Victoria
3. Wollotuka Institute, Newcastle University, New South Wales
4. Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT
5. School of Indigenous Australian Studies (SIAS), James Cook University, Townsville, Qld
6. Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges & Education (ACIKE), Charles Darwin University, NT
7. David Unaipon College of indigenous Education and Research (DUCIER), University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia
8. Wilto Yerlo now Wirltu Yarlur Aboriginal Education, University of Adelaide, South Australia

Across all ten universities, Indigenous services and programs were coordinated from an Indigenous-run central place; all had made senior Indigenous appointments (at Associate Professor or Professor level); all had Indigenous Employment Strategies and Coordinators, and all had Aboriginal Education strategic plans.

A report was developed outlining some of the arrangements in place at each site visited (Andersen 2013). It also suggested strategies to improve the engagement of Indigenous staff and students at UTAS. Some of the recommendations were that Indigenous issues should have university-wide approach, that there is a need to increase the number of Indigenous staff at the universities to provide support for each other as well as for students, and that a central one-stop center coordinating services and programs across the university is a working and perhaps a desirable model to implement. The report also suggested that staff should be physically located together to prevent isolation, foster enthusiasm for their work, and forge strong bonds and relationships and a sense of community. Also, an Aboriginal Education Strategic Plan and Operational Plan with KPIs for all schools and divisions linked to the Aboriginal Employment Strategy would be essential to establish a balanced workplace and raise moral for Indigenous staff. As for students, the report recommended that more student scholarships and cadetships are needed to provide real-life work experience as well as an income to support students while studying.

In addition, this report suggested seven actions to enhance the experience and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at UTAS and made eight recommendations which are outlined in Table 2 along with progress to date.

In 2013, the restructure of the Riawunna Centre was implemented, largely ignoring the recommendations contained in the report, and in a manner disrespectful to the right of Indigenous people, preventing them from being heard and involved in the decision-making processes related to the restructure. This was certainly a missed opportunity that can affect the university and its entire community, in particular its Indigenous community. As Altman's (2013) research on the Northern Territory National Emergency Response highlights, "top-down" approaches are disempowering to Aboriginal people, and this was certainly experienced at UTAS.

Table 2 Actions and recommendations for UTAS

Actions	Progress	Recommendations	Progress
Educate and inspire our students and staff to focus their energies on creating a better future for Indigenous peoples	Ongoing	Colocation of senior appointment with Executive Officer and Indigenous Student Services	Implemented in Feb 2016
The development and delivery of a core breadth unit for all UTAS students	Developed in 2015	Display of three flags in the foyer on each campus, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and state	Aboriginal flag in Hobart and Burnie Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in Launceston
	Additional unit being developed in 2016		
The development and delivery of a core Murina Aboriginal pathway unit for all university preparation program students	Unit being developed in 2016	Creation of an Indigenous Hall of Fame on each campus with photos to showcase graduates	To be actioned
The appointment of a person to coordinate student exchange opportunities, conference participation, postgraduate study opportunities, and Riawunna graduation events	Casual research assistants assist with this work	Inclusion of Acknowledgement of Country for each campus on the back of UTAS business cards	To be actioned
The appointment of faculty-based Indigenous Engagement Officers to assist in creating a greater Indigenous presence across the university and students and staff in the respective faculty would have a local contact person to focus on specific goals and outcomes	Faculty-based officers appointed in Health	Introduction of a requirement that all academic programs include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content	Commenced 2015 with appointment of an Aboriginal Higher Education Advisor
Indigenous involvement in decision-making at UTAS through the UTAS Internal Indigenous Advisory Group and external	An Aboriginal Policy Working Group was established in 2015	Postgraduate supervision workshops for supervisors of non-Indigenous students with an Indigenous research topic and Indigenous students	Ongoing

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Actions	Progress	Recommendations	Progress
advice from the broader Aboriginal community			
Senior Indigenous Leadership appointments	<p>PVC Leadership and Research appointed in 2015</p> <p>Head of Service for Riawunna appointed in 2016</p>	Development of an Indigenous Health Support Unit within the Faculty of Health Science	To be actioned
		Accepting the invitation from the Director of the Tjabal Centre at ANU for UTAS Senior Management representatives to visit	To be actioned

Source: Andersen 2013. Looking at Models for Indigenous Higher Education

Restructure of Riawunna Centre

According to the 2013 UTAS Higher Education Statement, the role of the Riawunna Centre is to:

- Support schools across the university to have an awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students study and teaching and learning needs.
- Ensure all students have access to the Riawunna Centre as a culturally safe space.
- Ensure all students who are eligible have access to ITAS tutoring.
- Provide study spaces and access to technology including computers.

The restructure of the Centre diminished its role to focus on student support only, creating low morale and a decline in services and programs. UTAS stated their actions were in response to the Behrendt Review (2012) though staff perceived them to be a direct contradiction. At that time, UTAS had a total of sixteen (16) Indigenous staff members (12 professional and 4 academics). This number included the Riawunna Centre staff of nine, comprising three professional, two trainees, two cadets, and two academics.

Riawunna staff (including the trainees and cadets employed under the AES) provided the support mechanisms for Indigenous people studying at the university and also carried out the wider community engagement activities and strategies to attract students to study at UTAS. These staff numbers are small when compared with another similar regional Australian university, Newcastle University, which had

two support teams with ten staff focused on outreach to prospective students and nine staff focused on student engagement, experience, tutorial support, and leadership with one person responsible for student exchange, conferences, postgraduate study opportunities, and graduation events (Andersen 2013).

During the unsettled time of the restructure, UTAS Senior Management asked the Riawunna Director to explore senior Indigenous appointment models to assist with future appointments at UTAS. Subsequently the positions of Aboriginal Higher Education Advisor and PVC Indigenous Leadership and Research were established. With these appointments along with a new Head of Service for Riawunna, an Aboriginal Leadership Group (ALG) was formed to focus on addressing overall commitment and achievement of increased Indigenous education and employment outcomes at UTAS. The ALG have progressed the initiatives in Table 2.

Conclusion

This chapter outlines some key strategies and recommendations for successful recruitment and retention of Indigenous professional staff in higher education in Australia. It also highlights some challenges and barriers that still need to be overcome. However, further research and work are required to fully address the many issues impacting on Indigenous staff at Australian universities so that they can better support and facilitate the success of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. As discussed before, the work of Indigenous professional staff is vital to enhance the learning experiences not only of Indigenous students but also for all students across the university through developing culturally inclusive courses and learning environments.

As Aboriginal people working within the university we have the ability to empower Indigenous peoples. Problems of poverty, racism, poor health and suicides are the lived realities of our people and will continue. These are the reasons to write, teach and research, to make scholarship useful to do otherwise “is self-serving and purposeful only to the academic who needs a job, promotions and book contracts.” (Mihsuah and Wilson 2004, p. xi)

This is a key message for Indigenous professional and academic staff to reflect on, as they are the role models for future students and the driving force for universities to provide appropriate support and encouragement to facilitate the career development of their Indigenous colleagues.

The Closing the Gap Report (2015) indicates progress is ahead of schedule to meet the target of halving the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 with Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020, which is a positive indicator for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending university. It is also further motivation to enhance Indigenous employment within the sector so that future students will have access to Indigenous role models as leaders, academics, and professionals in their respective universities across the nation. However to achieve this, strong Indigenous leadership among Indigenous professional staff is essential across all

areas of the university, including student engagement, learning and teaching, research, and workforce development. This leadership has the potential to be the catalyst in creating culturally affirming environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students in Australian universities. As argued by Dreise et al. (2016), “targeted programs and co-ordinated efforts at local levels” (p. 2) are effective for improving school attendance. The same focused effort is needed in higher education, and Indigenous staff are essential to undertake this work in partnership with their respective communities and universities.

References

- Altman, J. 2013. Arguing the intervention. *Journal of Indigenous Policy* 14: 1–158.
- Andersen, C. 2013. Looking at models for indigenous higher education. Internal UTAS Report.
- Andersen, C., and M. Walter. 2014. Indigenous perspectives and cultural identity. In *Diversity, inclusion & engagement*, eds. Mervyn Hyde, Lorelei Carpenter, and Robert Conway, 2nd ed, 68–82. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Andersen, C., T. Bunda, and M. Walter. 2008. Indigenous higher education: The role of universities in releasing the potential. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 37: 1–8.
- Andersen, C., A. Edwards, and B. Wolfe. 2016. Finding space and place: Using narrative and imagery to support successful outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in enabling programs, *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 46(1): 1–11. ISSN 1326-0111.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2013. Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011, cat.no. 3238.0.55.001, ABS, viewed 25 June 2015. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3238.0.55.001>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. Key findings, 2014–15 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS).
- Australian Demographic Statistics. 2011. ‘Table 11: Estimated resident Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, age groups: States and territories: at 30 June 2006’, ‘Table 12: Estimated resident Australian non-Indigenous population, age groups: states and territories: at 30 June 2006’, data cube: Excel spreadsheet, cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Government. 2013. Indigenous staff scholarships. <http://archive.industry.gov.au/ministerarchive2013/sharonbird/mediareleases/pages/indigenousstaffscholarshipsnowopen.aspx.htm>.
- Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. 2015. Closing the gap. Prime Minister’s Report 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.dpmc.gov.au/pmc-indigenous-affairs/publication/closing-gap-prime-ministers-report-2015>.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. n.d. Information sheet – Social justice and human rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-social-justice/guides/information-sheet-social>. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. n.d.-a. Mabo Case 1992. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/mabo-case>. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia. 1996. <http://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. n.d.-b. Mabo Case 1992. <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/mabo-case>. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2017. Indigenous Australians. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/indigenous-australians/>. Accessed 11 May 2016.
- Behrendt, L. 2012. Department of Education and Training, Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. 5.1 Growing and retaining the general

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university workforce. Retrieved from <https://iher.education.gov.au/growing-and-retaining-general-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-university-workforce>.
- Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Trans. R. Nice. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bradley, D., P. Noonan, H. Nugent, and B. Scales. 2008. *Review of Australian higher education: Final report [Bradley review]*. Canberra: DEEWR.
- Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. 1999. National strategy to overcome disadvantage. http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/orgs/car/overcoming_disadvantage/pg3.htm. Accessed 17 Sept 2016.
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG). 2008. Closing the gap on indigenous disadvantage. https://www.coag.gov.au/closing_the_gap_in_indigenous_disadvantage. Accessed 12 May 2016.
- CreativeSpirits. Info. 2017. Aboriginal culture-education-aboriginal students in higher education studies at university. Retrieved from <https://www.creativespirits.info/education>.
- CSIRO. 2015. Indigenous STEM Education Program. <http://www.csiro.au/en/Education/Programs/Indigenous-STEM>. Accessed 12 May 2016.
- DEEWR. 2011. 'Internal evaluation of selected DEEWR programs directed towards the support of higher education access and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students: prepared for the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Review Panel', unpublished internal report for the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Canberra. p. 34.
- DET. 2012. Indigenous student support in Australian Universities. Retrieved from <https://docs.edu.gov.au>.
- DET. 2015. Higher education data. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2015-staff-data>.
- Devlin, M. 2009. Indigenous higher education student equity: Focusing on what works. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 38: 1–8.
- DIISRTE. 2012. Higher education staff data collection review. https://www.acpet.edu.au/uploads/DIIRSTE%202012%20HE%20Staff%20Data%20Collection%20Review%20ACPET%20submission%2002072012_BV.pdf.
- Dockery, A.M. 2013. *Cultural dimensions of indigenous participation in vocational education and training: New perspectives*. Adelaide: NCVER.
- Dreise, T., G. Milgate, B. Perrett, and T. Meston. 2016. Indigenous school attendance: Creating expectations that are 'Really High' and 'Highly Real'. *Policy Insights*. Issue 4, March 2016. Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research, Camberwell.
- Fredericks, B., S. Kinnear, C. Daniels, P. CroftWarcon, and J. Mann. 2015. *Path+Ways: Towards best practice in indigenous access education*, Final Report, prepared for the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. Office of Indigenous Engagement, CQUniversity, Australia. <https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/PathandWays-Towards-best-practice-in-Indigenous-access-education.pdf>. Accessed 17 May 2016.
- Graham, C. 2012. Enhancing student and research outcomes. Retrieved from <https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/institute-sustainable-futures/news/enhancing-student-and-research>. Accessed 15 Apr 2016.
- Graham, C. 2013. University professional staff: Enhancing student outcomes. LH Martin Institute. <http://www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au/insights-blog/2013/09/152-university-professional-staff-enhancing-student-outcomes>. Accessed 10 Apr 2016.
- Grenfell, M. 2004. *Pierre Bourdieu: Agent provocateur*. London: Continuum.
- Harvey, W.B., and L.V. Stiff. 1985. Examining opportunities for mobility for professional staff in State Universities. *Innovative Higher Education* 10 (1): 14–22.
- Herbert, J. 2010. Conceptualising a Model for delivery of Foundation/Enabling programs at Charles Sturt University (CSU). Discussion Paper, Foundation/Enabling Programs, 2010. www.csu.edu.au/student/transition/doc/Discussion_Paper%20indigenous%20ena. Accessed 15 May 2016.
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). 2003. Social justice information sheet. http://www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice. Accessed June 2017.

- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC). 2007. *Ngaparti Ngapartji – Yerra: Strong futures*. Report of the 3rd Annual IHEAC Conference, Adelaide.
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC). 2011. National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy (NIHEWS). Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/nihews.pdf>
- Kinnane, S., J. Wilks, K. Wilson, T. Hughes, and S. Thomas. 2014. 'Can't be what you can't see': *The transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students into higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.olt.gov.au/project-transition-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-students-higher-education-2011-0>.
- LH Martin Institute. 2012. Insights Blog, trends in Non-academic Staff for Australian Universities 2000 to 2010. Retrieved from www.lhmartininstitute.edu.au>2012/06.
- Mihesuah, D.A., and A.C. Wilson, eds. 2004. *Indigenizing the academy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities*, xi. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Miller, J., D. Morgan, and B. Spagnoletti. 2008. *Establishing good practice models of leadership which focus on professional development of academic and general staff and building and sustaining Indigenous participation, retention and success in Higher Education*. Adelaide: David Unaipon College of Indigenous Education and Research.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. 2000. Duggaibah, or 'place of whiteness' : Australian feminist and race. In *Race colour and identity in Australia and New Zealand*, ed. J. Docker and G. Fischer. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- NTEU. 2011. Advocate: Newsletter of the National Tertiary Education Union, 18 (3): 10-11. ISSN: 1321-8476. <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=660496860584560;res=IELBUS>
- NTEU. 2016. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff numbers drop for first time in 10 years. *Advocate* 23 (1): 12–13.
- Sams, C. 2012. Do indigenous recruitment and retention policies work? Opinion. HR Daily Community, Oct 2012. Retrieved from <http://community.hrdaily.com.au/profiles/blogs/aboriginal-employment-retention>.
- Trudgett, M., S. Page, and N. Harrison. 2016. Brilliant minds: A snapshot of successful indigenous Australian Doctoral Students. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2016.8>. Available on CJO 2016.
- Universities – Public Service Association. 2012. <http://psa.asn.au/agencies/universities/>. Accessed 8 Apr 2016.
- Universities Australia. 2014. Indigenous higher education. <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/uni-participation-quality/Indigenous-Higher-Education#.WWRWMoSGPDB>. Accessed 8 Apr 2016.
- University of Tasmania. Annual Report 2015. http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/887278/Annual-Report-2015.pdf#page=35. Accessed 21 June 2017.
- University of Tasmania Staff Agreement 2013–2016:9. http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/470098/UTAS-Staff-Agreement.pdf. Accessed 10 May 2016.
- UTAS, Indigenous Higher Education Statement. 2012. http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/641915/UTAS-IHES-2012.pdf.
- UTAS Annual Report (2015) Annual Report 2015, University of Tasmania http://www.imas.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/1059121/Annual-Report-2015.pdf
- Wilks, J., and K. Wilson. 2015. A profile of the A&TSI higher education student population. *Australian Universities Review* 57 (2): 2015.



In Pursuit of Nontext Excellence: Reflections on Navigating the Multiple Literacies and Vernaculars of Higher Education Work

13

Trish McCluskey and Peter Lane

Contents

Introduction	192
The Changing Higher Education Environment	193
Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)	195
Case Study	197
Subject	198
Object	199
Instruments/Tools	199
Community	202
The Rules of Engagement	202
Division of Labor	203
Case Study Continued	204
Storyboarding	205
Conclusion	205
References	206

Abstract

With the recent interest and adoption of the concept of the flipped classroom and recognition of the power of video to reinvent education (Khan 2011), video has made a resurgence as a transformative tool to enhance learning and teaching. Most experts in the design and development of multimedia resources in Higher Education are employed as professional staff, and one of their challenges is to work collaboratively with academic staff to interpret and translate traditional lecture based content into digestible, engaging audio-visual artifacts. This interaction and process is often akin to working with someone from another country who speaks a different language and observes different cultural customs. It

T. McCluskey (✉) · P. Lane
Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, Australia
e-mail: Trish.McCluskey@iinet.net.au; Peter.Lane@deakin.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_20

191

requires multiple forms of communication and signals. This chapter will explore the competing discourses of making and sharing meaning in higher education from the perspective of a professional video producer and a senior academic in learning and teaching, who have both had enduring and successful careers in Higher Education. Having survived the “Kodak Moment” (Scott 2016) and numerous other disruptive innovations, they will reflect on the multiple literacies, engagement strategies, and work practices that are essential to ensure success and survival in a rapidly changing higher education environment. It will also reflect on the challenges of engaging academic staff in the language and discourse of digital media design and development.

Keywords

Cultural Historical Activity Theory · CHAT · Digital Literacy · Multi-media · Video production · Professional Staff · Third space professionals · Learning Design in Higher Education · Multiple literacies · Cross team collaboration · Storyboards · Curriculum design · Multiple literacies · Educational Discourse

Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been an increased focus on student learning in the digital era (Lea 2013) as many aspects of modern lives are transformed by digital media. Digital technology is being used to produce innovative resources and authentic learning opportunities for students. Work, study, and self-expression are being transformed via the affordances of digital media (Littlejohn et al. 2011), and there is an increasing recognition of the significant pedagogical benefits of using video and other technology to create authentic learning opportunities for students. There is an expectation that creative, engaging, and media rich video resources will be available for students to explore and learn from. Kelly (2008) claims that we are experiencing a paradigm shift similar to the introduction of the printing press and we are moving “from book fluency to screen fluency, from literacy to visuality.” Video is seen as the “new vernacular” which extends beyond words and where audio-visual artifacts will be easily navigated and searchable just like text (Kaufman and Mohan 2009). However, there are also concerns that the screen literacy and digital capital that students bring with them into the classroom are not adequately being serviced by universities, and there is a conspicuous difference in the ways in which students access, create and distribute entertainment media in their personal lives compared to their life as a university student (Tapscott 1998; Oblinger 2003). With the recent interest in and adoption of the concept of the flipped classroom and recognition of the power of video to reinvent education (Khan 2011), video has again made a resurgence as a transformative tool to enhance learning and teaching.

Most specialist staff who are engaged in the design and development of digital media resources for learning in Higher Education are employed as *professional* or *general* staff and are generally viewed as belonging to a service sector, specifically

focused on supporting academic staff. However, in the author's experience, many of these staff are disciplinary experts in their own right, often with tertiary level qualifications and many years' experience in an associated work environment. One of the many challenges they face is how to engage and work collaboratively with academic staff to interpret and translate traditional lecture-based content into digestible, engaging audio-visual artifacts suitable for the contemporary university learning environment. Professional staff in higher education learning support roles are expected to maintain currency in their own professional practice as well as navigate and interpret academic culture and discourse (Graham 2009). This interaction and process can be likened to working with someone from another country, who speaks a different language and observes different cultural customs. It requires multiple forms of reciprocal translation, communication, and signals.

This chapter explores the challenges and opportunities of working collaboratively across professional and discipline boundaries in a progressive Australian university and examines the complex nature of these multiple perspectives using a Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) framework.

The Changing Higher Education Environment

Higher education, like many other major institutions such as media, banking, retail, and travel, is undergoing significant change or what some term a "disruption" (Christensen et al. 2011) in their model of delivery. Universities are having to adapt and respond to a rapidly changing environment by redesigning their course offerings and developing workforce capability to ensure students are appropriately engaged in new digitally mediated learning environments. Kalantzis and Cope (2012) tell us that literacy is changing and is no longer only the domain of the written text "meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal – in which written-linguistic modes of meaning interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactile, and spatial patterns of meaning." The ubiquity of digital technology is a contributing driver of this change, and traditional modes of learning and teaching such as lectures are gradually being replaced by interactive, media-enhanced learning experiences that are not confined to lecture theatres and classrooms. Siemens et al. (2015) describe this as the "thinning of classroom walls" where learners can now use a variety of tools to interact with other learners, experts, and content from around the world.

The use of film and video is not as new as some of the more recent digital tools and indeed have long been an integral element of flexible and online education. They are recognized as valued resources to create a stimulating learning environment through aural and visual channels (Willis 2009). What is new, however, is the technological developments that are enabling students to access video content on multiple wireless devices and platforms with increased speed and quality of digital interfaces. Students can now access and create multimedia artifacts any time and any place.

Rosenblum (2015) reminds us that telling stories through the medium of video is more complicated than "just hitting the record button and hoping for the best." It requires creative, iterative design and planning, and this is best conducted within a collaborative

team with a clear focus on the ultimate aim of student learning. A collaborative team conjures up images of a cohesive group who are all on the same page and enjoy reciprocal respect and regard for each other. However, this is not always the case, particularly in higher education where the workforce has become an increasingly disparate conglomerate of multifaceted professional and discipline groups.

Traditionally university courses were designed and developed by individual academic *experts* and focused on transmitting specific disciplinary knowledge and discourse, usually through campus-based lectures. However, designing and developing courses of study in contemporary higher education requires a much broader range of knowledge and skills such as digital media production, instructional design, and web development to produce high quality, sustainable, and scalable learning resources that students can access when and where they choose. Today, collaboration on curriculum design and development entails various experts engaging in new collegial ways of working in what Whitchurch (2008) has termed “Third Space” environments where both the academic and professional identities undergo “a continuous process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction” (Henkel 2010). To engage and move forward in this new collaborative working space necessitates clear reciprocal communication between each participant, mutual respect, and a rudimentary understanding of the culture and vernacular of the other participants.

In the experience of the authors, many academic staff have already made this shift and enthusiastically incorporate digital media into their courses and units of study; however, there are also many who resist doing so or lack the skills and confidence to teach effectively using these tools. Some academics do not see developing digital media resources as part of their job and therefore discount such activity or do not prioritize it in curriculum development.

It is not unusual for digital production staff to get a request from an academic to “Just make me a video” and to be handed a folder of lecture notes without any appreciation for the design requirements of this very specialist genre. The transformation of learning resources from traditional lecture-based materials to digital artifacts can be a daunting proposition for many academic staff. It is a situation that can generate anxiety because engaging students in each medium requires different knowledge and skill sets. This often requires *letting go* of pre-existing resources that have significant emotional attachment as they are often built up over time and have previously been successful in a lecture-based teaching environment.

The authors of this chapter work in an Australian university that has embraced and strongly promotes a flexible and *cloud-based* learning environment. Academics in this university are expected to provide students with a range of platforms, tools, and activities to engage with their learning, both “on campus” and “in the cloud.” There has been a concerted, strategic effort to reconceptualize and re-purpose learning resources to create “Cloud concepts” that students can access “anytime, anywhere, anyhow.” A critical requirement of these “Cloud concepts” is that they actively engage students. However, this can sometimes create tensions for academic staff who may interpret this to mean “bells and whistles” akin to an “infotainment” genre which is often considered to be somewhat trivial or less academically rigorous. Initial discussions with academic staff about translating their lecture-based resources

into Cloud concepts often result in the replication of long passages of text or “talking head” videos which are less than engaging for students.

The authors, who between them have logged over 60 years of service in the tertiary education sector, across a variety of academic and professional roles, have a keen interest in the dynamics and tensions involved in navigating what Whitchurch (2012) describes as an interstitial space. A Cultural Historical Activity Theory framework was employed as an analytical lens to reflect on the author’s experience of working with multiple historical, cultural, and social perspectives within an interprofessional curriculum design team.

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

Engeström (1987) describes Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as “a systematic way to understand the complex human activity within a social community.” CHAT can facilitate the exploration of competing tensions inherent in any given *activity system* as it provides a mechanism to explore a range of critical interactions and distributed experience within the system. CHAT also enables reflection on participant’s assumptions about the dominant discourse in the activity system and stimulates debate and development of solutions. It is described by Kuutti (1996) as “a philosophical and cross-disciplinary framework for studying different forms of human practices as development processes, with both individual and social levels interlinked at the same time.”

The theory originates in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) and A.N. Leont’ev (1978). Yrjö Engeström (1987) has expanded on this to develop what is now referred to as third generation activity theory. The various components of CHAT are conceptualized by Engeström (1987) in Fig. 1.

CHAT is specifically concerned with how instruments/tools, which represent the accumulation and transmission of socio cultural knowledge, mediate activity. The earlier generations of this theory were represented in the top level of the triangle in Fig. 1 and only focused on the interaction between the individual subject and object and how this was mediated through an instrument (tool or artifact). Engeström (1987) however expanded the subject-object interaction in recognition of the wider collective activity and social context in which they were situated. By introducing *community*, he thereby created a three-way interaction among subject, object, and community. In addition other means of mediation within the system include *rules* for the subject-community interaction and *division of labor* for the object-community interaction (Kaptelinin and Nardi 2006).

Put simply, an *activity system* focuses attention on *who* (subject) is doing *what* (object) and *why* (outcome), using what tools or symbols (instruments), within what context (community), governed by what regulations (rules), and with what support (division of labor).

The focus of CHAT is not just on the mediating tools, rules, and divisions of labor for the activity under examination but also focuses on the multiplicity of interconnections and tensions mediated by those tools in the activity system over time. Nardi

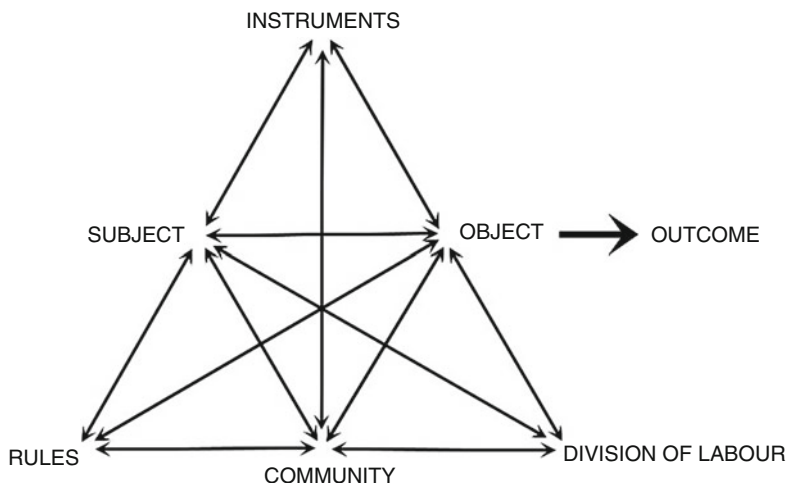


Fig. 1 Engeström's (1987) activity system model

The Eight-Step-Model		
	<i>Identify the:-</i>	<i>Question to Ask</i>
Step 1	Activity of interest	What sort of Activity am I interested in?
Step 2	Objective	Why is the activity taking place?
Step 3	Subjects	Who is involved in carrying out this activity?
Step 4	Tools	By what means are the subjects performing this activity?
Step 5	Rules and Regulations	Are there any cultural norms, rules or regulations governing the performance of activity?
Step 6	Division of labour	Who is responsible for what, when carrying out activity and how are the roles organised?
Step 7	Community	What is the environment in which this activity is carried out?
Step 8	Outcome	What is the desired Outcome from carrying out this activity?

Fig. 2 The eight step model (Mwanza 2002)

(1996) states that “all human experience is shaped by the tools and sign systems we use” and applying the CHAT framework can assist us to view more explicitly those tools that we often implicitly use. This is a useful way to unpack the dynamics and interactions within a contemporary higher education workforce environment.

Mwanza's (2002) eight step model, outlined in Fig. 2, is a useful instrument to capture and outline the essential components of an activity system.

By way of illustration, Fig. 3 depicts an activity system based on the traditional model of learning resource development prior to the *digital era*. Academics traditionally worked autonomously and often in isolation, focused primarily on their scholarly work and relied on their own resources in the design and delivery of their lectures and supplementary resources. If required they sought additional support from graphic designers or administrative staff to edit or enhance the formatting and visual appeal of their resources.

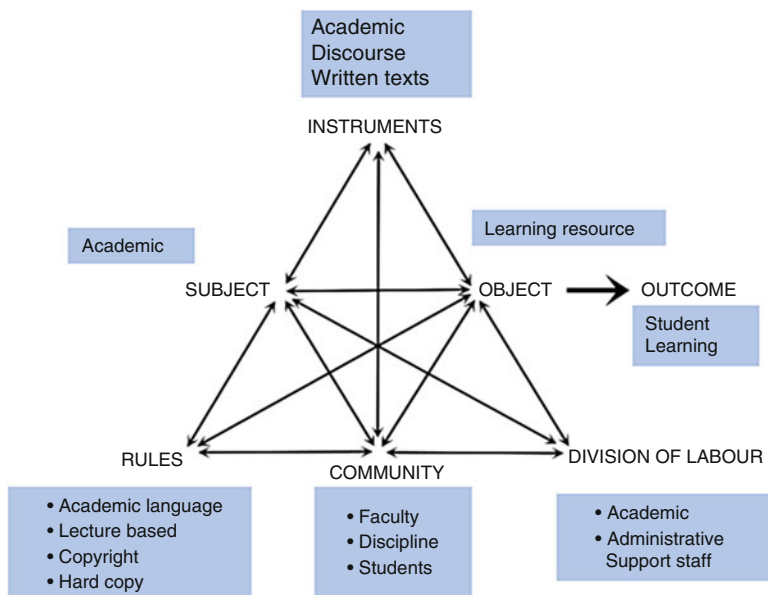


Fig. 3 Activity system based on the traditional model of learning resource development

However, this model is no longer sustainable in the contemporary university as the focus of learning design moves away from classroom located, content delivery to active student engagement and inquiry-based learning that is accessible any time, any place, and on any device.

Another factor contributing to this paradigm shift is the rapidly expanding higher education sector, driven by the imperatives of marketization, digital technology, and wider participation has resulted in increasing regulation and quality standards being applied to the design and delivery of university *products*. Thus, there are also corresponding impacts on the activity system as more stakeholders participate and more complex rules of engagement are applied.

Figure 4 reflects these developments and outlines a more complex activity system comprising more participants and rules of engagement.

Case Study

The above model will be elaborated further through reflection on a recent activity involving the authors.

An academic colleague requests support to build a digital media resource to reinforce a threshold learning concept that students are struggling to grasp, despite having attended classes dedicated to the topic. A meeting is arranged between the academic and the resource development team to discuss the design and development

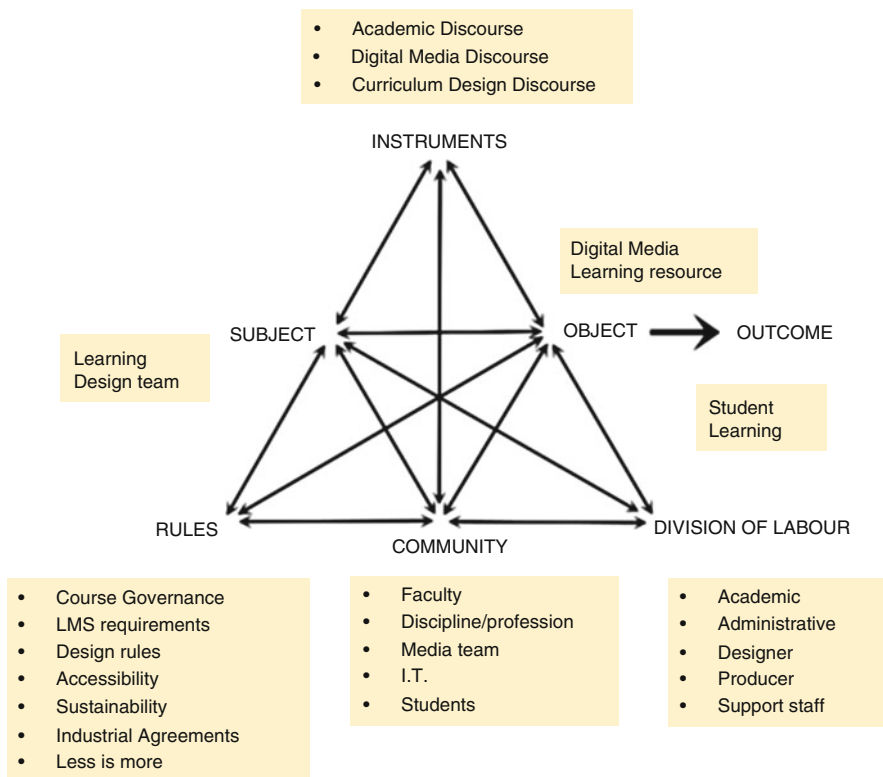


Fig. 4 Activity system based on a contemporary collaborative model of digital learning resource development

of a digital resource to make the threshold learning concept clearer and more accessible to the student.

As part of the exploratory planning discussion, the academic is invited to explain the concept of astigmatism to the others in the team. The academic moves to the white board and starts drawing a complex diagram while confidently explaining the concept of astigmatism. The learning design team listen intently, but at the end of the presentation they reluctantly admit that they struggled to understand what was presented. The academic clarifies that students also struggle when the concept is presented in this two dimensional format which is why a more interactive and dynamic format to communicate the concept is being sought.

We can explore this challenge using the CHAT lens.

Subject

In this case study, the *subject* in the activity system is the team involved in the design and development of a digital learning resource on the concept of astigmatism for an undergraduate optometry course. The team included a video producer/designer, an

instructional designer, a project coordinator, and an academic from the optometry course who had requested support to reconceptualize previous lecture-based content into a digital format.

Object

The *object* (the goal or motive of the activity system) is the design and development of a digital media resource outlining a difficult threshold learning concept (astigmatism) in optometry which will in turn enable the student to achieve the *outcome* of learning.

Instruments/Tools

For the activity system to become activated, *instruments* or *tools* are required to mediate the activity and enable the subject to act on developing the object. In this case, the mediating tool is the discourse and language used by those in the team to articulate the essence of the object and work together to construct it in order to achieve the outcome.

This is the point where things become challenging, as the *tools* (language, literacies, and discourses) commonly used by the subjects involved in the project are quite different and prove to be quite ineffective in this cross boundary communication. These tools are grounded within the respective socio-cultural communities from which each of the subjects originates, and have fundamental differences that will require navigation and negotiation skills.

CHAT views *instruments/tools* as being “culturally defined” and used as a way of “transmitting cultural knowledge” (Kaptelinin and Nardi 2006). They emphasize the context and background of those using them and “carry within them successful adaptations of an earlier time” (Cole 1996).

The tool being employed in this case study to mediate the *subject* acting on the *object* is disciplinary language and discourse. This discourse is what is used by the *subjects* to articulate the action in order to create the *object*. Gee (1990) defines discourses as “ways of being in the world,” and as such, can involve “words, acts, gestures, attitudes, beliefs.” A discourse also incorporates an individual’s professional identity and by actively engaging in that discourse, they are recognized as “members of socially meaningful groups or networks” (Gee 1990).

Many academic staff have spent much of their working lives writing in an academic genre (with its associated conventions) and sometimes use a similar style when communicating verbally. However, communicating in this genre is inappropriate when writing a script in order to create a cloud concept or digital media resource. Academics need to be able to write for the spoken word, as presented via a video presentation which is significantly different. Such writing needs to be less formal and more conversational, and colloquial. This is a style that is akin to communicating directly with students, just as if they were sitting

right in front of them so needs to be tailored accordingly. Although the message is much the same, it now needs to be communicated in a manner that is clear, easily understood, and if possible, dynamic and engaging. A scriptwriting rule goes something like this. “Don’t use a \$5 word when a \$2 words works just as well.” In other words, less is more so keep it simple. Feedback from academic staff suggests they have concerns that diluting and shortening key concepts trivializes their importance and need for academic rigor, which is perhaps a reflection on how they mastered the topic, predominantly through intense reading and analyzing.

The video producer in the team explained that a 3–5 minute cloud concept is similar to a movie trailer. One does not watch a movie trailer and conclude that they do not need to watch the full-length film. It is more likely that they will watch the trailer and think, I must now go and see that film. In the same way, a cloud concept/digital resource should engage and inspire a student to watch, listen, read, and explore more on a given topic.

So the plan for this team to collaborate in the activity of developing a relevant and useful digital resource presents a challenge in terms of discourse and tools of their respective trades.

For the academic participating in this activity system, this discourse is firmly contextualized within the disciplinary community and similar concepts have probably been communicated previously without difficulty to colleagues who operate within their long established optometry discipline, community, and activity system. However, the individuals involved may also belong to other communities and engage in other activity systems which is evidenced in this situation by the use of the term *Threshold Learning concept*. This term is a sign or symbol that they are also engaged in the discourse of education or academia which is a separate community and activity system to optometry. Threshold learning concepts are described by Meyer and Land (2003) as “akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something.” To clarify, they are disciplinary concepts where students often get *stuck*; however, they need to be able to master such concepts before they can progress to the next stage of their learning.

The video producer, however, belongs to yet a different activity system and the discourse and language employed to mediate activity in this system involves terms such as *story boards*, *narrative*, *production values*, *scripts*, *editing flow*, *picture/sound syncing*, and *green screens* all of which may be new concepts to academics and initially troublesome terms to understand.

Video production discourse is informed by the work of Hansch et al. (2015) who identified a range of video types and affordances including nine key features that include: building rapport, field trips, manipulating time and space, telling stories, motivating learners, historical footage, demonstrations, visual juxtaposition, and multimedia presentation.

Jack Koumi (2006) has also impacted the discourse of effective educational video design by stressing that “teaching intentions” underpin the design process and “words and pictures need to be carefully interwoven, in order to create synergy of meaning, ensure clear exposition and facilitate a receptive frame of mind.” He promotes a pedagogically effective video design framework and suggests an “open

1. HOOK a Shock / surprise / delight b Fascinate, entertain/amuse, appetise, create suspense	5. SENSITISE a Music Style/Occurrence by Design b Signal Change of Topic c Consistent style
2. SIGNPOST a Chapter Heading: what's next? b Focus: what to look out for	6. ELUCIDATE a Moderate intellectual depth/complexity b Vary tempo to indicate syntax c. Enhance Legibility / Audibility
3. FACILITATE ATTENTIVE VIEWING a Pose questions b Encourage prediction	7. REINFORCE a Repetition (with a different angle) b Compare / Contrast c Synergy between words and pictures
4. ENABLE CONSTRUCTIVE LEARNING a Concretise / Activate existing knowledge b Words NOT DUPLICATING pictures c Do not blinker, disclose the context d Pause commentary for contemplation	8. CONSOLIDATE/ CONCLUDE a Recapitulate b Consolidate / Summarise key features c Chapter Ending

Fig. 5 A pedagogic screenwriting framework (Koumi 2006)

structure that enables and encourages sustained attention and constructive learning.” This framework is designed to be used flexibly, rather than prescriptively; however, it does inform the practice of the video producers in the case study being explored.

Figure 5 indicates that the video producer/designer is already conversant and engaged in the context and process of pedagogy and learning design.

If the video producer/designer was asked to initiate the design activity, it would probably go as follows:

- Who and where is the audience – in the cloud, campus based, community, language, etc.?
- What is the objective of the resource? To hook, signpost, motivate, tell a story, or demonstrate?
- What is the context – professional, clinical, technical, instructional, documentary, role play, etc.?
- What are the key concepts to be communicated?
- What is the product – video, animation, interactive?

The instructional designer and project coordinator may have yet another set of tools/discourses to mediate the activity, however to expand on this would extend beyond the scope of this chapter. A brief synopsis of their concerns however would include the following:

- Is there constructive alignment between the unit learning outcomes and course learning outcomes?
- What graduate capabilities will be addressed?

- How will the learning be assessed?
- Has this concept been scaffolded in earlier units?
- Will it require a structural change to the course?
- What is the project timeline?
- What is the availability of the academic staff to work on the project?

All of the above perspectives and voices are critical and integral to the success of the project and need to be heard and explored.

To progress this project, the team (subject group) needed to find a workable, mutually agreeable, mediation tool or language to enact the proposed digital concept.

What we have described above is the basic unit of activity; however, as outlined previously, activity systems do not occur in isolation and need to be contextualized within a broader social environment or community.

Community

In this case study, the community is made up of the broader academic course team, the curriculum support team, the faculty staff, the technology support staff, the governance team, the professional accreditation body, and probably many more stakeholders who have an interest in the student learning journey. Each of these has a defined history, culture, and practice base which has been built up over time and determines/guides their practice and participation. The mediating factor between the design team (subject) and their sociocultural context (community) are the parameters and guidelines (rules) that dictate and moderate their activity.

The Rules of Engagement

The rules that mediate the collective design activity are generally governed by the university curriculum approval policy and processes and require constructive alignment between the learning activities/content, assessment activities, and course learning outcomes. Whatever is produced will also need to meet the technical, procedural, and administrative requirements of the institution's Learning Management System which will enable students to actively engage with the resulting artifacts. That will require the artifact to meet strict size, accessibility, and engagement requirements across a range of desktop and mobile platforms.

More broadly though there is an expectation that any activity complies with the various industrial agreements in terms of tasks and expectations of workload hours and work engaged in. This is where contradictions can often arise, as such rules are often influenced by socio-historical power structures and patterns of relations both within the community and between a community and the larger culture/society of

which it is part. For example, an academic staff member is required to engage in not just teaching but also research and service. There is a pervasive perception in higher education that research has a much higher value than teaching and academic staff often feel pressured to “publish or perish.” This places undue stress on them to commit time to research which can significantly impact the time available to collaborate on developing digital learning resources.

Professional staff on the other hand work under a different award structure and have tighter constraints on their work-plan and performance. They are expected to define clear outputs followed by demonstrable impact of such outputs in order to achieve their annual performance bonus. This is an important point to note as equivalent career progression opportunities are not available to professional staff as are to academic staff. The activity of professional staff is usually “project managed” within the tight constraints of time, cost, and quality parameters, and they are expected to move onto the next project within a specified and tracked timeframe. This can prove problematic if the academic partner in the project is too busy researching, marking, or presenting at conferences to actively contribute to the activity.

Division of Labor

Even though there are only a handful of staff involved in the top level activity system to design the digital learning resource, there are many other personnel in the community who will be impacted and involved indirectly in the ongoing project work.

- *Course team*: to ensure the changes align with and compliment the rest of the course, the course team will need to be briefed about the project. It is imperative that the academic staff involved continue to contribute to the activity team as often progress depends on them providing feedback or additional information to allow the remainder of the team’s work to continue.
- *Digital resource team*: to extrapolate and create the technical side of the design requirements which can often require significant planning, time commitment and specialist resources. This team is again dependent on the ongoing engagement of the academic staff member and the iterative development of the digital artifacts can be held up if feedback or information is not forthcoming. It is the experience of the authors that projects can be delayed significantly because there has not been sufficient engagement from the academic content expert.
- *Curriculum design team*: to ensure the alignment of the new resource within the course and unit learning outcomes and to check that assessment tasks are also appropriately aligned.
- *Governance team*: to ensure that any changes to the course/unit are communicated to the most recent course/unit descriptor and published in handbooks and course guides accordingly

Although it is the individual directly engaged in the activity system who experiences the tensions and contradictions, solutions can only be arrived at collectively; therefore, the team faced with this challenge needs to explore new ways of engaging in a collaborative and distributed paradigm and embrace each other's ways of knowing, doing, and being.

Case Study Continued

The academic who initiated the request for support had a clear vision of the threshold learning concept but needed to find a way to translate that into language that could be understood by those external to the discipline and academic discourse.

The digital media producer/designer referred to his previously outlined toolkit in an effort to further frame the artifact.

There was clarity on the first two points regarding the objective of the resource and the context; however, the concept and nature of the product were still not clear. After much discussion, and wrangling with the complexity of the threshold learning concept, the academic staff member came up with a novel way to communicate it to the rest of the team and expand on what the digital learning resource needed to convey.

The academic devised a *contraption* (See Fig. 6) comprising stings, discs, and clips that kinesthetically demonstrated the concept, while clarifying the complex discipline vernacular. This transferred the complexity of the concept away from the limitations of language and the one dimensional graphics on the white board to a 3D, tangible model that communicated movement, and dynamism that enabled others in the team to understand the concept.

The project was ready to progress now that everyone in the group could integrate their respective thoughts and it subsequently opened up a whole new range of design possibilities.

So now that everyone had a fundamental understanding of the threshold learning concept under investigation; it was time to move onto the next phase of the design which was capturing the sequence of the concept through a storyboard.

Fig. 6 String contraption demonstrating the astigmatism threshold learning concept

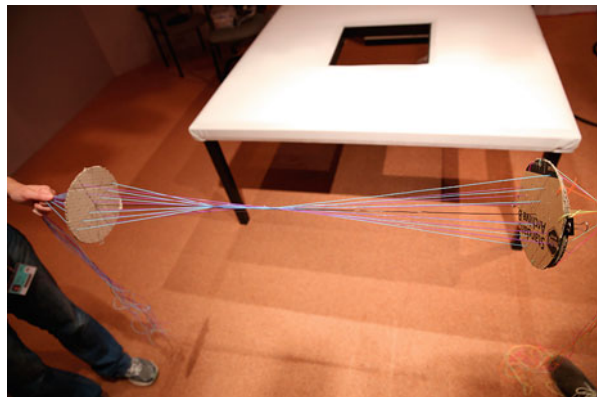
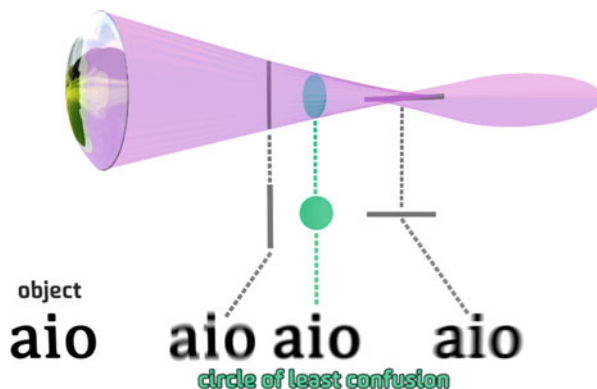


Fig. 7 A screenshot from the 3D animated video



Storyboarding

A key tool in any video-based design/production is a storyboard (Garrison 1999). The storyboard is invaluable to ensure ideas are organized in the right order and are used as a reference check regarding the intentions of the academic or owner of the project. The storyboard will also be used in the recording and editing stages to ensure the product adheres to what has been discussed. Storyboards are powerful tools that allow the team to previsualize and check ideas. This is especially important if the project is being passed on to others to film and edit. From the author's experience, there is no substitute for getting to the point with exceptional planning in the preproduction stage. This sets the project up for a much more efficient and effective outcome.

And so the CHAT dance continued and a variety of video designs and animations were explored. The academic staff engaged further in the discourse of the media production staff and provided feedback as the string contraption evolved and materialized into a 3D animated video (Fig. 7).

The *astigmatism* digital artifact was delivered on time and exceeded all expectations. It is continuing to evolve and there is interest internationally in developing the resource further.

Conclusion

The case study presented in this chapter highlights just one example of how a multifaceted team with a willingness to collaborate across workforce boundaries collectively and creatively approached the design and development of a digital resource to support student learning. Analyzing the interactions, discourses and contributing external factors using a CHAT framework enabled us to make explicit the many tacit tensions and ways of knowing inherent in the multiple perspectives of curriculum design in a contemporary university.

CHAT presents a mechanism for us to unpack, make explicit, and reflect on some of these tensions and indeed on the dominant assumptions about the binary nature of the higher education workforce.

Today's higher education workforce has "expanded and diversified" and "rigidly defined boundaries between functions and categories of staff have loosened" (Henkel 2010). There has been a blurring of academic and professional staff roles, and their relative status has progressed from a service/support relationship to one of mutual dependence and respect (Winchester 2005). A collaborative and cohesive network of professional and academic staff is *the new norm* to design and facilitate a positive learning experience for students. An interrogation of the realities, multiple discourses, and rules of engagement of other co-workers in this continuously evolving workforce is essential to help us make sense of the inherent contradictions and therefore open up further possibilities for collaboration and contribution.

Higher education is struggling to keep pace with the ubiquitous expansions in digital technology and organizations will need to develop responsive and agile strategies to leverage the collective capability and wisdom of its most powerful resource: Staff.

References

- Christensen, C.M., M.B. Horn, L. Caldera, and L. Soares. 2011. *Disrupting college: How disruptive innovation can deliver quality and affordability to postsecondary education*. Washington DC: Centre for American Progress. Retrieved from https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/02/pdf/disrupting_college.pdf.
- Cole, M. 1996. *Cultural psychology: A once and future discipline*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Engeström, Y. 1987. *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research*. Orienta-Konsultit: Helsinki.
- Garrison, A. 1999. Video Basics and Production Projects for the Classroom. Centre for Media Literacy. Retrieved from <http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/video-basics-and-production-projects-classroom>.
- Gee, J.P. 1990. *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. London: Falmer.
- Graham, C. 2009. Investing in early career general staff. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 31 (2): 37–41.
- Hansch, A., Newman, C., Hillers, L., Shildhauer, T., McConachie, K., and Schmidt, P. 2015. Video and online learning: Critical reflections and findings from the field. Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2577882.
- Henkel, M. 2010. Change and continuity in academic and professional identities. In *Academic and professional identities in higher education: The challenges of a diversifying workforce*, International studies in higher education, ed. G. Gordon and C. Whitchurch. New York: Routledge.
- Kalantzis, M., and B. Cope. 2012. *Literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kaptelinin, V., and B.A. Nardi. 2006. *Acting with technology: Activity theory and interaction design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kaufman, P.B. and Mohan J. 2009. Video Use and Higher Education: Options for the Future New York University and the Copyright Clearance Centre. Retrieved from https://library.nyu.edu/about/Video_Use_in_Higher_Education.pdf.
- Kelly, K. 2008. Becoming Screen Literate. The New York Times Magazine <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/23/magazine/23wwln-future-t.html>.

- Khan, S. 2011. TED [TalkDocumentary Channel]. (2011, March). Salman Khan: Let's use video to reinvent education. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/salman_khan_let_s_use_video_to_reinvent_education.
- Koumi, J. 2006. *Designing video and multimedia for open and flexible learning*. London/New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Kuutti, K. 1996. Activity theory as a potential framework for human-computer interaction research. In *Context and consciousness: Activity theory and human-computer interaction*, ed. B.A. Nardi. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Lea, M.R. 2013. Academic literacies in the digital university: Integrating individual accounts with network practice. In *Literacy in the digital university: Critical perspectives on learning, scholarship, and technology*, Research into higher education, ed. R. Goodfellow and M.R. Lea. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Leont'ev, A.N. 1978. *Activity, consciousness, and personality*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Littlejohn, A., H. Beetham, and L. McGill. 2011. *Learning at the digital frontier: A review of digital literacies in theory and practice*. Glasgow: Caledonian Academy.
- Meyer, J. and Land, R. 2003. Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Linkages to Ways of Thinking and Practising within the Disciplines. Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses, ETL Project, Occasional Report 4, May 2003. Retrieved from www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/docs/ETLreport4.pdf.
- Mwanza, D. 2002. Towards an Activity-Oriented Design Method for HCI Research and Practice. Doctoral dissertation. Retrieved from <http://oro.open.ac.uk/32101/>.
- Nardi, B. 1996. Activity theory and human-computer interaction. In *Context and consciousness: Activity theory and human-computer interaction*, ed. B.A. Nardi. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Oblinger, D. 2003. Boomers, Gen-Xers and Millennials: Understanding the new students. *EDUCAUSE Review*, July/August, 37–47.
- Rosenblum, M. 2015, March 31. The Critical Need for Video Literacy [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-rosenblum/the-critical-need-for-video-literacy_b_6967902.html.
- Scott, A. 2016. Kodak's Downfall Wasn't About Technology. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/07/kodaks-downfall-wasnt-about-technology>.
- Siemens, G., D. Gasevic, and S. Dawson. 2015. *Preparing for the digital university: A review of the history and current state of distance, blended, and online learning*. Athabasca: Athabasca University. Retrieved from <http://linkresearchlab.org/PreparingDigitalUniversity.pdf>.
- Tapscott, D. 1998. *Growing up digital: The rise of the net generation*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Vygotsky, L.S. 1978. In *Mind in society – The development of higher psychological processes*, ed. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, and E. Souberman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2012. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of 'third space' professionals*. London: Routledge.
- Willis, H. 2009. Video: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Educause Review* 44 (6): 106–107.
- Winchester, H.P. 2005. Staffing Issues for Universities. Paper presented to the 3rd Annual Higher Education Summit, 17 & 18 March 2005, Melbourne. http://w3.unisa.edu.au/cha/mgmt%20gov/winchester_presentation/staffing%20issues%20for%20universities%20formatted.doc.



Virtual Central Support Unit Approach to Organizational Support and Staff Development

14

Jonathan Flutey, Beth Smith, and Stephen Marshall

Contents

Introduction	210
The Victoria University of Wellington Context	211
Drivers for Change	212
The Virtual Central Support Unit Model	213
Virtual CSU Successes	217
Organizational Development Activities	218
Coordinating Training Planning and Delivery Through a Common Calendar	219
Spaces for Development and Teaching	220
Contacts for Academic Technologies (CATs)	222
Failures	223
Conclusion and Future Directions	224
References	225

Abstract

The Virtual Central Support Unit (CSU) is a model of organizational development and support created by Victoria University of Wellington in response to strategic drivers for change in the way Victoria engages in administration, teaching, and research. A collaborative approach encompassing professional support staff based in several different CSUs working on strategic and operational projects in virtual teams lies at the heart of this model. A key feature of this approach is that the Virtual CSU can be seen as a collection of inter-related virtual

J. Flutey (✉) · B. Smith

Victoria University of Wellington, Information Technology Services, Wellington, New Zealand
e-mail: jonathan.flutey@vuw.ac.nz; beth.smith@vuw.ac.nz

S. Marshall

Victoria University of Wellington, Centre for Academic Development, Wellington, New Zealand
e-mail: stephen.marshall@vuw.ac.nz

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_28

209

organizations focused on specific priorities, rather than as a single alternative hierarchy in an otherwise traditionally structured organization. This chapter highlights the important components of the Virtual CSU approach and presents examples of key successes that have helped the University work towards its wider strategic and operational goals. This new organizational model has also unified the strategic needs of professional development at Victoria to create new services and initiatives that raise the awareness and accessibility of training for all staff across the University. The framework illustrates how universities can incrementally address the wasteful and rigid structures of traditional siloed groups and achieve similar positive changes to their organizations.

Keywords

Organizational development · Collaboration · Knowledge sharing · Virtual teams · Shared responsibility · Strategic support

Introduction

Since 2012 Victoria University of Wellington has been on a journey of strategic change focused on moving the institution into the digital age. Core digital strategies have been articulated that include actions aimed at assessing Victoria's learning, teaching, research, and administrative environments and building the digital capability of professional and academic staff aligned to the wider academic and operational vision of the University.

Due to the cross-disciplinary nature of the challenges posed by these strategies, delivery of strategic action points has been distributed across multiple Central Support Units (CSUs) responsible for their own area of disciplinary focus and expertise. Working in partnership across the organization to support professional development and strategic outcomes has created a new cultural model of support at Victoria University of Wellington now named "The Virtual CSU."

The Virtual CSU is a response to the complex relationships that occur within universities. The most obvious of these is that between academics and professional staff responsible for a variety of operational activities, including many that directly influence learning and teaching. Whitchurch (2008) has described the evolution of a "third space" in universities, situated between activities that are purely the domain of professional staff and those that are academic functions. Whitchurch characterizes this space as the province primarily of a group of professional staff operating as bounded, cross-boundary, unbounded, and blended depending on the nature of their role and portfolio and the extent to which they operated with regard to organizational boundaries and reporting lines (Whitchurch 2009a).

New Zealand shares many of the features of Australian higher education with regard to the demarcation of the roles of academic and professional staff (Whitchurch 2009b). The major difference is the level of funding, which is significantly lower in New Zealand (Universities New Zealand 2017), and consequently there is far greater incentive to adopt more efficient models of activity wherever possible.

The Virtual CSU model at Victoria is an explicit organizational strategy aimed at supporting academic and professional staff operating in the third space. Although the initial development of the model was an attempt by individual staff to make sense of their role and sustain the relationships needed to achieve their immediate operational objectives, it has grown into a formally recognized approach to ongoing work in a wide range of contexts.

A key feature of the approach underlying the Virtual CSU is the recognition of the value of genuine collaboration, as opposed to simple cooperation. Collaboration implies that working with others results in a synergistic shift not only in the volume of work achieved, but also in the qualities of the work (McClellan 2016). The value of collaboration by groups of people with common values and objectives has seen the creation of many communities of practice (Wenger 1998). The Virtual CSU is similar in conception, but also incorporates an explicitly organizational focus on its design and operation, rather than reflecting only the needs of the participants. It sustains a range of operational activities, not merely a means of enabling projects with a range of participants, and is now very much a part of the ongoing capability of the University to sustain its activities.

This chapter explores the key elements of the Virtual CSU model. This includes the drivers for cultural change contextualized by success stories of encouraging university support staff and organizational units to work outside of their traditional roles and responsibilities. The chapter also highlights the new skill sets and expertise required to encourage ongoing focused organizational change.

The Victoria University of Wellington Context

Organizational development and support at Victoria University of Wellington has in recent years been a large and distributed task. The University has 2300 staff members all with individual learning pathways and support requirements. Ten Central Support Units (CSUs) work to deliver different aspects of professional development across the organization. A particular challenge for those providing professional development is the devolved and siloed nature of the University with the majority of management decisions, including staff development funding and planning, being allocated to the level of Heads of Schools or CSUs.

As a result of a devolved management structure, each CSU has a small budget for staff, support, and training facilitation related to their primary area of focus, e.g., Finance, HR, Technology, or Academic Development. This model has seen the delivery of organizational development through towers of isolation where strategy through to delivery is focused purely on the area of disciplinary focus and operational needs of the CSU. Another simple constraint supporting these towers was the lack of opportunities and initiatives enabling staff involved in organizational development to collaborate and share ideas and expertise. This was recently highlighted in the Victoria University Your Voice staff survey, where “working across the organization” was identified as a key issue in staff responses (Victoria University of Wellington internal report 2016).

Over the last 5 years, Victoria University of Wellington has made a comprehensive effort to remove these siloed support towers including the work to develop and sustain the Virtual CSU. An important feature of this activity has been the focus on delivering value holistically to the University as the first priority, rather than on reorganizing units and restructuring functions in the hope that the desired outcomes will emerge from a new organizational model. This has allowed the University to focus scarce resources on aligning organizational development with core strategies and supporting staff to work across the organization to dramatically increase professional development awareness and opportunities. To achieve this degree of organizational change, the adoption of an Agile methodology has been introduced (Beck et al. 2001). The nature of the Agile approach is to encourage a culture of improvement cycles which include an allowance for informed failure and cross-institutional experimentation by staff, rather than a hierarchical control model that requires adherence to a formally developed plan.

The journey Victoria is on is driven by a strong collegial approach to change and the recognition that technology provides opportunities to reinforce aspects of the University's culture while also reinventing and reframing others. The Virtual CSU model has emerged in response to number of drivers and priorities, common to many universities, which are explored in the next section.

Drivers for Change

In 2012 a wave of strategic change signaled the need to increase professional development opportunities for staff at Victoria University of Wellington. Two organizational strategies were released and accepted for implementation:

- The Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012–2017 - The Digital Vision (Victoria University 2012)
- Victoria University of Wellington Capability Strategy, Te Rautauki Kaiaka, 2013–2017 (Victoria University 2013).

At the same time, a complementary working group developed the “eResearch at Victoria: Building Our Research With ICT” report (Hine et al. 2014) that planned a pathway for increasing Victoria's support and capability for digital research. This engagement with a mix of strategic and operational priorities reflected a crystallization within the University of the need to actively drive change informed and stimulated by the potential offered by technology (Marshall and Flutey 2014).

These documents identified key strategic action points to increase and fundamentally change the support and professional development offered at Victoria. The strategic action points that recognized the need for scaled-up and sustainable professional development for university staff included:

- The Digital Vision:
 - Training and support in ICT use provided and ongoing development encouraged for all staff engaged in learning and teaching

- Faculty support staff employed to help staff engage with technology for learning and teaching
- Victoria Capability Strategy:
 - Improve the University’s coordination of organizational and professional development opportunities and initiatives to meet future capability needs
 - Develop, pilot, and evaluate an integrated “career pathways program” for professional staff
 - Complete a needs analysis to identify key areas that require skills development to advance university performance; and develop effective approaches to providing skill development opportunities
- eResearch Capability Report:
 - That the structure and processes of Information Technology Services evolve to enhance the service and support of eResearch at Victoria University including the addition of software development capability
 - A strategy be developed to guide the development and integration of various university processes that support research
 - The Director of eResearch raise academic and support awareness of eResearch at Victoria University.

A common theme identified across the strategic action points was the objective that staff needed to feel confident in their ability to engage with technology before they could be expected to be imaginative and able to lead the University’s ongoing activities in this space (Victoria University 2012).

As the organizational response to these action points was planned, it quickly became evident that just building the digital capability of our academic staff was not enough. There were wider implications flowing from academic decisions affecting the work of professional staff and the operational activities of the University. These included the decision to offer programs of study to students using specific technologies such as video conferencing and the use of online tools for assessment activities.

The overall capability of the organization had to be raised to keep pace with the increasing digital shift. This included increasing the focus on developing the digital capability of professional staff, organizational support processes, and professional development offerings. Due to the siloed CSU structure at Victoria, the responsibility to deliver this was shared across multiple units. While this could have been a roadblock to the delivery of these strategies, a cross-disciplinary group of staff working on the action points realized that strategic success was bigger than the responses of each individual unit.

The Virtual Central Support Unit Model

To work around limitations of resources and to transcend the silos that normally define operational activities, members of the University’s Centre for Academic Development (CAD), Information Technology Services (ITS), Library, Research Office, and Human Resources group have established a support model that ensures

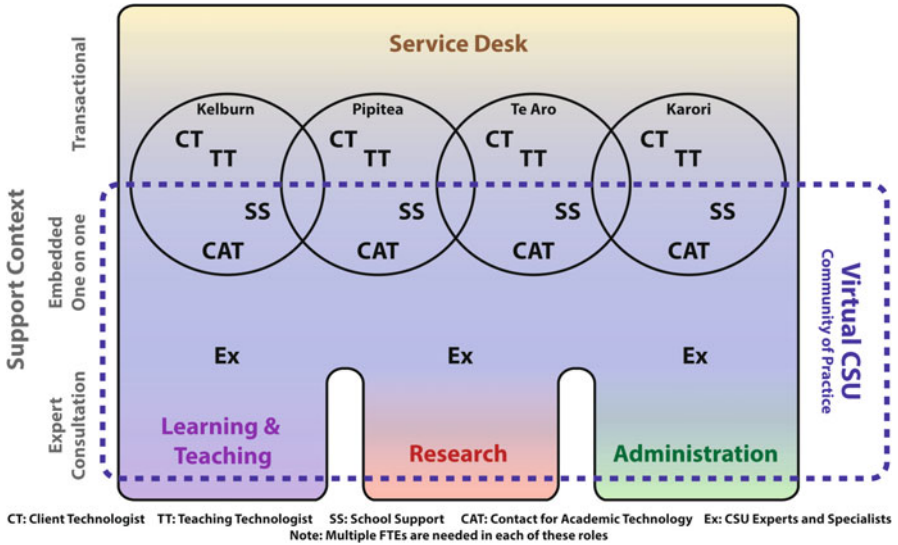


Fig. 1 Virtual CSU support model

the right people from across the organization are engaged at the right time to deliver the best results. The term “The Virtual CSU” was coined to describe this new support model at Victoria.

The organizational relationships comprising the Virtual CSU model at Victoria is shown in Fig. 1. This diagram identifies key features including the removal of hard organizational boundaries between teaching, research, and administrative support which are shown instead as a blend of points of focus, rather than as responsibilities held by specific organizational groups. An ongoing need for specialist expertise in these areas is respected (and maintained in each case by multiple service units), but staff operate with a dynamically changing group of colleagues across the various University campuses. Other key features are the use of a single point of contact through a university-wide service desk and the grouping of teams of support staff on the three campus locations operated by the University (Kelburn, Pipitea and Vivian St.). This figure can be understood as encompassing the third space at Victoria.

The support contexts are indicated on the left and make the point that support issues vary in complexity. The intention is to provide a model that primarily distinguishes between transactional support and direct one-on-one support. For anything other than transactional issues, a single staff member is the primary contact point and they draw indirectly and directly on the skills and knowledge of other support colleagues as needed. In more complex cases, a temporary and flexible team of support staff may be established to engage with the support need and ensure its resolution. By mixing professional and academic staff, the model also provides an opportunity for less experienced staff to learn from experts and ultimately develop their own capabilities towards expertise in specific areas. This cross disciplinary

movement away from traditional capabilities is evident as administrative, and professional support staff have seen their roles gradually shift to incorporate a stronger element of direct student support and involvement in learning and teaching (Macfarlane 2011).

The Virtual CSU model focuses on working across the organization to develop cross-disciplinary skills, knowledge and opportunities. Experts with specialist knowledge provide support, both to professional and academic staff needing extensive in-depth assistance, but also to the other professional support staff with whom they have a mentoring responsibility as partners in the Virtual CSU community.

A Virtual CSU involves staff from across a variety of organizational units. They routinely work with colleagues from different groups without the need for direct managerial involvement and with outcomes valued by all CSUs. Staff may start with transactional roles, but evolve through experience and training to ultimately take up positions as experts themselves.

By removing functional silos from the Virtual CSU and instead focusing on the core organizational outcomes, the Virtual CSU model allows for:

- Professional development and support to be planned around organizational needs, not support unit responsibilities
- Increased opportunities for serendipitous change and recognition of synergies as they arise through the awareness of a greater range of organizational context and drivers
- More efficient allocation of resources, with decisions tested by a wider range of perspectives and with less risk of “groupthink” developing
- A less hierarchical model of decision making, with greater opportunities for less senior staff to actively participate in planning and decision making processes learning from more experienced colleagues
- Greater cohesion in organizational planning across the different CSUs, with Virtual CSU activities informing and stimulating changes in specific CSU functions

Whitchurch’s identification of the third space has provided a compelling narrative for professional staff to articulate the construction of their professional identities in the evolving university (Whitchurch 2010). It does not, however, describe how such an environment can be enabled and sustained explicitly by the university. The need to enable professional collaboration is not unique to universities, and the Virtual CSU reflects awareness of models drawn from other complex IT (Kniberg and Ivarsson 2012) and supply chain contexts (Gattorna 2010).

The tribes, squads, chapters, and guilds model of Kniberg and Ivarsson (2012) was implemented by music streaming site Spotify who developed an agile culture to scale their organizational outcomes and staff professional development. Spotify’s model defines a shift from hierarchical organizational units to focused delivery teams that also enable staff to learn and function outside of their traditional roles (Kniberg and Ivarsson 2012). In this model, people are organized in a range of clusters aimed at encouraging greater collaboration (Fig. 2):

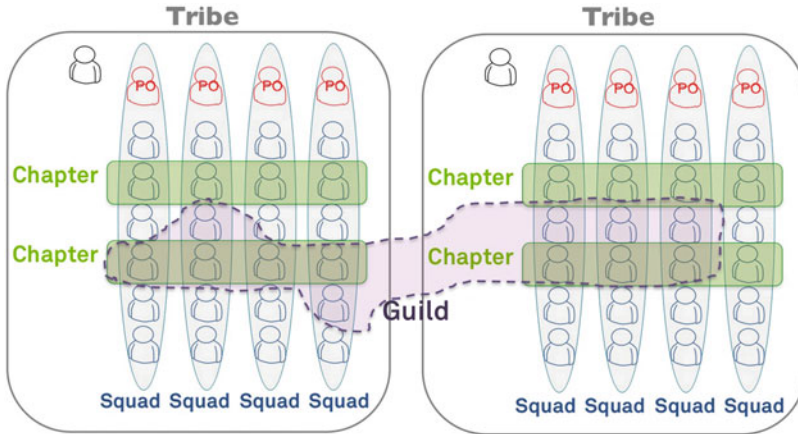


Fig. 2 Spotify model for organization teams (Kniberg and Ivarsson 2012) (Image courtesy of HenrikKniberg, Spotify)

- Tribes: Groups of staff working towards a common goal (e.g., Information Technology Services)
- Squads: People in a tribe working towards a tribal goal (e.g., Application Training Group)
- Chapters: A group of staff in a tribe who create a community of practice (e.g., All Technology Trainers)
- Guilds: A collection of staff from across the organization who have expertise or who want to know more about an area of the organization (e.g., Digital Literacy at Victoria)

Spotify's collaborative team-based model strongly reflects the cultural shift in support and focus driven by the Virtual CSU concept. A Guild approach to collective decision making and distributed responsibilities has been core to the development of cross-unit roles, organizational level shared projects (such as MOOC delivery), and major professional development programs. Not only has this normalized work in cross-disciplinary teams but also encouraged academic and professional staff to mentor and transfer skills to other staff outside of their traditional disciplines and roles. This includes ITS staff developing pedagogical knowledge and formal qualifications, while Academic Development staff are engaging more in the design and decision making process around technology.

John Gattorna's supply chain model (2010) is one of dynamic alignment that allows for optimization of product supply for dynamic customers by creating organizational "speed clusters." These clusters pull staff from across an organization to fulfill a task, project, or outcome in the quickest time possible and ensuring alignment to the end customer's needs (Gattorna 2010). While not a manufacturing production line preparing products for a competitive edge, professional development for staff within a large institution has similarities to these delivery needs. For

example, most universities have staff who require professional development (customers); professional development programs are driven by strategic needs and the individual requirements of staff (products); strategies and requirements for training are constantly shifting (speed to delivery of product); and professional staff must work together to complete organizational professional development programs that match the rapidly changing needs of staff (supply chain management).

In the speed cluster model, cluster staff meet and then move back to their individual units once the piece of work is completed to ensure a disciplinary focus is maintained. This is also core to the Virtual CSU ideal, which involves creating temporary virtual teams as needed. While staff are based in individual units, the focus of their work should be on supporting common strategic outcomes. To ensure this is successful, different areas of expertise are required at the right time and in the right place to achieve the best results. As an example, this might involve drawing together a lead support contact, a librarian, pedagogical design expert, and digital media specialist with academics (disciplinary and cross-disciplinary) to create the design and assist in the creation of content for a revision of an existing course or unit.

Virtual CSU Successes

Johnson and Johnson (1994) identify the following elements as conditions for effective collaboration:

1. Clearly perceived positive interdependence.
2. Considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction.
3. Clearly perceived individual accountability and personal responsibility to achieve the group's goals.
4. Frequent use of the relevant interpersonal and small-group skills.
5. Frequent and regular group processing of current functioning to improve the group's future effectiveness.

These features are all present under the Virtual CSU model and have been developed and reinforced through a series of successful initiatives that are framed by important university priorities for development. A key feature of this approach is that a Virtual CSU can thus be seen as a collection of inter-related virtual organizations focused on these priorities, rather than as a single alternative hierarchy in an otherwise traditionally structured organization.

Fundamental to the success of the Virtual CSU model is the absence of silos and departmental barriers separating the areas of administration, learning and teaching, and research support. It is important to note that the conceptual focus of the Virtual CSU is on enabling and sustaining a collaborative culture at the University building a resilient culture capable of coping with continual change. The intention was not to run a cross-unit project and declare success, but to establish the conditions for continual improvement and development.

In the 2 years that the Virtual CSU has been in practice, collaborative work has included: the creation of new roles for professional staff to support building digital capability and engagement; visibility of and governance over university wide staff professional development activities; and practical solutions for shared resources. The ability to make budget cases for new roles with explicit support from multiple organizational units has meant that a much stronger justification for funding new professional staff roles to support the organization can be made to senior leaders. The strength of the model is acknowledged repeatedly by the senior leadership of the University. These activities have built a level of momentum and visibility for ongoing effective collaboration. The sections below explore these areas of work and discuss the way that the Virtual CSU model has influenced the resulting pattern of work.

Organizational Development Activities

To support the Victoria Digital Vision and the key action point on increasing staff digital capability, an initial stocktake of training and professional development activities was undertaken by several different units with a role to play in facilitating and delivering professional development. This included Information Technology Services, the Library, Human Resources, the Faculty for Graduate Research, the Research Office, the Centre for Lifelong Learning, and the Centre for Academic Development.

The range of unit names conveys the scale and diversity of the different training and development activities that were identified in this process. These ranged from core business knowledge of health and safety training for all staff; specific training of software programs for finance management, grant application, and student records management; professional development in softer skills such as leadership, productivity, and cultural inclusion; and research and library resource skills, through to learning design and academic support for teaching practice. Each area was operating on its own to define, facilitate, and deliver training to the same staff.

The need to evolve university support models has been characterized by Holt et al. (2010) as requiring an extensive array of organizational systems and culture changes that seem unrealistic in their scope.

The Virtual CSU at Victoria has provided a means of achieving these ends without putting in place many of the affordances of a traditional full service academic development unit as described by Holt et al. (2010). In contrast with the Australian exemplars of that report, Victoria has achieved many of these elements through a model of distributed and collaborative engagement. Active engagement in planning, reflecting multiple views, and flexibly responding to the diversity of roles the University plays follows naturally from a model of support which is “built-in” and intrinsic to the functions of a growing proportion of the University operational functions through the participation of staff in collective activities on a daily basis.

In practice, this includes development programs delivered by staff drawn from multiple CSUs and academic groups. These are coordinated through regular meetings of all staff involved in the Virtual CSU professional development activities.

Depending on the nature of the staff development needed, one support staff person leads the activity with the support of colleagues drawn from throughout the Virtual CSU as needed. An important feature of this is the autonomy staff have within the Virtual CSU to engage in these shared activities without explicit confirmation and permission from their managers.

Having oversight across the whole University in terms of professional development offerings allows a more strategic approach to defining the needs of staff for building capabilities in areas of strategic relevance and organizational value. To provide focus for university professional development providers, the Virtual CSU defined the themes of learning and teaching, research, workplace, leadership, and TeHāpai (the New Zealand Māori word for induction and mentoring) to provide cohesive relevance and values across the organization. Other outputs from the work of this community can be seen in the combined training calendar and development of staff training facilities discussed below.

Coordinating Training Planning and Delivery Through a Common Calendar

A Virtual CSU is more than the people and processes they use to collaborate; it also is reflected in the tools used to support the work of the CSU and its engagement with the rest of the organization.

A common issue for professional development staff across the University has been the lack of uptake and difficulty in “marketing” the training offered. A typical concern raised by professional and academic staff was that they did not know which University unit offered training or how to access information about training and registration. The diversity of channels being used by the University to communicate with staff (i.e., newsletters, Yammer, Facebook, email) rather than improving communication fractured the University’s professional development program and many staff simply never heard about opportunities for training.

A significant challenge also arose from the practice of each support unit arranging their training activities in isolation from each other. This lack of coordination often led to clashes where training or seminars and sessions overlapped with regard to topic/audience. In one 2-week period, three separate workshops were organized aimed at improving academic writing, all run by different groups with different speakers. Arguably, even if there was a significant demand for a range of sessions, they would have been more effective if they had been coordinated. The planning of these training sessions by service units often had no consideration for the standard activities of the University’s Academic calendar, resulting in key seminars and training sessions being planned during busy administrative periods for all professional staff.

A solution has been developed by applying the Virtual CSU approach to collective decision making and as a group, selecting and implementing a common calendaring system to manage all such events. The advantage of this is the ability to ensure that accurate information about university dates is shared consistently. The

system also implicitly promotes collaboration and coordination between the support groups. Session planning can now take the plans of other groups into account and ensure that a sensible balance of choice and intensity of training is encouraged. This is a significant improvement for the staff being supported as they can easily find out what is on offer through calendars embedded in variety of websites throughout the University. This also provides a means for staff to discover unexpected opportunities offered by different support groups that they may not regularly engage with, for example, disability support.

A key feature of this initiative has been the way that it promotes effective collaboration and coordination without imposing a management structure or bureaucracy on staff and support units. Due to the success of developing the organizational training calendar, a new project has instigated to investigate and implement a staff learning management system to enable the University to deliver online learning experiences developed for and delivered by professional staff.

Spaces for Development and Teaching

A key feature of the University's Digital Vision is the value that is placed on campus spaces as enablers of collaboration (Victoria 2012). The spaces universities use for learning and teaching have a profound effect on the experience of students and staff. The term "lecturer" immediately conveys ideas of the role of the academic staff member, their pedagogical strategy, the involvement of students, and the space where education occurs. In reality, the range of experiences students have in their study at Victoria goes well beyond the stereotypical lecture. Consequently, Victoria has invested in a range of spaces able to support this educational diversity and is continuing to evolve the campus facilities to do so in the future.

This conception of a blend of spaces, contexts, and technologies enabled by a variety of organizational units through the Virtual CSU is illustrated in Fig. 3. This diagram shows the range of virtual and physical contexts used by staff, students, and the wider community to engage with the University and the way that these combine to provide a rich environment.

Existing professional development facilities for staff had little in common with the new active learning and collaborative spaces being created in the University. The furniture, technology, layout, and setup reflected older models of teaching delivery. Rooms allocated to staff training provided little opportunity for staff to directly experience modern flexible approaches to using face to face time that focused on engagement, motivation, and the exploration of complex and challenging ideas. Staff training more often was allocated inflexible computer labs, even if computer-based training was not required for the session.

The response to this challenge has involved the Virtual CSU gaining funding and creating staff training spaces that provide a "safe" experience for trainers to progressively shift their training of professional staff into a more active and interactive model. These spaces have a built-in ability to support familiar modes of delivery as well, ensuring that staff feel confident they can fall back to a tried and true approach if a new idea fails to work as expected.

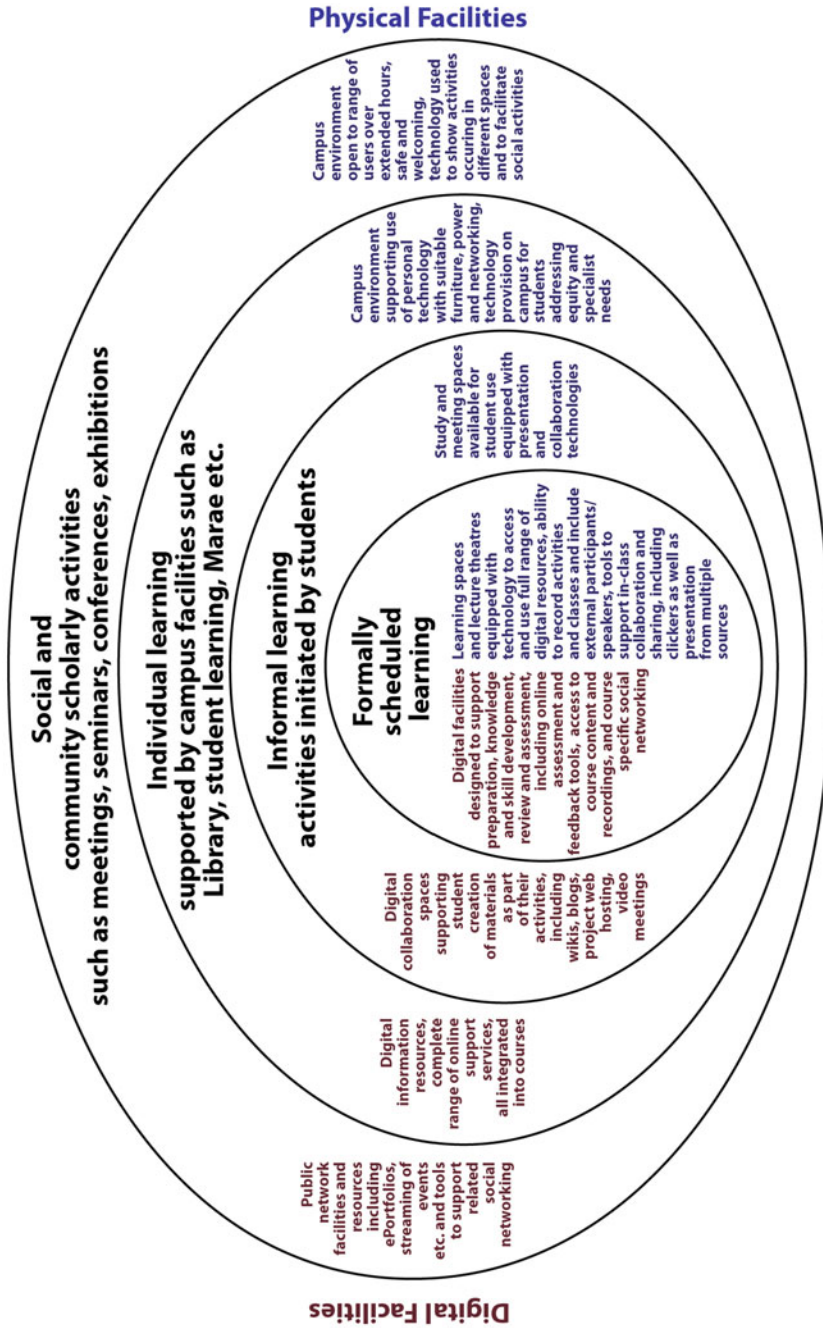


Fig. 3 Digital and physical contexts

Contacts for Academic Technologies (CATs)

In 1967 Herbert Simon identified that the changing university environment had generated the need for what he called “learning engineers” (Simon 1967). He described this new role as having several responsibilities:

- Working in collaboration with faculty to excite interest in the opportunities for change
- Sharing expertise widely across the organization
- Creating professional development experiences for other staff
- Supporting the development of a more effective campus environment
- Sharing and supporting effective uses of technology for academic work

The success of the Virtual CSU model has been greatly enabled by the creation of a new role that bears a startling resemblance to the learning engineer – the Contact for Academic Technology (CAT). The CATs are an example of Whitchurch’s blended professional (Whitchurch 2009a), able to work across the entire organization without the constraint of formal boundaries. Investment in this type of role allows the University to explicitly refocus resources in line with the Virtual CSU approach rather than just depending on professional staff initiative and autonomy.

The CAT role was developed over 4 years, starting in 2012 with the employment of eight part-time CATs by the Centre for Academic Development. These CATs were recruited from existing part-time professional staff and postgraduate students of the University. They were then distributed across CSUs and faculties based on their disciplinary knowledge and relationship.

This initial deployment was very successful. Feedback from staff ($n = 109$) showed that the highest utilization of CAT support based on the 7.5 hours per week they were hired to be in their role (71%) was in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The most commonly cited reason for seeking CAT help (77%) across all Faculties was to answer “how-to” questions about technologies and tools. Professional and academic staff also approached CATs for technology troubleshooting, to discuss ideas related to working with technology and to request targeted training. Staff reported that the CATs most commonly provided assistance with Blackboard (64%), followed by video recording and delivery. Support was also offered with Microsoft Office, social media, YouTube, and unit-specific software such as NVivo. Across the University, 50% of the respondents felt that as well as resolving the specific problem they faced, they also better understood the implications of digital tools for their work as a result of their interactions with the CAT.

Over the last 2 years, the CAT support model has transitioned from part-time student roles to Faculty-embedded full-time professional staff focused on increasing the digital capability of the University. At the same time, these roles were transitioned into the newly created Learning and Research Technology team with the central ITS group. This was done primarily in response to the challenge of sustaining a part-time workforce and in recognition of the need for a far more extensive level of support.

To ensure the CATs are a blend of academic development and educational technologist, staff hired in these roles receive their own professional development pathways that include both technology and pedagogically focused opportunities including the PGCert Higher Education Learning and Teaching qualification.

In 2016, over 2050 professional and academic staff attended training sessions managed by the CATs, equating to more than 5200 hours of training contact time delivered across the University. This was a substantial increase in formal technology training provided previously solely by the ITS group where in 2014, 204 was the years combined total. As well as training, the CATs have been able to expand on their original scope and provide valuable instructional design, technology adoption, and research expertise across multiple projects including the development of online courses and strengthening the capability of the University to respond to major disruptions such as earthquakes.

The success of the CAT model is leading to an increased uptake of existing technologies for administration, research, learning, and teaching. This has been most evident in a 500% increase in staff and student utilization of technology tools such as educational video capture and streaming services.

Failures

Learning, both for individuals and organizations, inevitably includes failures or experiences that fail to deliver on the full extent of possible outcomes. Every engagement with a professional development need or technology implementation includes the risk of failing to deliver specific outcomes on time and for the cost (both time and financial) planned.

An example of this is in the complex area of space development and maintenance. Ongoing development of physical spaces in universities is challenging with the need to balance competing priorities for space with limited funding and the realities of the construction and maintenance of buildings. The failures of some of these space investments to deliver on the range of outcomes described in the Digital Vision reflect ongoing challenges for the Virtual CSU. Not all managers and operational units are yet fully engaged with the Virtual CSU model, and the imposition of hierarchical decision making has yet to be overcome in all cases.

Another example that illustrates the complexity of aligning aspirations for flexibility and agility in an organization with existing hierarchical systems is the challenge of funding new roles. The success of the Virtual CSU and the CATs has been widely recognized as being strategically important in the University and specifically by senior management. This led to the proposal in 2016 to add three new CAT roles:

- A CAT role with a focus on the professional staff and administrative functions of the University
- A CAT role with a focus on postgraduate teaching and students including those in teaching roles such as tutors

- A CAT role to provide coverage that complements the existing positions in terms of discipline coverage and/or hours of operation

This last role reflects the consequence of success in professional development and support – invariably it generates more work. Unfortunately, these roles were not funded for a variety of reasons, exacerbated by the sense that they transcended organizational boundaries and so lacked a clear owner at senior management level. Changes at senior management level over the last year suggest that this lesson has been learnt and ongoing investment is anticipated in the future.

Such failures have long been recognized as opportunities to learn and build more resilient organizations (Sitkin 1992; Weick and Sutcliffe 2007). These are opportunities for reflection and often represent an incentive to more actively engage with the Virtual CSU rather than a failure of the model itself.

Conclusion and Future Directions

One of the major benefits of this shift to a more integrated and collaborative model of support has been the opportunities it provides the organization to bring together multiple viewpoints and perspectives across technology, administration, learning, teaching, and research professional development. The increased communication between support staff is complemented by a growing culture of relationship based support that is building a high degree of trust between professional and academic staff. In many ways, this parallels the expectations being made of academics to prepare students for a world requiring the ability to cope with change and adapt to a diversity of contexts (Araujo et al. 2015).

The value of the Virtual CSU is that it provides a more sustainable model for responding to growing demand, where resources (including funding for staff roles) can be incrementally and systematically deployed in a flexible way, rather than depending on disruptive, unnecessary, and ultimately unproductive structural changes. One measure of the success of the model has been the recent inclusion of explicit goals relating to the ongoing operation and development of the Virtual CSU in the performance expectations for CSU managers including the senior leadership role responsible for all learning and teaching at the University.

Our experiences at Victoria thus far have also shown us that there are many more opportunities for additional initiatives building on the successes and using experience from the failures to stimulate thinking towards alternative solutions. Stories of progress in adopting new ideas and approaches are now regularly shared with all staff within the institution through Victoria's staff newsletter. These case studies are being collected into a growing repository of experience that will soon be published online via Victoria's new Digital Learning Hub website. The Hub will also provide a common resource bank for all training materials across professional development programs.

Universities are rapidly changing places responding to a growing diversity of professional staff as learners and teachers. The Virtual CSU creates an environment

where we can safely fail in ways that do not comprise the business of the University. The modern slogan of agility “fail fast, fail often” is criticized for its lack of respect for the costs that failure can bring, but it does express an important need to try new things in order to learn and improve.

The concept of the third space is widely recognized as providing a rationale for re-examining the roles professional staff in particular play in the evolving university. Whitchurch (2010) has observed that universities need to consider the structure implications, including the impact on career progression and the ways that success is identified and celebrated. The Virtual CSU is one example of a university engaging in this space; many more examples are needed to understand the critical success factors for this type of model.

Enacting similar models in other universities is potentially challenging. Our experience suggests that the early stages require considerable trust on the part of senior managers. Mid-level staff with the personal characteristics that define third space professionals (including academics) most likely already exist but need to be supported and validated in their efforts to work across the organization. Strong and confident leadership is needed, able to define measurable goals for the university that can be supported by Virtual CSU-like activities. This requires considerable flexibility on the part of the management and an ability to define outcomes rather than mechanisms. The necessary shift away from formalized structures and operational procedures may well prove too difficult for some. One option is to start with activities that represent green-field or clearly failing needs where the benefit of a new approach is more apparent and less threatening to established interests.

The final advice is to recognize the length of time it takes to change established cultures and to help staff evolve their own and other’s sense of their professional identities and roles. Change is always discomforting for individuals and organizations alike, but it remains an intrinsic aspect of life.

References

- Araujo, N., R. Wilson, and B. Clarke. 2015. Student engagement for employability: A Belonging Project case study. In *Proceedings of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia Conference (HERDSA, 2015)*. Melbourne, 6–9 July.
- Beck, K., et al. 2001. *Manifesto for Agile software development*. <http://agilemanifesto.org/>.
- Gattorna, J. 2010. *Dynamic Supply Chains: How to design, build and manage people-centric value networks*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hine, J., J. Flutey, and G. Hunter. 2014. *eResearch at Victoria: Building our research with ICT*. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington. <https://onedrive.live.com/redirect?resid=D628931E547D02D!10697&authkey=!AFSSlaqNDRsJ3gk&ithint=file%2cpdf>.
- Holt, D., et al. 2010. *A guide to support Australian university teaching and learning centres in strategic leadership for teaching and learning enhancement*. Strawberry Hills: Australian Learning and Teaching Council.
- Johnson, R.T., and D.W. Johnson. 1994. An overview of cooperative learning. In *Creativity and collaborative learning*, ed. J. Thousand, A. Villa, and A. Nevin, 2. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

- Kniberg, H., and A. Ivarsson. 2012. Scaling Agile@ Spotify. Online: UCVOF. <http://wordpress.com/2012/11/113617905-scaling-Agile-spotify-11.pdf>.
- Macfarlane, B. 2011. The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the para-academic. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65 (1): 59–73.
- Marshall, S., and J. Flutey. 2014. Turning a digital vision into reality. In *Rhetoric and reality: Critical perspectives on educational technology*, ed. B. Hegarty, J. McDonald, and S-K. Loke, 190–200. Dunedin: Proceedings ASCILITE.
- McClellan, C. 2016. Teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation as a student learning outcome for undergraduates. *Assessment Update* 28 (1): 5–6.
- Simon, H.A. 1967. The job of a college president. *Educational Record* 48: 68–78.
- Sitkin, S.B. 1992. Learning through failure: The strategy of small losses. *Research in Organizational Behavior* 14: 231–266.
- Universities New Zealand. 2017. *Briefing for the incoming Minister: December 2016*. Wellington: Universities New Zealand.
- Victoria University. 2012. Vision and strategy for digital learning and teaching at Victoria 2012–2017. Online: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/academic-development/digital-vision/DigitalVisionStrategy.pdf>.
- Victoria University. 2013. Victoria University of Wellington capability strategy, TeRautakiKaiaka, 2013–2017. Online: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/strategies/capability-strategy.pdf>.
- Victoria University. 2016. Your Voice Staff Survey. Unpublished internal document.
- Weick, K.E., and K.M. Sutcliffe. 2007. *Managing the unexpected: Resilient performance in an age of uncertainty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009a. Progressing professional careers in UK higher education. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 13 (1): 2–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603100802596983>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009b. The rise of the “blended professional” in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58(3): 407–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9202-4>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2010. Convergence and divergence in professional identities. In *Academic and professional identities in higher education: The challenges of a diversifying workforce*, ed. G. Gordon and C. Whitchurch, 167–183. New York: Routledge.

Part III

Leadership and Collaboration



Blended Leadership: From Conceptualization to Practice

15

Sandra Jones

Contents

Introduction: The Impact of Changing Context on Universities	230
Leadership in Universities	232
Conceptualizing Blended Leadership	235
Practicing Blended Leadership	236
Conclusion	240
References	240

Abstract

This chapter has a dual purpose; first, to present recent research findings on leadership in the higher education sector that provides the best opportunity to build collaboration between professional staff and academics and, second, to introduce the six following chapters that provide case studies of how leadership for collaboration between administrative and professional staff and academics in universities can be built. The chapter first identifies the changing context of universities that is resulting in increasingly complex and more diverse work carried out by a more divergent group of administrative and professional staff and academics. It then presents a summary of some of the recent research into leadership in higher education, relying primarily on recent Australian empirical research into how to build leadership capacity for learning and teaching in Australian universities. This research identifies the value of a distributed leadership approach in not only building leadership capacity but also in encouraging collaboration between administrative and professional staff and academics in a “third space” where the expertise of all is shared.

S. Jones (✉)
School of Management, RMIT, Melbourne, VIC, Australia
e-mail: sandra.jones@rmit.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_33

229

Keywords

Leadership · Higher education · Collaboration · Faculty

Introduction: The Impact of Changing Context on Universities

The work of universities is changing as the context changes. Externally, governments in many countries are placing increased reliance on higher education to contribute to national economies. At the same time, the industry, government, and community are requiring graduates with greater knowledge and cognitive skills. In the UK, for example, university education has been described as “the tool for realising personal gain and national economic development; it is above all else charged with providing the skills base and knowledge required to drive the economy, creating better performing public service and enhanced private enterprise” (Browne and Rayner 2015, p. 291). Simultaneously, external stakeholders are calling for new partnerships with universities to “build significantly deeper relationships with industry in the decade ahead – to differentiate teaching and learning programs, support the funding and application of research and reinforce the role of universities as drivers of innovation and growth” (Ernst and Young 2014, p. 4). The addition of new digital technology that enables more distanced education has further changed the nature of education as well as expanded global competition between universities. This has led to an increasingly complex structure of universities. In Australia, for example, the higher education sector includes not only universities but “over 185 higher education providers enrolling over 1.2 million students” (James et al. 2015, p. 1). The outcome is that universities are increasingly being driven by corporate goals and objectives focused on the global marketplace that treats students as customers and sees work in higher education as focused on institutional brands, markets, and performance (Bolden et al. 2012).

As the external context changes the work of universities, so the work in universities changes (Davis and Jones 2014). The initial change saw the introduction of an administrative management approach to operate alongside the traditional academic collegial approach. Termed new managerialism, described as “a new discourse of management derived from the for-profit sector and introduced by governments into public sector institutions to reduce public spending costs” (Deem 1998, p. 8), this change is regarded as challenging the “deeply rooted cultural, structural and power differences in the source of authority . . . as well as differences in perceptions about working” (Jones, Harvey, Lefoe, and Ryland 2012b, p. 68). The outcome, claims Bolden et al. (2012), is a complex mix of conflicting aims, differences in approach to management and leadership, and confusion of formal roles (associated with academic management) and informal roles (associated with academic leadership). Depicted as a “sinking ship,” these authors go on to claim that the result has been an increasing rift between administrative and professional staff and academics that threatens the development of a partnership approach underpinned by common sense of purpose, goals, and objective.

Over the same period, work in universities has been changing in response to the emergence of new resources for education that place the student at the center of learning environments, be they in traditional university face-to-face environments or online or situated in business. Places and spaces for learning have expanded as students are located in practice placements with external stakeholders, online learning opportunities are provided, and transnational student learning, exchange, and mobility are encouraged. These advances have resulted in not only change in the components of what constitutes an educational experience but in who is involved in the design and delivery of education. While academics are still the focus of direct student learning engagement, there has been an increase in *other* staff engagement in direct support for students and in assisting academics with new technology for learning design. This has resulted in recognition that the traditional division of work in universities, between academics and *nonacademic* or *administrative* roles (Dobson 2000), does not fit with the spread of functions in which “nonacademics” are engaged. In turn this has led to the emergence of a new category of *professional staff* (Dobson 2000), described by Marshall (2006) as staff who:

do not hold academic appointments but who are actively involved in the planning and decision-making processes associated with the development of the organisational context in which learning and teaching occurs. ...[and provide]... expert advice and support in their area of specialist expertise to enable others with more specific responsibilities for learning and teaching . . .to make informed decisions. (p. 9)

Included under this category are service providers, such as student learning services, professionals, librarians, information technology specialists, facilities’ managers, laboratory managers/technicians, and administrators. While this new category of professional staff has been recognized as blurring traditional role demarcations between academics, administrative, and professional staff, it has not led to a significant change in the nature of the interactions between these groups of employees. Indeed what has been created is a complexity of parallel lines of authority (for academic and administrative and professional staff) with little change in position descriptions or wages and working conditions despite an increase in qualification requirements of both administrative and professional staff. In turn this has resulted in lack of collaboration between these two groups of employees and ongoing debate about the relative contribution of each (Conway 1995; McInnis 1998; Dobson 2000; Szekeres 2004).

Several suggestions of how to incorporate these changes into work in universities have been proposed. In the UK, based on her research into the emergence of a significant group of employees who combine academic and professional tasks (such as information technology and instructional design), Whitchurch (2008a, b, 2009, 2012) suggests the need to recognize the existence of a “third space” occupied by *academic professionals* or *blended professionals*. In Australia James et al. (2015) identified a group of what they termed “para professionals. . .who ‘ride the boundaries’” (p. 18).

What these various research findings suggest is the need to encourage a change from the competitive culture that is associated with new managerialism to a more collaborative culture, particularly between administrative and professional staff and academics (Jones et al. 2012b). In addition the growth in the number of senior executives, appointed to undertake roles that have more to do with managing employees than traditional research and teaching roles, is encouraging the need for partnerships between formal leaders, such as administrators, and academic managers (McMaster 2011). Before this can be explored, there is a need to explore the nature of leadership in universities.

Leadership in Universities

Academic culture has traditionally blended the individual and the collective to create a complex collegiality of collaboration and competition. Academics, traditionally focused on knowledge development and transfer research, have tended to eschew managerial tasks (Jones et al. 2014b). The advent of a more corporate approach associated with new managerialism and its increased focus on management and control has added a new and often totally separate linear structure of academic and professional in formal leader positions. This has led to the need to try to more concisely define what constitutes leadership in universities.

In Australia, in 2005, the then Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) established a national Leadership Grants Scheme Program (LGSP) to fund empirical projects within higher education institutions designed to identify and develop opportunities for leadership capacity building. The LGSP established two streams of research – first, to identify how to develop the skills of structural/positional leaders and, second, to explore how a distributed leadership approach could build leadership capacity more broadly. Between 2005 and 2010, 76 empirical research projects were funded, 52 of which were framed by a structural/positional approach and 24 by a distributed leadership approach (ALTC 2011). Several of these projects involved sector-wide research that is relevant for this discussion.

The first project involved a survey of academic leaders in formal positions of responsibility in 20 Australian universities (Scott et al. 2008). This survey identified three types of capabilities required of leaders – personal, interpersonal, and cognitive – and two types of competency, role-specific and generic. In addition, survey respondents identified the need to establish a context in which many people could be engaged:

in the process of personal and institutional change and improvement. ... [and acknowledged the importance of formulating and implementing desired change not as]...an event but a complex learning and unlearning process...because if something new has to be implemented, those who deliver it. . .have to do something. ...[that] requires them to learn a 'gap' in their expertise. (Scott et al. 2008, p. xiv)

This survey was later adapted by the Association for Tertiary Education Management to identify what capabilities and competencies were required of professional leaders

in formal positions of authority. This second survey included professional leaders in universities in 39 Australian and 32 New Zealand institutions. The survey adapted the original survey to incorporate questions specifically related to the Tertiary Education Professional Leadership Capability Framework that used a more prescriptive description of competencies and capabilities. The Framework described competency as “delivering of a specific task in relatively predictable circumstances...[and]... capability...[as]...more about responsiveness, creativity, contingent thinking and growth in relatively uncertain ones” (Scott and McKellar 2012, p. 7). This resulted in a more descriptive list of specific competencies for professional staff than had the initial academic survey. However, this survey also acknowledged the importance of establishing a context that encourages ongoing change and adaptability of employees. The conclusion reaches was the “first priority for institutional and leadership development in higher education in the current context should be on building the capacity of our institutions to be more change capable, implementation savvy and resilient” (Scott and McKellar 2012, p. 30).

The second (series of three) projects were designed as action research empirical projects framed by a distributed leadership approach. A distributed leadership approach had been identified by Gronn (2000, 2002) as a new architecture of leadership that involves a complex interplay between people and artifacts (agency), structures, and action. Building on this, research in the UK into distributed leadership identified the need to move from a focus on positions of leaders to actions that encourage different leaders to emerge as time and circumstances change (Day et al. 2004). This led Woods et al. (2004) to describe distributed leadership as an extension of collegiality often associated with academia that was characterized by three elements: concertive action, movable boundaries, and a broader spread of expertise. They concluded that a distributed leadership approach consists of five dimensions – a context (internal and external), a culture (of academic autonomy), change and development from many sources (top-down and bottom-up), activity that is collaborative, multiple and complementary by teams of people sharing responsibility for a successful outcome, and conflict resolution processes that are effective (to assist the multiple people contributing across a broad arena of activity). From these findings they characterized distributed leadership as “analytical dualism” in which “both structure and agency have distinct effects” (Woods et al. 2004, p. 448). They described structure as encompassing institutional, cultural, and social elements (including the duties and role of, and the distribution of power between, the participants), systems and patterns of knowledge ideas and values in the institution, and patterns of relationships and interactions between the parties. While agency places emphasis upon the action of people and includes self-consciousness that enables people to evaluate their social context, envisage alternatives creatively collaborate with others to bring about change. In summary they described the kernel of distributed leadership as “the idea that leadership is a property of groups of people, not of an individual” (Woods et al. 2004, p. 449).

While this research focused on academics rather than professional staff, research being undertaken at a similar time by Whitchurch (2008a, b) had identified the need when looking at the structure and agency of changing university environments,

to pay more attention to the contribution of professional staff. However, it took empirical research in Australia to highlight how a distributed leadership approach could bring academics and professional staff together into more collaborative partnerships.

The Australian empirical research is built on these UK findings to unpack the elements of context, culture readiness for change, and action, needed to enable a distributed leadership approach. The first step was through national funding (by the then Australian Learning and Teaching Council) of four single institution-based projects that used a distributed leadership approach to enhance learning and teaching (see Fraser and Harvey 2008; Chesterton et al. 2008; Barber et al. 2009; Parrish and Lefoe 2008). The second step was a multi-institution project aimed at identifying synergies between the initial single university projects. This revealed commonality of four dimensions (with associated values) to enable a distributed leadership approach – a *context* of trust in the expertise of all staff; a *culture* of respect based in encouraging individuals from all levels and functions to participate in collective approaches to decision making; preparedness to change from reliance on linear, hierarchical decision making characteristic of managerialism; and an *action* that encourages relationships and partnerships (Jones et al. 2012a). In addition, the research identified four criteria for distributed leadership – people, processes, professional development, and resources. Through analysis of interaction between the dimensions and criteria, 32 detailed activities required to enable distributed leadership were identified (Jones et al. 2012a, p. 17). The third step involved a national survey of Australian higher education institutions (HEIs) that had adopted a distributed leadership approach. This survey attracted 110 completed responses from 47 Australian HEIs. This identified good practice benchmarks against which HEIs could evaluate the effectiveness of action they had taken to enable a distributed leadership approach (Jones et al. 2014a).

Further analysis of these projects expanded on the initial findings to identify actions required to support a distributed leadership approach. This resulted in the development of a conceptual model of distributed leadership – termed the 6E conceptual model of distributed leadership because of its identification of six basic tenets of distributed leadership. The six tenets of the 6E conceptual model of distributed leadership were the *engagement* of all experts; the context (trust), culture (respect), and change (from structures to relationships) that *enable* distributed leadership; people, processes, and support systems of support that *enact* distributed leadership; collaboration and partnerships that *encourages* distributed leadership; demonstration of impact through which distributed leadership can be *evaluated*; and sustainability of distributed leadership through *emergent* change (Jones et al. 2014a). The action arising from these tenets placed emphasis on relationships and on an action research approach in which reflection provides the impetus for ongoing cycles of change.

Of particular importance for the focus of this section is the response from a majority of respondents that a broad cross section of functional and discipline experts had been involved in the learning and teaching initiative from design through to successful implementation and outcome. This included academics and professional staff responsible for learning and teaching delivery. A majority (64%) of

respondents agreed that “professional staff with learning and teaching expertise were involved through the distributed leadership approach and that their initiative or project had involved academics or professional staff responsible for learning and teaching delivery (73 per cent)” (Jones et al. 2014a, p. 422). There was also evidence that collaboration went beyond direct involvement in project planning and working groups to include collaborative engagement of learning and teaching units in workshops and other professional leadership development opportunities. This was illustrated qualitatively in comments such as:

The planning group consisted of academic staff and general staff from different departments within the university. The task had the support of senior management but was led and undertaken by staff who did not have formal responsibilities in the university, but had knowledge and experience of eportfolios. (Jones et al. 2014a, p. 20)

These research findings provided more contemporary confirmation of Ramsden (1998) earlier claim that the work of leadership in higher education involves many positions, roles, and functions “everyone from the Vice Chancellor to the casual car parking attendant, leadership is to do with how people relate to each other” (p. 4). This has since been reiterated in Randall’s (2012) description of the operation of higher education institutions as the integration of many functions, levels, and bodies:

Although the president of an institution can make a final decision, many top administrators understand that major decisions made without buy-in by the major university governing bodies and participants many not achieve successful implementation or sustainability. (p. 3)

This finding resulted in the identification of a conceptual approach to leadership that blends professional staff and academics in collaborative relationships.

Conceptualizing Blended Leadership

As indicated above, Australian research into both a structural/positional and a distributed approach to leadership in higher education has identified the importance of engaging all experts in collaboration. Although this research had its focus on academics directly engaged in learning and teaching, it identified the importance of engaging both academics and professional staff with functional responsibilities related to learning and teaching. Research into a distributed leadership approach has been more useful in identifying detailed actions required. However, there is also a need to recognize that there are different cultures that influence academics and professional staff:

In the administrative management space, professionals focus on issues of accountability and strategy and are more likely to adopt an administrative management approach. In the academic leadership space, academics focus on issues of learning and teaching and research, adopting a more distributed leadership approach. (Jones et al. 2014b, p. 425)

Table 1 Blended Approach to Leadership in Higher Education

Leadership	Administrative	Distributed
Engages	Formal leaders	Formal and informal experts
Enables through	Regulation and control	Autonomy and trust
Enacts via	Top-down, individual decisions	Interdependency and collectivity
Encourages by	Focus on linear structures	Focus on activity
Evaluates through	Measurement of output	Benchmarking of process
Emergent through	Conformance to rigid systems	Focused on flexibility

Adapted from Jones et al. (2014b, p. 424)

Consequently, a blended approach to leadership that enables choice of components that make up a distributed leadership and administrative management approach is recommended (Jones et al. 2014b) to ensure that “participants in any change process can design an approach that offers the best fit for their context, an approach that they are both comfortable with that will encourage collaboration between them” (Jones et al. 2014, p. 425). Using the six tenets that underpin a distributed leadership approach, the components from which a blended approach to leadership can be designed are summarized in Table 1.

This enables a different interpretation of the “third space” as not simply occupied solely by professional staff with expanded activities and roles associated with student learning, but rather as a space in which a blending of expertise of professional staff and academics occurs through collaborative partnerships.

In summary, recent research into leadership in universities has identified the need for a new approach to leadership that encourages collaboration. This requires three elements – a context of trust in the expertise of many, a culture of respect that encourages engagement of all experts, and an action that encourages relationships and partnerships rather than hierarchies and control. A distributed leadership approach was identified as providing the basis for these elements, integrated by six tenets. While much of the research on leadership in universities approach has focused on academic leaders, the findings from research into a distributed leadership approach highlight the importance of a more collaborative approach between administrative and professional staff and academics. This finding led to the conceptualization of blended approach to leadership (Jones et al. 2014b). The next section introduces the six case examples presented in this section in terms of how they illustrate elements of a blended approach to leadership for collaboration between professional staff and academics.

Practicing Blended Leadership

The first chapter (► [Chap. 16, “Faculty Managers: A Constantly Changing Role”](#)) in this section, by Judy Szekeres, provides a good introduction of why a blended leadership approach is needed. The case example she presents is that of faculty managers who occupy senior administrative positions with responsibility for

overseeing a diverse portfolio of administrative functions. This description outlines the emergence of administrative management roles as universities adopted more business-like practices in response to declining government financial support. The case highlights the many and diverse changes that have occurred to this role over the last 25 years. This demonstrates the increased responsibility of faculty managers for activities related to governance, strategy, and quality. From a survey of faculty managers, she identifies the many tasks associated with general management that include strategic planning, human resources, and finance. The challenges for those who occupy these positions are both the increased tasks and the increased qualifications required to perform these tasks. In addition, given the role of the faculty manager described as the interface between academic staff and the university central administration, she identifies the challenge for these managers as academics respond negatively to the appearance, at least, of reduced academic autonomy, particularly given the almost continuous organizational change that universities engage. One of the solutions to developing a more collaborative culture she suggests is that universities could make more use of the expertise of academic staff in the field of change management.

The second chapter (► [Chap. 17, “Connecting the Dots for Professional Practice in Higher Education: Leadership, Energy Management, and Motivation”](#)) in this section, by Davis, presents the argument for a different approach to leadership, away from managing people to managing energy in order to respond to the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous context facing higher education. She bases her proposal on the findings from a survey into what motivates professional staff. Responses to the survey let her to identify the importance of leaders focusing on the cognitive as well as physical factors needed to encourage professional staff to share their creative energy. She argues that this is especially necessary in knowledge-intensive enterprises such as universities, where their purpose is dependent on the willingness of employees to share their knowledge. In so doing she argues the case for leadership in universities to move beyond the “heroic,” from leadership as control agent, to leading in order to open the space for collaboration. In recognizing the criticism that has been made of the narrowness of Maslow’s (1943) four-level hierarchy of needs, she adds four further levels – a cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence level. She states that it is necessary for leaders to recognize these levels if they are going to move beyond what she terms a deficit approach focused on simply developing the skills of professional staff to fill deficits to a more growth approach that encourages personal growth beyond what currently exists. Adopting this expanded approach to leadership, she concludes, requires a fundamental change to leadership in higher education from the traditional focus on hierarchical, linear structures led by individual leaders to leadership focused on the collective that maximizes energy management.

The third chapter in this section (► [Chap. 18, “Professional Staff, Professional Recognition: Bringing Learner Support Staff into the Fellowship of University Educators”](#)), by Beckmann, presents the case for how professional staff can be recognized for the contribution they make. She argues that this will lead to a greater collaboration between professional staff and academics. Building on

Whitchurch's (2009) identification of the "blended professional," Beckmann discusses how the contribution of professional staff to academic departments and individual academics in teaching and learning has not traditionally been recognized. Based on the Professional Standards Framework identified by the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA), Beckmann demonstrates how professional staff can be recognized for the broader contribution they make in contemporary universities. Referring to a case study from an Australian university, Beckmann describes the motivations and outcomes for professional staff who applied successfully for HEA Fellowships through an Australian HEA-accredited scheme. She identifies the benefits for both individuals and institutions as accredited staff become part of a broader recognition process and relationships between academics and professional staff increase. She concludes that the professional recognition scheme demonstrates both an inclusive and distributed approach to leadership that, supported by the right strategic infrastructure, can become the center of an institution-wide collaborative community of practice that focuses on peer engagement and continual professional development.

The fourth chapter in this section (► [Chap. 19, "Pedagogical Partnerships: Collaborations for Positive Student Outcomes"](#)), by Graham, presents a case of how universities need to link structural and cultural change if collaboration is to be achieved. To illustrate this Graham presents a case study of collaboration between professional staff and academics in what she terms a *pedagogical partnership*. In order to explore the nature of collaboration between professional staff and academics in contributing to positive student outcomes, she broadens the conceptualizations of pedagogy to include how learning and teaching are embedded in activities and relationships not formally designated as educational. This enables inclusion of a broader spectrum of activities performed by professional staff such as academic librarians, information technology experts, and student counselors. Placing her case study in a large modern university in an Australian capital city, Graham identifies the broad range of activities that require academics and professional staff to work in partnerships to support student positive outcomes. While focused upon how to develop pedagogical partnerships between professional staff and academics, Graham recognizes broad leadership challenges for the university. First is the need for structural change from a linear model to a matrix structure. Second is the human resource and industrial relation challenges for workforce planning, career design, and remuneration as traditional job and work classifications come under scrutiny.

The fifth chapter in this section (► [Chap. 20, "Building a Successful Partnership Between Professional Staff and Academics to Improve Student Employability"](#)), by Hobson, Knuiman, Haaxman, and Foster, presents an example of the importance of fostering a culture of respect for expertise of both professional staff and academics leading to mutual trust. This is illustrated in a case study of a highly successful 15-year partnership between academics in a teaching and learning center and professional staff in a career center who worked together to develop, teach, and coordinate a course designed to bridge the gap between university and work life by developing student skills for employability. In presenting this case, the authors identify a complex interplay of factors, structural and cultural, that have to be

navigated, on a continuous basis, to ensure that such partnerships are, first, established and then, sustained. The authors refer to structural challenges to existing prescribed hierarchies, university administrative systems that don't recognize the contribution of professional staff to learning and teaching, and budgetary surveillance. In addition are cultural challenges, with professional staff often seeing academics as living in an "ivory tower bubble," while academics often see professional staff as living in world of outputs and priorities peripheral to the main business of the university. The key to the successful partnership that is the subject of this case is identified as an agreed focus on the shared value of contributing to student-centered learning. In this case, this enabled academics and professional staff to identify a common purpose, which in turn led to the development of mutual trust and respect for the skills that each participant brought to the shared value. In so saying, the paper does identify the need for individuals to work as "boundary spanners" rather than entering into political debate about who and what is each individual contributing.

The last chapter in this section (► [Chap. 21, "The Role of Professional Staff in Assessing Students: A Case Study of the Objective Structured Clinical Exam"](#)), by Taylor, outlines the benefits of a shared leadership approach in fostering collaboration. The author of this case first outlines the complexity involved in conducting an objective structured clinical exam that assesses student clinical competency. This requires an intricate partnership in which academic input is complemented by logistical and technical expertise of professional staff. During the actual examination, students are required to undertake the same clinical task over the same time and using the same marking scheme. To ensure that this occurs in a manner that maximizes the positive learning experience for students, professional staff often assume leadership as significant planning, organization, and oversight over the day are required as students move through the assessment activities. This requires a shared leadership approach in order to foster a collaboration between all staff such that a partnership association is created.

In summary, the chapters in this section demonstrate different ways that the components of a blended leadership approach between professional staff and academics can lead to collaboration. The example of faculty managers by Szekeres identifies the stress that a traditional structural context of an administrative management places on individual managers as they attempt to lead change in consistently changing contexts. She highlights the fact that such a focus on structural context results in the lack of clarity which in turn places constraints on the ability of professional and academic staff to collaborate. The proposal for faculty managers to more effectively use the expertise of academics in change management is suggested as one way to build such collaboration. In seeking to reconceptualize this relationship, Davis suggests a change in perception from people management to energy management. This changed focus can assist the move from a focus on structural contexts to relational cultures. The chapter by Beckmann presents a case study of action taken to support professional recognition of the contribution of both academic and professional staff. This can assist the growth of a collaborative approach as professional staff and academics blend their expertise in design and

development of learning and teaching and student support in universities, knowing that their contribution will be recognized. The chapter by Graham further highlights the complexity that underpins what appears to be a simple move to partnerships. In suggesting a broader conceptualization of pedagogy to include activities and relationships not traditionally identified as educational, she identifies a complex need for change in both structural context and cultures before such partnerships can be successful. The chapter by Hobson, Knuiman, Haaxman, and Foster highlights the complex relationship building that is needed for professional staff and academics to develop partnerships. This requires recognizing both structural and cultural challenges to partnerships built on mutual trust and respect developed through the identification of shared values. Finally, the chapter by Taylor highlights the need for activities and seamless integration through a collaborative partnership between academics and professional staff that requires a shared leadership approach. This requires both a removal of traditional structural boundaries and the development of a culture of mutual respect.

Conclusion

That the work of higher education is changing in response to the challenges it faces in the increasingly globally competitive education “marketplace” is axiomatic. What is less openly discussed is how work in higher education is changing the nature of interactions between professional staff and academics. This chapter and the six chapters that follow in this section illustrate what is needed for a more blended collaborative leadership approach to this engagement. While championing a distributed leadership approach, the author acknowledges the need for a blend of the components that are characteristic of professional and academic contexts, cultures, and actions. Choosing the appropriate mix of these components will differ depending on institutional characteristics, external and internal climate, and time period. The next six chapters illustrate different ways that such a blended approach can be implemented.

References

- ALTC. 2011. *Report: Leadership for excellence in learning and teaching, completed and continuing leadership projects*. Strawberry Hills: ALTC.
- Barber, J., S. Jones, and B. Novak. 2009. *Student feedback and leadership*. Final Report. <http://www.altc.edu.au/resource-leadership-assessment-rmit-2009>. Retrieved 1 June 2017.
- Bolden, R., J. Gosling, A. O’Brien, K. Peters, M. Ryan, and A. Haslam. 2012. *Academic leadership: Changing conceptions, identities and experiences in UK higher education. Final report research and development series*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.
- Browne, L., and S. Rayner. 2015. Managing leadership in university reform: Data-led decision-making, the cost of learning and déjà vu. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 43 (2): 290–307.
- Chesterton, P., P. Duignan, E. Felton, K. Flowers, P. Gibbons, M. Horne, T. Thomas, and T. Koop. 2008. *Development of distributed institutional leadership capacity in online learning and*

- teaching project: Final report*. Strawberry Hills: Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Retrieved 23 Mar 2017 from <http://www.olt.gov.au>.
- Conway, M. 1995. The rise of the Australian Institute of Tertiary Administrators as a professional association, M.Ed. Admin. Thesis, University of New England, Unpublished.
- Davis, H., and S. Jones. 2014. The work of leadership in tertiary education management. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (4, Special Issue): 367–370.
- Day, D., P. Gronn, and E. Salas. 2004. Leadership capacity in teams. *The Leadership Quarterly* 15 (6): 857–880.
- Deem, R. 1998. New managerialism in higher education: The management of performance and cultures in universities. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 8 (1): 47–70.
- Dobson, I.R. 2000. ‘Them and us’ – General and non-general staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 203–210.
- Ernst and Young. 2014. University of the future. Available at www.ey.com/au. Accessed 8 May 2016.
- Fraser, J., and M. Harvey. 2008. *Leadership and assessment: Strengthening the nexus. Final report*. Strawberry Hills: Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Available from <http://www.olt.edu.au/resource-leadership-assessment-mq-2008>. Retrieved 1 Mar 16.
- Gronn, P. 2000. Distributed properties. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 28 (3): 317–338.
- Gronn, P. 2002. Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly* 13: 423–451.
- James, R., C. Baik, V. Millar, R. Naylor, E. Bexley, G. Kennedy, K.-L. Krause, M. Hughes-Warrington, D. Sadler, S. Booth, and C. Booth. 2015. *Advancing the quality and status of teaching in Australian higher education*. Final Report to the Office for Learning and Teaching. Available at <http://www.olt.gov.au/resource-library>. Accessed 27 June 2016.
- Jones, S., M. Harvey, G. Lefoe, and K. Ryland. 2012a. *Lessons learnt: Identifying synergies in distributed leadership projects*. Final Report. Office for Learning and Teaching. Retrieved 23 Mar 2015 from <http://www.olt.gov.au>.
- Jones, S., G. Lefoe, M. Harvey, and K. Ryland. 2012b. Distributed leadership: A collaborative framework for academics, executive and professionals in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (1): 67–78.
- Jones, S., R. Hadgraft, M. Harvey, G. Lefoe, and K. Ryland. 2014a. *Evidence-based benchmarking framework for a distributed leadership approach to capacity building in learning and teaching*. Final Report. Office for Learning and Teaching. Retrieved 23 Aug 2016 from <http://www.olt.gov.au>.
- Jones, S., M. Harvey, and G. Lefoe. 2014b. A conceptual approach for blended leadership for tertiary education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (4): 418.
- Marshall, S. J. 2006. *Issues in the development of leadership for learning and teaching in higher education*. Sydney: ALTC Exchange. Retrieved 3 Jan 2017 from <http://www.altc.edu.au/resource-issues-development-leadership-learning-macquarie>.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). The theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review* 50 (4):370–96.
- McInnis, C. 1998. Academics and professional administrators in Australian universities; dissolving boundaries and tensions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 20 (2): 161–175.
- McMaster, M. 2011. Partnerships between administrators and academic managers: How deans and faculty managers work together. ATEM Publications. Retrieved 23 Jan 2017 from <http://www.atem.org.au/publications/research/partnerships-between-administrative-and-academic-managers-how-deans-and-faculty-managers-work-together>.
- Parrish, D., and G. Lefoe. 2008. *The GREEN report: Growing, reflecting, enabling, engaging, networking*. Final report. Strawberry Hills: Australian Learning and Teaching Council. <http://www.altc.edu.au/resource-leadership-assessment-ouw-2008>. Retrieved 1 Sept 2017.
- Ramsden, P. 1998. *Learning to lead in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Randall, L. 2012. Transforming a university: A study of process leadership. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal* 16 (2): pp 1–20.
- Scott, G., and L. McKellar. 2012. *Leading professionals in Australia and New Zealand tertiary education*. Report to Association of Tertiary Education Management. Retrieved 6 June 2016 from <http://www.atem.org.au/publications/occasional-papers>.

- Scott, G., H. Coates, and M. Anderson. 2008. *Learning leaders in times of change. Report to Australian Learning and Teaching Council*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney & Australian Council for Educational Research. Retrieved 20 Mar 2016 from <http://www.olt.gov.au>.
- Szekeres, J. 2004. The invisible worker. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26 (1): 7–22.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008a. Beyond administration and management: Reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management* 30 (4): 375–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800802383042>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008b. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9202-4>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2012. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of “third space” professionals*. New York: Routledge.
- Woods, P.A., N. Bennett, J.A. Harvey, and C. Wise. 2004. Variabilities and dualities in distributed leadership: Findings from a systematic literature review. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership* 32 (4): 439–457.



Faculty Managers: A Constantly Changing Role

16

Judy Szekeres and Tony Heywood

Contents

Introduction	244
Methodology	245
Nomenclature	245
Previous Studies of This Role	246
The Role of the Faculty as an Organizational Unit	246
Evolution of the Title/Role	247
The Faculty Manager Surveys	247
Faculty Manager Demography	248
The Role Itself	249
Salaries and Classifications	249
Management of Staff	250
Organizational Units and Structures	251
Tasks and Roles	253
What Faculty Managers Feel About Their Roles	254
Challenges and Changes to the Role Over Time	255
Skills Required for the Role	256
Conclusion	257
References	258

All dollars mentioned in the chapter refer to Australian dollars.

J. Szekeres (✉)

DVE Business Solutions, Adelaide, Australia

e-mail: judy.szekeres@dvesolutions.com.au

T. Heywood

Faculty of Health, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

e-mail: tony.heywood@uts.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,

University Development and Administration,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_5

243

Abstract

This chapter discusses the role of Faculty Manager that is typically the most senior professional staff role in the largest academic units in universities. It is a continuously developing role and is a crucial lynchpin for the successful management of academic units which are at the heart of delivering the core *raison d'être* of a university. To explore these roles in more detail, Faculty Managers in Australian and New Zealand universities were surveyed in 2004, 2012, and most recently 2016. These three surveys are discussed in this chapter, identifying what it is these people do, who inhabits these roles, how their roles have developed, what challenges they face in the higher education climate of the early twenty-first century, and what skills they need and might need into the future.

Keywords

Faculty management · General management · Skills required · Administrative salaries

Introduction

One of the crucial roles in academic units (faculties, divisions, colleges, schools, departments) is the senior administrative role – frequently titled as Faculty/College/Division Manager/Director/Administrator. This role is in general the most senior professional staff member in the academic unit and will normally have a generalist management role overseeing a diverse portfolio of administrative functions.

These roles have undergone great change over the last 25 years, often depending on how large or small the academic unit becomes and the level of centralization or decentralization within the university. When universities restructure and choose to change the mix of administration either away from or to the academic units, these Manager roles can grow or decline in terms of their level of responsibility and their oversight of staff and operations.

There is very little published literature about these specific roles, although they are often the topic of papers at conferences. In Australia the Faculty Managers operate as a loose collegiate group with their own irregular conference. These are the least specialized of roles in the university's senior professional staff but the closest to the real life of the institution – the academic units. It is often the Faculty Manager who negotiates the administrative minefield for academic staff while at the same time ensuring the academic unit operates within the bounds of university policy and rules.

This chapter looks at three iterations of the same survey of Faculty Managers considering the profiles of the staff that fill these positions, as well as their functional responsibilities, the academic unit they work within, and their perceptions of their role and its challenges. It analyzes some of the changes taking place in academic units and in particular how these changes affect and have evolved these managerial roles.

Methodology

The original survey was devised in 2004 by a Faculty Manager and a senior member of the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM). The impetus for the first survey was to scope Faculty Managers as a target audience prior to considering potential ATEM professional development and networking activities for that group. The survey was designed to capture demographic information about Faculty Managers in Australia and New Zealand, the structure of their organizational areas, and some qualitative data about their day-to-day experiences and their connection to their institutions. The three surveys undertaken in 2004, 2012, and 2016 used the same basic questions, with some changes at each iteration, depending on the issues at the time. For instance, in the most recent iteration, a number of questions about change management were added in as this was an issue common in the sector as many universities were restructuring faculty administration. The surveys were all distributed in the same way. An email list of staff in Faculty Manager or similar roles had been collated and continuously updated, and the online survey was sent to this email list of over 200 recipients across Australia and New Zealand. Added to this a general call was sent to the ATEM list through the weekly email that goes out to all members and affiliates. The survey was left open for 3–4 weeks and results collated using freely available survey software. Data gathered enabled the researchers to identify gaps and common patterns in the data and literature through percentage calculations and comparisons.

Nomenclature

While the nomenclature chosen for this study is *Faculty Manager*, in fact this role has an array of titles, depending on subdivisions and the prevailing naming conventions within the particular university. In some universities, there are no “faculties,” and the large academic units may be called “divisions,” “schools,” or “colleges.” In some universities there is a level of confusion as they use a mixture of naming conventions, particularly around disciplines such as Business, Law, and Medicine, so while the rest of the university is divided into faculties, the Business or Law disciplines might be a “business school” or a “law college.” Other institutions have a small number of very large “colleges,” with still relatively large “faculties” as subunits. These nomenclatures will affect how the senior professional staff role is named.

Added to this, each institution has its own prevailing naming conventions for senior staff roles – so some are “Managers,” some are “Directors,” others are “Executive Managers,” and some are even “Registrars” or “Secretaries.” Add these two sets of differences together and we have a large array of titles. In the latest survey of people in these roles, this stretched to over 30 different titles. However, Faculty (College/School) Manager (or General Manager) was by far the most common (46%). The title “Director” has increased in prominence over time as has the title “Business Manager.” Since the turn of the century, Whitchurch (2004, p. 282) was

able to point to these changing nomenclatures, and the name changes have continued to evolve over time.

It should be noted that throughout this chapter, the authors use the terms “Faculty” and “Faculty Manager” as the generic terms to refer to these larger academic units and the people in the most senior administrative roles, irrespective of the nomenclature used by various institutions.

Previous Studies of This Role

There is very little in the prevailing literature about the Faculty Manager role as a particular cohort within university administrations. They are captured in a number of previous studies which generally look at university administrative and professional staff (Gornitzka and Larsen 2004; McInnis 1998; Middlehurst 2004; Rosser 2004; Szekeres 2010; Whitchurch 2004). However, other than a study by McMaster (2002) examining the relationship between Deans and their Faculty Managers, and Heywood’s (2004, 2012) previous surveys of this group, there is precious little literature about the role itself or the people who inhabit it. This might be said about most professional staff roles within universities (Szekeres 2004), but this role in particular plays a crucial part in the successful management of academic units. As a senior role, it is worthy of some consideration to provide a model for staff who are aspiring to progress their careers in higher education.

As will be seen from survey results, the roles can vary in their level of responsibility and the span of their control. In some institutions, this role is seen as a lynchpin which maintains and manages all administrative functions for large academic units. In others, the role harks back to previous incarnations where the responsibility is primarily for student management within the faculty. In yet others, the role mostly has a resource function.

The Role of the Faculty as an Organizational Unit

A key administrative entity in any university is the Faculty or its equivalent, as the entity which binds related discipline groups together. It allows certain administrative functions to be undertaken at a position close enough to the delivery of academic outcomes to take account of the needs of different discipline groups. But it is conglomerate enough to provide an efficient and cost-effective administrative function to those discipline groups. In many cases, its key role is as a bridge between the central university administration with all its demands and bureaucracy and those smaller groups designed around all important academic disciplines.

If one accepts the premise that the Faculty-level organization has a key role in providing the link between the demands of the central administration and the needs of the academic disciplines, then there can be no question that a key administrative role is that of the senior Faculty Administrator. As Rosser (2000) points out, “Midlevel administrators are an essential component of higher educational organizations” (p. 7).

Evolution of the Title/Role

In Australia the title “Faculty Manager” emerged in the late 1990s and quickly was adopted across many universities through the early 2000s. The 2004 Faculty Manager Survey (Heywood 2004) saw 35% of respondents indicating that “Manager” was part of their position title. Prior to this period, the titles more commonly found were Faculty Administrator, Faculty Secretary, or Faculty Registrar. The incumbents of these predecessor roles were also viewed as the most senior administrative person within the Faculty, usually managing many of the support functions and providing a single point of contact for communications with the various central administrative units with the university. Often the incumbent would provide committee support to the main Faculty committees, with a particular focus on organizing meetings and taking minutes.

The emergence of the “Manager” designation within the title came at a time when universities and faculties were adopting more businesslike practices in their operations as the sector’s funding basis evolved from primarily government-supported to a more self-determined business model (Bessant 2002; Deem and Brehony 2005; Dixon et al. 1998; Considine 1995; Deem 1998; Stewart 1997). A stronger focus on strategic planning, marketing, budgets, and process improvement was typical of activities that were expected of academic units, and consequently having a professional manager was seen as a means to provide the skills and abilities to meet these expectations. Faculty Managers evolved to become part of the Faculty’s management team rather than simply supporting that team. Already in 2004, 92% of survey respondents agreed that they were part of the management team in their faculty, and this level has not changed over time.

These broader changes were not without challenges. Many academic staff were (and remain) uneasy with the *managerialist* culture that was unwelcome in the sector (Bessant 2002; Deem and Brehony 2005; Meyer 2002; Tourish 2000). While this disquiet was primarily with the new activities undertaken by Faculty Managers, others saw the change in the nature of the role as inappropriate. This was a period where the sector saw stronger reactions to the perceived relationships and the “divide” between academic and professional staff (Conway 2000; Szekeres 2004).

Universities, government, and enterprise agreements commonly used the terms “nonacademic staff,” “support staff,” and “general staff” as designators of the range of positions in these roles – titles which are often viewed as “negative” terminology (Dobson 2012). More recently, the term “professional staff” has been embraced and is widely used across the higher education sector in Australia and globally (Szekeres 2011).

The Faculty Manager Surveys

Three comprehensive surveys of Faculty Managers across Australia and New Zealand have been undertaken – one in 2004, 2012, and 2016. Together, the outcomes of these surveys provide an insight into how the role has changed over time and how the universities themselves have changed. The outcomes also provide an insight into what the role focuses on, where it fits in the salary scales in universities

and therefore, where it fits in career plans for professional staff, as well as the skills and training which are needed by people moving into these roles. The 2004 and 2016 surveys both received over 100 responses, while the 2012 one had a smaller response group. Given there are 43 universities in Australia and 8 universities in New Zealand and, assuming on average, each university has around 5 faculties or equivalent, this suggests that over 100 responses provide around a 40% response rate. However, it should be noted that in 2016 only 83 of these respondents filled out the survey completely. It is unclear why this occurred.

Faculty Manager Demography

The results of the survey consistently indicate that the Faculty Manager role is inhabited by women (65–70% over the survey period) who are aged between 46 and 55 years (43%). It is an interesting question why this role is such an attraction for women, while Directors of central units such as finance, facilities, and ICT are more likely to be men. It could be that this role is more a middle to upper management role rather than a senior management role or that it is closer to a “helping” professional within the institution, being the most senior role which is situated close to students. This would be an interesting topic to examine further, but was not investigated by these authors.

People in these roles have usually been working in higher education for a number of years, across the surveys over 40% being involved in HE for over 20 years. While they have usually been in higher education for a long time, over 50% of respondents in all three surveys had been in their current role for less than 10 years. In 2016 only 43% had been in the role less than 5 years, less than in the previous surveys. This suggests the advancement opportunities from this role have reduced over time as the tenure of incumbents had increased.

Increasingly, people in the Faculty Manager role have been in the workforce for over 20 years (60–88% over time). This suggests a substantial slowing of younger workers moving into these roles and suggests that once people get into them, there is little incentive, opportunity, or impetus to move.

Increasingly, people have come to the role from the private sector (30–45% over time) and less and less from the public sector other than education (40–20% over time). These trends suggest that universities are now less keen to take public sector workers and more interested in those who come with business or commercial skills. It may also reflect the increase in the number of private higher education providers, which could form another pathway into such roles. This also accords with the changing title to include the word “Business” in the title. There is a small group of people in these roles who have only ever worked in universities. There is a similar cohort who has had previous experience in education, as well as the community and nonprofit sectors.

The highest qualification for most people in these roles remains the master’s degree, with 49% in 2016 having this qualification up from 30% previously. The Bachelor qualification as the highest qualification has declined, with only 18% in 2016 against 30% in the previous surveys. There is a very small group with doctorates, and those without formal qualifications beyond school have all but disappeared. The latest survey results reflect the trend since 2004 for higher credentialed Faculty Managers,

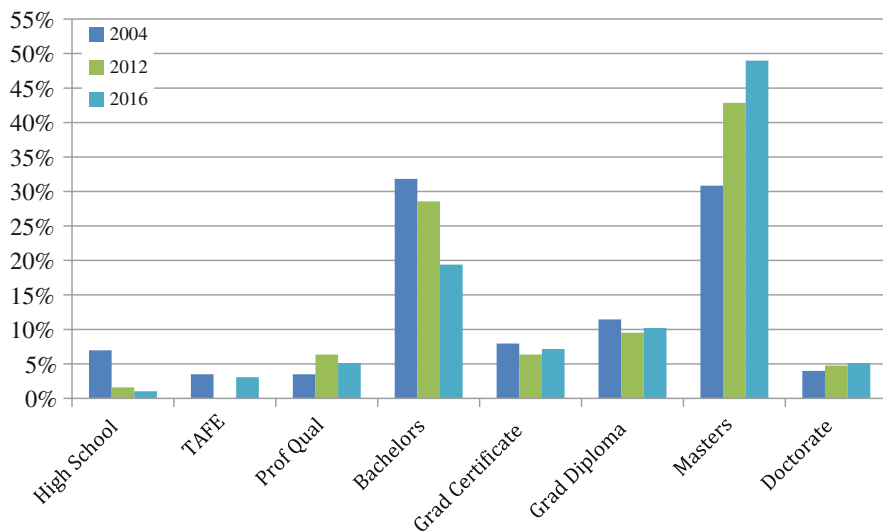


Fig. 1 Faculty Manager qualifications 2004, 2012, and 2016

which is indicative of a requirement for a higher level of professional learning expected in candidates for this role. As Whitchurch (2004, p. 285) identifies, “Generalists typically enter an institution with a degree but no specialist training, except perhaps a few years’ experience in a comparable sector” (Fig. 1).

The Role Itself

Salaries and Classifications

In Australia, professional staff roles in universities are largely classified into higher education worker (HEW) levels, with HEW10 being the highest and HEW1 being the lowest. In the 2012 and 2016 surveys, the Faculty Managers were largely HEW10 and above (which is usually considered Senior Executive) by quite some margin, with over 62% in both surveys. In the previous surveys, there were a number of people spread through the 7, 8, and 9 levels, but in 2016, most of them were at level 9, a few at level 8, and virtually none lower. This suggests a marked change from 1995 as suggested by Moodie (1995, p. 22), where “departments’ full-time administrative staff remain predominantly junior appointments” (Moodie 1995, p. 22). A number of Faculty Managers clearly hold what is considered Senior Management or Executive-level positions. In terms of salaries, this means that over 90% are being paid AUD\$ 100,000 or more (well over the Australian average salary), with 23% being paid over \$180,000 (generally considered top 10% of salaries). This has increased substantially over the surveys, with 67% being paid over \$100,000 in 2012 and only 7% achieving this salary in 2004. While consumer price index (CPI) rises will automatically result in people moving to a higher salary range over time, this salary shift has clearly outstripped CPI which is only

24% over this period (ABS 2016). This reflects the increasing professionalism and standing of the role over the period and the need to offer substantial salaries to attract the right candidate.

The one thing that has not changed over time, however, is the inequality of male and female salaries. In the 2016 survey, there were 30 males and 68 females who were willing to reveal their salary range. Forty percent of the males but only 15% of the females had salaries over \$180,000. At the lower end, only one male had a salary under \$100,000, but 10% of females had salaries at this level. In fact, this is a worse picture than what occurred in 2012 when the inequalities were clear, but not quite so stark. Given it is the same or equivalent job being done, it really begs the question why this inequality persists. It is also relevant that below HEW10, salaries are mandated, so they would be equivalent for men and women, but above this level the rate of pay becomes a function of agreement between the Faculty Manager and their supervisor. It is likely that men will negotiate strongly for a higher salary or maybe supervisors are more inclined to pay men more. Irrespective, the continued inequity is difficult to defend.

Management of Staff

In all three surveys, almost all respondents supervised professional staff, around a third to half managed technical staff, smaller numbers managed lab and field staff and research staff, and a reducing number (from 6% down to 2%) managed academic staff. In 2016 the majority (around 50%) directly supervise 5–9 staff, with the next largest percentage supervising 10–14 staff in 2016. In previous surveys, the next largest percentage managed only one to four staff, so this suggests there has been a shift to expect managers to take on more staff and responsibility. Indirect reports have also grown steadily with over 50% now having more than 30 staff reporting (up from 41% in 2012 and 25% in 2004). Budgets of the typical academic unit were over AUD \$80 million, and 81% of respondents had direct responsibility for a budget, up from earlier surveys. The authority limit for Faculty Managers has clearly increased with 15% being able to sign off on expenditures over AUD\$ 150,000 (previously only around 5%) and the majority being able to sign off on over \$50,000, whereas in earlier surveys, the majority of respondents could only sign off on less than \$20,000. Again, while increases in CPI would automatically result in general increases for budgets and sign-offs, these changes are greater than CPI and in line with increased responsibilities and a shift to a more managerial style.

To summarize, the Faculty Manager role continues to attract people who have been in higher education for a large number of years and in the workforce for over 20 years. There is a stabilization into this role, with a more experienced demographic and a definite shift to previous private sector experience. There is a clear shift to master's degree graduates, and the increase in salaries to over \$140,000 has outstripped CPI and shows the most dramatic change in the demographics of this group. These increased salaries reflect the skillset required for a generalist manager who can operate at a strategic level and commands a good salary in the marketplace. However, salary outcomes for men and women remain unequal. It is evident the Faculty Manager role has evolved from a "good administrator" to a "General Manager."

Organizational Units and Structures

The title “Faculty” to describe the main and largest academic unit of the university continues with between 60% and 80% using this title in all three surveys. The terms “College” and “School” have been the next most steadily used, with 11% and 15%, respectively, in each survey and “Division” wavering around the 8–10% mark. These descriptors fluctuate due to the seemingly constant restructures that are happening in the sector, depending on the vision of the relevant university senior management. Faculty Managers report to the “Dean” in 45% of all three surveys. However, the title Executive Dean has increased steadily, from 12% to 29%. In the same way that the term “Business” has increasingly appeared in the Faculty Manager title, the word “Executive” has increasingly entered the Dean’s title. This reflects an inexorable shift to the language of commerce in the management of universities.

The question of whether the Faculty Manager is the most senior professional staff role in the academic unit has increased over time to 91% in 2016, and the position is clearly part of the senior management group of the faculty with over 90% of respondents indicating this. In 2016, the size of the student body in the academic unit varies widely from less than 500 to more than 10,000 students, with the most common size being between 2000 and 5000. The size of these academic organizations has increased over time as in previous surveys there were many more faculties at the lower end of this range. Linked to this increase is a corresponding increase in academic staff with 38% having over 180 academic staff (similar to 2012 but a clear increase on 2004). It is at the lower end that there is a greater change, with less than 60 academic staff being almost 40% in 2004 but only 12% in 2016. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show the percentage of respondents indicating the size of their Faculty over the survey periods.

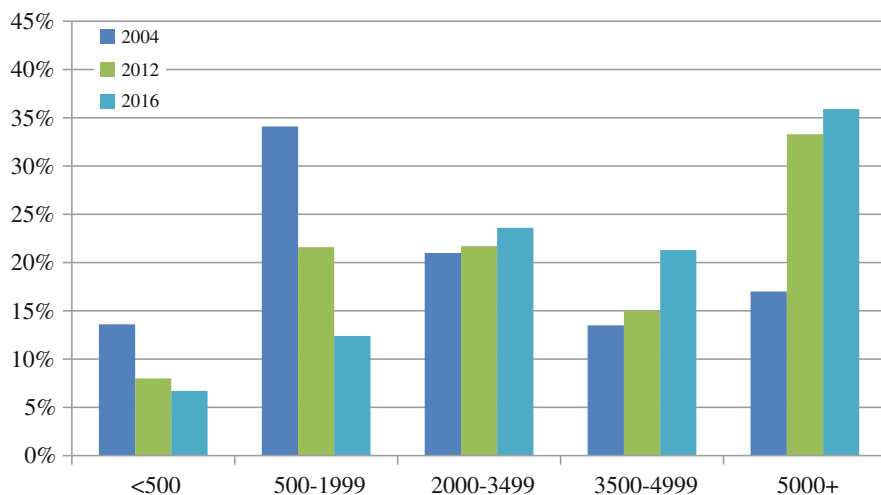


Fig. 2 Student enrolments (FTE) in faculties, 2004, 2012, and 2016

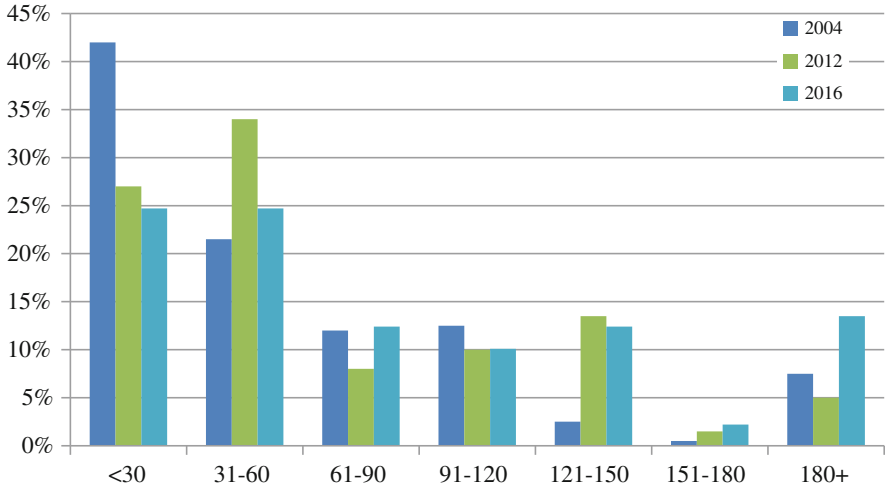


Fig. 3 Number of professional staff (FTE) in faculties, 2004, 2012, and 2016

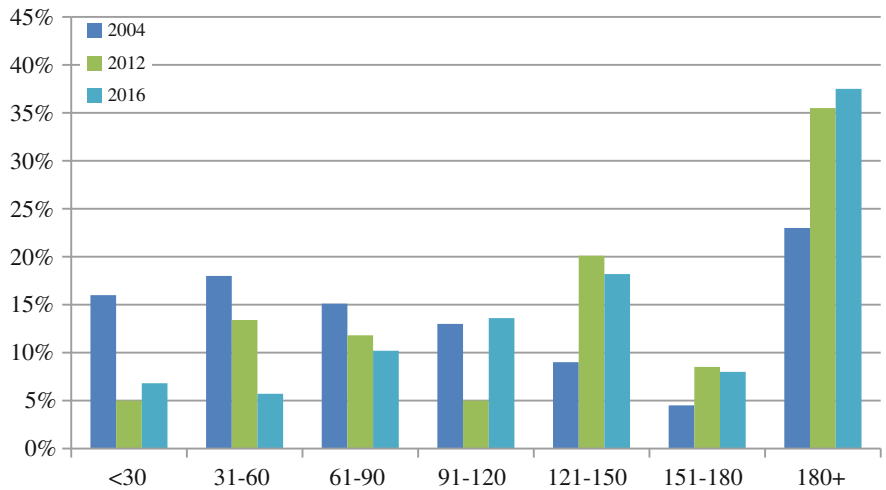


Fig. 4 Number of academic staff (FTE) in faculties, 2004, 2012, and 2016

Over this period there has been a great deal of structural change in Australian universities, with a number of amalgamations of large academic units in a move to reduce the cost of administration. Therefore, it should be no surprise that the numbers of students and staff in these academic units have shown a substantial increase. At the same time, the number of professional staff has also grown, but at the lower end, it has stayed remarkably steady with just over 60% of respondents having less than 60 professional staff in each survey. At the top end, less than 10% of faculties had more than 180 professional staff in the earlier surveys, but in 2016 over 13% had over 180.

Tasks and Roles

In the surveys, respondents were asked to identify their major tasks, including identifying their four key responsibilities. The makeup of these tasks has changed over time. In 2004 a major part of Faculty Managers' roles revolved around finance, human resources, student, general administration, and some strategic planning. In 2012, strategic planning had increased in importance, as did quality and compliance (which hardly featured in 2004). In 2016 quality and compliance had marginally reduced in the percentage of managers' responsibility, and it had all but disappeared from being one of the four key responsibilities. This is possibly due to changes to the compliance regime, which is less onerous under the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) than it had been under the previous regulator, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). However, strategic planning remains a key responsibility as does human resources and finance.

Facilities management, committee servicing, marketing, and Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing (OHSW) have all shifted into greater importance. Sadly, student administration, which featured strongly in both the previous surveys, has all but disappeared as a major responsibility in 2016. This suggests that the Faculty Manager role has lost its key link to the major *customer* of the university and has become much more about general management than needing to understand the specific needs of students. It is also indicative of the shared service models of operation being broadly embraced throughout the sector, with student administration one of the key areas targeted by this approach to service provision.

Respondents were asked to describe in a couple of sentences what their role entailed. In summarizing the terminology used by respondents, typical descriptors of responsibilities have changed from *Coordinate* . . . in 2004 to *Manage* . . . in 2012 and to *Lead and manage* . . . in 2016. The responses also emphasized the breadth of the role, as exemplified by the following response:

A huge range of responsibilities, including management of administration staff, strategic planning, governance, business development, providing high level advice to Exec Dean and Heads of School, Faculty liaison with central administration, management of marketing for student recruitment (domestic, international, HDR) and management of offshore teaching. (Female, HEW 10+, NSW, 2016)

This role description is typical of most of the responses, identifying the mix of strategy and operations and the breadth of responsibilities. However, there are some more unusual responses which in some cases also reflect how people feel about their roles. For example:

I say that I orchestrate chaos to make it as harmonious as possible. (Female, HEW 9, 2016)

My role requires me to manage the business of the Faculty and provide air traffic control. I spend most of my time problem-solving, managing what I have responsibility for and influencing in other areas for the benefit of the Faculty and institution. (Female, HEW 10+, NSW, 2016)

These roles require a breadth of understanding of management functions. Most of these people have to understand HR principles; how information technology works;

how to manage facilities; how to support teaching including technical subjects; principles of student and course administration; marketing; budgets and forecasting; strategic planning; governance; management of offshore activities; and the needs of different cohorts of students, including research students, and they have to be consummate negotiators, facilitators, and mediators and act as consultants to a varied group of senior staff. They have to understand university policy intimately and often have to be willing and able to find creative ways of managing within these policies to achieve required outcomes or in some cases to find ways around restrictions. Perhaps most importantly, they provide an interface between academic staff and the university central administration and interpret the needs of each to the other.

What Faculty Managers Feel About Their Roles

Well over two thirds of respondents felt they had significant autonomy, played a key leadership role in their academic unit, and were involved in both strategic and operational decision making. A slightly lesser percentage felt they were able to influence the strategic directions of their faculty and less again felt their input was valued as much as academic staff or was, at least, recognized. Only 50% felt their ideas were implemented and that they got credit for them.

While two thirds of the group said they were satisfied with their roles, three quarters were still looking to change their jobs. Almost half found the work challenging, and more than half could not identify a career path from their current roles, while only 13% felt trapped with little opportunity for advancement. Most respondents thought their role was classified correctly, although less than half thought their remuneration was appropriate. While these results seem somewhat contradictory, it is not unusual in universities for administrative roles to have unclear career paths or for staff to be keen to move to the next step (and therefore a different role). Unlike academic roles, there is little chance for advancement or promotion within the same role for administrators, especially from a position that has a generalist rather than specialist scope.

Only half of the respondents thought that accountability demands had increased their workload since the last survey, probably reflecting that these demands were already fairly high in 2012. Two thirds of respondents indicated there had been significant restructuring in their university over the last 3 years and just over half had seen significant restructuring in their faculty. Only one tenth of respondents thought morale in their faculty was good. Worse, over 40% thought it was very poor, and the majority were noncommittal about how well people got on with each other in their workplace. These outcomes may be understandable within the context of recent significant change; however they present a clear challenge for the management of faculties across the sector.

Only 10% of respondents found their jobs to be a source of personal stress, and even less thought that their work dominated their lives or that their work commitments got in the way of their personal activities. This is in stark contrast to similar surveys of academic staff who usually respond very negatively on similar questions (Coaldrake and Stedman 1999; Currie and Vidovich 1997; McInnis 1998).

Respondents to this survey were generally satisfied with their jobs and their institutions, although only 40% said they would choose to work at their current institution again. This may also be a reflection upon the experience of recent significant change.

Challenges and Changes to the Role Over Time

Respondents were asked to identify major changes to their roles over the last 3 years. A number of them indicated the increased need to take a lead in change management in their faculty as well as taking on activities such as research administration, facilities management, alumni, new campuses, international activities, risk management, development of academic workload processes, marketing, and transnational education. A large number of participants mentioned that frequent and significant restructuring have impacted their roles within the faculty.

A further question asked respondents to identify the sources of the greatest stress in their work, with the most common responses being:

- Bureaucratic administration
- Managing staff including workloads, capabilities, attraction and retention, and performance management
- Change management
- Working with static or decreasing budgets
- Juggling multiple projects
- Amount of work and demands on time

Many of these stresses would not be specific to Faculty Managers, but would be common to many staff in universities and, indeed, other organizations (Dahl 2011; Devenport et al. 2008; Pignata and Winefield 2015; Smollon 2015).

The biggest challenge for the future for these roles was identified as organizational change (particularly the revolving door of centralization and decentralization). This was by far the most frequent issue raised by respondents and is clearly top of mind for many of them. These results from 2016 were in contrast to the findings in 2004 and 2012, where the most common response for the biggest challenge revolved around interactions with people, whether they be staff, colleagues, or supervisors. Over 80% identified that there had been university-wide restructuring over the last 3 years that had affected their faculty. Over 40% of these said the main focus had been efficiency and cost savings, while 27% said the main focus was centralization of control. Some of the Faculty Managers are concerned about their own jobs in the face of restructuring, and a number of universities have already dismantled this role as a general management role as they have centralized most services. This is likely to be the trend over the next period, which suggests the Faculty Manager role might be in some jeopardy, reducing further the career paths for generalist administrators.

Very little restructuring seems to focus on service improvement to either students or staff or academic realignment. When asked about the effect of restructuring on their role, one respondent commented that they had seen “Implementation of new

systems by central units without clear understanding of delegations and workflows at business unit level” (Female, HEW 9, NSW, 2016). Others responded “centralisation to people who don’t understand our business” (Female, HEW 10+, ACT, 2016) and “less direct control over shared services”(Male, HEW 10+, TAS, 2016) and “reduction in scope of responsibility, loss of staff, reduction in staff morale and productivity”(Female, HEW 10+, QLD, 2016). Another respondent described themselves as the “meat in the sandwich” (Male, HEW 10+, VIC, 2016).

Most Australian universities have undertaken this type of change management over the last 8 years, and most have done it poorly as described by the respondents to this survey. Yet universities have academic staff who are the experts in this field and could help guide them through the difficult task of restructuring to achieve happier and more productive outcomes, but they are rarely if ever sourced to help with this task (Watson 2000). The last word on this is to two respondents who described a typical example of poorly done change management: “Restructuring has affected many academic and administrative units. Morale is low university-wide. Institutional knowledge has been lost. [I’ve] had to take on more work to cover gaps” (Male, HEW 8 equivalent, NZ, 2016). . .[which] “increased management stress and diminished accountability”(Female, HEW 10+, VIC, 2016).

Trying to increase resources and student numbers were the next most common challenges for faculties in the future, and the two are often deeply connected. In many cases, it is the Faculty Manager who is responsible for student load management and for budget management, so they have a deep understanding about the connection between these two problems.

Skills Required for the Role

The final structured question put to respondents (included for the first time in 2016) was what three skills they saw as key to the Faculty Manager role. This points to the sort of professional development someone might undertake if they wanted to move into this role. The most common answers in 2016 were:

- Ability to communicate and build relationships
- People management
- Financial and business acumen
- Ability to lead
- Strategic thinking

These skills are primarily those which are broadly described as generic skills rather than those which relate to specific expertise and reinforce the concept of the *General Manager*. While any senior management role should possess such skills (Cesare and Thornton 1993; Storey and Salaman 2005), specialist managers would also be likely to have content expertise or specific prior experience that would be necessary for them to perform their role (e.g., the senior finance managers would

require expertise in accounting standards; senior facilities managers would need to know the relevant building codes).

There were also an identified number of skills/qualities that are less obvious, some of which reflect the type of environment universities are, with groups of highly professional and well-educated staff. According to participants, these skills are resilience, problem-solving, organizational skills/time management, negotiation, and adaptability/flexibility.

It could be argued that resilience and adaptability are linked. Certainly, resilience is a quality which generally has emerged in the workplace as increasingly important in times of great stress and change.

Identified only by small groups of respondents were:

- Calmness
- Diplomacy and discretion
- Change management skills
- Emotional intelligence

It is of some concern that given the amount of change management going on in universities, the 2016 respondents placed such little value on skills to manage these processes, particularly as the respondents themselves identified change management as one of their greatest stressors.

For anyone aspiring to the Faculty Manager role, gaining an understanding of general skills in HR management, financial management, strategic planning, change management, and the teaching and learning environment would all be helpful. Spending time on building resilience, negotiation skills, and problem-solving would also be beneficial, according to the survey respondents.

Conclusion

The three Faculty Manager surveys provide a valuable snapshot of the evolution of a key leadership role within university administration, as well as an insider's perspective into broader changes that have occurred within higher education. The sectoral change of nomenclature from "nonacademic staff" to "professional staff" is reflected in this role transforming from serving the table to sitting at the table. "Where once administrative staff were considered powerless functionaries, they now increasingly assume high-profile technical and specialist roles that impinge directly on academic autonomy and control over the core activities of teaching and research" (McInnis 1998, p. 70). The data demonstrates the creation of a role at a time when the sector adopted a stronger businesslike mode of operation. It has evolved subsequently into a more senior, more professional position that is recognized for those attributes which contribute to the successful management of the largest academic units in the university.

The prerequisite skills and abilities required for success as well as the titles, portfolio of responsibilities, and salary packages all indicate the need for an agile

General Manager leading a broad range of administrative functions to support faculties that have become larger academic and, if one accepts the nomenclature, business units.

The challenges for the role that incumbents identified are indicative of the times – quality and compliance in the AUQA era and restructuring challenges now – and future surveys will undoubtedly reflect the broader issues being managed within the sector at that time. The generalist nature of the Faculty Manager role is such that the skillset necessary to be effective in the role will equip those staff to be well placed to manage these challenges as they arise.

References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). 2016. Consumer price index Australia, March 2016, Table 6401.0 www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6401.0Mar%202016?OpenDocument. Accessed 30 Apr 2016.
- Bessant, B. 2002. 'A climate of fear': From collegiality to corporatisation. In *The subversion of Australian universities*, ed. J. Biggs and R. Davis, 52–84. Wollongong: Fund for Intellectual Dissent.
- Cesare, S.J., and C. Thornton. 1993. Human resource management and the specialist/generalist issue. *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 8 (3): 31–40.
- Coaldrake, P., and L. Stedman. 1999. Academic work in the twenty-first century. Occasional Paper Series Higher Education Division, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.
- Considine, D. 1995. The loose cannon syndrome: University as business & students as consumers. *Australian Universities' Review* 1: 36–40.
- Conway, M. 2000. What's in a name? Issues for ATEM and Administrators. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 199–201.
- Currie, J., and L. Vidovich. 1997. *Centralisation and devolution through corporate managerialism in American and Australian universities*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Brisbane.
- Dahl, M. 2011. Organizational change and employee stress. *Management Science* 57 (2): 240–256.
- Deem, R. 1998. New managerialism' and higher education: The management of performances and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom. *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 8 (1): 47–70.
- Deem, R., and K. Brehony. 2005. Management as ideology: The case of 'new managerialism' in higher education. *Oxford Review of Education* 31 (2): 217–235.
- Devenport, T.J., K. Biscoomb, and A. Lane. 2008. Sources of stress and the use of anticipatory, preventative and proactive coping strategies by higher education lecturers. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education* 7 (1): 70–81.
- Dixon, J., A. Kouzmin, and N. Korac-Kakabadse. 1998. Managerialism – something old, something borrowed, little new. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 11 (2/3): 164–187.
- Dobson, I. 2012. *How the other half lives: University general staff today and tomorrow*. Paper presented at the National Tertiary Education Union Conference, Sydney.
- Gornitzka, A., and I. Larsen. 2004. Towards professionalization? Restructuring of administrative work force in universities. *Higher Education* 47: 455–471.
- Heywood, T. 2004. *Just who does manage faculties? A snapshot of the faculty manager in 2004*. Paper presented at the Tertiary Education Management Conference, Hobart.
- Heywood, T. 2012. *Faculty manager survey, 2012*. Paper presented at the Tertiary Education Management Conference, Adelaide.

- McInnis, C. 1998. Academics and professional administrators in Australian universities: Dissolving boundaries and new tensions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 20 (2): 161–173.
- McMaster, M. 2002. *Partnerships between administrative and academic managers: How deans and faculty managers work together*. Paper presented at the Australian Tertiary Education Management National Conference, Brisbane.
- Meyer, H.-D. 2002. The new managerialism in education management: Corporatization or organizational learning? *Journal of Educational Administration* 40 (6): 534–551.
- Middlehurst, R. 2004. Changing internal governance: A discussion of leadership roles and management structures in UK universities. *Higher Education Quarterly* 58 (4): 258–279.
- Moodie, G. 1995. The professionalisation of Australian academic administration. *Australian Universities' Review* 1: 21–23.
- Pignata, S., and A.H. Winefield. 2015. Stress-reduction Interventions in an Australian university: A case study. *Stress & Health* 31 (1): 24–34.
- Rosser, V.J. 2000. Midlevel administrators: What we know. In *Understanding the work and career paths of midlevel administrators*, ed. L.K. Johnsrud and V.J. Rosser, 5–13. New Directions for Higher Education, No 111. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rosser, V.J. 2004. A national study on midlevel leaders in higher education: The unsung professionals in the academy. *Higher Education* 48: 317–337.
- Smollon, R. 2015. Causes of stress before, during and after organizational change: A qualitative study. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 28 (2): 301–314.
- Stewart, J. 1997. Rethinking university management. *Australian Universities' Review* 2: 36–41.
- Storey, J., and G. Salaman. 2005. The knowledge work of general managers. *Journal of General Management* 31 (2): 57–73.
- Szekeres, J. 2004. The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26 (1): 1–22.
- Szekeres, J. 2010. General staff experiences in the corporate university. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 28 (2): 133–145.
- Szekeres, J. 2011. Professional staff carve out a new space. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 679–691.
- Tourish, D. 2000. Management and managerialism: Mis/managing Australian universities? *New Horizons in Education* 103: 20–42.
- Whitchurch, C. 2004. Administrative managers – a critical link. *Higher Education Quarterly* 58 (4): 280–298.
- Watson, S.R. 2000. Why is it that management academics rarely advise on the management of their own institutions? *Human Resource Development International* 3 (1): 89–100.



Connecting the Dots for Professional Practice in Higher Education: Leadership, Energy Management, and Motivation

17

Heather Davis

Contents

Introduction	262
Energy Management	264
Motivating Factors for Knowledge Work	265
Expanding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	265
Illustrative Case: Professional Staff Energies and Motivations	266
Motivations for Work by Professional Staff in Australia	267
Connecting the Dots Between Motivation, Energy Management, and Contemporary Leadership Studies	271
Conclusion	272
References	273

Abstract

This chapter considers the contexts for leadership and work in higher education at a time described as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). It does so by connecting the dots between leadership, energy management, and motivation to call for the creative energies of all who work in higher education to be called upon to meet these challenges. It is also a time where leader and follower distinctions are increasingly moot given that all involved in knowledge work have responsibilities for both leading and following well, no matter the formal responsibilities held.

This chapter discusses “energy management” as a useful throughline for contemporary leadership studies and professional practice in higher education. Today professional staff repertoires include soft skills and behaviors which rely

H. Davis (✉)

LH Martin Institute for Tertiary Education Leadership and Management, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

e-mail: heather.davis@unimelb.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*, University Development and Administration,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_11

261

heavily on knowing the self well. Here the idea of the *T-shaped professional* is a term that elevates the many tangible and intangible strands necessary for higher education management work in knowledge-intensive institutions.

The chapter also explores these ideas through a case study of motivational and other energy-related drivers elicited from the lived experiences of work and leadership shared by 226 professional staff members working in Australian universities.

Keywords

Leadership · Energy management · Motivation · T-shaped professional · Knowledge Era · Professional staff · Higher education

Introduction

This chapter considers the contexts for leadership and work in higher education at a time described as volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). This is a time where the creative energies of all who work in knowledge-intensive enterprises like universities will be called upon to meet these challenges. It is also a time where separation of leader and follower distinctions is increasingly moot given that all involved in knowledge work have responsibilities for both leading and following well, no matter the formal role held.

Professional staff leadership development imperatives for these times are usefully captured by the idea that “leaders are in the business of energy management” (Kets de Vries and Manfred 2003, p. 111). This focuses attention upon ways to work with the complex, turbulent, and fast-moving contexts that underpin and challenge work today and considers leadership as professional practice rather than traits residing on the “heroic” leader, as Raelin (2016b) makes clear:

The foundation of the leadership-as-practice approach is its underlying belief that leadership occurs as a practice rather than from the traits or behaviours of individuals. A practice is a coordinative effort among participants who choose through their own rules to achieve a distinctive outcome. Accordingly, leadership-as-practice is less about what one person thinks or does and more about what people may accomplish together [and]. . .how leadership emerges through day-to-day experience. (p. 3)

The idea that energy management is now a key leadership responsibility may be novel still, yet it provides a useful lens for reflection by professional staff, as well as the higher education sector more generally, to consider preparedness for significant changes ahead. However, there are concerns about high levels of staff disengagement in higher education (Bolden et al. 2015). In Australia, for example, it is estimated that engagement levels across the sector are as low as 24% (O’Boyle and Harter 2013). Given these concerns, ignoring motivations and energy management – of ourselves, our staff, and our institutions – works against business objectives too, as Raelin (2016a, p. 124) notes:

What's wrong with our leaders? With no measurable change in the vital statistics compiled by the Gallup organisation for over a decade that some 70% of our employees are either not engaged or actively disengaged at work, why haven't they done more?

Taking up challenges to reroute leadership and leadership development (Bolden et al. 2016; Ladkin 2010), this chapter positions leadership studies and practice for professional staff within a turn toward post-heroic leadership studies and away from "the 'leader' as control agent, to 'leading' which opens up spaces to consider more creative, shared and collaborative approaches in the field" (Davis and Jones 2014, p. 367). These shifts are already taking place and can be further encouraged through shared language for more expansive understandings of leading as action and practice. Thinking about leadership for professional staff in this way signifies the inherent link between leadership and responsibility that knowledge workers are already innately aware of, whether in formal leadership positions or not. Raelin (2016a) encapsulates this shift:

Employees aren't necessarily looking to be taken care of. Most of them, given the chance and the time to get their confidence back, wish to participate in the enterprise through their own collective practices. When engaged this way, the practice of leadership becomes less about what's residing in the hearts and minds of named leaders and more about how to facilitate the dedicated activities of those doing the work. (p. 124)

Key to what motivates professional staff for knowledge work in these contexts is crucial – as this is also the space occupied by professional staff in higher education. The higher education sector is not impervious to disruptive change and needs to effectively harness the knowledge, ideas, and creativity to support the necessary and ongoing service innovation and improvement agenda. This line of enquiry naturally leads to consideration of what may be contained within minds of knowledge workers, where intangible factors like soft skills are increasingly acknowledged as important for knowledge work. Indeed, the time has well passed, if it ever existed, where professional staff employed as managers, leaders, and specialists in the sector can get by on technical ability alone. In other words, while hard-won technical abilities in chosen professions or niche knowledge areas in higher education are necessary, they are not likely sufficient.

Today professional staff repertoires are enhanced by these softer skills and behaviors which rely heavily on knowing the self well. Here the idea of the *T-shaped professional* connects and defines the many strands necessary to undertake and lead knowledge work. It adds to the professional vocabulary, so it is possible to meaningfully reflect upon and discuss this kind of work. Soft skills are part of broad boundary crossing skills located within the horizontal part of the letter "T," while technical requirements of roles are captured in the vertical (Hansen and von Oetinger 2001). Further, Demirkan and Spohrer (2015) point to the organizational imperative to engage with hearts as well as minds in order to recruit and retain people with these specialized skills and attributes:

T-shaped people are in great demand. Winning – and keeping – them requires a concerted effort to build the kind of values, beliefs, skills and behaviours to support them. Companies need to think about how they can tune up their talent engines to find and foster the right talents to sustain innovation. (p. 14)

In turn, this standpoint encourages conversations about how to best harness the creative energies of all to “not merely produce the reliable result [but rather] reliably produce the desired result” (Martin 2009, p. 156). The next section of this chapter drills a little deeper into elements of the often invisible soft skills, namely, energy management and motivations for knowledge work.

Energy Management

The connections between the ideas of energy management and motivation as leadership responsibilities are not new, as Kets de Vries and Manfred (2003) argue that “leaders are in the business of energy management” (p. 111) and Loehr and Schwartz (2003) posit that “leaders are the stewards of organizational energy . . . [where] the skilful management of energy, individually and organizationally, makes full engagement possible” (p. 5).

Indeed, the connection between energy management and leadership can be traced to the work of Mary Parker Follett almost 100 years ago. Follett’s views on the significance of purpose, energies, and leadership were recorded on at least three occasions: leaders “release energy, unite energies, and all with the object not only of carrying out a purpose, but of creating further and larger purposes” (Follett 1927, p. 268); “there is energy, passion, unawakened life in us – those who call it forth are our leaders” (Follett 1928, p. 293); and that a great leader “develop power wherever he can among those who work with him, then . . . gathers all this power and uses it as the energising force of a progressing enterprise” (Follett 1933, p. 173). Follett was also instrumental in the human relations movement of the 1930s (e.g., see Barnard 1938, 1948; Mayo 1919). The revival of energy management as a leadership consideration has gained momentum since the turn of the twenty-first century after remaining unprivileged, as soft skills more generally were, for the last part of the twentieth century. Humane ideals were out of favor during this period because they were out of kilter with dominant rationalist mindsets of the second half of the twentieth century, which in turn underpinned economic, political, science, and management discourse and practice in the West during this period. As mindsets more amenable to understanding and working with contexts for the Knowledge Era emerge, so does the reawakening of the ideas grounded in the work from the human relations movement.

Schwartz (2007) also argued that human energies come from “four main well-springs in human beings: the body, emotions, mind, and spirit” (p. 64). This conception provides a useful lens for otherwise invisible soft skills and motivations now considered part of contemporary leadership development and practice in higher education. It brings together ideas such as knowledge workers bringing their “whole selves” to work (HBR 2008), leadership and followership as embodied experiences

(Ladkin 2012; Sinclair 2007), and that energies are entwined with the central and unifying role that “purpose” plays within knowledge-intensive institutions (Bennis 1988; Chaleff 2009; Follett 1933; Greenleaf 1977). It follows therefore that leadership as practice (Carroll et al. 2008; Crevani et al. 2010; Kennedy et al. 2013; Raelin 2016a, b) is a complex, shared, and relational endeavor (e.g., see Bolden et al. 2015; Davis 2015; Fletcher and Kaeufer 2003; Gronn 2011; Uhl-Bien 2006). Energy management is also of continuing interest to social psychologists, where there is ongoing work in the field to inform contemporary leadership studies. For example, Ryan and Deci (2008) find that:

The depletion of human energy and vitality has long been a focus of interest in psychology, and recent works in social psychology has reinforced the idea that social and motivational variables can affect the depletion process. Less well understood is how people catalyze or gain energy. (p. 713)

Motivating Factors for Knowledge Work

Given that motivations are directly connected to the wellsprings of energy that Schwartz (2007) described and that motivations for work have been connected to management theory from at least the time of McGregor’s (1960) Theory X and Y, it is timely to explore needs and motivational drivers for professional staff work in higher education today.

Expanding Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

This chapter is informed by a framework from a study that investigated leadership and knowledge work in higher education (Davis 2012). The framework shown in Fig. 1 brings Maslow’s original hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1943, 1970) into conversation with later works of Martin and Joomis (2007) and Koltko-Rivera (2006) to produce an expanded hierarchy of needs and motivations for the twenty-first century. Here Maslow’s original pyramid has been expanded by the addition of three extra levels and the delineation between deficiency and growth needs. Martin and Joomis (2007) added two levels congruent with knowledge work as mentioned by Raelin (2016b) which make sense of their contexts and environments and “choose through their own rules to achieve a distinctive outcome” (p. 3) that of cognitive and aesthetic needs, as well as the line to identify where motivations shift from *deficiency* needs to energizing *growth* needs. The four levels noted as deficiency needs in Fig. 1 are named because their lack produces the necessary motivation to meet them, often by depleting our energies in the process. The four levels noted as growth needs, on the other hand, tend to energize people when they are pursued. Koltko-Rivera’s (2006) contribution reacquaints readers to Maslow’s original, albeit often omitted, level of self-transcendence as the highest order at the top of the pyramid.

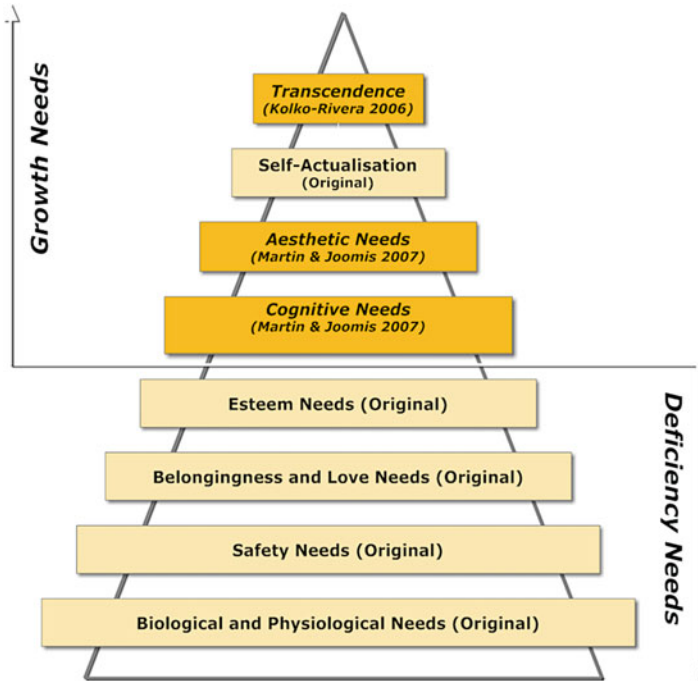


Fig. 1 Expanded hierarchy of needs

While acknowledging some disagreement between scholars who see Maslow's theory as relying on needs being met in strict order from the lowest to the highest levels, Maslow himself is recorded as being less dogmatic about the order:

The weight of evidence now available seems to me to indicate that the only sound and fundamental basis on which any classification of motivational life may be constructed is that of the fundamental goals or needs, rather than on any listing of drives in the ordinary sense of instigation. (Maslow 1970, p. 26)

The elements themselves remain generally accepted in many disciplines and are widely known in management practice (e.g., see Beck and Cowan 1996; Hall and Thompson 1980; Harris 2005; Wilber 2008). Further, given that “work motivation is one of the major topics in organizational behavior, not many work motivation surveys exist” (Gagné et al. 2010, p. 628); this is a useful concept to explore professional staff motivations in the case study to follow.

Illustrative Case: Professional Staff Energies and Motivations

This case draws upon the contexts for professional staff work as outlined so far in the chapter and brings these into conversation with findings about motivating

factors for professional staff work. These findings were part of a wider qualitative study that explored challenges of higher education leadership and management for professional staff in universities (Davis 2012). This interpretive inquiry built five themes which emerged from a critical review of the contextual literatures relevant for leadership for knowledge-intensive work in the early twenty-first century and named these as worldly, sustaining, leadingful, relational, and learningful leadership literacies for the Knowledge Era. These were positioned as a “speculative typology” (Thrift 2008, p. 2) and empirically tested for their signs of *theorization* and *experience* in the field. The inquiry used a “between-methods” version of a multi-method triangulation strategy (Denzin 1977, p. 302) in that the two methods used were both analyzed qualitatively. The first method was a thematic analysis seeking signs of *theorization* of the five leaderships within extant data relating to Australian higher education published in the period 2008–2011. The second method, and where the case study for this chapter is drawn, was a qualitative survey of 226 professional staff working in Australian universities which served to explore whether signs of these five leadership literacies could be seen as being *experienced* in practice.

The case given in this chapter is drawn from data only regarding the “sustaining” leadership literacy gathered as part of the second method, from professional staff working in universities in Australia. A brief sketch of respondents as shown in Table 1 provides detail about this cohort.

These details show that respondents were largely heterogeneous in that some held formal leadership positions and some had informal leadership roles and most managed staff. All would likely fit knowledge worker descriptors. Some held executive leadership roles, and many were situated in the spaces where engagement with students and other stakeholders occurred and where policy, leadership, management, and resourcing decisions were sharply felt. Such heterogeneity secured a data set from a diverse range of staff, which allowed the findings to build a broad picture of experiences of leadership and work of professional staff in Australian universities.

Motivations for Work by Professional Staff in Australia

Of specific interest for this chapter are the findings from the *key motivating drivers bringing respondents to work* part of the study. Respondents chose one answer that best captured their motivation for work from options that included *regular and secure employment, pay and conditions, social relationships, and professional communities of practice; self-esteem/status; meaning-making and learning opportunities; to make a difference in the world; for self-fulfillment/personal growth; or to help others reach their potential*.

These responses were then mapped against the particular motivational driver as shown in Fig. 1 of motivational needs that could reasonably be addressed within the workplace (the first deficiency need, biological and physiological shown in Fig. 1, was not included in the analysis as it was assumed that such “survival” needs were a reasonable precondition for work). Figure 2 shows the results with the theorized

Table 1 Profile of professional staff participants of the study

Invitations to participate were sent to professional staff and members of the Association of Tertiary Education Management (ATEM). Of the 800 invitations extended, 226 respondents completed the survey
Gender breakdown shows that 75% of respondents were female which corresponded with ATEM's membership gender profile and is also indicative of the broader distribution of professional staff in the sector, where 65% of the 52,850 staff were female (DEEWR 2010, Table 1.7). Despite only contributing at the rate of 25% of overall respondents, males nevertheless accounted for 61% of the executive level participants, which is indicative of gender representations at senior leadership levels in Australian universities (Blackmore 2009, p. 73)
The respondents were well credentialed, with 90% completing an undergraduate degree level, and of these 4% held doctorates and 35% Masters degrees
When considered by role and level, executive staff accounted for 10% of respondents and general managers 20% of the total. Managers were the largest representative grouping, contributing 47%, followed by administrators at 22%, and "other" at 1%
Ages were classified according to generational periods by birth year range, the largest grouping identifying as baby boomers (1944–1965); Gen X (1966–1980) were 34% of respondents. A very small numbers of Gen Y (1981–2000) at 2% took part, and one respondent identified as part of the "Builder" generation (1922–1943)
Respondents were employed in all of the university type groupings as defined by the Australian Education Network classification which includes Australian Technology Network (ATN) at 17% of respondents; Group of Eight (Go8) at 27%; Innovative Research Universities (IRU) at 14%; New Generation Universities (NGU) at 17%; and 25% of respondents worked in universities unaligned (UU) with these groupings at the time of the study
In order to ensure anonymity of participants, ranges rather than specific data given for age, role levels, and university names were collected. Further, where direct quotes are provided, pseudonyms are used to reflect the gender and role level of the respondent (e.g., Ann is an administrator, Greg is a general manager)

need in brackets next to the results and the line drawn at the point where the needs turn from deficiency to growth needs.

The findings show that more than half of the responses fell into the "deficiency needs" and that the majority of those were at the lowest order "safety needs" (i.e., regular and secure employment and pay and conditions). When analyzed further, the choice for safety needs did not vary much when viewed by role level, gender, age range, or university grouping. **Martha**, for example, cited regular and secure employment as her key motivation for coming to work and succinctly articulated the pressures and likely consequences:

We seem to be working longer and longer hours – I regularly work a 50+ week and also work on the weekend. Most of my colleagues are in similar positions, this situation will increasingly take a toll on our health, work productivity and organizational sustainability. However, what can we do about it? (**Martha**, Baby Boomer, Go8 Manager)

As the responses tagged as deficiency needs account for 53% of all responses for this question, it does raise concerns about the capacity and appetite for necessary depth of learning needed to fuel a service innovation agenda needed to work with complex, turbulent, and fast-moving contexts of higher education management work today.

Q. When you think about what brings you to work, what is the key motivating driver?

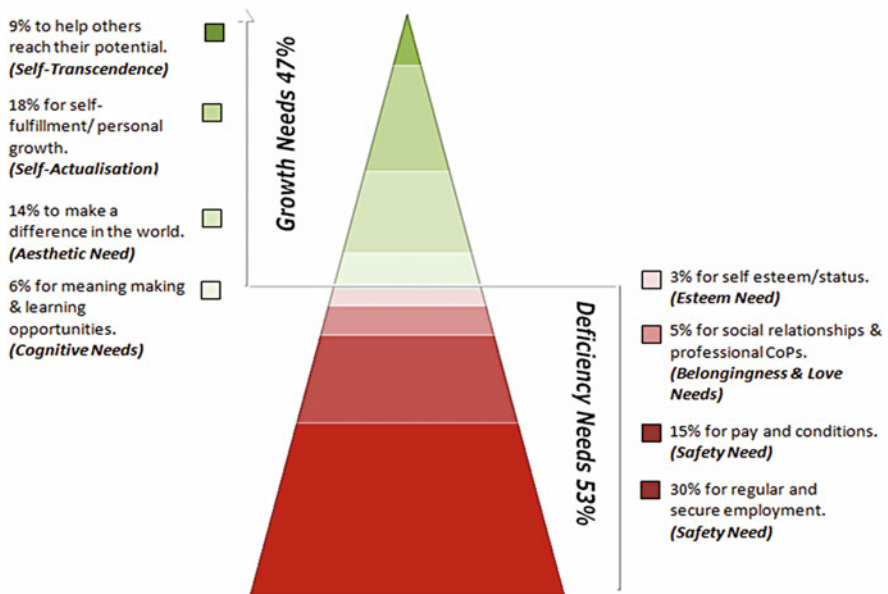


Fig. 2 Motivational drivers that brought respondents to work

These are serious concerns for the sector because motivations associated with growth needs are the ones that positively motivate and energize staff in ways to drive creativity and innovation.

As well as the motivating factors specifically addressed at Fig. 2, two questions related to lived experiences of work and leadership are indicators for sustainable levels of energy management, and therefore useful to this discussion. Both directly relate to Schwartz's (2007) indicators of body and emotions as wellsprings of energy management and may serve to illustrate why the majority of needs shown in Fig. 2 were shown in the deficiency needs:

- First, while the majority of respondents were also long-serving higher education sector staff (37% of respondents reporting their length of service in the sector as between 11 and 20 years, 26% having 6–10 years of service, and 16% having more than 20 years in the sector), they also reported their time in current roles to be relatively short. Twenty percent of respondents reported being in their current role for less than 12 months, 34% between 1 and 2 years, and 25% for between 3 and 5 years. This means that half of the respondents had been in their present role for 2 years or less and 75% of staff in their role for 5 years or less.
- Second, when asked *how many hours did you work last week?* Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that they worked more than the hours they were paid. Of these, 35% of respondents indicated that they had worked moderately more, 18%

many more, and 7% significantly more (in the survey, these distinctions were given as slightly more (1–10%), moderately more (11–20%), many more (21–35%), and significantly more (+35%)). These results did not change significantly when further analyzed by administrative, manager, general manager, or executive level roles or when sliced by gender, age group, or university grouping.

There was a strong sense from respondents that working more than hours paid was culturally accepted and normalized within their institution. For example, general managers **Gary** (Gen X, Go8) reported “too much to do but that is what happens at the top,” **Glenda** (baby boomer Jones, NGU) described this as “a cultural expectation that you work long hours to get the job done,” and **Glenn** (baby boomer, IRU General Manager) felt that “too many competing demands; impossible deadlines and requests to satisfy bureaucratic accountability” resulted in many more hours work every week than he was paid for. **Michael**, a manager, who reported working significantly more than the hours he was paid for, epitomizes the complexities underlying these issues:

It is not unreasonable to expect that staff in senior positions to work more than the standard working day – indeed it is necessary for the health of divisions and the overall institution. The workload at senior level, however, has extended beyond that which might be reasonably expected, and there is a tendency for this to also ‘trickle down’ to less senior levels. Staff are paid relatively well (particularly at the lower end of the HEW scale at entry level) however there are increasing stresses that may limit our ability to retain key staff. (**Michael**, Gen X, Go8 Manager)

Although only 9% of respondents did work their normal allocation of hours, others reported that they were content to work more than the normal hour allocation in exchange for more flexible work arrangements. **Annette** (baby boomer, Go8 administrator) who worked moderately more hours than she was paid for reflected that she “worked flexi-time which enables me to work longer hours to keep up with my workload and take time off when needed.” **Miriam** (baby boomer, UU manager) reported that she worked slightly more hours than she was paid yet “workload is not an issue for me currently as I have a high degree of autonomy and with this comes flexibility so if I put in a few extra hours I am happy to do this in exchange for this work option.”

These work patterns are a concern for long-term sustainability of individuals and indeed the sector given that knowledge workers are not fungible labor. Indeed, the “dots” discussed in this chapter are elements that reside inside the head – soft skills, relationships, networks, etc. – and important, if invisible, components of knowledge work. Further, professional staff are not as easy to replace as workers seen as a “pair of hands” may have been on the factory floor in the industrial era. So if energies and motivations continue to show at largely deficiency level motivations, we are likely to lose experienced and connected knowledge workers due to burnout and to other sectors that are more attuned to supporting this kind of work.

This case brings these often invisible issues into focus. The challenge remains for the Australian higher education sector, institutions, and leaders to do more to align with “skilful management of energy individually and organizationally” as argued for by Loehr and Schwartz (2003, p. 5).

Connecting the Dots Between Motivation, Energy Management, and Contemporary Leadership Studies

Encouraging conversations about mindsets rather than just skillsets will connect the dots between otherwise hard to identify (and measure) elements such as motivation and energy management and the socially complex fields of leadership and management. More expansive and holistic mindsets amenable to working with complexity and uncertainty are needed, but these are incommensurate with the mindsets that served so well in the industrial era. Knowledge Era mindsets are attuned to frames of mind that can realistically and humanely address complexities of work undertaken by professional staff in higher education.

Further to the case shown in this chapter, a focus on motivations for knowledge work in higher education has been addressed more recently: as part of the annual Times Higher Education's Workplace Survey (Grove 2016) and through the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education's Motivating and Developing Leaders' report (Peters and Ryan 2015). Both reports found that intrinsic factors (which can be mapped to growth needs in Fig. 1) were important for motivating higher education staff:

... a number of key factors that are important for motivating staff in their day-to-day jobs; many of the same factors play an important role in motivating individuals to take on leadership responsibilities. A central theme to emerge is the importance of intrinsic motivation, and in particular having opportunities to learn and grow (in many cases through challenging and interesting work). (Peters and Ryan 2015, p. 18)

From a theoretical perspective, self-determination theory (SDT) (Gagné and Deci 2005; Gagné et al. 2010) is emerging as a useful metatheory for the study of human motivation and learning, which in turn illuminates the critical role that soft skills play in knowledge work. SDT focuses on three basic psychological needs: *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*. Indeed, Gagne and Deci (2005) argue that work climates that attend to these three areas are likely to enhance intrinsic motivation for employees that may yield these six important work outcomes:

1. Persistence and maintained behavior change
2. Effective performance (particularly for creativity, cognitive flexibility, and conceptual understanding)
3. Job satisfaction
4. Positive work-related attitudes
5. Organizational citizenship behaviors
6. Psychological adjustment and well-being (337)

Therefore, attention toward staff motivations and work-related psychological needs provide opportunities to learn and grow and resonate with Raelin's (2016a) earlier stated premise that "given the chance and the time to get their confidence back, [employees] wish to participate in the enterprise through their own collective practices" (p. 124).

In consideration of leadership and management development for professional staff in higher education, attention to “thriving” as well as the “T-shaped professional practice” draws just all of the elements discussed in this chapter together; both address key markers of vitality and learning, in particular, as areas to pay attention to. Both concepts align well with and surface the mostly invisible elements of self-determination theory (SDT), in order to develop the necessary mindsets and skillsets needed to work with uncertain and turbulent conditions that underpin higher education management work today. Thriving at work, as argued by Spreitzer et al. (2012), is where vitality and learning are gauges and the key markers:

like a thermometer, this thriving gauge can help individuals understand if they are overheating (with a propensity for burning out) or too cold (indicating stagnation and depletion). By paying attention to one’s sense of vitality and learning, individuals have a mechanism to assess the sustainability of their work. (p. 155)

Learning and connecting to one’s vitality play their part in earlier mentioned T-shaped professional skills that pay attention to both deep disciplinary, professional, and technical knowledge (the vertical part of the T) and our boundary crossing capacities variously described as soft skills, enterprise skills, and boundary crossing expertise (the horizontal part of the T).

Conclusion

The challenge remains in preparing ourselves, our staff, and our institutions for the likely disruptions and significant changes the sector is facing. Connecting dots between leadership, energy management, and motivation are worthy of attention now. This chapter outlined the benefits when considering the elements that were the “dots” and the contexts that make it necessary to connect them in this way.

Looking forward then, attention to the art, practice, and research for leadership by and for professional staff in higher education requires a shift in development focus “from the ‘self’ to taking responsibility for the ‘self-in-relation’ to others” (Bolden et al. 2015, p. 31), and one achievable way to do this is encourage a critical reflective profession practice (Davis and Moon 2013).

Looking back as we eye the future, it is also possible to see that Mary Parker Follett considered these ideas nearly a century ago. Join me to marvel at her grasp of ways to engage with the kinds of challenges we are now facing. It appears that she was a person ahead of her time – is she ahead of ours?

Whoever connects me with the hidden springs of all life, whoever increases the sense of life in me is my leader. (Follett 1928, p. 294)

References

- Barnard, Chester Irving. 1938. *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Barnard, Chester Irving. 1948. *Organization and management: Selected papers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Beck, Don, and Christopher C. Cowan. 1996. *Spiral dynamics: Mastering values, leadership, and change: exploring the new science of memetics, developmental management*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Business.
- Bennis, Warren. 1988. The character of leadership. In *The power of character: Prominent Americans talk about life, family, work, values, and more*, ed. M.S. Josephson and W. Hanson, 142–149. Marina del Rey: Josephson Institute of Ethics.
- Blackmore, Jill. 2009. Re/positioning women in educational leadership: The changing social relations and politics of gender in Australia. In *Women leading education across the continents: Sharing the spirit, fanning the flame*, ed. Helen C. Sobehart, 73–83. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Bolden, Richard, Sandra Jones, Heather Davis, and Paul Gentile. 2015. *Stimulus paper: developing and sustaining shared leadership in higher education, stimulus paper*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.
- Bolden, Richard, Morgen Witzel, and Nigel Linacre, eds. 2016. *Leadership paradoxes: Rethinking leadership for an uncertain world*. London: Routledge.
- Carroll, Brigid, Lester Levy, and David Richmond. 2008. Leadership as practice: Challenging the competency paradigm. *Leadership* 4 (4): 363–379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715008095186>.
- Chaleff, Ira. 2009. *The courageous follower: Standing up to & for our leaders*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Crevani, Lucia, Monica Lindgren, and Johann Packendorff. 2010. Leadership, not leaders: On the study of leadership as practices and interactions. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 26 (1): 77–86.
- Davis, Heather. 2012. *Leadership literacies for professional Staff in Universities*. PhD Thesis, School of Management, RMIT.
- Davis, Heather. 2015. Social complexity theory for sense seeking: Unearthing leadership mindsets for unknowable and uncertain times. *E:CO* 17 (1): 1–11.
- Davis, Heather, and Sandra Jones. 2014. The work of leadership in higher education management. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management* 36 (4): 367–370.
- Davis, Heather, and Jenny Moon. 2013. *Making room for new traditions: Encouraging a critical reflective professional practice for tertiary education management*. TEMC 2013: Trends, traditions, technology: 15–18 September 2013, Hobart.
- DEEWR. 2010. *Staff 2010: Selected higher education statistics*. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
- Demirkan, Haluk, and Jim Spohrer. 2015. T-shaped innovators: Identifying the right talent to support service innovation. *Research-Technology Management* 58 (5): 12–15. <https://doi.org/10.5437/08956308X5805007>.
- Denzin, Norman K. 1977. *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fletcher, Joyce K., and Katrin Kaeufer. 2003. Shared leadership: Paradox and possibility. In *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership*, ed. Craig L. Pearce and Jay Alden Conger, 21–47. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Follett, Mary Parker. 1927. Leader and expert. In *[Reprinted in] dynamic administration: The collected papers*. 247–269. New York: Harper & Bros. Original edition, 2 successive papers in April and November 1927.
- Follett, Mary Parker. 1928. Some discrepancies in leadership theory and practice. In *[Reprinted in] dynamic administration: The collected papers*, 270–294. New York: Harper & Bros. Original edition, 8-Mar-1928.

- Follett, Mary Parker. 1933. The essentials of leadership [one of five lectures given to inaugurate the Dept of Business Administration, London School of Economics, University of London]. In *Mary Parker Follett – prophet of management: A celebration of writings from the 1920s [reprinted as Chapter 6]*, ed. Pauline Graham, 163–177. Washington, DC: Beard Books. 1995.
- Gagné, Marylène, and Edward L. Deci. 2005. Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 26 (4): 331–362. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.322>.
- Gagné, Marylène, Jacques Forest, Marie-Hélène Gilbert, Caroline Aubé, Estelle Morin, and Angela Malorni. 2010. The motivation at work scale: Validation evidence in two languages. *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 70 (4): 628–646.
- Greenleaf, Robert K. 1977. *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Gronn, Peter. 2011. Hybrid configurations of leadership. In *The Sage handbook of leadership*, ed. Alan Bryman, L. Collinson David, Keith Grint, Brad Jackson, and Mary Uhl-Bien, 437–454. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Grove, Jack. 2016. THE University workplace survey 2016: results and analysis. *Times Higher Education*.
- Hall, Brian P., and Helen Thompson. 1980. *Leadership through values: A study in personal and organizational development*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Hansen, Morten T., and Bolko von Oetinger. 2001. Introducing T-shaped managers. *Harvard Business Review* 79 (3): 106–116.
- Harris, Bill. 2005. *Spiral dynamics: A new model for understanding the values that shape our world*. Beaverton: Centerpointe Research Institute.
- HBR. 2008. *Harvard business review on bringing your whole self to work*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kennedy, Fiona, Brigid Carroll, and Joline Francoeur. 2013. Mindset not skillset: Evaluating in new paradigms of leadership development. *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 15 (1): 10–26.
- Kets de Vries, Manfred F. R. 2003. *Leaders, fools and imposters: essays on the psychology of leadership*. Rev ed. New York: iUniverse.
- Koltko-Rivera, Mark E. 2006. Rediscovering the later version of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: Self-transcendence and opportunities for theory, research, and unification. *Review of General Psychology* 10 (4): 302–317.
- Ladkin, Donna. 2010. *Rethinking leadership: A new look at old leadership questions*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Ladkin, Donna. 2012. Perception, reversibility, “Flesh”: Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology and leadership as embodied practice.” *Integral Leadership Review*: 1–9.
- Loehr, James E., and Tony Schwartz. 2003. Fully engaged: Energy, not time, is our most precious resource. In *The power of full engagement: Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance and personal renewal*, 3–18. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Martin, Roger L. 2009. *The design of business: Why design thinking is the next competitive advantage*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Martin, David Jerner, and Kimberly S. Joomis. 2007. *Building teachers: A constructivist approach to introducing education*. Belmont: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Maslow, Abraham H. 1943. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review* 50: 370–396.
- Maslow, Abraham H. 1970. *Motivation and personality*. 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Row.
- Mayo, George Elton. 1919. *Democracy and freedom*. Melbourne: Massina & Co..
- McGregor, Douglas. 1960. *The human side of enterprise*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- O’Boyle, Ed, and Jim Harter. 2013. *State of the global workplace: Employee engagement insights for business leaders worldwide*. Washington, DC: Gallup.
- Peters, Kim, and Michelle Ryan. 2015. Motivating and developing leaders. In *Higher Education Leadership and Management Survey (HELMS)*. London: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education.

- Raelin, Joseph A. 2016a. It's not about the leaders: It's about the practice of leadership. *Organizational Dynamics* 45 (2): 124–131. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2016.02.006>.
- Raelin, Joseph A. 2016b. *Leadership-as-practice: Theory and application*, *Routledge studies in leadership research*. New York: Routledge.
- Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. 2008. From ego depletion to vitality: Theory and findings concerning the facilitation of energy available to the self. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2 (2): 702–717. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2008.00098.x>.
- Schwartz, Tony. 2007. Manage your energy, not your time. *Harvard Business Review*: 63–71.
- Sinclair, Amanda. 2007. Bringing bodies into leadership. In *Leadership for the disillusioned: Moving beyond myths and heroes to leading that liberates*, 91–110. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Spreitzer, Gretchen, Christine L. Porath, and Cristina B. Gibson. 2012. Toward human sustainability: How to enable more thriving at work. *Organizational Dynamics* 41 (2): 155–162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2012.01.009>.
- Thrift, N.J. 2008. *Non-representational theory: Space, politics, affect*. London: Routledge.
- Uhl-Bien, Mary. 2006. Relational leadership theory: Exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *The Leadership Quarterly* 17 (6): 654–676. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.007>.
- Wilber, Ken. 2008. *Integral life practice: A 21st century blueprint for physical health, emotional balance, mental clarity, and spiritual awakening*. Boston: Integral Books.



Professional Staff, Professional Recognition: Bringing Learner Support Staff into the Fellowship of University Educators

18

Elizabeth A. Beckmann

Contents

Introduction: The Blended Professional in the Context of University Teaching	278
Recognizing Professionals in Higher Education Teaching and Learning:	
The UK Professional Standards Framework	281
Research Methodology	282
Background: The ANU Educational Fellowship Scheme	283
Findings from the Case Study	283
Why Did Professional Staff Apply for Fellowships?	284
The Process of Applying	285
Perceptions of the Reflective Writing Process	286
Impacts of Success on Individuals	287
Postrecognition Outcomes	287
Conclusion	288
References	290

Abstract

This chapter considers how professional recognition opportunities that do not differentiate between academics and professional staff have the capacity to engage and support the “blended professionals” who contribute to teaching and learning in higher education. Using participant observation and survey data from an Australian case study, this chapter reports the outcomes for professional staff who applied alongside academics for professional recognition of their university teaching and learner support experience through a fellowship scheme endorsed by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). This kind of inclusive approach to professional recognition is shown to be an important developmental pathway for

E. A. Beckmann (✉)
The Australian National University, Canberra, ACT, Australia
e-mail: elizabeth.beckmann@anu.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_16

277

professional staff, able to strengthen links between academic and professional staff in their shared activities around enhancing teaching quality and student learning outcomes in university education.

Keywords

Professional recognition · Professional staff · University teaching · Higher Education Academy · Fellowships · Teaching quality

Introduction: The Blended Professional in the Context of University Teaching

Strong political and social pressures are creating university workforces that are more accountable across diverse dimensions, with an emphasis on research outputs, teaching quality, and overall impact (Buckley et al. 2015; James et al. 2015). Student feedback on their satisfaction with teaching is being intensively used by universities as an accountability proxy for quality teaching, even at the level of the individual teacher, despite concerns about its validity for such a role (Darwin 2015). Despite the traditional view of the Ph.D. as a licence to teach, and an emphasis on research competence rather than teaching effectiveness in academic recruitment at some institutions, students are making clear their preference for staff qualified to teach rather than research (Buckley et al. 2015). Nationally and internationally mobile academics are thus increasingly needing to demonstrate their experience in teaching as well as research, through relevant teaching qualifications, transnational experience, and professional recognition (Bauder 2015; Korhonen and Weil 2015; Probert 2014; Smith 2009).

However, it is not only academics who support learners and learning in higher education institutions. This role is also played by those officially labeled as general, nonacademic, or professional (services) staff, such as librarians, academic skills advisers, learning advisers, educational designers, educational technologists, and staff working in student access, equity, and inclusion. In addition, the tensions between teaching and research competence, and government measures of research output per academic, have led to many teaching-focused or learner support staff in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia being reclassified as professional (services/general) staff in recent years (Fung and Gordon 2016; James et al. 2015; Probert 2014). These “blended,” “hybrid,” or “unbounded” staff (Berman and Pitman 2010; Szekeres 2011; Graham 2013) span a “third space” (Whitchurch 2006, 2009, 2013) that includes both professional and academic spheres of activity. Third space professional staff may support academic departments and individual academics by providing resources and services related to teaching and learning, such as in fields related to technology, or by delivering specialist individual or small-group teaching to students directly, for example, in academic or careers-focused skills. Often these professional staff work in cutting-edge areas of educational development, for example, related to independent learning, academic integrity, enacting change around the adoption of technologies, or student guidance around physical and mental health as

factors impacting on study and student attrition (Browne and Beetham 2010; Intentional Futures 2016; James et al. 2015, p. 18). These activities have become more important with the increasing diversification in both institutional missions and the student cohorts they serve that has ensued from imperatives for increasing participation and internationalization (Shah et al. 2016; Universities Australia 2013).

For these reasons, blended professionals are playing increasingly important roles in learners' outcomes in higher education, for example by having significant impact in the design and implementation of effective learning spaces and learning environments (Graham 2012; Intentional Futures 2016). Moreover, student interactions with professional staff appear to influence student engagement and retention outcomes just as much as interactions with academic staff (Parkes et al. 2014; Thomas 2012). Examining why UK students nominated academic or professional staff for teaching and learning awards, Thompson and Zaitseva (2012, p. 3) found that professional staff encouraged "a sense of belonging"; were "often considered by students like friends or family, providing ... emotional support, life related advice and practical help"; and acted as important "intermediaries between students and academics." The extent of this impact of professional staff on the educational roles of universities may not be widely understood. Even when professional staff are included within a university's formal and informal communities of practice around teaching and learning (e.g., through membership or observer status on committees and working groups, and participation in development programs), they – and others – may be unaware of the depth of their contributions to organizational culture and outcomes (Regan et al. 2014).

Tensions around professional standards and qualifications for professional staff contribute to difficulties in measuring their productivity related to teaching and learning in higher education. Graham (2013, p. 14) argues that universities should "recognise the contributions of professional staff to the core business of learning and teaching, and ... explicitly value these contributions." The latter, however, are rarely tied to anything tangible. Despite the ubiquitous name change in Australia from "general staff" to "professional staff," those involved in learning support are still often seen as having generic administrative skills rather than professional skills highly developed to a specific purpose. Recognizing and labeling these more specialized skills seems fundamental to good practice. In her in-depth study of Australian professional staff, Szekeres (2011, p. 689) noted that an environment of truly effective respect and cooperation between academics and professional staff may require a "shift into a new space where professional staff become increasingly more credentialed".

However, while credentials in finance or people management, for example, may be relatively easy for professional staff to access, institutional barriers often severely restrict opportunities for professional staff to gain credentials relevant to university teaching and learning. Certainly, many universities in Australasia and the UK provide formal professional teaching development programs for their academics, such as degree-based Graduate Certificates of Higher Education or the equivalent, supplemented by one-off workshops and nonaward Foundations of University Teaching programs or similar (Gibbs et al. 2000; Norton et al. 2013). Academic staff are generally supported in gaining these qualifications through research/study leave or fee relief/bursaries, especially if required as part of recruitment or probation

requirements. Nevertheless, in 2010 just 12 per cent of Australian academic staff had a general education qualification, and only 15 per cent held a degree in university teaching (Bexley et al. 2011). Almost three quarters of academic staff thus had no qualifications related to teaching, despite this often being a significant component of workload. With pressures for research outcomes vying with the time needed to gain degree-based teaching qualifications, and some researchers raising doubts as to the actual impact of such programs on teaching quality (Gibbs and Coffey 2004), universities have increasingly been replacing degree-based qualifications with continuing professional development programs that accentuate experience, skills, and/or communities of practice (Gibbs 2013; Beckmann 2016a).

Professional staff, however, often fall through the cracks, in that they are neither required nor encouraged by their institution to acquire this kind of development and recognition, even when it is directly related to their work with students or other ways of supporting learning, such as educational design or technology support. Unlike academics, professional staff are often able to enrol in award programs, such as Graduate Certificates, only by incurring significant financial and leave costs and may even find it difficult to access the free workshop-based professional development programs on offer to academics. Whitchurch (2009, p. 412) argues that this kind of institutional barrier to academically organized activities appears to be particularly inflexible in Australia: it has been reported that fewer than one in four Australian universities include professional staff in their teaching development activities (Ling and Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development 2009). As a result, Australian blended professionals often have to develop personal career paths that are relatively uncharted in terms of professional development, qualification, and recognition (Whitchurch 2009; James et al. 2015, p. 18). Moreover, in a higher education environment where short-term academic contracts are increasingly dominant (Harvey 2013, p. 1), many professional staff in blended roles are truly blended themselves, as academics who have transitioned from traditional teaching roles into professional staff positions that support learning more indirectly. Drivers for such shifts include not only the lack of academic positions, but also potentially more life-friendly working circumstances (clearer working hours or more part-time options as professional staff), and staff classification decisions by institutions. For example, in Australia and the UK, many of those involved in delivering professional development award programs in higher education teaching, such as Graduate Certificates, have themselves been reclassified from academic to professional staff (I. Solomonides, 2015, Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development, personal communication; Fung and Gordon 2016).

The outcome is a cohort of highly qualified and skilled professional staff who, in spanning multiple spheres of influence within a university, may often experience an “identity stretch” as they find their backgrounds and activities overlapping more and more with those of academics, yet without the same recognition or reward (Whitchurch 2009, p. 410). Any deliberate or inadvertent emphasis on accentuating differences, rather than similarities, in professional identities can lead not only to individuals frustrated at the lack of institutional recognition, but also to structural failures in effective collaboration toward shared institutional goals to enhance teaching quality, student engagement, and learning outcomes in university education.

A key question arising from the above discussion, therefore, is what benefits might accrue – to individuals and institutions – by more open and explicit acknowledgment of the contributions that professional staff make to the institutional core business of learning and teaching. This chapter addresses this question by considering some empirical research in the context of an Australian university that has created inclusive approaches to professional development and professional recognition opportunities related to university teaching and learning.

Recognizing Professionals in Higher Education Teaching and Learning: The UK Professional Standards Framework

The UK-based Higher Education Academy (HEA) sponsors a pathway for professional recognition specifically related to higher education teaching and learning. Four categories of professional recognition (HEA fellowships) are identified in relation to the three Dimensions of Practice and four Descriptors in the 2011 UK *Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education*. Descriptor 1 leads to the career entry level of Associate Fellowship (AFHEA), while sound experience across the full set of standards, Descriptor 2, leads to Fellowship (FHEA). Descriptor 3 denotes Senior Fellowship (SFHEA), for those with a thorough understanding of teaching and learning in higher education and a record of effective peer engagement and support. Descriptor 4 leads to Principal Fellowship (PFHEA) for those who have sustained records of impact in strategic leadership of teaching and learning at institutional level and beyond. Recognition in one of these categories is accessible either through taught programs, such as Graduate Certificates, or through the so-called “experiential” route, whereby individuals describe and reflect on their experiences in relation to teaching and learning in ways that evidence the relevant Descriptor.

While the experiential route is accessible by direct application to, and assessment by, the HEA, most higher education institutions instead seek quality-assured accreditation by HEA to deliver fellowship recognition themselves, in forms that suit their staff (see, for example, Thornton 2014; Beckmann 2016a; HEA 2016a). This accreditation may include diverse ways of assessing evidence of “experience” as well as taught (and assessed) professional development award or nonaward courses. Thus most university teaching development programs in the UK that lead to relevant awards (e.g., postgraduate certificates of higher education teaching and learning) are now accredited and quality assured by the HEA (Higher Education Academy 2016a, b). The HEA approach falls into the category of “more intense accreditation process” described by Freeman and Evans (2016, p. 65) as it involves “the interrogation of documented evidence . . . [by] peers and professionals,” annual reporting, and requirements for continuing professional development. Many UK universities have set targets for the proportion of staff who should attain recognition as HEA fellows, some as high as 100% of teaching staff (Thornton 2014).

Although developed and “owned” by the UK higher education sector, the UK *Professional Standards Framework* (PSF) describes generic elements universally

applicable not only to most higher education sectors worldwide but also potentially to *all* staff – whether academic or professional – involved in teaching and learning in those sectors. In the PSF’s four Descriptors, and in its underpinning three Dimensions of Practice (Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge and Professional Values), the crucial phrase that opens up recognition opportunities to professional staff is “support learners.” This phrasing was not accidental, nor has it gone unnoticed by institutions and individuals. Rather it provides scope for recognition through HEA-accredited schemes of all those associated with the diverse aspects of university teaching, including professional staff (Sargeant 2016). The range of activities and breadth of recognition categories in the PSF provides scope for inclusiveness, in marked contrast to the exclusiveness more common in professional membership programs. Together with the diversity of experience valued through the PSF itself, the outcome is recognition that is not restricted to academic staff who teach but instead easily extended to professional and technical staff involved in supporting learners. In an increasingly competitive market, professional staff can use recognition through HEA fellowships to demonstrate that they have “the knowledge and skills to operate in our modern educational environment [and] be a part of the drive towards standards and professionalism” (Bowman 2015).

Whitchurch (2009, p. 417) recommended that, in both the UK and Australia, institutions need to encourage “blended” professional staff to “extend their profiles . . . by contributing to an applied professional knowledge base and disseminating their research and practice.” Veles and Carter (2016) have advocated for a “university professional shared identity.” Throughout the UK, HEA-accredited schemes are seen as pathways through which nonacademic staff who support learners can gain professional recognition on a par with academics (S. Bradley, K. Hustler, HEA, 2015, personal communication). The following case study from an Australian university specifically describes the motivations and outcomes for professional staff who applied successfully for HEA fellowships through an Australian HEA-accredited scheme.

Research Methodology

This chapter is informed by a mixed methods approach (approved by ANU Human Research Ethics Protocol 2014/146) to collecting qualitative and quantitative data in 2015 and 2016 from professional staff participating in a specific professional recognition scheme (the ANU Educational Fellowship Scheme, EFS) for those involved in teaching and supporting learning. The author’s leadership role in the recognition scheme allowed access to multiple informal sources of data – including group discussions, direct observation of participants’ engagement, and emails – as a participant observer (Kawulich 2005). More formal data was collected in early 2016 via an online survey completed anonymously by 156 EFS fellows (from ANU and other Australian universities who had utilized the EFS route). An employment status question allowed responses to open-ended questions (on motivations, aspects of the application process, self-efficacy beliefs, and postrecognition outcomes) to be analyzed separately for the 17 professional staff respondents (from ANU and one other

university). In addition, a targeted email survey later in 2016 collected feedback from 10 professional staff at ANU.

Given the relatively small number of responses from professional staff involved (not more than 25 overall, given overlap in data sources), this chapter focuses on the qualitative data that represents the majority views of the professional staff informants on the basis of simple thematic analysis. Other aspects of the research have been reported by Beckmann (2016a, b). All survey quotes below are from professional staff who were recognized as Associate Fellows, Fellows, or Senior Fellows of the HEA by the ANU EFS from 2014 to 2016: minimal labeling has been used to avoid possible identification of individuals.

Background: The ANU Educational Fellowship Scheme

In 2013, the Australian National University (ANU) became the first institution outside the UK accredited to award HEA fellowships. In January 2014, the HEA-accredited ANU *Educational Fellowship Scheme* (EFS) was launched, open to *all* staff who either teach directly or who support learners in other ways. The EFS route to recognition involves individuals writing reflective narratives that evidence their experience related to the appropriate Descriptor in the PSF. These narratives are then judged by more experienced peers (already recognized fellows in the EFS) against the criteria of that Descriptor, as accredited by HEA for quality assurance. The EFS has adopted a developmental approach to supporting applicants, so that the process of writing an application itself takes on the nature of a professional development activity. By mid-2017, more than 350 ANU staff, and more than 200 staff from many other Australasian universities, had submitted successful HEA fellowship applications through the EFS (Beckmann 2016a, and unpublished data).

Given the novelty of HEA recognition in Australasia, most “early adopter” applicants were academic staff, often institutional educational leaders or national teaching award winners. Nonetheless, as information about the scheme spread, it quickly became evident that would-be applicants for professional recognition as university educators represented all groups of staff – tenured, contract, and sessional; senior and junior; teaching-intensive and research-intensive; discipline specialists and skills specialists; overseas-trained and Australian-trained; highly experienced and relatively inexperienced; and, especially relevant in this context, both academic and professional staff. This inclusiveness of recognition was specifically fostered in the ANU scheme and is considered one of its major strengths (Beckmann 2016a).

Findings from the Case Study

At ANU, as elsewhere, there are many third space professional staff whose qualifications, experience, and backgrounds are very similar, even identical, to those of academics, and who contribute significantly to the teaching and learning sphere of influence:

My role at the university is categorised as professional staff, but it requires a higher degree by research as it is a specialist role . . . I and many of my [professional staff] colleagues have PhDs or MAs by research . . . we have [previously] been involved in academia [as] . . . tutors, lecturers, course convenors . . . (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Nevertheless, when the recognition scheme for educators was launched at ANU, professional staff were initially reluctant to believe it had anything to offer them. Despite good relationships between academics and professional staff with student support roles at the University, underlying perceptions of “them and us” were still evident: “There are many like me in higher education – like, but not of, the academic staff. We are part of the university’s scholarly community, but the ways in which we participate are different from those of our academic colleagues” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Frustration related to a perceived lack of acknowledgment were also evident: “. . . certain professional staff have a very active and direct role in either teaching or supporting teaching that goes largely unnoticed and unrecognised because they are not categorised under the well-understood ‘academic’ label” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

However, as the first professional staff were mentored to write their experientially informed narratives, then publicly recognized through the EFS, there was an increasing enthusiasm among professional staff to take up the opportunity for recognition alongside academics. This was especially true among academic language and learning advisors and educational technologists, who were not only deeply engaged in the practices of teaching and learning, but also identified recognition as a direct path to engagement with academics. The quote below evidences this enthusiasm:

As academic language and learning staff, our role is almost universally misunderstood, especially amongst ‘academics’. Having a recognition program like the EFS means . . . overcoming the barriers faced by academic language and learning staff in professional staff roles. . . it allows us to highlight and showcase our varied teaching and learning experience in traditional . . . areas as well as our academic language and learning [work], and to explain . . . the way [discipline and skills teaching] . . . interconnect and rely on each other to ensure that students [acquire] . . . the necessary graduate attributes (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Why Did Professional Staff Apply for Fellowships?

James et al. (2015, p. 17) note the expectation in Australian universities that “academic and professional staff will increasingly work together.” It is not surprising, therefore, that professional staff reported that they applied for recognition for reasons similar to those given by academics, especially focused on the cross-institutional and international nature of the recognition, and the collegial nature of the scheme. Many professional staff applicants, however, also reported being motivated to apply specifically to facilitate and improve their working relationships with academics, a view exemplified in the response below:

As a Fellow of the HEA, I went through the same process [the academics] did to gain my recognition, all in line with a *Professional Standards Framework* that governs the work we all do. Hopefully this will allow academics to take our work more seriously and to think about and embrace what we have to offer their students (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Professional staff were more likely than academics to have been encouraged to apply by a colleague. One group of early adopter fellows became very enthusiastic in spreading the concept to other professional staff working in their sphere, and became in-house mentors to their colleagues, almost all of whom have now applied successfully. Another reason why professional staff applied for the fellowship was the relative dearth of esteem indicators and qualifications around their work in teaching and learning. Professional staff survey respondents were much more likely than academics to report interest in this kind of recognition in connection with future job prospects, as this response exemplifies: “[Offers] CV improvement in a widely recognised way i.e. not just at ANU but at multiple and international universities” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

The Process of Applying

Although there are different pathways at different universities, applying for recognition within the ANU scheme mirrors direct application to the HEA itself, by requiring a written first-person reflective narrative that presents an applicant’s experiences related to teaching and supporting learners in higher education. Reflective practice is often considered the hallmark of professionals (Barnett 1997, p. 132). For this reason, there is a deliberate focus on mentored, guided, and written reflection throughout the EFS application process. Like academic applicants, professional staff welcome this structured approach, as exemplified by this feedback:

The nature of the reflective narratives . . . means that you are able to really consider what has worked in your different roles and what has not, the reasons why and how you learnt from this. It helps to ensure that you remain critical of your practices and aware of your strengths and weaknesses (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Applicants are supported by experienced EFS mentors and by discipline-based referees. The mentors help the applicants first to engage with the *Professional Standards Framework* (which is new to almost all), including the Descriptor for the relevant category of fellowship in the context of the applicant’s experience. The EFS mentors then contribute customized professional development in the form of reflective coaching as the applicant writes his or her narrative (from 2000 words for Associate Fellowship to 7000 words for Principal Fellowship). Like academic staff, professional staff have reported satisfaction and engagement with this mentored, collegial, and supportive environment, as typified in this example of feedback:

The most exciting part [of my application] was writing my narrative. [My EFS mentor] was very kind and patient while commenting on my drafts. Her constructive feedback not only improved my writing, but also made me think and reflect on specific elements of my teaching experience (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Perceptions of the Reflective Writing Process

Professional staff respondents echoed academics in reporting the mentoring as extremely valuable: “I found the support behind the application process thorough and helpful . . . the [writing] workshops certainly made the expectations clear” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Again like their academic counterparts, professional staff applicants found it powerful to focus on reflective, not just descriptive, writing as the form of the narrative:

In the frenzy of university life time for reflection on and articulation of the learning and teaching principles and values that underline one’s practice can be overlooked. The process of applying for a fellowship offered a clear structured framework for reflection, evidencing practice with a clear end goal (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Both academic and professional staff reported that the process of application became a form of professional development in its own right, as exemplified by this feedback about the application process:

. . . [it] was an amazing opportunity to reflect on our practices and contribute to our ongoing professional development. There are not many opportunities for professional development for professional staff, especially around teaching (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Moreover, it appeared that the experience of the fellowship application process convinced some applicants of the utility of reflective writing as an ongoing contribution to their practice, as illustrated by the following quote:

[Our professional staff team now sees] reflective writing as a way to improve our teaching and our communication about teaching, both communication within the team and with other staff (Professional Staff 2016, survey).

Indeed, professional staff appeared almost more likely than academic staff to have found the reflective process powerful in revealing just how much they had actually done in the context of teaching and learning. Often this revelation was related to career progress: “. . . it was nice to have an opportunity to examine how far I’ve come in my career in this field” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Perhaps because of the “unplanned” career trajectories of professional staff (Whitchurch 2009; James et al. 2015, p. 18), the reflective overview was sometimes eye-opening. For example, one successful applicant reported that the most enriching part of the application was “Going back and rediscovering projects that I had been involved with, and reflecting on the learnings . . . Realising that, when put together, I had a substantial body of work” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

One required feature of every fellowship application narrative is a statement of the applicant’s personal teaching philosophy, which essentially identifies applicants’ motivations (usually values-driven) for being involved in higher education. Being required to make these motivations and values explicit was seen as beneficial, as illustrated by this quote: “. . . for the first time, [I] wrote down my teaching philosophy. I think I have

always had my philosophy on my mind, but having it in writing made a big difference. I could see my values and beliefs as an educator and what made me passionate about teaching” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Increasingly, academic staff may find themselves appointed to new roles, or reclassified, as professional staff. One such applicant reported on the benefits of reflection for self-perception:

I had a chance to assess my teaching experience and myself as a former [academic] educator . . . For the first time I could see [my current] teaching and assessing responsibilities with so many students: that was the thing I almost forgot in my recent professional [staff] roles (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Impacts of Success on Individuals

Successful fellowship applicants are sent a congratulatory email with positive, often extensive, assessor feedback on their strengths as educators. Like the academics, most professional staff canvassed in the survey reported that this feedback was “very affirming,” and increased the sense of achievement. Professional staff respondents often also reported that the capacity of the PSF criteria to accept their experience provided additional encouragement: “I was . . . pleased that, as a professional staff member, the assessors were very supportive of the range of experience that I had been able to demonstrate” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Professional staff often showed concern that their activities would not be considered worthy of recognition: “I was very excited that my teaching experience and skills were recognized with such positive and rewarding feedback from the [assessors]” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Like many academics accepted as fellows, professional staff told of their real pleasure, even surprise, at being successful in their applications. One applicant noted “The day I received an email that my application was awarded with [fellowship] I felt very privileged and appreciated” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey), while another showed the extent of doubt that professional staff could actually achieve parity of recognition: “I was so surprised to be accepted as a Senior Fellow that I barely took it in at first. I had to go back and look at it more than once!” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Postrecognition Outcomes

The feedback from successful professional staff about the application process shows that inclusion and recognition were of value in their own right to the individuals concerned: “It has definitely raised my confidence knowing that [our educational] leaders . . . are routinely and explicitly showcasing professional staff, as well as academic staff, [who have] fellowship” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). The intended outcome is for the impact of recognition to spread. Even though some professional staff respondents had not had their fellowships for long, many reported institutional recognition and a greater willingness for collaboration by academic staff colleagues:

Academic staff who know that I am a Senior Fellow have demonstrated a greater openness to working with me. This is the sort of endorsement which makes my work partnering with academics easier (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Events run for fellows postrecognition provide an inclusive milieu in which discussions about teaching and learning can be held without barriers: “a way to meet people across the university . . . so that the silos are traversed” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). Given that the EFS has a focus on communities of practice (Beckmann 2016b) and distributed leadership (Beckmann 2017), professional staff who attain Senior Fellowship or Fellowship are just like their academic counterparts, offered opportunities to mentor and assess future applicants. Assigning fellowship applications from professional staff to both professional and academic staff mentors and assessors, and vice versa, facilitates third space engagement and developmental processes (V. Silvey, 2016, personal communication; T. Snowball, 2016, personal communication). The feedback from professional staff who take on such roles is positive:

[Doing] assessments [has been] a way to gain knowledge of the university’s diverse operations and the variety of ways in which people teach and support students. . . . [I see] assessments across institutions [as a] a way to build networks and collaborative capacity between different Australian universities (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

The nested developmental hierarchy among the HEA Associate Fellowship, Fellowship, and Senior Fellowship categories means that achievement of one category can provide individuals with a scaffolded approach and impetus for their future experiential and professional development as educators. One successful applicant described this perception in this way: “currently working on my [next category of fellowship] application . . . clearly I think that the program is worthwhile” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Overall, the capacity for this kind of recognition to boost self-efficacy (Bandura 1997) and personal motivation among professional staff is captured in this feedback from an Associate Fellow (the entry category):

The EFS application process and receiving the [fellowship] title [as a member of professional staff] gave me . . . confidence and empowered me to take up more responsibilities related to teaching or writing about teaching. It encouraged me so much that I even started thinking about pursuing a PhD degree to become a lecturer in education studies. . . . (Professional Staff, 2016, survey).

Conclusion

Professional staff in Australian universities increasingly include many who directly support the institutional core business of learning and teaching, yet these contributions are not often explicitly and formally recognized and valued (James et al. 2015, p. 18). There is a need for both a “more explicit conception of the paraprofessionals . . . those who ride the boundaries,” and a “more sophisticated and nuanced conception

of academic work that recognises the unique contribution of academic staff, together with those paraprofessionals or ‘blended professionals’ who are pivotal to supporting academic staff” (James et al. 2015, p. 18). In a detailed consideration of the need to take university teaching “seriously,” based on significant empirical research in Australian universities, Norton et al. (2013, p. 55) concluded that “policy pressures to improve teaching are necessary, but professionalisation should be the long-term goal.” Agreeing with this suggestion, but without access to an Australian recognition scheme for university teaching (James et al. 2015), many Australian universities are reaching out to the fellowship scheme accredited by the UK-based Higher Education Academy against the UK Professional Standards Framework, through which more than 98,000 fellows have already been recognized worldwide (HEA International, November 2017, personal communication).

As this chapter has explicitly shown, one of the strengths of this approach is its focus on recognizing and rewarding experience in supporting teaching and learning, rather than positional status, and its inclusiveness across staff designations. The latter is especially important when institutions are either reclassifying teaching staff as professional services staff (as has happened in the UK; Fung and Gordon 2016), reclassifying teaching development staff as professional staff (as has happened in Australia), or expecting professional staff to have major inputs into significant educational initiatives (as is happening in both countries). Whitchurch (2013), in an in-depth analysis related to professional staff in Australia, the UK, and the United States of America, identifies relationship building as one of many facets of the “rise of the third space professional” that are prerequisites for future success. Understanding that both professional development and professional recognition are crucial to enabling individuals to become “increasingly engaged and effective through their career” (Fung and Gordon 2016, p. 53), one can only expect a win-win outcome from an approach that supports both academic and professional staff in their contributions to the teaching mission of a university.

This chapter has described some of the positive outcomes for professional staff who have been encouraged to join their academic colleagues in applying for internationally accredited recognition of their experience and commitment to teaching and supporting learners. Including all staff in a new approach to professional recognition of university educators has already proved successful for the case-study institution, not only in giving individuals appropriate recognition, but also in helping to “establish a crucial shared language between academics and the professional wing of university life” (Professional Staff, 2016, survey). By demonstrating the capability of appropriate professional recognition to create shared, instead of divergent, pathways for academic and professional staff, this chapter has indicated the potential for the third space to be one of inclusion, not exclusion. With the right strategic infrastructure involving a solid base in inclusiveness and distributed leadership, a professional recognition scheme for university educators can become the center of an institution-wide community of practice that focuses on peer engagement and continuing professional development, regardless of the staff’s designation or status within an institution’s bureaucracy.

References

- Bandura, Albert. 1997. *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: WH Freeman.
- Barnett, R. 1997. *Higher education: A critical business*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bauder, H. 2015. The international mobility of academics: A labour market perspective. *International Migration* 5: 83–96.
- Beckmann, E.A. 2016a. Teaching excellence: Recognising the many as well as the few. In *Research and Development in Higher Education: The Shape of Higher Education*, ed. M. Davis and A. Goody, vol. 39, 13–22. Refereed papers from the 39th HERDSA Annual International Conference, Fremantle, Australia, 4–7 July 2016. Retrieved from <http://herdsa.org.au/research-and-development-higher-education-vol-39>.
- Beckmann, E.A. 2016b. Forums, fellowship and wicked problems in teaching. In *Communities of practice: Facilitating social learning in higher education*, ed. J. McDonald and A. Cater-Steel, 545–565. Singapore: Springer.
- Beckmann, E.A. 2017. Leadership through fellowship: Distributed leadership in a professional recognition scheme for university educators. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 39 (2): 155–168.
- Berman, J.E., and T. Pitman. 2010. Occupying a ‘third space’: Research trained professional staff in Australian universities. *Higher Education* 60 (2): 157–169.
- Bexley, E., R. James, and S. Arkoudis. 2011. *The Australian academic profession in transition*. Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne.
- Bowman, S. 2015. Librarians awake! Higher Education Academy Blogs. Retrieved from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/librarians-awake>
- Browne, T., and H. Beetham. 2010. *The positioning of educational technologists in enhancing the student experience*. Oxford: Association of Learning Technology & Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from http://repository.alt.ac.uk/831/1/Tom_Browne_Helen_Beetham_HEA_finalweb.pdf.
- Buckley, A., I. Soilemetzidis, and N. Hillman. 2015. *The 2015 student academic experience survey*. York: Higher Education Academy Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/StudentAcademicExperienceSurvey2015.pdf>.
- Darwin, S. 2015. The emergence of contesting motives for student feedback-based evaluation in Australian higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development* 35 (3): 419–432.
- Freeman, M., and E. Evans. 2016. Professional associations, accreditation and higher education: Foundations for future relations. In *Relevance and Professional Associations in 2026*, ed. J. Guthrie, E. Evans and R. Burritt, Academic Leadership Series, vol. 7, 63–76. Sydney: NSW Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, and RMIT University.
- Fung, D., and C. Gordon. 2016. *Rewarding educators and education leaders in research-intensive universities*. York: Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/rewarding_educators_and_education_leaders.pdf.
- Gibbs, G. 2013. Reflections on the changing nature of educational development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (1): 4–14.
- Gibbs, G., and M. Coffey. 2004. The impact of training of university of teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to teaching and the approach to learning of their students. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 5 (1): 887–100.
- Gibbs, G., T. Habeshaw, and M. Yorke. 2000. Institutional learning and teaching strategies in English higher education. *Higher Education* 40: 351–372.
- Graham, C. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (4): 437–452.
- Graham, C. 2013. Professional staff contributions to positive student outcomes. *Australian Universities’ Review* 55 (1): 7–16.
- Harvey, M. 2013. Setting the standards for sessional staff: Quality learning and teaching. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* 10 (3). Retrieved from <http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol10/iss3/4>.

- Higher Education Academy. 2016a. Recognition and accreditation. Retrieved from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/recognition-accreditation>.
- Higher Education Academy. 2016b. Annual report 2014–15. Retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/hea_annual_report_2014-15_final.pdf
- Intentional Futures. 2016. Instructional design in higher education: A report on the role, work flow, and experience of instructional designers. Retrieved from http://intentionalfutures.com/reports/instructional_design/files/Instructional%20Design%20in%20Higher%20Education%20Report.pdf.
- James, R., C. Baik, V. Millar, R. Naylor, E. Bexley, G. Kennedy, K. Krause, M. Hughes-Warrington, D. Sadler, S. Booth, and C. Booth. 2015. *Advancing the quality and status of teaching in Australian higher education*. Melbourne: University of Melbourne. Retrieved from <http://www.olt.gov.au/resource-academic-workforce-2025>.
- Kawulich, B.B. 2005. Participant observation as a data collection method. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung [Forum: Qualitative Social Research]* 6(2), Art. 43. Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/466/996>.
- Korhonen, V., and M. Weil. 2015. The internationalization of higher education: University teachers' competencies and professional development. In *Teaching skills assessments: Qualitätsmanagement und Personalentwicklung in der Hochschullehre*, ed. R. Effer and M. Merkt, 49–71. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Ling, P., and Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development. 2009. *Development of Academics and Higher Education Futures*. Vol. 1. Sydney: Report to Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Retrieved from http://www.cadad.edu.au/pluginfile.php/401/course/section/79/DAHEF_Final_report_2009_voll_1_.pdf.
- Norton, A., J. Sonnemann, and I. Cherastidham. 2013. *Taking university teaching seriously*. Melbourne: Grattan Institute.
- Parkes, S., J.B. Young, E. Cleaver, and K. Archibald. 2014. *Academic and professional services in partnership literature review and overview of results. Leading the student experience*. York: Higher Education Academy.
- Probert, B. 2014. Becoming a university teacher: The role of the PhD. In *Discussion paper 3*. Canberra: Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.
- Regan, J., E. Dollard, and N. Banks. 2014. A comparative study of the perceptions of professional staff on their contribution to student outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (5): 533–545.
- Sargeant, A. 2016. Talking teaching: Why I became an HEA fellow. Higher Education Academy Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/blog/talking-teaching-why-i-became-hea-fellow-arthur-sargeant#sthash.zf121Txk.dpuf>
- Shah, M., A. Bennett, and E. Southgate. 2016. *Widening higher education participation: A global perspective*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Smith, K. 2009. Transnational teaching experiences: An under-explored territory for transformative professional development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 14 (2): 111–122.
- Szekeres, J. 2011. Professional staff carve out a new space. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 679–691.
- Thomas, L. 2012. *Building student engagement and belonging in higher education at a time of change: Final report from the what works? Student retention and success programme*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation/HEFCE.
- Thompson, S., and E. Zaitseva. 2012. *Reward and recognition: Student-led teaching awards report. HEA policy reports*. York: Higher Education Academy.
- Thornton, T. 2014. Professional recognition: Promoting recognition through the Higher Education Academy in a UK higher education institution. *Tertiary Education and Management* 20 (3): 225–238.
- Universities Australia. 2013. An agenda for Australian higher education 2013–2016: A smarter Australia. Retrieved from https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/ArticleDocuments/209/An%20Agenda%20for%20Australian%20Higher%20Education2103_2016.pdf.aspx.

- Veles, N., and M.A. Carter. 2016. Imagining a future: Changing the landscape for third space professionals in Australian higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 38 (5): 519–533.
- Whitchurch, C. 2006. *Professional managers in UK higher education: Preparing for complex futures. Interim report*. London: Leadership Foundation of Higher Education, research and Development. Retrieved from <http://www.lfhe.ac.uk/download.cfm/docid/8CDF90BE-A540-4175-AD4727C34CE9BC23>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the UK, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418.
- Whitchurch, C. 2013. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of third space professionals*. Abingdon: Routledge.



Pedagogical Partnerships: Collaborations for Positive Student Outcomes

19

Carroll Graham

Contents

Introduction	294
The Context of Australian Higher Education	295
Student Expectations and Massification	296
Student Outcomes: <i>The Core Purpose</i>	296
The Case	297
Methodology	297
Participants	299
Findings and Discussion	300
Welcoming, Efficient and Comprehensive	300
Professional Staff Pedagogical Partnerships	302
Professionalization	304
Implications and Recommendations	305
Limitations and Further Research	307
Conclusion	308
References	308

Abstract

This chapter reports on a case study that explored the contributions of professional staff to student outcomes at one Australian university. This case study examined the practices of professional staff in their day-to-day work and analyzed their behaviors in relation to student outcomes. The research design used a two-stage process involving the development of a framework for analysis, followed by an in-depth exploration of self-reported behaviors for a range of professional staff roles. From the second stage interview data, a conceptualization, *professional staff pedagogical partnerships*, was developed to describe and analyze the work of professional staff

C. Graham (✉)
University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia
e-mail: carroll.graham@uts.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_1

293

in relation to student outcomes. Four domains were identified as enablers or inhibitors to the formation of *pedagogical partnerships*. *Pedagogical partnerships* provides a theorization of the working lives of professional staff, the changing and increasing complexity of their roles, and the contributions professional staff make to student outcomes. Finally, recommendations for changes to the structure of professional and academic positions are discussed, which represent a revolutionary change towards a twenty-first-century model that could liberate the potential of all university staff.

Keywords

Professional staff · Student outcomes · Student retention and success · Student experience · Collaborative working · Institutional behaviors · Networking

Introduction

Since the late 1980s, professional staff in Australian universities have comprised more than half the higher education workforce (aggregated data from Department of Education 2012; Department of Education and Training 2016b), yet little has been known about their contributions to the core purposes of their institutions, namely, education and research. This chapter examines the practices of professional staff in their day-to-day work and analyzes their behaviors in relation to student outcomes. Based on case study research at one Australian university into the work of professional staff, as viewed from their own perspectives (Graham 2013b), a clear picture has emerged of the contributions that professional staff make to positive student outcomes in terms of retention, persistence, and achievement of students.

This research used a two-stage process: Stage 1 investigated and developed a framework for the enquiry, which was used in Stage 2 to inform the coding and analysis of interview data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 professional staff in a wide range of roles. From the interview data, a conceptualization of the work of professional staff in relation to student outcomes was derived. This conceptualization – as *professional staff pedagogical partnerships* – provides a theorization of the working lives of professional staff, the changing and increasing complexity of their roles, and the contributions professional staff make to student outcomes.

In the latter part of this chapter, it is argued that the changing identities and roles of professional staff in the twenty-first century require a shift from the industrial era human resource structures currently used, to a model that is more relevant to the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) knowledge era in which we are now working. For example, during the 1960s university structures were likened to an “academic civil service” (Sloman quoted in Whitchurch 2006, p. 160), and such analogies have persisted well into the current century (Gill 2009). Indeed, the Australian government continues to enshrine such notions through its use of terminology such as *academic staff* and *nonacademic staff* or *academic staff* and *other* (Department of Education and Training 2016b). However, such terminology and the associated models are no longer relevant to the relationship between highly qualified and experienced professionals, whether they be working in academic-focused or

management-focused roles. For example, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Professor Glyn Davis, questioned the accuracy and usefulness of existing classifications for professional staff (Davis cited in Matchett 2016). To address this paradigm shift, a matrix model (Graham 2014) and an associated single pay spine model are discussed, which represent a revolutionary approach to a model for twenty-first-century industrial relations that could tap the potential of all university staff.

The Context of Australian Higher Education

Conditions in higher education changed dramatically during the quarter century spanning the turn of the twenty-first century, both in Australia and overseas, as external pressures from global transformations impacted on universities. Such changes may be classified as two types: *broad change forces*, which has created wider changes within and beyond universities, and *higher education related*, which has created changes more directly associated with universities (Fullan and Scott 2009; Scott et al. 2008). Specifically, the last decade of the twentieth century saw rapid growth in higher education participation, changes in higher education funding and accountability, increasing demand for new disciplines and transdisciplinary approaches, and changes to industrialization and industrial relations policy (Coaldrake and Stedman 1999). Additional and accelerating global drivers for change include the rapid growth and diversification of information technology and changing student expectations of their higher education experience (Bradley et al. 2008; Scott et al. 2008; Wilen-Daugenti 2009).

It has long been recognized that “the key resource for universities is their staff, academic and general [professional]” (Hoare 1995, p. 10). At the same time, staff costs are a significant expense in Australian universities, accounting for more than half the total continuing operations costs (Department of Education and Training 2015). As a key resource and a major expense, staff must be appropriately developed and their potentials fostered if universities are to continue to achieve their missions and strategic goals in the current VUCA environment. Yet in order to more comprehensively understand this issue, we need to understand the roles that professional staff play in contributing to the core purposes of these institutions.

As noted above, professional staff have comprised more than half the workforce in Australian universities since the late 1980s; furthermore, they hold much of the systemic knowledge underpinning the functioning of the university. However, until recently, there has been little research into the work of professional staff and into the effective use of this pool of talent. Conway (2000) asserted that university administrators were ignored by government, by their universities, and by academics. It is not surprising that academic staff have written little about the work and identities of professional staff, since academics tend to “focus on the areas that concern them the most” (Pitman 2000, p. 166). At the time of writing this chapter, little has changed. Thus, the small yet growing body of literature about the work and identities of professional staff has been written typically by professional staff (Graham 2012). This chapter derives from my research, as a higher education professional, into the contributions that professional staff make to the core purpose of education, through the achievement of student outcomes.

Student Expectations and Massification

Changing student expectations have been affected significantly by changing demographics of the student population, with different types of students having different needs and expectations of their higher education experience (Bradley et al. 2008). Generational changes can be seen, with millennial students expecting continuous connectivity, remote access to learning environments, immediate personal returns from their higher education and for their expenditure, and expecting to be consulted and catered for (Correia and Watson 2013; Nimon 2007; Sharabi 2013). Notably, the proportion of international students in Australian higher education grew from 5.5% to 27% of the total student population in the 20 years between 1991 and 2011 (aggregated data from DEEWR 2012), and it is generally recognized that international students have greater needs for student support services than domestic students (Bradley et al. 2008). While the proportion of international students has remained relatively stable since 2007, the Australian student population has generally become more diversified over the last 5 years, with the proportion of students from disadvantaged groups increasing slowly but steadily (aggregated data from Department of Education and Training 2016a).

Along with increasing diversity of the student population has been a growth in overall student numbers. Between 1989 and 2014, student numbers in higher education rose from 441,074 to 1,373,230 (aggregated data from DEEWR 2012; Department of Education and Training 2016a), representing an increase in the proportion of the total Australian population from 2.6% in 1989 to 5.9% in 2014 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, 2011, 2015). This substantial growth, or *massification*, led to changes in funding sources, with proportionally less government funding (Norton and Cherastidham 2014), increased student to academic staff ratios, and overall higher workloads for all university staff (Dobson 2005). Similarly, professional staff numbers increased by only 58% between 1991 and 2014, in contrast to an increase in student numbers of almost 160% (aggregated data DEEWR 2012; Department of Education and Training 2016a, b). Yet this diluted group of professional staff is crucial to effective operations of universities.

Student Outcomes: *The Core Purpose*

Although universities have developed a broader agenda during the twenty-first century, becoming multifaceted and multiproduct organizations, education, and research remain their core purposes; as such, these purposes remain fundamental to the success and strategic goals of their institutions (Shattock 2010). While contributions of professional staff to research, through research management and administration, have been studied by various practitioners (e.g., Allen-Collinson 2007; Sebalj and Holbrook 2009; Shelley 2010), prior to my case study there had been little research into the contributions that professional staff make to learning and teaching (Graham 2013a). Yet, of the three areas that comprise the core purpose of universities – education, research, and university engagement and service – Fullan

and Scott (2009) argue that learning and teaching should be placed centrally and should become the integrator for all three core purposes. Furthermore, an earlier study determined that “it is students’ total experience of university – not just what happens in the traditional classroom – that shapes their judgments of quality, promotes retention and engages them in productive learning” (Scott 2006, p. vii). Consequently, when taken in the context of the proportion of professional staff in Australian universities and the centrality of education, it is clear that a better understanding of the work of professional staff in relation to achievement of positive student outcomes is essential.

The Case

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) was chosen as the site for this case study for both representative (Yin 2009) and logistical reasons (Daymon and Holloway 2002). UTS is a large modern Australian university located in Sydney, New South Wales, and has several characteristics that make it representative of many Australian universities (Graham 2013a). Furthermore, as UTS was my workplace during this study, it was both convenient for me and of benefit to UTS for UTS to be the case study site. The aim of the case study was to investigate how professional staff contribute to student outcomes, from the perspectives of the staff themselves, using a pragmatic constructivist approach (Morgan 2007; Patton 2002).

Methodology

Due to the lack of previous research considering the work of professional staff in relation to student outcomes, a two-stage research design was developed. The first stage resulted in a framework that could be used in the case study analysis. Such a framework was also needed to explore any link between professional staff behaviors and positive student outcomes. The overall research design is shown schematically in Fig. 1.

Stage 1: Development of the Professional Staff—Student Outcomes Framework

Stage 1 of this research project investigated and developed a framework for analysis, which was subsequently used in Stage 2 to inform the coding and analysis of interview data. This Stage 1 study addressed the research question: *How can the contributions of professional staff to student outcomes be investigated?* Development of this framework – the Professional Staff–Student Outcomes (PSSO) Framework – involved a nine-step process: an in-depth literature search and analysis (Steps 1–4) and a Delphi study (Steps 5–9), which used a series of questionnaires interspersed with feedback to achieve consensus on the ranking of key propositions by a group of expert professional staff (Graham 2010, 2013c), as outlined below.

During the literature search and analysis phase (Fig. 1), a meta-study was located that reviewed 146 international studies into the effects of institutional support practices

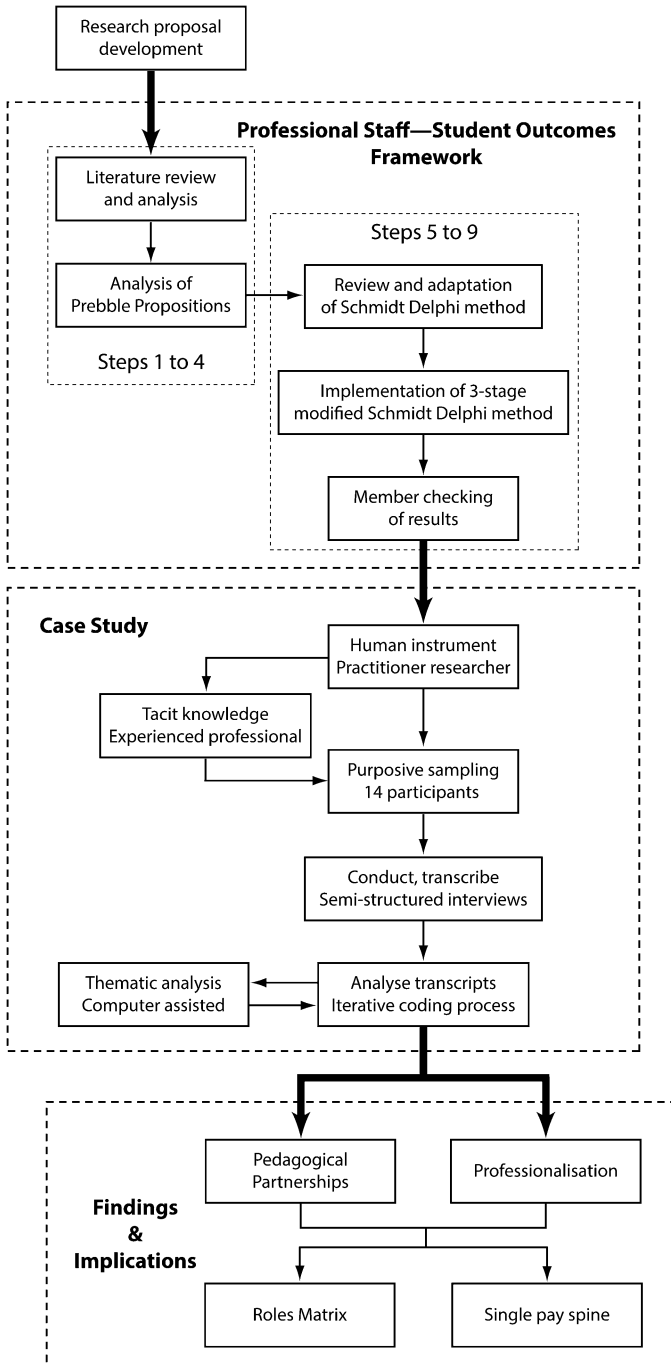


Fig. 1 Research design

on student outcomes (Prebble et al. 2004). This meta-study derived 13 propositions for student support (henceforth referred to as *Prebble Propositions*) for enhancement of student outcomes in terms of retention, persistence, and achievement. Despite the focus on student services, almost no mention was made of professional staff who manage and are at the front line of these services. Nevertheless, it became clear that an understanding of how professional staff might contribute to key behaviors identified in the Prebble Propositions could provide insight into how professional staff contribute to student outcomes. Accordingly, the following sub-questions were explored using a modified Schmidt Delphi method (Schmidt 1997):

- *According to professional staff, to which of the Prebble Propositions for student support (Prebble et al. 2004) do professional staff contribute?*
- *What is the order of significance of this contribution, as viewed by professional staff?*
- *What other activities do professional staff undertake that support positive student outcomes?*

This study established that 10 of 13 Prebble Propositions were relevant to professional staff (Graham 2010), leading to the development of the PSSO Framework (Graham 2013c) and its subsequent use for analysis in stage 2.

Stage 2: The Case Study

Findings from Stage 1 (Graham 2010) confirmed that there would be value in conducting in-depth interviews with range of professional staff. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to identify a variety of professional staff who had at least 3 years' experience in higher education. Theoretical saturation – the point at which no new themes are observed – may occur after 12 interviews for a relatively homogeneous purposive sample (Guest et al. 2006). In line with this finding, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Participants

Professional staff were recruited from 12 different work units within the case study site. Of the 14 participants, 64% were women, which corresponded to the overall proportion of women professional staff at UTS during the period of the study. As can be seen in Table 1, participants' length of experience in higher education ranged from 3 to 24 years, averaging almost 10 years, while the length of service at UTS across different age groups reflected the pattern for the total UTS professional staff population. Half the participants had worked *only* at UTS, whereas the other half had worked at one other university. Participants worked in positions ranging from Higher Education Worker (HEW) level 5 to above level 10, with the median being level 7. In Australian universities, HEW levels refer to the classification structure for professional staff. The classification ranges from HEW 1, which is the lowest level and is generally rarely used, to HEW10+, which includes directors and managers. At the time of the study, HEW 5 and 6 were the most common levels at UTS, representing 40% of all professional staff in

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of case study participants

Characteristic	Measure
Total number of participants	14
Female participants (%)	64
Minimum experience working in higher (years)	3.0
Maximum experience working in higher (years)	24
Average experience working in higher (years)	9.9
Average experience at case study university (years)	8.1
Participants with other higher education experience (%)	50
Number of different work units	12
Minimum HEW level	5
Maximum HEW level	>10
Median HEW level	7
Number participants with Bachelor's degree	9
Number participants with postgrad qualifications	6
Number participants with at least a Master's degree	4

the period 2009–2011. Six of the 14 participants had completed a postgraduate coursework program, while four staff were studying at the time of this research study.

The interviews were conducted in neutral spaces and lasted 45–90 minutes, apart from one interview that was 30 minutes long. The average length of the interviews, including the outlier, was 64 minutes. The interviews were digitally recorded and then professionally transcribed. Analysis of the data was informed by the PSSO framework and used first cycle descriptive coding as well as structural coding (Saldaña 2009). This permitted identification of key themes and subsequent second cycle coding provided elaboration of these themes, identifying subthemes. The online software application, *Dedoose* (SocioCultural Research Consultants n.d.), was used to assist with coding and the associated analysis. This facilitated efficient generation of initial codes and testing of emergent themes and patterns. Importantly, *Dedoose* facilitated the identification of co-occurrence – the application of two or more codes to the same piece of text (Namey et al. 2008) – which led to insights into connections between different themes.

Findings and Discussion

Welcoming, Efficient and Comprehensive

I think it's important to ensure that staff understand how much of an impact they have on the students and their lives, and how important some of these small processes are, and that they know how important it is to the students. (Participant 2)

Applying the PSSO Framework in the analysis of the case study, the contributions of professional staff to student outcomes were found to be most significant in ensuring that behaviors, environments, and processes are welcoming and efficient

(Prebble Proposition 1, PP1) and in providing a comprehensive range of services and facilities (Prebble Proposition 8, PP8) (Graham 2012, 2013a, d). Furthermore, there was a high level of co-occurrence between these two propositions, suggesting that in providing these services and facilities, staff need to ensure that environments and behaviors are welcoming and that processes are efficient, in order to make a positive contribution to student outcomes. Although it is perhaps predictable that PP1 would be clearly identifiable in the interview data, the contributions by professional staff are often overlooked:

I guess in the overall way that the University sees things, I think that the small encounters that a lot of the professional staff have with students – it's not picked up how much of a difference they really make. I hear from students that a small thing a person in the student centre has said, which stopped them from pulling out of the course, just gave them that little bit of something to think about, like 'I will keep going'. (Participant 8)

In particular, Fowler and Boylan (2010) discuss the importance of having clear guidelines for the institution's policies and procedures, and they suggest that an 'improved understanding of institutional policies, procedures, and consequences of noncompliance may impact the attrition rate for students in developmental education' (p. 3). Data from this case suggest that expertise in this area lies primarily with professional staff, and this is recognized by the staff themselves:

I think being informed about policies and procedures of the university is important; things that you deal with intimately in your role, to things overall I might not be at the counter [directly answering student enquiries] but I still see that knowledge, and having up to date knowledge about those things, as beneficial to this role because I can then make a positive contribution that is effective and efficient. [It's] not just only worrying about your little corner here but knowing how this might then have implications for students because of the other frameworks that you all have to fit into. (Participant 5)

The role that a comprehensive range of facilities and services play in supporting student retention (PP8) has been extensively explored (e.g., Fowler and Boylan 2010; Tinto 2004). Yet the professional staff who provide these services are often invisible in these discussions, such services being referred to as 'institutional services' (Prebble et al. 2004, p. 71). Furthermore, the academic staff are typically 'not aware of the types of support services that are available to students nor do some see it as their responsibility to lead students to these services' (Hinton 2007, p. 22). Nevertheless, the participants in this case study recognized the importance of the facilities and services provided by professional staff to the retention of students:

Education is becoming a very, very competitive market. It's becoming even more competitive by the year. UTS's greatest challenge is to attract new students, but after having attracted the students it also needs to retain them. That directly correlates to the quality of the academics that are involved in education as well as quality of facilities that are available to accommodate the needs of teaching and learning My involvement, not in all projects but in a considerable percentage of those [building] projects, directly impacts on the environment that's provided to students. (Participant 12)

We get feedback from students that if counselling and special needs and financial assistance [staff] weren't here, for some students they wouldn't be here because there is just no way they could do their course without having access to those kinds of services. (Participant 8)

It was clear from the data that professional staff contribute to the Prebble Propositions mainly through their interactions with others: other professional staff, academic colleagues, external contacts, and, of course, students. The ability of professional staff to work with a diverse range of other stakeholders is therefore essential for their contribution to be effective in supporting positive student outcomes. In exploring the Prebble Proposition themes in the data, four core subthemes emerged, which elaborate these findings: changing and increasing use of technology for learning and learning environments, importance of knowledge of the participant and of colleagues, significance of helpful colleagues and supportive supervisors or managers, and the associated job satisfaction (Graham 2013d). Analysis and theorizing of the themes and subthemes led to the conceptualization of *pedagogical partnerships*.

Professional Staff Pedagogical Partnerships

Pedagogy is recognized as a contested term, and while traditionally English language conceptualizations of pedagogy have focused on the teaching of children, European cultures have used a broader definition (Watkins and Mortimore 1999). Nevertheless, even in English-speaking cultures, the conceptualization of pedagogy has become more complex over time and has developed to include “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” (Watkins and Mortimore 1999, p. 3). Indeed, conceptualizations of pedagogy have developed further to include “how learning and teaching are often embedded in activities and relationships not formally designated as educational” (Lee et al. 2012, p. 268). This framing of the term *pedagogy* allows the work of professional staff, in relation to the achievement of positive student outcomes, to be conceptualized as being in pedagogical partnerships with others. In this context, learning and teaching occur through activities and relationships that contribute to student retention, persistence, and achievement and may be skills-based and process-based rather than content-based.

The term *pedagogical partnership* has been used across a broad spectrum of activities, for example, academic librarians working with faculty-based academics (Simmons 2005; Techataweewan et al. 2009); families, schools, and communities working together at pre-tertiary education levels (Ravn 2005); and between academics (Cochrane and Bateman 2010). However, prior to this case study, the concept had not been applied to the work of professional staff in universities, and a satisfactory definition of *pedagogical partnership* was not readily available. Nevertheless, the case study data revealed clearly that professional staff interact with others in their support of positive student outcomes. In this context of a diverse range of

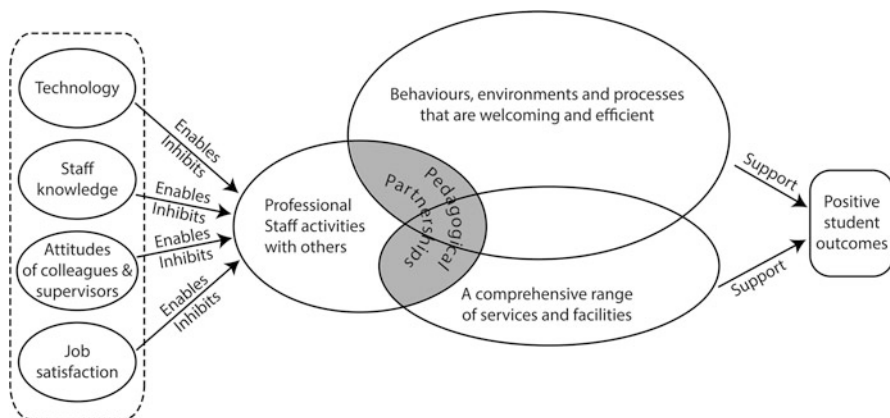


Fig. 2 Formation of pedagogical partnerships (Adapted from Graham 2013b)

relationships, a partnership may be defined as a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility (“Partnership [Def. 3]” n.d.). When this interpretation is considered in combination with the above conceptualization of pedagogy (Lee et al. 2012, p. 268), a working definition for *pedagogical partnerships* for professional staff was developed:

Professional staff form relationships – for the achievement of positive student outcomes – with a range of different individuals and groups including other professional staff, academic staff, students and, at times, external stakeholders. In these pedagogical partnerships, learning and teaching occur through activities, undertaken by professional staff in cooperation with these partners, which contribute to student retention, persistence and achievement. (Graham 2013b, p. 38)

Embodied in this definition is pedagogical work, occurring implicitly or explicitly between participants in service partnerships, which develop new practices, dispositions, and capacities for action (Lee and Dunston 2010). The subthemes (or domains) identified – technology, staff knowledge, colleagues and supervisors, and job satisfaction – were recognized as being enablers (or inhibitors) of professional staff working effectively with others, in their contributions to the propositions for successful student outcomes (Graham 2013d). Thus these domains mediate the interactions of professional staff with others, either positively or negatively, enabling or inhibiting the formation of pedagogical partnerships that contribute to positive student outcomes, as illustrated in Fig. 2.

The case study data revealed numerous examples of such pedagogical partnerships operating within and between these domains. For example, the pedagogical partnership between two librarians, quoted below, illustrates the intersection of *staff knowledge* and *colleagues and supervisors*, as one librarian provides support to colleagues to answer students’ questions:

Sometimes when I'm on the desk, I overhear the other librarian having trouble helping a student. If I think I might know something, then I don't mind popping over and saying 'what's the problem?' and suggesting they could try this and that. Everyone has different experience and awareness of different things. So it's not that they've handled the situation badly, but just that they don't have the experience of a certain database or certain technology that I might know about. I guess that's the benefit of teamwork and working together is that you can draw on each other's strengths that way. (Participant 11)

Crossing the domains of *technology* and *staff knowledge* is the pedagogical partnership formed by special needs counselors working with library staff to systemically provide learning materials in alternative formats to accommodate students' learning needs:

The alternative format service was set up through a partnership between us and the library. A person in the library had a brilliant idea that those students who need alternative formats should have their own website, so they could log on and see all their materials in an accessible format just in the one place so they wouldn't have to come in and pick up CDs and go back and forward doing all of that. So that's a really great service compared to what a lot of other universities are doing. (Participant 8)

Another example was IT support staff, who not only fixed technical problems but also supported students with advice on navigating university processes:

But yeah, [it's important] to retain staff that have been here a while, that know about the whole university, we can provide a more in depth support for students. Not just fix the technical problem, but also [advise the student to] . . . 'get the lecturer to call me to confirm that your story's true. That way they know that you've really had a technical problem and it really affected your ability to send that email'. Whereas, someone who's only been here six months can fix the email problem, but might not know what the ramifications are, or what to do to make things okay. (Participant 4)

The more complex understanding of the work of professional staff in relation to their contributions to student outcomes presented in this chapter, enabled by the concept of pedagogical partnerships, has significant implications for these staff, the people they work with, the institutions who employ them, and for governments and their regulatory agencies.

Professionalization

The other key finding from this case study, as shown in Fig. 1, was that there is growing professionalization of higher education professional staff (Graham 2013b). While this finding is outside the scope for this chapter, suffice it to say that the growing professionalization was illustrated by changing identities of professional staff, with staff at relatively low HEW levels demonstrating capacity to work across and beyond boundaries, and redefining the character of their work (Graham 2013a).

It was found that professional staff need to have a solid understanding of the values and mission of their institution, and of pedagogical imperatives, to maximize the effectiveness of their support for student learning. Furthermore, it was clear from this study that the changing identities and growing professionalization act as an enabler (*how*) and a driver (*why*) for the formation of pedagogical partnerships (Graham 2013b).

Implications and Recommendations

Imagining more productive relationships in higher education, in ways that do not look nostalgically backwards to an older, more elitist system, may be part of the first steps towards realising universities as more humane places in which to practice. (Clegg and McAuley 2005, p. 31)

From the turn of the millennium and well into its first decade, much was written about the tension between professional and academic staff and their roles (Conway 2008; Dobson 2000; Dobson and Conway 2003; Gill 2009; Wallace and Marchant 2011). However as Clegg and McAuley suggest, there are considerable gains to be had from productive working relationships in our universities. While there may be a perception among academic staff that professional staff are not interested in, or are remote from academic activities (Wallace and Marchant 2011), this case study has demonstrated that a wide range of professional staff are interested in and engaged with supporting positive student learning outcomes. The improved understanding of the complexity of the roles of professional staff that this study has revealed, through the conceptualization and illustration of professional staff pedagogical partnerships, provides the basis for opportunities for major changes to our institutions, as well as for changes to policies and practices in higher education.

Emerging from discourse on the “binary divide” between academic and professional staff (Dobson 2000, p. 203), a more nuanced understanding has developed of the roles and identities of professional staff and their relationships with academic staff (Allen-Collinson 2009; Graham 2013a; Sebalj et al. 2012; Small 2008; Whitchurch 2006, 2009). While Whitchurch devised a typology of professional identities, from “bounded” through to “blended” professionals (Whitchurch 2008, p. 379), and Schneiderber and Merkator have proposed an “overlap model” to describe the changes to traditional administrative and academic roles, functions, and tasks (2013, pp. 79–82), these models describe a linear continuum of professional identities from routine professionals to traditional academics.

The findings in this case study, however, have led to the development of a model that extends beyond these linear models to a matrix structure that transcends the binary divide between professional and academic staff and even transcends a continuum from professional to academic roles, as illustrated in Fig. 3 (Graham 2014). Such a matrix structure would have three key benefits (Graham 2014), for both institutions and their staff: enhanced workforce planning through an improved understanding of staff

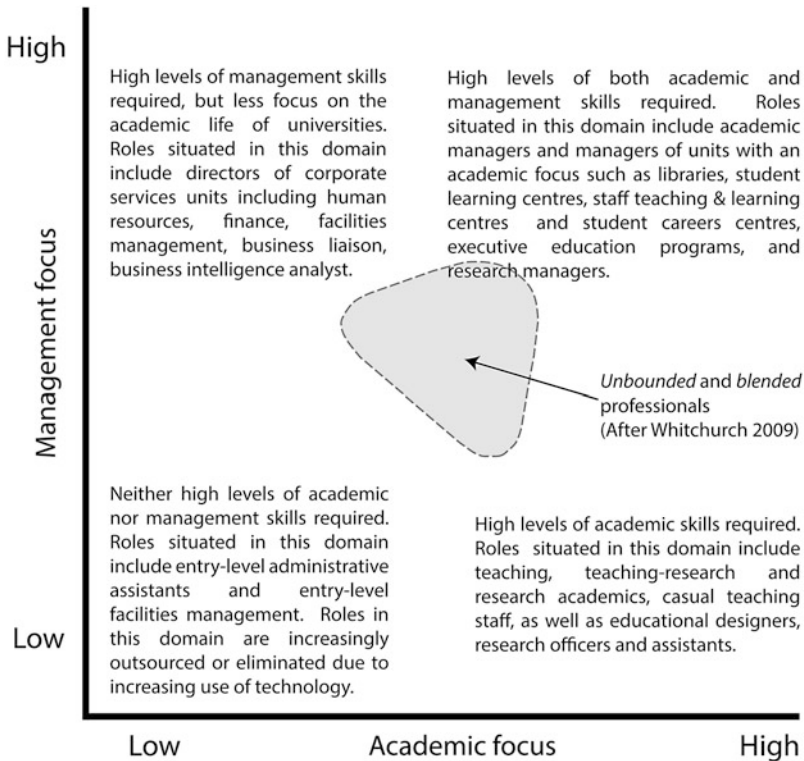


Fig. 3 Roles matrix: A two-dimensional model for university roles (Reproduced with permission of the *Australian Universities' Review* from Graham 2014)

capabilities and capacities, improved career progression through more novel pathways, and an understanding of the equivalent value of different roles, thereby leading to greater equity in remuneration through the introduction of a single pay spine, with lines connecting roles of equal pay (“iso-pay”) (Fig. 4).

The introduction of a matrix model and the associated single pay spine would have significant human resource and industrial relations implications for government, our institutions, unions, and professional associations. For example, at the very least, the Australian government would need to develop a more nuanced approach to the data collection and reporting on higher education staff, removing the binary divide between academic classifications and “nonacademic” (Department of Education and Training 2016b). Universities would need to develop more effective and efficacious human resources policies, procedures, and systems. Enterprise agreements would need to provide not only equitable salaries for work of equivalent value but also equitable non-salary benefits and conditions, such as flexible working arrangements and career progression procedures for all roles. These proposed conceptualizations, the roles matrix and the single pay spine, should be of particular interest to the National Tertiary

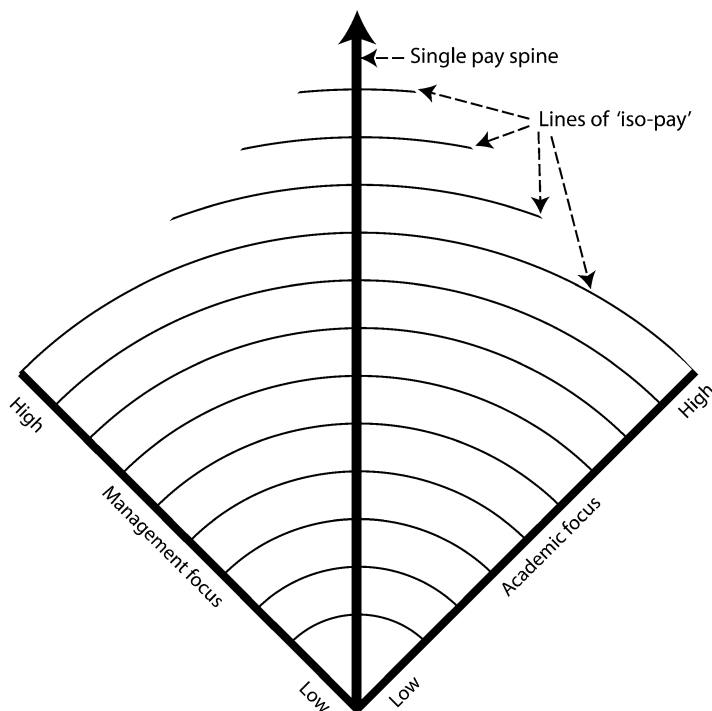


Fig. 4 Single pay spine showing lines of “iso-pay” (Reproduced with permission of the *Australian Universities’ Review* from Graham 2014)

Education Union (NTEU) and the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM), for the benefits that could be gained by all their members.

Limitations and Further Research

Limitations of this study are inherent due to the epistemological approach and the associated methodology. It is not generalizable, nor was it intended to be. Rather the intention was to explore the issue of the contributions that professional staff make to the key core purpose of higher education, namely, education. Subsequent studies are needed to explore the questions discussed here in other contexts. Indeed, this has started: the methodology described in this chapter has been used already at one university in the UK. This comparative study shows a large degree of similarity in the findings from both case study institutions, and the analytical model presented in this chapter, pedagogical partnerships, was found to be largely applicable to the UK case (Graham and Regan 2016). Further comparative studies could now be developed by studying other institutions, ideally from countries with less similarity in higher education systems and cultural background.

Conclusion

I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people . . . I find it extremely comforting that we're so close. I also find it like Chinese water torture, that we're so close because you have to find the right six people to make the right connection Ouisa Kitteridge in *Six degrees of separation*. (IMDb n.d., p. 1)

The case study discussed in this chapter has clearly demonstrated that knowing the right people with whom to make the right connection is essential for facilitating positive student outcomes in higher education. These connections, conceptualized as *pedagogical partnerships*, demonstrate links between the work of professional staff, even those without direct student contact, and student outcomes. Furthermore, the concept of *pedagogical partnerships* identifies and names the symbiotic nature of the roles of professional and academic staff in the twenty-first century. Importantly, this study indicates that the work of *all* staff is essential to students achieving their learning outcomes, and that all staff need to work together, supportively, valuing the work of their colleagues, “to serve The University and its students” (Sharafizad et al. 2011, p. 47).

References

- Allen-Collinson, Jacquelyn. 2007. “Get yourself some nice, neat, matching box files!” Research administrators and occupational identity work. *Studies in Higher Education* 32 (3): 295–309.
- Allen-Collinson, Jacquelyn. 2009. Negative ‘marking’? University research administrators and the contestation of moral exclusion. *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (8): 941–954.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2008. *Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008 (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001)*. AusStats, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012008>. Accessed 23 Sept 2012.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2011. *Population by age and sex, Regions of Australia, 2011 (cat. no. 3235.0)*. AusStats, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3235.02011>. Accessed 23 Sept 2012.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2015. *Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2015 (cat. no. 3101.0)*. AusStats, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/6CBA90A25BAC951DCA257F7F001CC559>. Accessed 13 Feb 2016.
- Bradley, Denise, Peter Noonan, Helen Nugent, and Bill Scales. 2008. *Review of Australian Higher Education – final report*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. <http://www.deewr.gov.au/highereducation/review/pages/reviewofaustralianhighereducationreport.aspx>. Accessed 8 Nov 2010.
- Clegg, Sue, and John Mcauley. 2005. Conceptualising middle management in higher education: A multifaceted discourse. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 27 (1): 19–34.
- Coaldrake, Peter, and Lawrence Stedman. 1999. *Academic work in the twenty-first century: Changing roles and policies*. Canberra: DETYA/Higher Education Division. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.124.4559&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Accessed 10 Feb 2016.
- Cochrane, Thom, and Roger Bateman. 2010. A mobile learning journey: Or “A tale of two academics’ pedagogical partnership”. Paper presented at the Sixth International Conference on Technology, Knowledge and Society, Free University, Berlin, Germany, 15–17 January. http://shura.shu.ac.uk/4400/1/A_Mobile_Learning_Journey.pdf. Accessed 14 May 2016.
- Conway, Maree. 2000. What’s in a name?: Issues for ATEM and administrators. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 199–201.
- Conway, Maree. 2008. Exploring the academic-administrator divide: Myth or reality? Paper presented at the 2008 Tertiary Education Management Conference: Investing for Success,

- Christchurch, NZ, 28 Sep–1 Oct. <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/10533/20090114-0719/www.tmc.org.au/2008/downloads/6.1-CONWAY.pdf>. Accessed 19 Aug 2012.
- Correia, Eduardo, and Ricky Watson. 2013. Cloud technologies in technical education: A case study. In *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on e-Learning: ICEL 2013*, Cape Town, South Africa, 27–28 June, 91–96. Reading, UK: Academic Conferences and Publishing International Limited.
- Daymon, Christine, and Immy Holloway. 2002. *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communications*. New York: Routledge.
- Department of Education and Training. 2015. *Finance 2014: Financial reports of higher education providers*. <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/38416>. Accessed 10 Feb 2016.
- Department of Education and Training. 2016a. *Selected higher education statistics – 2014 student data*. <https://www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2014-student-data>. Accessed 13 Feb 2016.
- Department of Education and Training. 2016b. *Staff data*. <http://www.education.gov.au/staff-data>. Accessed 10 Feb 2016.
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. 2012. *Publications – HE statistics collections*. <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/HEStatistics/Publications/Pages/Home.aspx>. Accessed 29 Jan 2012.
- Dobson, Ian. 2000. “Them and us” – general and non-general staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 203–210.
- Dobson, Ian. 2005. Cultures within: Academic staff, Governance and Administration. Paper presented at the CHER 18th Annual Conference Higher Education: The Cultural Dimension – Innovative Cultures, Norms and Values, Jyväskylä, Finland, 1–3 September 2005. http://ktl.jyu.fi/img/portal/4791/ian_r_dobson.pdf. Accessed 5 May 2007.
- Dobson, Ian, and Maree Conway. 2003. Fear and loathing in university staffing: The case of Australian Academic and General Staff. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 15 (3): 139–153.
- Fowler, Paul R., and Hunter R. Boylan. 2010. Increasing student success and retention: A multi-dimensional approach. *Journal of Developmental Education* 34 (2): 2–10.
- Fullan, Michael, and Geoff Scott. 2009. *Turnaround leadership for higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gill, John. 2009. “By the role divided.” *Times Higher Education*, 9 April. <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=406078>. Accessed 25 Apr 2009.
- Graham, Carroll. 2010. Hearing the voices of general staff: A Delphi study of the contributions of general staff to student outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 32 (3): 213–223.
- Graham, Carroll. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: the contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (4): 437–452.
- Graham, Carroll. 2013a. Changing technologies, changing identities: A case study of professional staff and their contributions to learning and teaching. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 17 (2): 62–70.
- Graham, C. 2013b. *Pedagogical partnerships and professionalisation: Changing work and identities of professional staff at one Australian university*. Sydney: Doctor of Education, University of Technology Sydney. <http://hdl.handle.net/10453/33090>. Accessed 10 Feb 2016.
- Graham, C. 2013c. The professional staff – student outcomes framework: Investigating the contributions of higher education professional staff to student outcomes. Paper presented at the ATINER’s Conference Paper Series, No. EDU2013-0433, Athens, Greece, 20–22 May. <http://www.atiner.gr/papers/EDU2013-0433.pdf>. Accessed 9 July 2015.
- Graham, Carroll. 2013d. Professional staff contributions to positive student outcomes: A case study. *Australian Universities’ Review* 55 (1): 7–16.
- Graham, Carroll. 2014. Another matrix revolution? The overlap of university work. *Australian Universities’ Review* 56 (1): 67–69.
- Graham, Carroll, and Julie-Anne Regan. 2016. Exploring the contribution of professional staff to student outcomes: A comparative study of Australian and UK case studies. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 38 (6): 595–609.

- Guest, Greg, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson. 2006. How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods* 18 (1): 59–82.
- Hinton, Leone. 2007. Causes of attrition in first year students in science foundation courses and recommendations for intervention. *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development* 4 (2): 13–26.
- Hoare, David. (Chair). 1995. *Higher education management review: Report of the committee of inquiry*. Canberra: AGPS.
- IMDb. n.d. *Six degrees of separation (1993) – quotes*. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108149/quotes>. Accessed 14 May 2016.
- Lee, Alison, Roger Dunston. 2010. ‘Working in the spaces between’: Co-production and changing professional practice in health. Education for future practice, Joy Higgs, Della Fish, Ian Goulter, Stephen Loftus, Jo-Anne Reid, Franziska Trede, 61–74. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Lee, Alison, Roger Dunston, and Catherine Fowler. 2012. Seeing is believing: An embodied pedagogy of ‘Doing Partnership’ in child and family health. In *Practice, learning and change: Practice-theory perspectives on professional learning*, ed. Paul Hager, Alison Lee, and Ann Reich, 267–276. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Matchett, Stephen. 2016. Glyn Davis calls for expert agency to plan higher education. *Campus Morning Mail*, February 1. <http://campusmorningmail.com.au/503978-2/>. Accessed 11 Feb 2016.
- Morgan, David L. 2007. Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1 (1): 48–76.
- Namey, Emily, Greg Guest, Lucy Thairu, and Laura Johnson. 2008. Data reduction techniques for large qualitative data sets. In *Handbook for team-based qualitative research*, ed. Greg Guest and Kathleen M. MacQueen, 137–161. Lanham: Altamira Press.
- Nimon, Sally. 2007. Generation Y and higher education: The other Y2K. *Journal of Institutional Research* 13 (1): 24–41.
- Norton, Andrew, and Iltima Cherastidham. 2014. *Mapping Australian higher education, 2014–15*. Melbourne: Grattan Institute. <http://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/816-mapping-higher-education-20141.pdf>. Accessed 13 Feb 2016.
- Partnership [Def. 3]. n.d. In *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition (2011)*. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/partnership>. Accessed 28 Feb 2016.
- Patton, Michael Q. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Pitman, Tim. 2000. Perceptions of academics and students as customers: A survey of administrative staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 165–175.
- Prebble, Tom, Helen Hargreaves, Linda Leach, Kogi Naidoo, Gordon Suddaby, and Nick Zepoke. 2004. *The impact of student support services and academic development programmes on student outcomes in undergraduate tertiary study: A synthesis of the research*. http://www.educationcounts.gov.nz/publications/tertiary_education/5519. Accessed 21 Jan 2013.
- Ravn, Birte. 2005. An ambiguous relationship: Challenges and controversies in the field of family–school–community partnership. Questioning the discourse of partnership. Paper presented at the First ‘School-family partnership: past, present and future’ meeting, Department of Psychology, University of Milano-Bicocca, Milano, Italy. http://www.ltu.se/polopoly_fs/1.2117!d1f83832.pdf. Accessed 7 Nov 2012.
- Saldaña, Johnny. 2009. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.
- Schmidt, Roy C. 1997. Managing Delphi surveys using nonparametric statistical techniques. *Decision Sciences* 28 (3): 763–774.
- Schneijderberg, Christian, and Nadine Merkator. 2013. The new higher education professionals. In *The Academic Profession in Europe: New tasks and new challenges*, ed. Barbara M. Kehm and Ulrich Teichler, 53–92. Dordrecht: Springer.

- Scott, Geoff. 2006. *Accessing the student voice: Using CEQuery to identify what retains students and promotes engagement in productive learning in Australian Higher Education: Final report*. Canberra: Department of Education, Science and Training. http://www.uws.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/63955/HEIPCEQueryFinal_v2_1st_Feb_06.pdf. Accessed 4 Oct 2012.
- Scott, Geoff, Hamish Coates, and Michelle Anderson. 2008. *Learning leaders in times of change: Academic leadership capabilities for Australian Higher Education*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney and Australian Council for Educational Research. http://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=higher_education. Accessed 13 Mar 2012.
- Sebalj, Darlene, and Allyson Holbrook. 2009. The profile of university research services staff. *Australian Universities' Review* 51 (1): 30–38.
- Sebalj, Darlene, Allyson Holbrook, and Sid Bourke. 2012. The rise of ‘professional staff’ and demise of the ‘non-academic’: A study of university staffing nomenclature preferences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (5): 463–472.
- Sharabi, Moshe. 2013. Managing and improving service quality in higher education. *International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences* 5 (3): 309–320.
- Sharafizad, Fleur, Megan Paull, and Maryam Omari. 2011. Flexible work arrangements. *Australian Universities' Review* 53 (2): 43–49.
- Shattock, Michael. 2010. *Managing successful universities*. Berkshire: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Shelley, Louise. 2010. Research managers uncovered: Changing roles and ‘Shifting Arenas’ in the Academy. *Higher Education Quarterly* 64 (1): 41–64.
- Simmons, Michelle H. 2005. Librarians as disciplinary discourse mediators: Using genre theory to move toward critical information literacy. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 5 (3): 297–311.
- Small, Kate. 2008. Relationships and reciprocity in student and academic services. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 30 (2): 175–185.
- SocioCultural Research Consultants. n.d. *Dedoose: Great research made easy*. <http://www.dedoose.com>. Accessed 23 Feb 2016.
- Techataweewan, Wawta, Kuntpong Woraratpanya, and Charun Sanrach. 2009. The integration of information literacy into web-based tutorial with librarian–faculty partnership. Paper presented at the Asia-Pacific Conference on Library & Information Education & Practice, Tsukuba, Japan, 6–8 March, 2009.
- Tinto, Vincent. 2004. *Student retention and graduation: Facing the truth, living with the consequences*. Occasional Paper 1. Washington, DC: Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED519709.pdf>. Accessed 28 Feb 2016.
- Wallace, Michelle, and Teresa Marchant. 2011. Female administrative managers in Australian universities: Not male and not academic. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 567–581.
- Watkins, Chris, and Peter Mortimore. 1999. Pedagogy: What do we know. In *Understanding pedagogy and its impact on learning*, ed. Peter Mortimer, 1–19. London: Paul Chapman.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2006. Who do they think they are?: The changing identities of professional administrators and managers in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 28 (2): 159–171.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2008. Beyond administration and management: Reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 30 (4): 375–386.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418.
- Wilen-Daugenti, Tracey. 2009. *edu: Technology and learning environments in higher education*. New York: Peter Lang Pub.
- Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.



Building a Successful Partnership Between Professional Staff and Academics to Improve Student Employability

20

Julia Hobson, Suzanne Knuiman, Alexandra Haaxman, and Jane Foster

Contents

Introduction	314
Methodology	316
Working Across the Professional-Academic Divide	316
Working in the “Third Space”	318
Cross-Boundary Professionals	320
Working as an “Unbounded Professional”	322
Bringing It Together: Forging Fruitful Partnerships Across the University	323
References	324

Abstract

This chapter explores the unusual history of a 15-year partnership between academics in a Teaching and Learning Centre and professionals in a Careers Centre who together developed, taught, and coordinated a credit-bearing elective unit “*From University to the Workplace*” that explicitly taught career development learning (CDL) as an attempt to meet increased demands from employers for flexible, collaborative graduates who are committed to lifelong professional development. In part, the success of this partnership was due to a high level of mutual trust and respect. We suggest that the experience of teaching into the unit gave the career advisors a different identity which positioned them as “third space professionals” an identity which they then transferred into their other work across the university. Further, we suggest that opportunities for open dialogue among

J. Hobson (✉)

Centre for University Teaching and Learning, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

e-mail: J.Hobson@murdoch.edu.au; j.hobson@murdoch.edu.au

S. Knuiman · A. Haaxman · J. Foster

Careers and Employment Centre, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

e-mail: S.Knuiman@murdoch.edu.au; A.Haaxman@murdoch.edu.au; Jane.Foster@murdoch.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,

University Development and Administration,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_26

313

professionals and academics across different work subcultures should be created within a university and these could be key for an effective higher education sector. With the demise of the unit (due to a university-wide curriculum restructure), our final act of partnership is to claim authority in this space by authoring, together, this chapter.

Keywords

Collaboration · Employability · Career Counseling · “Third Space”

Introduction

With increased demands from employers for flexible, collaborative graduates who are committed to lifelong professional development, it is essential that these skills and capacities are explicitly addressed by universities. This is especially the case in “the face of an insecure, complex, individualised labour climate where emotional competence is increasingly necessary for both personal and professional reasons” (Lengelle and Ashby 2016, p. 1). Career development learning (CDL) addresses these competencies to foster employability and student engagement and has become more central to the Australian university experience. Research has shown that without explicit and specific assistance to develop career planning skills, graduates often struggle to position themselves successfully in the workforce (Whiston 2011).

In response to the challenge of equipping graduates with CDL, the centralized Teaching and Learning Centre at Murdoch University initiated an elective credit-bearing unit “*From University to Workplace*” as part of the curriculum. The unit was unusual because it moved the qualities of employability that are often developed as generic graduate attributes (Barrie 2012; Trede et al. 2012) in a university degree – usually taught implicitly by disciplinary academics – into a specific unit. This was first offered in 2000 and was one of the first units of its kind to recognize that students need assistance to transition out of university as much as they need assistance to transition into the academic culture. At the time Murdoch University in Western Australia was the only university to offer such a unit. For the 15 years that it ran (2000–2015), the unit was coordinated and run by academics from the TLC in collaboration with the professional staff of the Careers Centre.

Over this period the unit morphed and changed but the constant thread was the close working relationship between academics and professional staff. This included: group discussions on the curriculum content each semester, the choice and sourcing of invited speakers, and developing creative assessment processes that mirrored real-life practices. The decision to use class time to explicitly practice skills such as networking, job interviews, and informational interviewing, and to devise assessments linked to these skills, was because of the creative space that opened up in our group discussions. Students benefitted greatly from this creativity, for example, they repeatedly stated that the experience of sitting on an interview panel and playing the role of a potential employer assessing candidates for a job was extremely useful.

The lively exchange between professional staff and academics ensured that students in the unit gained up-to-date content, a range of inputs from across different industries and sectors, and an opportunity to network in multiple ways. The success of the unit was measured over this period both with the usual metrics of teaching quality surveys and by the numbers of students who stayed in touch and shared stories on the progression of their careers to inspire the next year's cohort. Comments from students given at end of semester teaching surveys included:

"Workshopping selection criteria and going through the mock job interview process has really given me confidence"; "This unit is great as it makes us put into practice what we learn"; "I really liked the organised practical activities we perform in class. They relate to everyday life and were fun!"

The partnership was also unusual because it involved academics working in a professional space and professionals working in an academic space, collegially. While this partnership has become more commonplace among Australian universities (Veles and Carter 2016), 15 years ago it was an unusual occurrence.

The success of this long collaboration was based on the acknowledgment of the quality of facilitators' skills and expertise and the recognition that all staff were committed to delivering a student-centered learning experience. This acknowledgment was the basis on which mutual trust and respect developed; it was the frame within which a different form of professional identity was created – not reducible to the dichotomy of academic or professional but, we argue, is an example of what Whitchurch (2008a, 2013) refers to as the "rise of third space professionals" in higher education. Despite its success, based on students' feedback and the positive experience of professionals and academics involved, the unit was cancelled due to the reorganization of the university curriculum and the introduction of "capstone experiences" in all degrees. Capstone experiences are final year units that bring together all the knowledge and skills learned during the degree. It is an opportunity for students to integrate and synthesize knowledge, demonstrate skills to prospective employers, and prepare for professional work. Although capstone units have been widely used for a long time in American degrees (Berheide 2007), they are a relatively new approach in Australian higher education (Butler et al. 2017).

In this chapter, we attempt to illustrate to readers how we have worked as "third space professionals" (Whitchurch 2008a, 2013). We begin by describing the methodology adopted to frame the study. We then identify the issues we had to overcome to work across and with the different identities fostered by the roles of professional and of academic staff. We use vignettes to illustrate some of the barriers we faced as professional staff and some of the creative ways we used to overcome these hurdles. In all of this our experience of working inside the curriculum as teachers in a unit transferred across to all our work and impacted on our relationships with academic staff across the university. Finally, we discuss ways to forge positive and fruitful partnerships across the university and end with a set of recommendations that may assist to support similar partnerships across the sector.

Methodology

We chose a methodology that would support the weaving of multiple voices and points of view, as this is a central element to our project, and have thus built our argument around personal narratives. A narrative style that uses qualitative data through storytelling is within some disciplines – such as anthropology and philosophy – an accepted method to grasp lived experience (Scutt and Hobson 2013). Utilizing a phenomenological method, we draw in equal measure upon our personal experiences and reflections presented as stories interspersed with literature review. This approach allowed us to examine conscious experience with an emphasis on our individual's views, feelings, and emotions (Harvey 2009). This is a method that assumes all knowing is interpretation; that interpretation is improved through a circle of open peer inquiry and discussion; that methods of inquiry must take great care over close, attentive observations; and that those observations must not be limited by preconceptions as to what should or should not be included. By generating detailed, careful descriptions of everyday encountered “things” – such as relationships between subcultures in a university – it is possible to see afresh the taken for granted and to raise to awareness the tacit and often silenced dimensions of our experience (Lopez and Willis 2004). Such a methodology is especially relevant to researching relationships between colleagues working in higher education, “as higher education research is largely practised by those immersed within the university, the questions we ask, and the stories we tell, over time co-create the university itself” (Scutt and Hobson 2013, p. 17).

Working Across the Professional-Academic Divide

It is not uncommon at universities to experience a lack of collegiality and sometimes an almost adversarial relationship between professional and academic staff, who seem to live in two separate worlds designed to frustrate each other (Gray 2015). It appears that academic staff feel professional staff do not understand their world and priorities and academics can be impatient, critical, and sometimes contemptuous of the work undertaken by professional staff (Conway and Dobson 2003; Dobson 2000; Szekeres 2004). Likewise, professional staff often seem to feel that academic staff live in an “ivory tower bubble” and may offer little respect or understanding in return. Each retreats to their silo and works at the same institution, for the same constituents, for the same goals but in parallel, rather than in collaboration (Szekeres 2011).

Being a professional or an academic are both a role within a university, and an entrenched identity. These roles are also linked to strongly delineated and prescribed hierarchical relationships. Generally speaking, professional female university staff are often viewed as subservient to male academic staff. This is a historically entrenched and unbalanced gender relationship (Wallace and Marchant 2011) that often mirrors the imbalance between the status of the professional-academic roles (Simpson and Fitzgerald 2014). Academic culture often positions professional staff

as peripheral to the main business of the university and this viewpoint is still present in twenty-first-century Australian universities. Indeed the change in job title from being designated as a nonacademic to being a professional has only occurred within the recent past at Australian universities (Sebalj et al. 2012). Szekeres (2011, p. 689) found that:

Despite some changes to professional staff over the last 10 years, some things have not shifted. There is still an uneasy relationship between academic and professional staff and there are still a number of professional staff who see their work as being “invisible” in the university.

As shown in the following vignette from the Manager of the Careers Centre, it is still extremely difficult to have a substantive conversation around the issue of career development learning between professional and academic staff.

“Nobody Answers the Door” (Suzanne’s story, 1)

In 2015, my team from the Careers Centre were involved in the organisation of a major on-campus student activity. A primary component of this activity was practice job interview sessions for students with real recruiters in their industry. We were struggling to find interviewers in a particular discipline so we approached the arts school to see if their connections with industry would be of assistance. After numerous requests were ignored, we managed to find a few participants on our own. Not wanting to give up on engagement with these academic staff, I approached the school after the event to see if we could work together more collaboratively for future events.

This time my communication was not ignored, and unleashed a flurry of heated emails from academic staff asking me why didn’t I invite this organisation or that one and essentially couldn’t I do my job properly at all? I saw this as an opportunity rather than a threat and asked if I could address each of the discipline groups in the school to talk about engagement with my area. Meetings were scheduled, and with some trepidation I prepared a short presentation to give to academic staff.

The first presentation was a disaster. The committee chair forgot I was coming and left me off the agenda. With a heavy sigh he agreed to slot me in. 50 faces of disinterested academics were before me. The dean was asleep. I began my presentation and halfway through was interrupted by the chair to see if I was almost finished. At that stage I wrapped up quickly, issued a request to work together and exited the room as quickly as possible. Two more sessions to go.

Values are central to identity, and academic identity is often enmeshed with a belief in the intrinsic public “good” of higher education (Churchman and King 2009). The impact of massification of higher education and the ongoing transformation of the university (Barnett 2011) on academics’ identity have been much

discussed in the literature (Hornibrook 2012; Macfarlane 2011) particularly in relation to their roles becoming more managerial and bureaucratic (Rayner et al. 2010). However, many professional staff chose to work in the higher education sector because of their core values and beliefs in the university system. Professional staff often view their commitment to university and to students as wider and deeper than the operational procedures (Gibbs 2010). The neoliberal, enterprise university (Marginson and Considine 2000) language of “‘quality assurance’, ‘performance indicators’, ‘standards’ and ‘efficiency’... shifts professionals away from the former values-driven behaviour where what *was* done was couched in a framework of what *should* be done” (Lewis 2014, p. 45). The styles of generic human resource formats – often imported from a business or government model that has nothing to do with the normative aims and goals of a higher education institution (Bolden et al. 2013) – can sometimes be as frustrating for professional staff as for academics. These values of the “public good” of a university education often drive professional staff to contribute above and beyond their designated role. This is a rich source of quality expertise that the university could draw on.

By revisiting the values of “public goods” and engaging in dialogues around joint contributions to student-centered learning, the professional staff in the Careers Centre and the academics from the Teaching and Learning Centre built a collaboration that was enjoyable, respectful, and truly collegial. Each played their roles, together for a common purpose and the students were the beneficiaries. We avoided the misunderstandings that can occur when a different style of working – the more autonomous style of academics versus the more collaborative style of professional staff (Jones et al. 2012) – is interpreted as denoting a conflicting set of values. Instead, we listened respectfully to each other and always put the “good” of the student first. Through our conversations around the values and goals of higher education we recognized more commonalities in our experiences, than might at first sight be perceived. Some recent work has suggested that a “third space” (Whitchurch 2008a, 2013) has emerged in higher education of blended roles – both professional and academic – and that this has led to new types of identity in universities. We suggest that our joint teaching into the unit, “*From University to Workplace*” is an example of working in the “third space” and that this 15 years of collaborative teaching impacted the way that the career advisors went about other aspects of their work.

Working in the “Third Space”

While there have always been academics who have held managerial and leadership positions within their institutions, professional staff performing academic tasks (e.g., learning design, learning support, and career development) have been less common in higher education until recently. Recognizing the existence and importance of these roles moves the discussion to a complementary rather than a binary – or even oppositional – framework (Gray 2015). This is a space where traditional roles within the university have become blurred and where “...the building of communicative

relationships and networks is more significant than the observance of organizational boundaries, so much so that third space work may occur in spite of, rather than because of, formal structures” (Whitchurch 2008a, p. 386). This was the experience of the authors when, for example, the formal administrative structures of the university would not accommodate a professional-academic coteaching the unit “*From University to Workplace*.” When we tried to put staff from both areas as coordinators of the unit, the university’s administrative systems would only recognize the academics from the Teaching and Learning Centre. At times, it felt that the teaching work of the three professional staff from the Careers Centre was rendered invisible for the university.

The confidence to work together so closely and collaboratively was supported by the recognition of shared skills in research and teaching among academics and professionals within the team, and that career advice includes: “interpretive, narrative approaches, grounded in social constructionism” (Reid and West 2016, p. 11). This opened up an opportunity for academics and professional staff to discuss paradigms and methodologies, epistemological and ontological assumptions, all of which built confidence in each other’s skills sets.

“Reconceptualising the Curriculum” (Julia’s Story)

To run the same unit over a 15 year period and to have that time to build collegial relationships; to share, to laugh, to reflect, to stay in touch with past students, to build and develop a transformative curriculum was only possible because the unit was not “mainstream”. When we began the unit in 2000 there was a focus on the sociology of work, but this transmogrified into allowing students to work through transformative experiences about the nature of work. We created multi-disciplinary groups of students who created reflective portfolios that tracked where and how they gained graduate attributes in their degrees. We integrated Australian and international students into working groups, where they explored how work is socially constructed in each other’s cultures. We built blogs with students in different countries-back when this was a new thing to have cross-cultural conversations around critical thinking and the nature of work (Hobson 2009). We built students’ networking skills and got them to do informational interviews with a range of people working in industry. We pushed the curriculum to be as responsive as possible to who was enrolled that year. We avoided submitting curriculum plans to the administrative system and often “made things up” on the go. Sometimes it was messy but it was always creative!

To some extent the unit survived over this extended period because we “outsourced” support through our collaborative relationship. With relatively small numbers of students in the unit, 60–80 per semester, we did the teaching without casual tutors and so escaped budgetary surveillance. While the “third space” allows the exercise of autonomy and creativity because it falls outside of the usual framework, it is “. . .risky because without a visible framework to work within, resist or

negotiate, there is the possibility of isolation, foreclosure, frustration and lack of access to resources and decision-making” (Bennett et al. 2016, p. 218). Collaborating with the Careers Centre colleagues and drawing on that pedagogical resource made this situation sustainable for 15 years.

Cross-Boundary Professionals

The experience of teaching into a unit gave the professional career advisors the confidence to approach other academics across the university in a different manner, as cross-boundary professionals (Whitchurch 2008b). While being aware of the necessity of structures and set roles in a university, cross-boundary professionals according to Whitchurch (2008b, p. 380) “. . .do not necessarily regard the space at either side of them as being mutually exclusive, and actively use boundaries to achieve superordinate goals.” One of the career advisors went beyond the boundary of advising only students and extended her work to advising casual early career academics in their search for permanent employment and assisting them with their applications, this built a two-way flow of learning.

“The Two Way Flow of Learning” (Alexandra’s Story)

What works for me is a genuine willingness to be a resource to academics. It is a two-way flow as I learn more about their relevant disciplines and build my own knowledge base amongst the disciplines. I have designed industry/discipline-relevant job search workshops (CV, selection criteria, interviews) for marine science, chiropractic, exercise physiology, public relations, international aid and development, nursing and veterinary science to name a few. I have also assisted by way of job applications for early career academics in law, sociology, English and public relations – all of whom have continued to benefit from our services in order to deliver career development initiatives in their respective units. Late 2016 our team commenced writing and publishing “careers in. . .” information sheets for our students, launching with “careers in academia”.

Being of assistance, combined with building friendships based on knowledge acquisition and interest is the principle approach that I use to bridge the divide between me as a professional staff member and my new friends who were once early-career academics finding their place within the tertiary sector.

Working as a cross-boundary professional – and keeping in touch with the superordinate goal of promoting and enhancing learning –Alexandra invited academics to join in a learning practice. Her focus on the sharing of skills, resources, and learning experiences built mutual respect across the professional-academic boundary.

The role of career advisor within universities has moved from individual consultations often using the DOTS model that identifies four tasks of: decision learning, opportunity awareness, transition learning, and self-awareness (Law and Watts 2003) to a more narrative-driven approach of “life designing” (Lengelle and Meijers 2014). There has also been a move to develop university-wide strategies to assist graduates to develop employability skills (Bridgstock 2009; Kinash et al. 2016). However, there can be a mismatch between the intention of high-level strategies and the actions of “on the ground” academics. A mismatch that may be best addressed by a cross-boundary professional opening up a dialogue.

“Opening Up a Dialogue Space” (Jane’s Story)

When I first started at Murdoch University I felt that a few (not all) of the psychology academics questioned the credibility of our service, suggesting that as practitioners our career counselling approach/tools were lacking empirical evidence and validity and were nothing more than “hocus pocus”. I was somewhat affronted by this, particularly since I was a past psychology student at the university.

After my initial reaction and the settling of emotions, I decided that perhaps we could improve the relationship with the School of Psychology by engaging their “expertise”. I saw an opportunity to reach out for assistance with the recruitment phase of a new co-curricular leadership program we were developing. I approached a psychology lecturer (whom I suspected held the above view) seeking an organisational psychology student to guide us with this process. I was hoping to secure a masters final year student keen to develop and lead us in facilitating a formal assessment Centre as part of their practicum placement.

This was a success on multiple fronts. As the student:

(1) added real value and validity to the effective recruitment of suitable students for the leadership program.

(2) indicated to his supervisor (and to us) that he had had a highly valuable and enriching placement experience in a real-life setting, which helped to enhance our standing with the school. (The lecturer subsequently referred me to a colleague, who agreed to be a guest presenter within the leadership program in its second year).

(3) subsequently received a high level of in-going support in his job search and career development post-program (i.e., engagement with our service).

On reflection, this experience has also made me more conscious of our need to continuously review our methods of practice/resources etc. and ensure that we offer more evidence based career development support to students.

A defining feature of cross-boundary professionals is that they “are able to hold together multiple identity components, seeing boundaries as opportunities rather than as constraints. . .” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 380). By refusing to stay with her initial

reaction and by bringing the attention of the academic disciplinary staff to the intersections between disciplinary expertise and CDL expertise, this career advisor opened up a “third space.” Drawing on her dual identity as a career advisor and a psychology graduate, this author brought together her understanding of both spaces and found a leverage point to open dialogue with recalcitrant academics. However, the key leverage point was the student; as Jane’s vignette illustrates academics will often listen more closely to the stories that students tell about an encounter with a professional than they will listen to the professionals themselves.

Working as an “Unbounded Professional”

The “third space” involves both crossing boundaries within the institution and also sometimes actively disrupting those boundaries to create change (Whitchurch 2008b). After her experience of a Dean of Environmental Science who fell asleep in front of her, and the Art Schools’ academics ignoring her approaches, the Manager of the Careers Centre decided that she would try a different tack.

“Do You Want Fries with That?” (Suzanne’s Story, 2)

In 2015, I was approached by the School of Arts to participate in a series of workshops for arts students to improve their employability. I was excited by the prospect and was keen to work collaboratively with the school on this important topic as we had very little collaboration to date. So, I made sure that my entire team were available and prepared for this valuable exercise. Due to factors in the school at the last minute the event was cancelled. We were disappointed and decided that as all of the groundwork was completed, we would host the event ourselves.

Arts students are a challenging group to work with, as their studies are not designed to be vocational and many graduates struggle to articulate their transferable skills in the market. There is considerable mythology around the job prospects for generalists and we decided to use the mythology as a marketing tool for the event.

When we titled the careers event “do you want fries with that? Debunking the myths and discovering your career with an arts degree” we could never have anticipated the furor that would ensue. Complaints were made about the title and academic staff refused to promote the event. Eventually, I agreed to another working title for the school to use and the event was a huge success. The year after that, we also worked collaboratively with academic staff in the school on a number of presentations and are looking forward to an ongoing working relationship with this school. Sometimes you need to light a fire to get a result!

Sometimes it is necessary to actively find ways to disrupt assumptions in order to get academics to give time, attention, and priority for CDL. Staying in the role of

subservient professional “handmaiden” to school deans does not achieve results. This author decided that she had politely knocked too often on doors that no one bothered to open. It was time to work as an “unbounded professional” and “rather than entering a political debate, ...work in an exploratory way with tension, and even conflict, seeking a common basis for understanding by, if necessary, re-conceptualising the space ... [and being] prepared to enter messy, or even dangerous, space. . .” (Whitchurch 2008b, p. 381).

Bringing It Together: Forging Fruitful Partnerships Across the University

Roles and identity in learning and teaching are closely tied to the collective vision and purpose of higher education. The framework in which a conversation occurs impinges upon and changes the qualities of the discourse (Clegg and McAuley 2005; Lillis 2007), and academic and professional staff identity will always be linked to wider debates about the nature and purpose of higher education, to “the idea of the university” (Neary and Saunders 2011, p. 334). Higher education is both a liberating and a conservative force in society (Freire 1973; Sullinan and Rosin 2008) and likewise our experiences of working at universities have been – at different times – both creative and controlled. In working together we have built confidence to resist control and to stay in a creative “third space.” In part, we found courage to move into these risky spaces because of our shared long-term commitment to a particular university and the relationships built over that time. In part, our capacity to enter messy spaces may also be due to being tired of being marginalized as “only” professional staff. Most importantly, our willingness to take risks is largely due to a desire to act on our authentic commitment to higher education – the act of being open to learning – which is where we consider our final accountability and responsibility lies.

If we take the mandate of universities to be to facilitate the development of engaged, critical, and creative learners capable of negotiating change and uncertainty and carving out a career path for themselves in the twenty-first century, then it would seem necessary that experts in CDL should be collegially involved in core curriculum development. Explicitly teaching students to negotiate the uncertainty of future employment is a responsibility of the university, a shared “third space” where multiple experts need to come together in a collegial manner.

As “cross boundary” and “unbounded professionals” drawing on our experience, we recommend to other “third space professionals” to work by:

- Brokering academic – professional partnerships around shared pedagogical values
- Finding time to explicitly state how such a value based partnership assists in the delivery of a quality learning experience for students
- Facilitating trust and respect through explicit and direct acknowledgment of the expertise and skills that each brings to the partnership

To return to the question of the nature and purpose of higher education – “the idea of the university” – we wish our partnership between professionals and academics to be acknowledged as central to enhancing learning and teaching in higher education, and to include professional voices as authorial, as in having authority. This was a story worth telling because in the telling – in this last project of academic authoring – we are thus authorized.

References

- Barnett, Ronald. 2011. The coming of the ecological university. *Oxford Review of Education* 37 (4): 439–455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2011.595550>.
- Barrie, Simon. 2012. A research-based approach to generic graduate attributes policy. *Higher Education Research and Development* 31 (1): 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.642842>.
- Bennett, Rebecca, Julia Hobson, Angela Jones, Pam Martin-Lynch, Cecily Scutt, Karin Strehlow, and Sarah Veitch. 2016. Being chimaera: A monstrous identity for SoTL academics. *Higher Education Research and Development* 35 (2): 217–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1087473>.
- Berheide, Catherine White. 2007. Doing less work, collecting better data: Using capstone courses to assess learning. *Peer Review* 9 (2): 27.
- Bridgstock Ruth (2009) The graduate attributes we've overlooked: enhancing graduate employability through career management skills, *Higher Education Research and Development* 28 (1): 31–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444347>
- Bolden, Richard, Jonathan Gosling, and Anne O'Brien. 2013. Citizens of the academic community? A societal perspective on leadership in UK higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 39 (5): 754–770. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2012.754855>.
- Butler, Des, Sandra Coe, Rachael Field, Judith McNamara, Sally Kift, and Catherine Brown. 2017. Embodying life-long learning: Transition and capstone experiences. *Oxford Review of Education* 43 (2): 194–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2016.1270199>.
- Churchman, Deborah, and Sharron King. 2009. Academic practice in transition: Hidden stories of academic identities. *Teaching in Higher Education* 14 (5): 507–516.
- Clegg, Sue, and John McAuley. 2005. Conceptualising middle management in higher education: A multifaceted discourse. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 27 (1): 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800500045786>.
- Conway, Maree, and Dobson. 2003. Fear and loathing in university staffing: The case of Australian academic and general staff. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 15 (3): 123–133. <https://doi.org/10.1787/17269822>.
- Dobson, Ian R. 2000. ‘Them and Us’ - general and non-general staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 203–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713678142>.
- Freire, Paulo. 1973. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Gibbs, Paul. 2010. A Heideggerian phenomenology approach to higher education as workplace: A consideration of academic professionalism. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 29 (3): 275–285. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-009-9175-x>.
- Gray, Stephen. 2015. Culture clash or ties that bind? What Australian academics think of professional staff. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 37 (5): 545–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1079397>.
- Harvey, Matthew. 2009. Drama, talk, and emotion: Omitted aspects of public participation. *Science, Technology & Human Values* 34 (2): 139–161.

- Hobson, Julia. 2009. An intervention program for practising critical thinking: On-shore and off-shore students blogging together. 32nd HERDSA Annual Conference, 6–9 July, Darwin. <https://herdsa.org.au/eseach-and-development-higher-education-vol-32>.
- Hornibrook, Sue. 2012. Policy implementation and academic workload planning in the managerial university: Understanding unintended consequences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (1): 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.642329>.
- Jones, Sandra, Geraldine Lefoe, Marina Harvey, and Kevin Ryland. 2012. Distributed leadership: A collaborative framework for academics, executives and professionals in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (1): 67–78.
- Kinash, Shelley, Linda Crane, Madelaine-Marie Judd, and Cecily Knight. 2016. Discrepant stakeholder perspectives on graduate employability strategies. *Higher Education Research and Development* 35 (5): 951–967. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1139555>.
- Law, B., and A.G. Watts. 2003. *The DOTS analysis original works*. Cambridge: The Career-Learning Network.
- Lengelle, Reinecke, and Sjon Ashby. 2016. Writing as soul work: Training teachers in a group-based career-narrative approach. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 45: 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2016.1169366>.
- Lengelle, Reinecke, and Frans Meijers. 2014. Narrative identity: Writing the self in career learning. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 42 (1): 52–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2013.816837>.
- Lewis, Kenton. 2014. Constructions of professional identity in a dynamic higher education sector. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18 (2): 43–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.914107>.
- Lillis, Deidre. 2007. *Steering by engagement – towards an integrated planning and evaluation framework for higher education*. EUA Case Studies 2007 – Embedding quality culture in higher education.
- Lopez, Kay, and Danny Willis. 2004. Descriptive versus interpretive phenomenology: Their contributions to nursing knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research* 14 (5): 726–735. <http://qhr.sagepub.com/content/14/5/726>.
- Macfarlane, Bruce. 2011. Professors as intellectual leaders: Formation, identity and role. *Studies in Higher Education* 36 (1): 57–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070903443734>.
- Marginson, Simon, and Mark Considine. 2000. *The Enterprise University: Power, governance and reinvention in Australia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Neary, Mike, and Gary Saunders. 2011. Leadership and learning landscapes: The struggle for the idea of the university. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65 (4): 333–352. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00494.x>.
- Rayner, Steven, Mary Fuller, Lindsey McEwen, and Hazel Roberts. 2010. Managing leadership in the UK university: A case for researching the missing professoriate? *Studies in Higher Education* 35 (6): 617–631. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070903243100>.
- Reid, Hazel, and Linden West. 2016. Negotiating professional and personal biographies in a liquid world: Creating space for reflexive innovation in career counselling. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 44: 562. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2016.1145014>.
- Scutt, Cecily, and Julia Hobson. 2013. The stories we need: Anthropology, philosophy, narrative and higher education research. *Higher Education Research and Development* 32 (1): 17–29.
- Sebalj, Darlene, Allyson Holbrook, and Sid Bourke. 2012. The rise of ‘professional staff’ and demise of the ‘non-academic’: A study of university staffing nomenclature preferences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34 (5): 463–472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.715994>.
- Simpson, Andrea, and Tanya Fitzgerald. 2014. Organisational and occupational boundaries in Australian universities: The hierarchical positioning of female professional staff. *Studies in Higher Education* 3 (10): 1929–1941. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.806466>.
- Sullinan, William M., and Matthew S. Rosin. 2008. *A new agenda for higher education: Shaping a life of the mind for practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Szekeres, Judy. 2004. The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26 (1): 7–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080042000182500>.
- Szekeres, Judy. 2011. Professional staff carve out a new space. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 679–691. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2011.621193>.
- Trede, Franziska, Rob Macklin, and Donna Bridges. 2012. Professional identity development: A review of the higher education literature. *Studies in Higher Education* 37 (3): 365–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.521237>.
- Veles, Natalia, and Margaret-Anne Carter. 2016. Imagining a future: Changing the landscape for third space professionals in Australian higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 38 (5): 519–533. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2016.1196938>.
- Wallace, Michelle, and Teresa Marchant. 2011. Female administrative managers in Australian universities: Not male and not academic. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 567–581. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2011.621184>.
- Whiston, Susan. 2011. Vocational counseling and interventions: An exploration of future ‘big’ questions. *Journal of Career Assessment* 19: 287–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069072710395535>.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2008a. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2008b. Beyond administration and management: Reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 30 (4): 375–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800802383042>.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2013. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of third space professionals*. Abingdon: Routledge.



The Role of Professional Staff in Assessing Students: A Case Study of the Objective Structured Clinical Exam

21

Darci Taylor

Contents

Introduction	328
OSCEs at Our Institution	329
The Invisibility of Professional Staff in the OSCE Literature	329
A New Way of Conceptualizing the HE Workforce	331
The Case Study	332
The Contemporary Role of Professional Staff in OSCEs	332
Implications for the Future	340
References	341

Abstract

Conducting an objective structured clinical exam (OSCE) to assess a student's clinical competency is a complex and dynamic process that requires more than just academic input due to the intricate logistical and technical requirements. Such complexity necessitates the involvement of professional staff, who work collaboratively with academic staff in planning and conducting the OSCE itself – often having direct contact with students leading up to and during the exam. This chapter presents a case study to highlight the integral role of professional staff in the assessment of students undertaking an OSCE at an Australian university. The OSCE process involves a multiplicity of roles and skills, blurring the lines between traditional academic and professional staff boundaries, creating a partnership that arguably promotes mutual respect for the expertise of both roles in higher education. The technical, curriculum, and administrative expertise of professional staff is vital to running an effective OSCE, with professional staff often assuming leadership responsibilities during an OSCE to ensure a positive

D. Taylor (✉)
Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, Australia
e-mail: d.taylor@deakin.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_4

327

experience for the student. This level of expertise is often unrecognised by those outside the OSCE process, yet is essential to the quality and integrity of the OSCE and to the professional identity of the staff involved. This chapter unpacks the nature of the work and expertise involved in designing, developing, and delivering an OSCE and the range of qualities and skills required to ensure a successful experience for students.

Keywords

Objective structured clinical exam · OSCE · Professional staff · Academic staff · Assessment · Working relationships · Student outcomes · Logistics · Third space · Invisibility

Introduction

We can no longer conceptualise the higher education workforce as consisting solely of traditional academic and non-academic roles. The traditional *binary divide* is becoming less relevant and indeed unhelpful in understanding the human resourcing requirements of universities capable of meeting diverse needs of the twenty-first century (Whitchurch 2009). These needs are driven by reduced government funding, massification, new information technologies, and increased governance and accountability pressures that have resulted in rapid changes to the higher education (HE) landscape (Australian Higher Education Industrial Association [AHEIA] 2016; Rowlands 2013).

One area in which increased accountability impacts is assessment. Academics are increasingly shouldering responsibility for student outcomes (Blackmore 2009), including being able to justify to external accrediting bodies assessment decisions around competency (Koenen et al. 2015) as HE moves toward standards-based regulatory frameworks (Bosco and Ferns 2014). At the same time, there is an increasing expectation to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate competency through assessment that resembles the real world of the professional, that is, authentic (Gulikers et al. 2008).

The objective structured clinical exam or OSCE can be considered one such authentic assessment activity. In an OSCE, students move through a number of timed stations where they demonstrate their clinical competence under simulated conditions (Khan et al. 2013b). Students are commonly scored by examiners (usually clinicians) using criterion-referenced score sheets. In many health disciplines, the OSCE is considered a valid and reliable assessment of clinical competency (Rushforth 2007), often situated at key checkpoints in a course to determine a student's eligibility to progress to the next stage, or graduate, thus present a high-stakes assessment activity.

Conducting an OSCE is a complex and dynamic process that requires more than just academic input due to the intricate logistical and technical requirements needed to ensure rigor of the assessment process. Such complexity necessitates the involvement of non-academic or professional staff (PS), who take a leadership role in

planning and conducting the OSCE itself, often having direct contact with students leading up to and during the exam. The OSCE thus presents a situation where the traditional boundaries between academic staff (AS) and PS must be loosened and the *binary divide* crossed for the philosophy of the OSCE to be realised. However, the importance of the PS role is hidden within the broader OSCE literature.

It is within this context that this case study highlights the integral role PS play in all aspects of the organisation and implementation of an OSCE. Further, it moves beyond viewing the work of PS in the OSCE as being primarily *supportive*, *generalist* and *task focussed*. Instead it explores the changing relationship between academic and professional staff that has resulted in a shared leadership approach to organising and implementing a successful OSCE, the specialist expertise and skill set that PS bring to the OSCE, and the impact that PS have on student outcomes through the student assessment experience.

OSCEs at Our Institution

The OSCE was developed by Harden in the early 1970s (Khan et al. 2013a) and has become one of the most widely used methods of assessing clinical competency in healthcare education (Gormley 2011). The philosophy behind the OSCE is that as all students are presented with the same clinical task, completed in the same time, using the same marking scheme (Gormley 2011), it therefore provides equity, reliability, and validity to the assessment process. The structure of an OSCE at our institution sees students move through a circuit of ten active “stations” in individual rooms. Students will stand at the door of the station, read the task instructions, enter the room, and complete the task (which usually involves a trained actor, i.e., a standardised patient (SP)) while being assessed. Students are kept to time as they move through the circuit by a series of coordinated bells and whistles.

The biggest OSCE at our institution examines approximately 135 students across four circuits simultaneously, over three sessions. This entails recruiting 65 examiners, 40 SPs, and 25 personnel to assist. As you can envisage, it involves significant planning, organisation, and oversight on the day in order to ensure the OSCE runs smoothly. Much of which is undertaken by PS, yet this fact is not reflected in the OSCE literature.

The Invisibility of Professional Staff in the OSCE Literature

Approximately half of the staff working in Australian universities are classified as non-academic (Australian Government Department of Education and Training 2015), yet historically they have been largely invisible in the HE discourse, often being recognised in terms of what they are not (i.e., non-academic), rather than what they are (Conway and Dobson 2003; Dobson 2000). The academic/non-academic classifications have led to HE institutions being described as binary, with an associated *them and us* culture (Dobson 2000; Whitchurch 2012).

I was first exposed to OSCEs in 2013, when I took up a middle management PS position at an Australian university. Part of my role was to support the OSCE academic lead through coordinating and leading the PS support team. I was overwhelmed by my first OSCE experience: the work AS required of my team to develop stations, the intricate organisation and planning required by PS, and the roller coaster of emotions and physicality of the day itself.

In a quest to improve my team's part in the OSCE (and having had previous roles in academia), I turned to the scholarly literature for guidance. Here I found a wealth of information regarding the psychometric properties of OSCEs and good practice guidelines. For example, OSCE stations should be well written and workshoped, an appropriate method of standard setting selected (Friedman Ben-David 2000), marking checklists and global rating scales constructed (Gormley 2011), and the importance of having well-trained examiners and actors (SPs) (Collins and Harden 1998; Kachur et al. 2013; Khan et al. 2013a, b).

While such considerations are paramount to ensuring the reliability and validity of the OSCE, through my experience, they were not the only aspects of an OSCE that were worthy of attention. Missing were details around the tasks PS were responsible for and an acknowledgment of the specialist knowledge and skill set required to organise and implement a successful OSCE. For example, the intricate logistics around the movement of students and SPs, effective relationship management of examiners and SPs, structure of the circuit and coordination on the day were from my perspective also vital to a successful OSCE. Not to mention the collaboration, leadership and problem solving that occurred on a minute-by-minute basis on OSCE day.

Even with a more thorough search of the literature, I discovered a paucity of discussion around such PS considerations. While Harden (1990) emphasises that careful organisation and planning is needed for the potential of the OSCE to be realised, there were few current articles that had these considerations as their primary focus. Indeed where the non-academic aspects of an OSCE were referred to, the main focus was on cost analysis; organisation was considered secondary to the importance of the exam content, or the text gave the impression that these were overseen by the academic lead.

For example, Carpenter (1995, p. 832) includes secretarial and support needs as part of the personnel costs in his OSCE cost analysis and concludes with the sentence "Finally, enthusiastic support of the school's administrative team is crucial to the success of such a program." And more recently Kachur et al.'s (2013, p. 7) chapter on organising OSCEs in ten steps does provide a comprehensive breakdown of the logistical requirements of an OSCE and identifies the individual staffing needs; it also falls short of acknowledging the expertise of professional staff, "For those involved in the actual OSCE implementation the most basic job requirements are availability, interest in the project, and stamina." Both of these imply that PS OSCE expertise is unnecessary and by extension not viewed as an important skill set of those PS whose primary responsibility is to provide such support.

Khan et al.'s (2013a) article on OSCE organisation and administration goes some way to acknowledge the amount of administrative work an OSCE requires, "...and by ensuring there is adequate *administrative support* to meet these needs, the OSCE lead will have more time to address *academic considerations* [emphasis added]" (p. 1448) and goes on to provide a list of "Common administrative tasks for OSCE" (p. 1456). However, this serves to put clear boundaries around the type of role the administrator plays, i.e., supportive, and the types of tasks they are responsible for, i.e., administrative.

And finally, in Sudan et al.'s (2015) paper that reviewed the costs and logistics of implementing a formative surgical OSCE, the authors reported administrative costs (44 h, total \$2200) as the second most expensive item behind the cost of experts who developed stations and examined students. In this study, stations were supplied externally; thus, Sudan et al. underestimate the significant amount of administrative support required if new stations are developed – which was the case at our institution. In addition, as it uses a monetary value to define cost, it further hides the contribution of PS due to differences in wages between PS and AS.

A New Way of Conceptualizing the HE Workforce

Rather than the contemporary HE workforce being conceived in binary terms, Whitchurch (2008a) conceptualises it as more complex, with managerial-level roles existing in-between this dichotomy, in what Whitchurch terms the "third space" (p. 378). The third space is characterised by partnerships between academic and professional staff, not hierarchies, and those working in this space often have both professional and academic backgrounds, leading to new typologies of professional identities not reflected in current position descriptions. For instance, the *blended professional*, with both academic credentials and other types of experience, may interpret their non-academic/professional role more academically (Whitchurch 2012). Graham (2014) builds on Whitchurch's concept, suggesting that the third space is not restricted to management-level professionals, but junior-level roles also exist in this space, and that roles within HE should be envisaged in terms of a two-dimensional academic/management matrix rather than dichotomy or continuum of professional-academic.

This has implications for the identity of PS as the boundaries between traditional roles in HE become blurred (Whitchurch 2008a). Reconceptualising the academic-professional staff relationship as a partnership within this third space was a useful lens through which to examine my OSCE experience, as it allowed for a more balanced view of the contribution that all staff make to the OSCE to be described.

It became apparent that the contemporary role of the PS member was not reflected in the current OSCE literature; indeed PS were being undervalued and their invisibility reinforced by it. The PS involved in OSCEs needed a voice within this literature – hence the inspiration for this study.

The Case Study

The role of PS in OSCEs was explored through a case study analysing the opinions of PS ($n = 7$) and AS ($n = 17$) involved in running OSCEs at an Australian university from 2013 to 2015. The research was approved by the institution's ethics committee, with qualitative comments collected via online anonymous questionnaire. A thematic analysis was then conducted (following Braun and Clarke 2006), with themes relevant to the research questions developed and combined with the author's autobiographical reflections of her OSCE experience from the perspective of a middle management PS member. The disadvantages associated with being an insider in this research are acknowledged (c.f Mercer 2007), and potential bias in the author's own account was countered by the inclusion of other's viewpoints (Birds 2015); however, being an insider has allowed for the invisible role of PS to be brought to light.

The Contemporary Role of Professional Staff in OSCEs

PS key responsibilities. Figure 1 shows the key areas of responsibility when organising an OSCE at our institution and the subtasks within these that were the responsibility of either PS, AS, or both. As is evident, PS play a role in all aspects of the OSCE, and while some areas of the OSCE show overlap of both AS and PS responsibility, in a majority of areas, PS play a predominant role.

Some of these areas were identified by participants as being crucial to a successful OSCE. For example, AS identified the quality of the station content, in terms of having high content validity, authenticity, and well-constructed marking rubrics. PS noted the importance of having adequate personnel, role clarity, and clear timelines. Both staff groups identified as crucial, engagement with external stakeholders (examiners and SPs) and exam logistics:

Adequate staff ie examiners, actors, support staff. (PS)

1. Longer-term planning
2. Well organised before the event
3. Cases peer reviewed at least twice (preferably at least three times).
4. Clear instructions for candidates, examiners, [standardised] patients and support staff.
5. Agreed, emergency, back-up strategies. (AS)

From my perspective, one of the crucial factors contributing to a successful OSCE was the ability to have robust pedagogical discussions. Consistent with Whitchurch's (2008b, 2012) suggestion around role interpretation in the third space, I interpreted my non-academic role more academically than it was formally defined, and as such I was particularly interested in contributing to these discussions. For example, in relation to new courses adopting OSCEs, I contributed to deliberations around the appropriate time within the curriculum to schedule the OSCE, the consideration of appropriate marking scales and cut scores, the number of stations to ensure a reliable exam, and the structures needed to be in place to ensure consistency and objectivity of the exam.



Fig. 1 A comparison of key areas of responsibility of PS and AS in the OSCE (*bold italics* denotes shared tasks)

Although this contribution was not explicitly referred to by the staff in this study (which may have been a result of the questions asked, or participants not being privy to such discussions), one AS member did describe the importance of the PS input into critiquing the OSCE:

A concerted effort between admin and academic staff to use their respective skills to produce a quality product. Attention to detail, a willingness to critique and accept critical input. (AS)

Figure 2 illustrates the expertise and skill sets participants identified as those they brought to the OSCE. These can be viewed as complementary to achieving a successful OSCE; however, it is the commonalities that highlight the importance of both PS

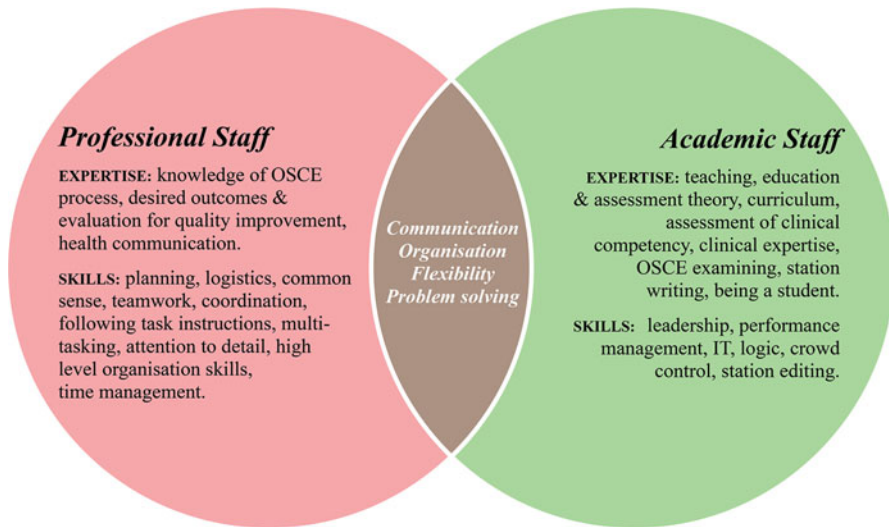


Fig. 2 Expertise and skills that AS and PS bring to the OSCE, overlap showing commonalities

and AS OSCE expertise. For example, although the OSCE day needs to be organised down to the finest detail, flexibility in both attitudes and schedule are paramount in the event that problems arise on the day, and solutions result in changes being made.

The problem solving and subsequent solutions require a holistic understanding of the OSCE process; this specialist knowledge is shared by both AS and PS. Further, implementing these solutions requires high-level communication skills so that changes can be efficiently and effectively communicated to those affected so that the OSCE can proceed. Thus it is clear that PS have skills and expertise above those required to complete 'traditional' administrative tasks as suggested by the OSCE literature.

Surprisingly PS didn't identify leadership as part of their skill set, although coordination and teamwork were reported. This may be due to those PS in formal leadership positions (such as myself) not participating in the questionnaire or PS not viewing teamwork and coordination as forms of leadership. In my experience, leadership was a key skill possessed by PS involved in the OSCE as they usually led the planning and organisation process and partnered in the leadership on OSCE day. It is to the idea of partnership that I now turn.

Working relationships. Participants were asked to comment on the nature and change in the working relationship between PS and AS leading up to and on OSCE day. Regarding the nature of the relationship with PS, AS described it as positive, collegial, and cooperative, which allowed issues to be identified and addressed quickly without impacting on the OSCE itself. They believed the most important aspect of the relationship was ongoing and effective communication, particularly on OSCE day:

Daily emails, phone calls and the odd lunch became the norm in the weeks before the exams. Again, we kept in close communication [on OSCE day] and we kept each other informed. (AS)

PS commented that the relationship with AS leading up to the OSCE was strong, again characterised by extensive communication and trust:

I need to have a very strong working relationship with the academics involved in the OSCE as they are entrusting our team to run their clinical examination. (PS)

Across 2013–2015, the number of OSCEs in the school doubled as new courses were implemented and OSCEs adopted as part of their assessment regime. During this time, PS set a schedule of timelines, facilitated relationships between AS from different disciplines, and drew on previous OSCE expertise to ensure best practice OSCE processes that they had established and refined were implemented:

Despite being an experienced examiner, this was the first OSCE that I have organised. I was most impressed and appreciative of the relationship and support between the academic and administrative staff. (AS)

I am far more dependent on the knowledge and experience of the professional staff than the other way around in conducting a successful OSCE. (AS)

Such expertise will be increasingly important as more effective OSCE processes, which still ensure rigor, will need to be developed to cater for the growth in OSCE use and massification of HE. It is therefore important that managers undertake appropriate succession planning with staff who hold OSCE expertise (both professional and academic), so that OSCEs run smoothly as it is known that small errors in organisation can have dramatic and cascading effects on OSCE day (Abdulghani et al. 2014).

The additional OSCE workload also puts pressure on working relationships. Although the quality of the relationship was described as overwhelming positive, sources of tension around PS setting deadlines and AS adhering to these were identified, as was a perceived lack of recognition of the impact last minute changes AS made to the exam:

Deadlines are often resented by academic staff by they do recognise the need for them and respect the right of the professional staff in setting these. (AS)

Generally ok – again small changes on the day can have a huge impact. I am not sure there is an awareness of the work that goes on for both sides. (PS)

At times this can be uncomfortable. There is an obvious level of anticipation and anxiety associated with an increase in workload. (AS)

I become as mad as a cut snake – terrible fear of a disaster or major omission. (AS)

It is imperative that they [AS] are forthcoming with the information in a timely manner thus creating pressure to adhere to guidelines set...Constant badgering is sometimes (always) required!! (PS)

It appeared that stress and anxiety associated with OSCEs impacted working relationships, and the well-being of some staff. Having appropriate support for staff

during these potentially stressful times is essential. Birds (2015) suggests that as role boundaries in the third space become blurred, staff may find it uncomfortable and challenging as clear distinctions around task responsibilities become unclear. This blurring may have been a contributing factor to feelings of unease in this study; however, we know that OSCEs are highly stressful for students (Brand and Schoonheim-Klein 2009; Brannick 2013), and this study suggests that they are also highly stressful events for staff. With an increased use of OSCEs in allied health disciplines, the impact this assessment type has on staff is worthy of further exploration, particularly if multiple OSCEs are concurrently managed by certain staff members.

In order to ensure a sustainable OSCE program within our expanding school, it became necessary to blur the traditional boundaries between academic and professional staff, and a 'whole of school' strategic approach was initiated that directed all staff, regardless of classification, to be involved in some capacity in the OSCE program. This effectively authorised PS to recruit AS into roles within the OSCE that would traditionally be considered non-academic (e.g., examiner check-in and timing).

This directive reflected a recognition that a successful OSCE required a collaborative approach, and fostered a culture of partnership between all staff, a culture of “both and also” rather than us and them (Zeichner 2008 as cited in Birds 2015). It is suggested that conceptualising a third space is necessary to effectively manage the complexities of conducting an OSCE in the contemporary HE environment. Indeed the AHEIAs (2016) most recent report proposes that the future workforce will need to be more collaborative, requiring a changing dynamic between AS and PS such that everyone works towards a common goal. Such an attitude was reflected in this study:

There is a real feeling of the whole faculty pulling together to get the students through the day successfully. (AS)

The whole team supports [the students] on OSCE days and it is a great feeling. (PS)

The AHEIA report also predicts the need for greater engagement of HE institutions with the broader community and industry. The OSCE is a situation where these can occur, as community members (SPs) and industry (clinicians/examiners) become involved in a core university function – assessment. The OSCE provides AS and PS an opportunity to facilitate this engagement and promote the value propositions of the university. Harvey and Radomski (2011) advocate that it is essential to nurture relationships with SPs if OSCEs are to be sustainable in regional areas. It is easy to see how this could equally extend to clinicians, given the large number required to examine a single cohort of students.

For instance, when asked about their role in facilitating relationships with externals, although the majority of AS reported minimal involvement, those that did engage believed positive relationships made it easier to recruit examiners:

I drew from my network of colleagues to recruit the most suitable examiners. (AS)

While PS who had contact with external stakeholders believed it was important to ensure that the relationship was positive, and staff made an effort to build rapport with SPs and clinicians, encouraging them to provide feedback on the OSCE process:

It is very important that we display the School in the best light. . . I try to develop a rapport with external/casual staff members by learning their names and encouraging feedback. (PS)

. . . I am acutely aware that if they [externals] have a bad experience with me it may have negative implications in their future involvement with the school, including OSCEs. (PS)

As part of the OSCE organisation, PS also fostered relationships with other key internal stakeholders. Figure 3 illustrates the range of PS interactions and demonstrates the central role PS play in internal and external relationship management.

When reflecting on how working relationship between academic and professional staff had changed over the last few years, the majority of both staff groups stated that PS had a greater degree of involvement in the OSCE, with the development of higher levels of collaboration and appreciation of each others' skill sets. This change was viewed by both groups as beneficial, with trust and mutual respect being features of the relationship:

[W]e have been guided by general staff in order to streamline the process and provide a more controlled and organ[ised] environment. (AS)

I do feel the relationship is one now where the academic staff fully appreciate the efforts of the general staff in preparation for the day and during the day for their organisational skills. (AS)

The general staff do the majority of the planning and in about 15 minutes worth of interaction let me know what I need to do and how I need to do it" (AS)

There is a lot of trust involved. . . a lot of the responsibility for running an OSCE is put onto the general staff. (PS)

The culmination of this collaboration was clearly demonstrated on OSCE day, when both AS and PS shared leadership roles. There was a general consensus that strong leadership from both AS and PS members was required and that the leadership on the day was viewed as a partnership:

Both academic and administrative leadership on the day is well coordinated; the two sides of the process work seamlessly together to ensure the best outcome for all involved. (AS)

People are clear about their roles and I feel that leadership on the day is provided by those that have organised it. (AS)

In contrast to the supporting role of PS that the OSCE literature implies, AS commented that they were happy for PS to take the lead on OSCE day:

I rely on general staff to drive the PROCESS and concentrate on watching student performance and adhering to rubrics. (AS)

Happy to be managed by general staff provided instructions are clear. Work as peers as much as anything, each recognising the other's strengths. (AS)

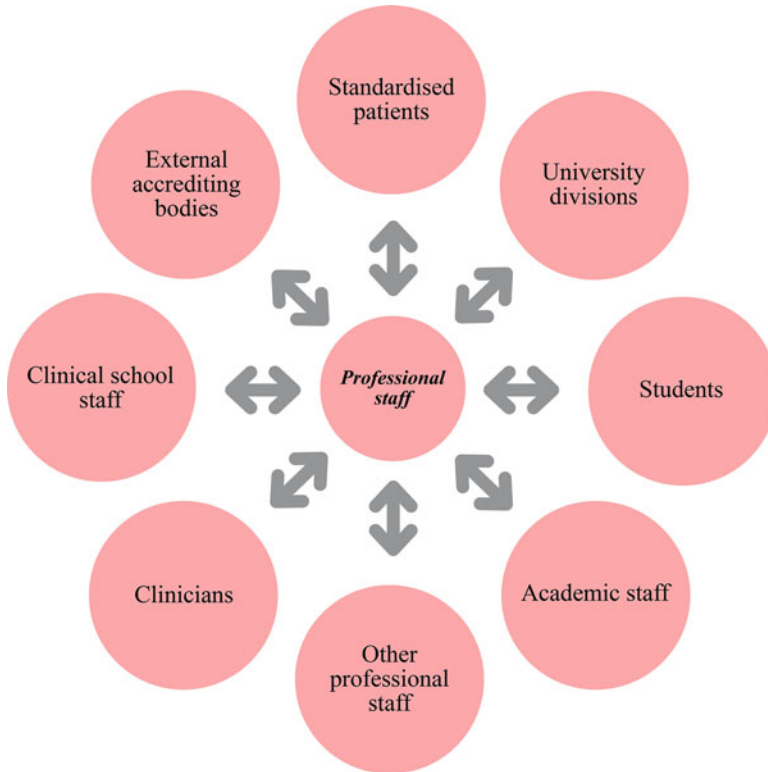


Fig. 3 Relationships with internal and external stakeholders that PS manage as part of the OSCE

This demonstrates a recognition of the expertise of PS and the importance of both academic and professional roles to the implementation of a successful OSCE. It also suggests that the partnership between staff impacts positively on the student experience.

The impact of PS on the student experience. Student experience includes aspects of teaching, engagement, representation, complaints and appeals, academic support, feedback, and experience of the assessment process (Kandiko 2013). While most students view OSCEs as an authentic and fair method of assessment (Yap et al. 2012), OSCEs also elicit greater amounts of test anxiety compared to other traditional forms of assessment (Brand and Schoonheim-Klein 2009; Brannick 2013).

While test anxiety shows a general negative relationship to performance (O'Carroll and Fisher 2013), Brannick (2013) claims the relationship between test anxiety and OSCE performance shows mixed results. He suggests that anxiety may dissipate after the OSCE begins and that a certain level of test anxiety actually increases the authenticity of the OSCE, as emotional arousal is likely to be present under real-life situations when the task is performed (Brannick 2013). Nonetheless it may be argued that if a student's performance is *overly* influenced by test anxiety, the OSCE may become an unreliable method of assessing the true competency of the student.

Students' perceptions of the factors that increase their anxiety and reduce performance during an OSCE relate to their preparation, examiners, and the environment (Nicholson and Forrest 2009). PS have a central role in impacting the OSCE environment through the organisation and management of logistics and their interactions with students on OSCE day.

Regarding the management of logistics, AS viewed the contribution that PS made to the student experience as significant, although perhaps largely unnoticed. They described the organisation and planning leading up to, and on the day of the exam as essential to ensuring a smoothly run and fair exam, as it allowed examiners and students to focus solely on the examination:

[V]ery significant. A well organised OSCE with friendly faces makes the assessment less daunting and more academically sound. (AS)

They are key to ensuring that the environment is as relaxed as possible, while maintaining maximum time efficiency. (AS)

PS also saw their contribution resulting in students being given the best opportunity to pass, as they did not have to worry about complicated logistics:

. . .enabl[ing] the students to feel a sense of calm and support on the day and unaware of any hassles behind the scenes. To the students it should feel [seam]less and organised. (PS)

Recognising that the OSCE is a highly stressful event, both AS and PS reported trying to keep students calm, here again the organisation of the OSCE was seen as having a positive influence:

If everything is planned well and runs smoothly then this should reduce student stress and anxiety and students can just concentrate on the OSCE assessment. (AS)

The big impact comes in the days leading up to the OSCE. The familiarity of familiar faces I'm sure adds value to their experience. Having the comfort and support of a familiar face walking between stations, waiting before and after the rotation through the stations (AS)

They are the conduit of information and the overseers of the day. They provide calmness. (AS)

My role is to ensure students know where they need to go, abide by the rules and if possible help keep them calm. (PS)

This case study adds to the growing body of evidence that PS play a considerable role in student learning outcomes (Graham 2013), and of an alignment between professional and academic values, that is, of wanting students to achieve. This study did not seek students' opinions on the impact of PS on their OSCE experience; however, investigating this may be warranted as even the smallest influence on performance in such a high-stakes exam is worthy of attention.

It also adds to the literature around PS perceptions of their impact on student outcomes. In a study looking at PS perceptions of their contribution to student outcomes in relation to institutional behaviour propositions, Regan et al. (2014)

found a lack of consensus between PS at both the faculty and central level. However, Regan et al. (2014) suggested that PS may consider their contribution more significant if practical propositions and/or personal contributions were used as a reference point rather than those related to organisational culture or to the PS body as a whole. This study supports this proposition, as PS perceived they had a direct impact on the experience of students in positive ways when referenced to their individual contribution to a practical task, i.e., the OSCE.

Implications for the Future

This case study has proposed that PS play an integral role in the OSCE, a role that has been largely invisible in the broader OSCE discourse. It has not only explored the types of tasks that PS take responsibility for in the planning, organisation, and implementation of the OSCE but has explored the expertise, skills, and nature of the relationship between AS and PS involved in OSCEs.

It proposes that rather than the OSCE reinforcing the traditional binary divide between AS and PS, it provides an example of where the divide is bridged. A successful and sustainable OSCE program requires an approach where staff value each other's strengths, maintain consistent and effective communication, and seek to proactively break down the traditional binary divide establishing culture of 'both and also', rather than 'us and them'. The OSCE illustrates a niche in which the notion of a third space is useful in describing the nature of the working environment and human resourcing requirements needed to effectively manage OSCEs in contemporary HE institutions.

Moreover, it has highlighted the role PS have on fostering positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders, and the valuable contribution they make to student outcomes through the student OSCE experience. These contributions should not be understated in the context of a PS member's identity.

All participants regarded PS as having a positive influence on student outcomes through their expertise in OSCE organisation and implementation, resulting in a smooth exam experience for students. They believed that PS brought a sense of calmness to the OSCE environment which allowed students to better concentrate on the exam, aiding in student performance.

Student perceptions regarding the impact PS have on their OSCE experience are worthy of further exploration. As test anxiety impacts exam performance, exploring ways in which anxiety can be reduced should be beneficial to performance. In addition, when students are reconceptualised as customers, it is important the HE institutions explore the ways in which students' overall experience can be enhanced. Further to this point, as OSCEs are known to evoke high levels of anxiety and stress in students, it is important that staff have the necessary skills to interact with students under stressful situations and is an area that may require targeted professional development.

While this case study has described an overwhelmingly positive experience resulting from the partnership between AS and PS, this relationship was not without

strain. Tensions centered on timelines and adherence to deadlines, managing increased anxiety and stress associated with the organisation of the OSCE, and perhaps at times uncertainty around responsibilities as boundaries became blurred. Notably, not only do students find the OSCE highly stressful but so do staff. Supporting staff well-being during the lead up to an OSCE should be a priority. This can be aided by strategic support to establish a culture of collaboration and the adoption of strategies that facilitate communication around competing priorities and information sharing.

The limitations of this study relate to the focus on OSCEs as run by one Australian institution. In addition AS and PS groups were conceptualised as homogenous, with themes identified by individuals, with potentially varied roles, generalised across each group. Nonetheless, this case study has implications for other universities that utilise OSCEs in that it offers insights into the skills and expertise required by the team responsible for organising and implementing a successful and sustainable OSCE program.

It suggests that in the contemporary higher education context, in order for the philosophy of the OSCE to be realised as a fair and valid assessment of clinical competency, both professional and academic staff are equally important partners in the process. Envisaging this work within a third space may allow for this partnership to be realised.

References

- Abdulghani, H.M., Z. Amin, and G. Ponnampereuma. 2014. *An essential guide to developing, implementing, and evaluating objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)*. Hackensack: World Scientific Publishing Company.
- Australian Government Department of Education and Training. 2015. *2015 Staff full-time equivalence*. Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/38385>
- Australian Higher Education Industrial Association. 2016. *Australian higher education workforce of the future*. Retrieved from <http://www.aheia.edu.au/news/higher-education-workforce-of-the-future-167>
- Birds, R. 2015. Redefining roles and identities in higher education: The liminal experiences of a university spinout company. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management* 37 (6): 633–645. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1103003>
- Blackmore, J. 2009. Academic pedagogies, quality logics and performative universities: Evaluating teaching and what students want. *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (8): 857–872. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070902898664>
- Bosco, A.M., and S. Ferns. 2014. Embedding of authentic assessment in work-integrated learning curriculum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education* 15 (4): 281–290.
- Brand, H.S., and M. Schoonheim-Klein. 2009. Is the OSCE more stressful? Examination anxiety and its consequences in different assessment methods in dental education. *European Journal of Dental Education* 13 (3): 147–153. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0579.2008.00554.x>
- Brannick, M.T. 2013. Metacognition, OSCE performance anxiety and OSCE performance. *Medical Education* 47 (6): 540–542. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.12148>
- Braun, V., and V. Clarke. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Carpenter, J.L. 1995. Cost analysis of objective structured clinical examinations. *Academic Medicine* 70 (9): 828–833.
- Collins, J.P., and R.M. Harden. 1998. AMEE medical education guide No. 13: Real patients, simulated patients and simulators in clinical examinations. *Medical Teacher* 20 (6): 508–521. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421599880210>
- Conway, M., and I. Dobson. 2003. Fear and loathing in university staffing: The case of the Australian academic and general staff. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 15 (3): 123–133. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1787/17269822>
- Dobson, I.R. 2000. ‘Them and Us’ – general and non-general staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management* 22 (2): 203–210. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800050196911>
- Friedman Ben-David, M. 2000. AMEE guide no. 18: Standard setting in student assessment. *Medical Teacher* 22 (2): 120–130. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421590078526>
- Gormley, G. 2011. Summative OSCEs in undergraduate medical education. *The Ulster Medical Journal* 80 (3): 127–132.
- Graham, C. 2013. Professional staff contributions to positive student outcomes. *Australian Universities Review* 55: 7–16.
- Graham, C. 2014. Another matrix revolution? The overlap of university work. *Australian Universities Review* 56 (1): 67–69.
- Gulikens, J.T.M., T.J. Bastiaens, and P.A. Kirschner. 2008. Defining authentic assessment: Five dimensions of authenticity. In *Balancing dilemmas in assessment and learning in contemporary education*, ed. A. Havnes and L. McDowell. New York: Routledge.
- Harden, R.M. 1990. Twelve tips for organizing an objective structure clinical examination (OSCE). *Medical Teacher* 12 (3/4): 259.
- Harvey, P., and N. Radomski. 2011. Performance pressure: Simulated patients and high-stakes examinations in a regional clinical school. *Australian Journal of Rural Health* 19 (6): 284–289.
- Kachur, E., S. Zabar, K. Hanley, A. Kalet, J.H. Bruno, and C.C. Gillespie. 2013. Organising OSCEs (and other SP exercises) in ten steps. In *Objective structured clinical examinations: 10 steps to planning and implementing OSCEs and other standardized patient exercise*, ed. S. Zabar, E. Kachur, K. Hanley, and A. Kalet, 7–34. New York: Springer Science+Business Media.
- Kandiko, C. 2013. The global student experience. In *The global student experience: An international and comparative analysis*, ed. C. Kandiko and M. Weyers, 1–10. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Khan, K.Z., K. Gaunt, S. Ramachandran, and P. Pushkar. 2013a. The objective structured clinical examination (OSCE): AMEE guide no. 81. Part II: Organisation & administration. *Medical Teacher* 35 (9): e1447–e1463. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2013.818635>
- Khan, K.Z., S. Ramachandran, K. Gaunt, and P. Pushkar. 2013b. The objective structured clinical examination (OSCE): AMEE guide no. 81. Part I: An historical and theoretical perspective. *Medical Teacher* 35 (9): e1437–e1446. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2013.818634>
- Koenen, A.-K., F. Dochy, and I. Berghmans. 2015. A phenomenographic analysis of the implementation of competence-based education in higher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 50: 1–12. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.04.001>.
- Mercer, J. 2007. The challenges of insider research in educational institutions: Wielding a double-edged sword and resolving delicate dilemmas. *Oxford Review of Education* 33 (1): 1–17.
- Nicholson, B., and K. Forrest. 2009. What influences performance in the OSCE exam? The medical student perspective. *Medical Teacher* 31 (11): 1040–1041.
- O’Carroll, P.J., and P. Fisher. 2013. Metacognitions, worry and attentional control in predicting OSCE performance test anxiety. *Medical Education* 47 (6): 562–568. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.12125>
- Regan, J.-A., E. Dollard, and N. Banks. 2014. A comparative study of the perceptions of professional staff on their contribution to student outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (5): 533–545. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2014.936093>

- Rowlands, J. 2013. Academic boards: Less intellectual and more academic capital in higher education governance? *Studies in Higher Education* 38 (9): 1274–1289. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.619655>
- Rushforth, H.E. 2007. Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE): Review of the literature and implications for nursing education. *Nurse Education Today* 27: 481–490. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2006.08.009>
- Sudan, R., P. Clark, and B. Henry. 2015. Cost and logistics for implementing the American College of Surgeons objective structured clinical examination. *American Journal of Surgery* 209 (1): 140–144. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjsurg.2014.10.001>
- Whitchurch, C. 2008a. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00387.x>
- Whitchurch, C. 2008b. Beyond administration and management: Reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management* 30 (4): 375–386. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800802383042>
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9202-4>
- Whitchurch, C. 2012. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of “third space” professionals*. New York: Routledge.
- Yap, K., M. Bearman, N. Thomas, and M. Hay. 2012. Clinical psychology students’ experiences of a pilot objective structured clinical examination. *Australian Psychologist* 47 (3): 165–173. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1742-9544.2012.00078.x>

Part IV

Career Development and Progress



Career Progression and Development of Professional Staff in Higher Education

22

Carina Bossu, Natalie Brown, and Vanessa Warren

Contents

Introduction	348
Careers of Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education	349
How and Why This Theme Emerged for This Book	351
The Chapters	352
Implications for Institutions and Further Research	353
References	354

Abstract

This chapter explores some of the unique issues and opportunities for career progression and development of professional staff in higher education, providing a broad overview of the existing literature in this space and discussing some of the key issues and findings that have emerged in recent publications. It then introduces the career-focused chapters of this book, *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*, situating them within a scholarly context, providing a critical exploration of their contributions to this burgeoning field, and identifying some of their implications for higher education institutions in the current climate of change.

Keywords

Professional staff · Professional staff in higher education · Career progression of professional staff · Career development of professional staff · Higher education

C. Bossu (✉) · N. Brown · V. Warren
University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
e-mail: carina.bossu@utas.edu.au; natalie.brown@utas.edu.au; vanessa.warren@utas.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_34

347

Introduction

Career development represents a deliberate and progressive engagement with work that has the potential to reach beyond economic imperatives and social status and into well-being, life satisfaction, and identity (Abele et al. 2016; Law et al. 2002). The vast scale of this topic, and the complexity contained within it, saw numerous theories of career development emerge in the twentieth century. The “big five” of these theories still dominate discourse today (Leung 2008): Theory of Work-Adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist 1984); Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment (Holland 1997); Self-concept Theory of Career Development (Super 1963); Theory of Circumscription and Compromise (Gottfredson 1981), and Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al. 2002). Each of these theories attempt to explain the sense-making and decision-making processes of individuals over the span of their careers by exploring the complex interplay of both individual traits and motivations and extrinsic factors, such as the institutional environment.

The stages of career development identified by Super (1990), growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, broadly align with the stages of the employee life cycle – recruitment, development, retention, and separation (Lavelle 2007). While both of these models appear to assume an inherent linearity in career trajectories, they can also be applied in more fragmented and complex working environments, lending themselves to iterative application in periods of transition and mobility. Many examples of specific career models can be found for defined professions such as architects, engineers, and teachers, as well as for professionals in areas such as marketing and sales. There has also been work on the development of academic careers (Mortensen 1983); little has been published, however, about the career trajectories of professional staff in higher education, who have been described as the “forgotten” or “invisible” workforce (Castleman and Allen 1995; Szekeres 2004).

Within higher education, professional staff are not comprised of one unified body of workers, but a loose association of diverse staff whose main defining characteristic (from an organizational perspective) was, until recently, simply that they were “nonacademic” staff – literally defined in the negative (Sebalj et al. 2012). The enormous range of professional norms and workplace cultures encountered within the broad body of professional staff (both within and across institutions) poses a number of challenges to researchers in this space, for example, the risk of missing significant nuance by treating this diverse body as a singular group or focusing instead on a small subset and thus risk missing larger trends. Other challenges researchers might face include the comparison and overlaps that the literature makes (or fails to make) between the career experiences of professional staff to their academic colleagues within higher education institutions, or even the comparisons with professional counterparts within commercial or governmental sectors.

This chapter explores some of the unique issues and opportunities for career progress and development of professional staff in higher education, providing a broad overview of the existing literature in this space and discussing some of the key issues that have emerged in recent publications. It then introduces the career-focused

chapters of this book, *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*, situating them within a scholarly context by providing a critical exploration of their contributions to this field and identifying some of their implications for higher education institutions.

Careers of Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education

It has been mentioned in other chapters of this book that the literature and research addressing professional and support staff in higher education is limited. The lack of literature becomes even more evident when the focus of the investigation is narrowed down to the career progression and development of professional staff. In contrast, there is an extensive body of work regarding career progression and development of academic staff in higher education, as well as of professionals of other sectors. In fact, the literature on career development alone is extensive. A search on ERIC for the term “career development” yields 17,073 results, ranging from those concentrating on child career development (e.g., the overview of literature by Watson et al. 2015); career development of specific underrepresented groups, including women (Loyola and Corazon 2016), women of color in STEM (Mack et al. 2013), and American Indian secondary students (Flynn et al. 2013); career advising for college students (Tull and Miller 2009); and so forth. Much of this work has applications in informing career counselling, particularly during compulsory and vocational education. Such is the level of importance of this field that Australia has a National Career Development Strategy (Australian Government n.d.) to support and guide young people, mostly young adults, through their career options and opportunities.

Similarly, there is a large body of knowledge that covers issues related to career development of academic staff, including dedicated journals, published book series, and specific associations and communities of practice. Academic staff development is a distinct field of study within higher education (Webb 1996). However, when narrowing the search on “career development” in ERIC to “career development” and “professional staff” and “college” or “university” or “higher education,” the result shows only nine valid resources. Likewise, the search for the term “career progression” yields 219 results in the ERIC database. But, when used in combination with “professional staff” and “college” or “university” or “higher education,” the results are nil. Interestingly, when combining this search with “academics,” the number of valid resources increases to 23. These results provide clear evidence that there is limited literature and research that looks at career development and progression as it pertains to professional staff in universities.

Some of this disparity may be accounted for in the fact that research and publication is generally not core business for most staff in professional roles in higher education, and even where there is interest in doing so, the incentives and opportunities to publish are not as prevalent for professional staff as they are in academia. Further, the diversity of roles encompassed within the broad identifier “professional staff” – both within institutions and across them – makes it difficult to

treat the group as a unified or coherent whole. The careers of professional staff are therefore generally explored either in the broadest sense (e.g., shifts in demographics) or by focusing on the specific experiences of subsets of professional staff in role/s with distinct activities, attributes, and job titles in common. The following chapters in this section include examples of both approaches.

The challenges of the contemporary higher education environment – competitive funding models, performance agendas, globalization and internationalization, massification, and technological developments to name but a few – have seen the rapid evolution of many of the norms, practices, and activities of universities and colleges worldwide (Hogan 2011; Lewis 2014; Lo and Yat 2017; Marginson and van der Wende 2007). The changes brought by these technological, sociopolitical, and market forces on the careers and workplace experiences of academic staff are well documented; less closely examined is their impact upon the opportunities and experiences of professional and support staff.

Of the existing literature in this space, it is clear that the pressures that are transforming the academic spaces of universities have also triggered a cascade of changes in their professional operations at both macro and micro levels, including the career trajectories and experiences of professional staff. Some of these changes may mirror those felt in the academy or develop in response to changes in the academic space, while others have emerged specifically within the realm of professional staff. Some of the shared changes experienced by both academic and professional staff reflect broader shifts in employment patterns that are not unique to higher education settings, such as increased employment uncertainty and the casualization of workforces (Tytherleigh et al. 2005). Other shared challenges, such as workload complexity and the increasing priority of performance-driven activity (Lewis 2014; Ricketts and Pringle 2014), have changed, and are changing, the nature of existing roles in higher education as well as leading to the creation of new professional roles (Marginson and van der Wende 2007).

This environment of change brings both challenge and opportunity for professional staff and their careers. Staff in professional roles report both the seemingly contradictory freedoms afforded by role ambiguity and relative invisibility and the challenges presented by these very same qualities, such as perceived authority and status, control over decision-making, and a clearly defined purpose (Ryttberg and Geschwind 2017; Ricketts and Pringle 2014). While their status as “backroom actors” allows professional staff to focus more on collaborative activities and outcomes rather than formal status (Smerek and Peterson 2007; Whitchurch 2008), this can be coupled with an uneasy tension and a sense of “us and them” in terms of priority, reward, and recognition.

Working within institutions dominated by academic norms (even when these norms are in flux) can engender a feeling of institutional indifference, misunderstanding, and even hostility, which can have significant repercussions on staff performance and retention (Ricketts and Pringle 2014). One clear example is the perception of opportunities for advancement (or lack thereof), which has been shown to be the biggest difference in career satisfaction between academic and professional staff (Ricketts and Pringle 2014). Most universities provide guidelines and support

for promotion for academic staff at different stages of their careers (Graham 2009); tenured academic staff generally have the opportunity to advance their careers within clearly articulated pathways that usually do not ask them to move outside their existing discipline area. In contrast, opportunities for career progression and promotion for professional staff are generally limited and/or self-directed in the case where staff take a strategic approach to managing their career. Professional staff must usually (though not always) leave their current jobs to advance their career, rather than find promotion within their existing role (Ricketts and Pringle 2014; Warren 2011).

Furthermore, the increased complexity and responsibilities of a new role are not always adequately supported by professional development, which tends to be ad hoc and on the job, feeding into the reported perceptions of indifference and feeling unsupported, and of adding pressure to staff who may already feel their intellectual legitimacy and professional authority are undermined or undervalued due to their “nonacademic” status (Olson 2005; Ricketts and Pringle 2014). While on-the-job learning is not necessarily problematic in itself, it must also be properly supported and recognized.

The cumulative effect of loosely defined roles, perceived invisibility and second-class status, informal development structures, and inconsistent opportunities for progression, coupled with the impact of increasingly complex workplace stresses, poses risks to professional staff satisfaction and retention in universities (Smerek and Peterson 2007; Tytherleigh et al. 2005). Institutions must consider and address the career needs and experiences of their professional staff to best meet the challenges of the competitive and complex global higher education sector.

How and Why This Theme Emerged for This Book

As discussed in chapter one, the editors of this volume did not set specific themes or subsections for authors to write to; the themes emerged in response to the submissions received from authors across institutions and indeed across the world. Issues surrounding career progression and development emerged quickly and strongly as one of the major theme areas in the research, experiences, and discussions of professional and support staff.

We are interested and delighted to find that the submitted articles pertaining to this theme have such a positive focus, acknowledging some challenges and concerns, but primarily focusing on opportunities for change, development, and improvement. They also reflect on opportunities at different stages of professional staff careers, as well as alternative pathways and possible options professional staff could consider. We were pleased to see that the chapters in this section were mostly written by professional and support staff in higher education and clearly demonstrate their important problem solving skills and pragmatic approaches. This section aims to contribute to a growing body of knowledge and positions the career experiences of professional staff within a scholarly context that has so far been largely underrepresented.

The Chapters

Six chapters were included in this section that is primarily focused on career progression and development of professional staff in higher education mostly in Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. However, the breadth and depth of the issues explored in these chapters could be generalized more broadly to other higher education systems.

In the first chapter in this section, Michelle Gander has provided an overview of key career theories, moving from a consideration of the factors evident in traditional trajectories to those seen in more contemporary careers. Using this foundation, she has moved to examine the careers of professional staff in higher education through engaging with the literature and conducting her own survey. The survey, conducted in both Australia and the United Kingdom, sheds light on career factors, adding to a thus far limited literature on professional staff career progression. The findings identify implications and practical actions for both individuals and organizations.

In the following chapter, Rania Sanford applies a developmental framework that explores three dimensions of professional staff career trajectory in higher education. She focused her chapter on the stories (narratives) of three female professional staff who have different managerial roles within a higher educational institution in the United States. Based on the participants' narratives about their career trajectory, professional experiences, and how they are currently situated, the author develops a three-stage development framework, comprising insight/commitment, growth/skills, and competence/contribution. Such a framework could assist individuals and institutions to further understand and support professional staff during the different stages of career progression.

The next chapter by Sheffield, McSweeney, and Joudrey used a collaborative autoethnographic inquiry to draw upon their own lived experiences as educational developers. The narratives explored their career paths in the Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) as postgraduate students. The GTA program is an opportunity available to some postgraduate students from a diverse range of disciplines at their university (Dalhousie University in Canada). According to the authors, the GTA program provides an important pathway into the educational development profession. In their narratives, the authors explored how their journeys also reflected the changing nature of the GTA program and revealed the evolving role of educational developers over time and the need to mentor such students into the profession. The outcomes of their analysis provide key recommendations to those managing learning and teaching centers and those mentoring GTAs or earlier career educational developers. The recommendations can be adopted not only by Canadian universities but also by any university wanting to better prepare and support their current and future educational developers.

Furthermore, the chapter by Abbot and Gravett examines the implications of requiring a PhD qualification in educational development-related jobs in American higher education. The authors explored the context and rationale that led to this requirement, which seems to be increasingly common in this field. They also share their own narratives as a way to provide further insights to readers and potential

educational developers about their journeys and experiences as they enter the field of educational development. The investigation of the authors' personal reflections underpinned by existing literature provides some alternative career pathways to graduate students, young professionals, and others interested in educational development.

In their chapter, Westhuizen, Verrill, Gamble, and Limpens have explored the design and development of a professional development program (named Learning Support Professional Development, or LSProf, for learning support staff for the University of Portsmouth, UK). After discussing the rationale, challenges, and opportunities of the program, the authors explained the pedagogical approach, which focused mostly on participants' engagement through discussion, dialogue, and critical reflections on their practice. The authors also explored the impact of the program through the eyes of participants, as they used reflections from two former participants in the program. The analysis of these reflections supported by the literature revealed a set of recommendations to be considered by individuals and institutions while developing, designing, and running such development programs for student support professionals across higher education. They concluded by stating that such programs could have a positive impact on the career development of these professionals, which could in turn have positive implications on academic settings across the institution, including learning and teaching.

We conclude this section with the chapter by Seth Fishman on retirement transition for professional staff in higher education. This chapter is part of a larger study conducted for his PhD, which investigated retirement of academic staff. However, for this book he adapted and applied his own three-phase retirement model to professional staff and outlined ways in which institutions and retiring professional staff could remain connected in mutually beneficial ways.

Implications for Institutions and Further Research

This chapter began by outlining the historical emphasis on the career lifecycle of the academic workforce despite professional staff representing a large proportion of the higher education workforce globally and more than 50% in Australia (Graham 2009). In particular there is a scarcity of research literature that can inform institutions on how best to support and develop their professional staff.

The chapters in this section of *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education* by no means address all the challenges, issues, and opportunities in career development for professional staff; they are not intended to. Rather, they open a dialogue and extend conversation in an emergent scholarly space. By rigorously documenting and critically examining both original research and personal experiences within a broader scholarly framework, these chapters extend our knowledge and contribute to a growing evidence base for the expansion of theory.

The broader dissemination of this work is highly timely. There are some promising signs that institutions are increasingly recognizing professional staff as a key component of the workforce, as evidenced by strategic plans and workforce

development strategies that are both inclusive and targeted at professional employees. This recognition that professional staff are key enablers of delivering broader university strategy and as such need to be explicitly supported through recruitment, orientation, career progression, and leadership development is gaining momentum. The University of Melbourne launched its Engagement at Melbourne 2015–2020 document (University of Melbourne 2015), where both professional and academic staff were included in the enabling strategy. For example, their objective to “Develop the capabilities of academic and professional staff to realise the potential of engagement” (p. 17) is supported by a program of internal professional development for all staff in communications, innovations, and entrepreneurship.

The University of Sydney, in its strategic plan, has been explicit about the essential nature of “[H]igh-calibre professional staff, technically able and personally committed to both the work of the University in education and research and to its institutional values” (University of Sydney 2016, p. 13). As one of its core initiatives, the University has identified creating career pathways for professional staff, with a particular emphasis on encouraging mobility across the different organizational units of the university. They have also proposed a “University-wide shadowing program for staff to assist them both in understanding other parts of the institution and in assessing opportunities for career advancement within the University” (p. 48).

At a sector level, the UK Higher Education Academy has designed their fellowship scheme to be inclusive of those who both “teach and support learning in Higher Education” (HEA 2011). The framework on which the fellowships are based reflects the diversity of staff involved in the higher education enterprise and includes guidance documents specifically targeted at supporting professional staff to meet the criteria in the framework.

With indications of a growing recognition of the importance of career pathways for valuing and retaining high-performing professional staff, the insights of researchers allow institutions to better plan effective initiatives and evaluate their efficacy.

References

- Abele, A.E., T. Hagmaier, and D. Spurk. 2016. Does career success make you happy? The mediating role of multiple subjective success evaluations. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 17: 1615–1633. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-015-9662-4>.
- Australian Government. n.d. National career development strategy. https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/national_career_development_strategy.pdf.
- Castleman, T., and M. Allen. 1995. The forgotten workforce: Female general staff in higher education. *Australian Universities Review* 38 (2): 65–69.
- Dawis, R.V., and L.H. Lofquist. 1984. *A psychological theory of work adjustment*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Flynn, S.V., K.J. Duncan, and L.L. Evenson. 2013. An emergent phenomenon of American Indian secondary students’ career development process. *Career Development Quarterly* 61 (2): 124–140.

- Gottfredson, L.S. 1981. Circumscription and compromise: A developmental theory of occupational aspirations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 28: 545–579.
- Graham, C. 2009. Investing in early career general staff. *Journal of Higher Education Management and Policy* 31 (2): 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800902825868>.
- Higher Education Academy. 2011. The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 201. Retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_framework.pdf.
- Hogan, J. 2011. Is higher education spending more on administration and, if so, why? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 15 (1): 7–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2010.532316>.
- Holland, J.H. 1997. *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Lavelle, J. 2007. On workforce architecture, employment relationships and lifecycles: Expanding the purview of workforce planning and management. *Public Personnel Management* 36 (4): 371–385.
- Law, B., F. Meijers, and G. Wijers. 2002. New perspectives on career and identity in the contemporary world. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 30 (4): 431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0306988021000025637>.
- Lent, R.W., S.D. Brown, and G. Hackett. 2002. Social cognitive career theory. In *Career choice and development*, ed. D. Brown and Associate, 4th ed., 255–311. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Leung, S.A. 2008. The big five career theories. In *International handbook of career guidance*, ed. J.A. Athanasau, R. Van Esbroek, 115–132. Netherlands: Springer Netherlands. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6230-8>
- Lewis, K. 2014. Constructions of professional identity in a dynamic higher education sector. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18 (2): 43–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.914107>.
- Lo, W., and W. Yat. 2017. The recalibration of neoliberalisation: Repoliticising higher education policy in Hong Kong. *Higher Education* 73 (5): 759–773. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-016-9989-8>.
- Loyola, M., and C.A. Corazon. 2016. Career development patterns and values of women school administrators. *Journal of Education and Practice* 7 (5): 26–31.
- Mack, K., C. Rankins, and K. Woodson. 2013. From graduate school to the STEM workforce: An entropic approach to career identity development for STEM women of color. *New Directions for Higher Education* 2013 (163): 23–34.
- Marginson, S., and M. van der Wende. 2007. *Globalisation and higher education*, OECD education working papers. Vol. 8. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/173831738240>.
- Mortensen, L.L. 1983. Career stages: Implications for faculty instructional development. *To Improve the Academy*, Paper 36. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/podimproveacad/36>.
- Olson, J. 2005. “No one really knows what it is that I need”: Learning a new job at a small private college. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education* 63: 141–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2015.1085947>.
- Ricketts, K., and J.K. Pringle. 2014. Going up? Perceived career progress of female general staff across New Zealand universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (5): 496–508.
- Ryttberg, M., and L. Geschwind. 2017. Professional support staff at higher education institutions in Sweden: Roles and success factors for the job. *Tertiary Education and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13583883.2017.1322631>.
- Sebalj, D., A. Holbrook, and S. Bourke. 2012. The rise of ‘professional staff’ and the demise of the ‘non-academic’: A study of university staffing nomenclature preferences. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2012.715994>.
- Smerek, R.E., and M. Peterson. 2007. Examining Herzbergs’s theory: Improving job satisfaction among non-academic employees at a university. *Research in Higher Education* 48 (2): 229–250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-006-9042-3>.
- Super, D.E. 1963. Self-concepts in vocational development. In *Career development: Self-concept theory*, ed. D.E. Super, 1–16. New York: College Entrance Examination Board.

- Super, D.E. 1990. A life-span space approach to career development. In *Career choice and development*, ed. D. Brown, L. Brooks, and Associates, 2nd ed., 197–261. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.
- Szekeres, J. 2004. The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26: 7–22.
- Tull, A., and M.T. Miller. 2009. Highways and byways: The career paths of senior student affairs officers. In *Annual conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators*, Boston. 7 July 2009. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505887.pdf>.
- Tytherleigh, M.Y., C. Webba, C.L. Cooper, and C. Ricketts. 2005. Occupational stress in UK higher education institutions: A comparative study of all staff categories. *Higher Education Research and Development* 24 (1): 41–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0729436052000318569>.
- University of Melbourne. 2015. Engagement at Melbourne 2015–2020. Retrieved from http://about.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1713967/Engagement-at-Melbourne-2.pdf.
- University of Sydney. 2016. If you change nothing, nothing will change. Strategic Plan 2016–20. Retrieved from <https://sydney.edu.au/content/dam/intranet/documents/strategy-and-planning/strategic-plan-2016-20.pdf>.
- Warren, V. 2011. Using workforce structures to enable staff retention and development: An academic library case study. *New Library World* 112 (1/2): 8–18. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03074801111100427>.
- Watson, M., L. Nota, and M. McMahon. 2015. Evolving stories of child career development. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* 15 (2): 175–184.
- Webb, G. 1996. *Understanding staff development*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Whitchurch, C. 2008. Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of Third Space professionals in UK higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly* 62 (4): 377–396.



Careers of Professional Staff in Higher Education: Theory and Practical Implications

23

Michelle Gander

Contents

Introduction	358
Professional Staff and Careers	359
Career Theory	360
Method	362
Results	362
Discussion	363
Implications for Practice	364
Implications for Individuals	364
Implications for Institutions	368
Conclusion	368
References	369

Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of the importance of applying career theory to professional staff working in universities to create a greater understanding of the types of career enacted and the implications for individuals in managing their careers and for organizations supporting employees' careers. This chapter outlines the results of a study into the career attitudes of professional staff in higher education in Australia and the UK and uses the theory of traditional and contemporary careers to explain the outcomes. An online survey was provided to members of the professional bodies in each country. The findings suggest that professional staff create a hybrid career orientation incorporating aspects of traditional organizational and contemporary careers. Traditional career factors such as the requirement for job security, loyalty, a career, and promotion

M. Gander (✉)

School of Business and Governance, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

e-mail: m.gander@murdoch.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,

University Development and Administration,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_2

357

opportunities are integrated with more contemporary attitudes including self-directed career management attitudes, psychological mobility, and the need for job satisfaction, meaningful work, and skill utilization. Implications for higher education institutions include the need to recognize this hybrid career orientation and provide a high-performing work system to create a culture where individuals can enact career-enabling strategies to ensure job satisfaction. Institutions could, for example, provide additional vocational guidance to help professional staff proactively manage their careers. For individuals, five career-enabling strategies are highlighted: high performance, continuing professional development, job rotation, networking, and mentoring.

Keywords

Career theory · Traditional career · Hybrid career · Contemporary career · Career management · Learning and organizational design · Continuing professional development · Career enablers · Career success

Introduction

Universities are large employers with considerable numbers of nonacademic staff. For example, in Australia in 2015 there were 65,739 nonacademic staff or 55.4% of the total staff complement; in the UK, the figure for 2014/2015 was 205,500 or 51% of the total population (Department of Education and Training 2016; Higher Education Statistics Agency [HESA] 2017). Professional staff can be categorized as a separate cohort of staff within the nonacademic cohort. They are typically graduate entry and on an equivalent salary level as academic staff. In 2014/2015, these staff numbered 95,870 or 23.7% of the total staff population in the UK (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2017; there is no number for this cohort of staff from Australia). Considering the numbers of staff in this category, there has been limited empirical research carried out on the careers of these staff as it is suggested they are “unseen and unsung” (Eveline 2004, p. 138). This is a significant oversight, as research has shown that staff who are engaged, are satisfied with their job, and embedded in their organization are more committed to their organization (Yousef 2017).

A career can be defined as the totality of a person’s work experience over time – a career becomes more than just a sum of its parts. Career success can be defined as “positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements one accumulates as a result of work experiences” (Seibert et al. 1999, p. 417). Career success has been investigated for many years with a number of enabling factors, such as learning agility, proactive career management (self-efficacy), moving roles (job rotation), mentoring, and networking found to be important (Bozionelos 2004; Colakoglu 2011). It is only relatively recently, however, that career theory has started to be applied to professional staff working in universities.

There are two reasons why this topic is important. Firstly, it directly affects individuals in the decisions they may make when managing their careers, and secondly, it allows universities to have a better understanding of their staff and

therefore how to better support their careers. For individuals, the literature states that professional staff are motivated by intrinsic factors such as meaningful work, ongoing learning, and challenging work assignments (LFHE 2010; Strachan et al. 2012). Additionally, extrinsic factors such as job security and promotion opportunities are valued (Bozionelos 1996; Nabi 1999). For universities and specifically for human resource departments, staff who are engaged and satisfied with their job are more committed and productive, with the positive effect of reduced staff turnover (Yousef 2017). However, many professional staff feel that their careers are undervalued, unsupported, and misunderstood (Whitchurch 2009).

This chapter explores how career theory can be used to achieve a greater understanding of professional staffs' careers. It highlights the fact that professional staff enact a hybrid career orientation and what this may mean for individuals, in terms of what can be proactively undertaken to enhance one's career, and organizations, for example, in providing greater vocational guidance.

Professional Staff and Careers

A report by Strachan et al. (2012), which surveyed 10,683 general staff in 18 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Australia, showed that 75% of respondents "strongly or somewhat agreed" that they were satisfied with their job. Fifty percent of respondents reported that they had no intention to leave their job in the next 12 months, whereas only 20% reported that it was likely they would. Sixty-three percent were satisfied with career opportunities at either their own university or in the sector, and 54% said that within the next 5 years, they would like to be in a higher-level role. A Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE 2010) study of 7560 self-declared professional staff in 26 HEIs in the UK found that professional staff were attracted to the sector by the "opportunity to use skills/experience," "a friendly work environment," "career security," and "salary." Once recruited, they were committed to staying within their organization and "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that higher education offered a worthwhile career. However, they reported that a number of factors could persuade them to move jobs such as salary, opportunities to further their careers, job descriptions that more closely matched their skills/experience, personal/professional development, work variety/challenge, recognition, and job security. These two reports indicated there was some integration of extrinsic and intrinsic desires, from promotion needs to skill development and utilization; they also highlighted high levels of job satisfaction.

The practitioner and academic literature show that although staff have high levels of job satisfaction and little intention to leave their jobs in the short-term, many wish to improve their salary and/or organizational position. For example, Bozionelos (1996) found that the number of promotions achieved significantly contributed to career satisfaction, and Nabi (1999) found that organizational size and structured career progression were positively related to objective career success; advancement opportunities were highlighted as a barrier when limited (Gardner Jr. et al. 2014; Tessens et al. 2011). Lack of senior opportunities has been noted as an issue in

universities with a study by Wild and Wooldridge (2009) reporting that most staff felt there were limited advancement opportunities apart from when reorganizations took place. Five years after that report, which concluded with recommendations for actions universities should take, Duncan (2014) reported that the issue of promotion was one that still concerned many staff in UK HE.

These perspectives on the factors that are important for professional staff and their careers are somewhat contradictory when applied to the career theory literature. As noted from the literature above, professional staff desire challenging work, the ability to use their skills and experience, personal and professional development, promotion, and increased salary. How does this integrate with current contemporary career theory?

Career Theory

Traditional organizational career theory was based on stability in the labor market, a secure employment relationship with deferred rewards, such as pensions, vacation time, social acceptance, and vertical promotion with employees moving through an orderly vertically organized career ladder (Clarke 2013). This was possible due to the continued growth that organizations were party to. Organizations assumed a paternalistic approach to the career management of their employees with career success measured according to hierarchical position, salary, status, and responsibility (Hall 1976, p. 202). As organizations responded to the rapidly changing economic environment starting in the 1970s, there was an argument made that as organizations moved to leaner and flatter structures, there was limited upward mobility and advancement (Lent and Brown 2006). The impact was that traditional theories of career development did not now “fit” this new altered state or necessarily represent individuals’ contemporary careers, and two major new models were developed: the protean and boundaryless career (Arthur 1994; Hall and Moss 1998). These new career theories argued that values, motivation, and needs were the most important aspect of contemporary careers (see Table 1).

The protean career focuses on success through self-directed vocational behavior; it centers on the idea of psychological success resulting from individual career management rather than organizational career development. The protean career involves a whole-life perspective, development as progression, lifelong learning, autonomy, flexibility, and self-fulfillment. It contains two distinct attitudes to career management: values-driven, i.e., the requirement to do what is best for one’s own career, and a self-directed attitude, that is, being proactive and taking responsibility (Briscoe et al. 2006). The boundaryless career viewed people as not tied to one organizational career – moving easily between organizations and between careers (Arthur and Rousseau 1996, pp. 3–20). Individuals orientated in this way focused on crossing both objective and subjective dimensions of careers, that is, they were primarily motivated by psychological success but also by hierarchical success often with more than one employer. Characteristics of this career type include intra- and interorganizational mobility, flexibility, meaningful work, skill utilization, work-life

Table 1 A comparison of the attributes incorporated in traditional, protean, and boundaryless career theory

Attribute	Traditional	Boundaryless	Protean
Labor market autonomy	Low: employer-dependent	High: employer-independent	High: employer-independent
Employment relationship	Performance for job security	Performance for marketability	Performance for satisfaction
Responsibility for career	Organization	Individual	Individual
Key attitudes	Organizational commitment	Skill utilization, relationships within and between organizations, flexibility, work-life balance	Work satisfaction, work-life balance, value match, developmental progression, learning opportunities, professional commitment
Core values	Hierarchical advancement	Meaningful work, organizational position	Meaningful work, freedom, growth
Degrees of mobility	Low	High	High
Success criteria	Status, salary	Psychological meaningful work and status	Psychological meaningful work

balance, and fulfilling relationships across organizations and at the same time not giving importance to (a specific) organizational promotions and career paths (Briscoe et al. 2006; Forrier et al. 2005). Later empirical work showed that there were two distinct aspects to the issue of mobility: physical mobility (from this point called locational mobility), the ability to geographically move organizations or location, and psychological mobility, which although has a number of definitions can be thought of as the employees' capacity to perceive a number of different career options (Sullivan and Arthur 2006).

Recently, there has been a call to review the extent to which individual careers have followed these contemporary theories, with an argument that theory has pulled ahead of real life (Dries and Pepermans 2007). For example, traditional careers offer many benefits to employees, such as reduced uncertainty about career investments, that is, reducing the distractions of having to continually maintain one's personal resources for possible reentry into the external labor market, and they offer linked jobs where previous organizational experience is important (Hirsch and Shanley 1996, p. 227).

In light of the calls for more nuance in contemporary career theory (Briscoe and Hall 2006), the idea of the hybrid career has emerged from research findings that show that many employees welcome aspects of both traditional and contemporary careers (Clarke 2009). For example, public sector workers in Australia, recognizing that the sector had undergone significant shifts toward a new public management paradigm, had embraced protean career attitudes; nonetheless aspects of traditional

careers such as long-term tenure and external definitions of success were still important (McDonald et al. 2005). Other empirical evidence has also established that employees still value traditional, organizational careers especially the aspects of job security and career development and that although there have been changes to organizational careers, for example, the elimination of the idea of lifetime employment, there has not been a complete restructuring (Gerber et al. 2009; King 2003; Ribeiro 2015).

What career orientations do professional staff show then? This question is key, as there is a need to understand the career orientations of professional staff to ensure that organizations provide a supportive environment for individuals' careers and a greater understanding at an individual level on what can be done to maximize career success. The results outlined below are part of a larger study into the careers of professional staff working in HEIs. To gather data an online survey was open between August 2015 and February 2016, and the initial results of the data analysis and how this may fit with the extant career theory literature are presented below.

Method

An online instrument was created from previously validated scale items for protean (self-directed and values-driven) and boundaryless (locational and psychological) career attitudes (Briscoe et al. 2006) and for psychological contract factors (Raeder et al. 2009). The professional organizations, the Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) in Australia and the Association of University Administrators (AUA) in the UK, facilitated the data collection process by sending out an invitation to members to participate in the study if they were employees in Australia on the higher education worker contract at level 7 and above (Fair Work Ombudsman 2010) and in the UK on salary spinal point 30 and above (University and College Union 2001). Data was analyzed in SPSS v.22.

Results

There were 226 usable responses, 90 from Australia and 136 from the UK which corresponded to approximately a 5.6% response rate from ATEM members in Australia and a 3.4% response rate from AUA members in the UK.

Maximum likelihood estimation was carried out which showed that the variables of self-directed, values-driven, locational, and psychological mobility were internally valid (Cronbach's alpha (α) all greater than 0.7). A traditional career variable was created using questions from the psychological contract section and included "I expect loyalty," "I expect job security," "I expect a career," and "I expect opportunities for promotion from my university" and was internally valid (α 0.7). Analysis was then carried out using the simple descriptive statistics function to find the means and standard deviations of the career theory variables (see Table 2).

Table 2 Mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation of career factors ($n = 226$)

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Self-directed	1.5	5	4.03	0.56
Values-driven	1.25	5	3.63	0.72
Psychological mobility	2.17	5	4.11	0.66
Locational mobility	1	5	2.49	0.84
Traditional	2.17	5	3.66	0.51

The results (Table 2) show that professional staff enact aspects protean, boundaryless, and traditional career orientations. Under the protean orientation, they show both a self-directed attitude ($\bar{x} = 4.03$) and a values-driven attitude ($\bar{x} = 3.63$), although participants show a more significant self-directed attitude compared with values-driven ($p = <0.001$). Under the boundaryless career orientation, participants show a psychological mobility attitude ($\bar{x} = 4.11$). However, the locational mobility attitude was significantly lower ($\bar{x} = 2.49$, $p = <0.001$).

There was only one significant difference ($p = 0.05$) between Australian and UK staff, and this was that UK staff ($\bar{x} = 2.38$) were less locationally mobile compared with their Australian ($\bar{x} = 2.65$) counterparts.

Discussion

Contemporary career theory argues that employees do not value an organizational-type career and, as part of taking responsibility for their own careers, are not bounded to one organization, are highly mobile, and value work-life balance (Briscoe and Hall 2006; Forrier et al. 2005). However, other research has indicated that organizational careers and aspects of contemporary careers are complementary or that individuals take hybrid approaches to their careers (Baruch 2014; Çakmak-Otluoğlu 2012; Clarke 2013; Dries and Pepermans 2007; Sullivan and Baruch 2009).

This research shows that professional staff enact a hybrid attitude to their careers, valuing aspects of traditional, protean (especially self-directed attitudes), and boundaryless (in terms of psychological mobility) careers. This highlights that staff are protean in their outlook, aware that they need to take responsibility for their own careers and career development activities and that they are likely to be more concerned with following their own path to success than that defined by their university. Professional staff are also highly psychologically mobile, being open to new opportunities for skill development and utilization, for example; however, they are not locationally mobile. Additionally, staff are also motivated by more psychological success factors such as meaningful and interesting work, with the need for developmental learning opportunities. Table 3 highlights how professional staff create a hybrid career orientation emphasizing the positive aspects of a traditional organizational career such as the need for job security, with the positive aspects from contemporary career orientations, such as meaningful work.

Table 3 Attributes incorporated in the hybrid career theory of professional staff

Attributes	Professional staff's hybrid orientation
Labor market autonomy	Low: institution/sector dependent
Employment relationship	Performance for job security <i>and</i> satisfaction
Responsibility for career	Individual
Key attitudes	Organizational commitment <i>and</i> skill utilization, flexibility, work-life balance <i>and</i> value match, developmental progression, learning opportunities, interesting work
Core values	Meaningful work <i>and</i> organizational position <i>and</i> growth
Degrees of mobility	Low geographical mobility <i>but</i> high psychological mobility
Success criteria	Psychological meaningful work <i>and</i> hierarchical level

Implications for Practice

Figure 1 shows a categorization framework which highlights the characteristics and activities that organizations and individuals can take to enable successful professional staffs' careers. If career management is defined as "a process for enabling employees to better understand and develop their career skills and interests, and to use those skills and interests most effectively" (Dessler 2005, p. 350), do universities support this? There is an argument that universities have been slow in realizing that an increasing business-focused agenda has "brought in highly professional and expert . . . staff" (Eveline 2004, p. 34). Eveline (2004, p. 148) argued that in Australian universities the skills and development needs of professional staff were relatively unrecognized, and from a UK perspective, Michael Shattock (2003, p. 179) reasoned that as management is a major component of university success and professional staff were critical to the process, then the training of this category of staff was critically important. Indeed it became apparent that workforce development was an enabling factor for universities to deliver their multiple agendas globally (Gordon and Whitchurch 2007).

Implications for Individuals

In contemporary organizations responsibility for career development falls on the individual; there is no longer the perceived expectation that the organization will manage an employee's career; individuals need to be self-directed in their career management attitudes. The academic literature shows that there are several enablers that individuals can embrace that have been shown to impact positively on career success, and these enablers can be utilized for professional staff to integrate into their own career management plans. For example, Laud and Johnson (2012) in their

Individual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy • Learning agility <p style="text-align: center;">Characteristics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good performance • Understanding context • Personal brand • Networking • Mentoring • Continuing professional development <p style="text-align: center;">Activities</p>
Organisational	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job security • Good job design • Learning and organisational development culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of rotation opportunities

Fig. 1 Categorization of organizational and individual level career enablers

multi-sector, multi-organization study of executives found that four meta-competencies were identified for career success: foundation (interpersonal, motivation, planning, style), building self-brand (training/education, networking, reputation/integrity, politics, confidence), performance (risk-taking, balance, communication, work quality), and opportunistic (luck, opportunities). Campion et al. (1994) and Dries et al. (2012) found that job rotation was key to success, and Nabi (1999), on her study of professional staff, reported that extended work involvement and networking were factors that enable career success as measured by promotion. Research by Gander et al. (2014) on professional staff in higher education showed that seven factors were important for career success: understanding the role, understanding the wider context, understanding the challenge of management, mentoring, networking, learning development, and career proactivity. The above literature can be distilled to the following five key career enablers.

Competencies

A number of behavioral competencies have been found to be positively associated with career success. Katz (2000) argued that executives needed three competencies to be successful: technical, people, and conceptual competencies. Won et al. (2013) in their study on sports administrators at universities in the USA argued that people’s skills and cooperativeness were the most critical attributes to succeed professionally. Hancock and Hums (2016) found that women in intercollegiate athletics enhanced their competencies to overcome a perceived “lack of experience” to be promoted to senior levels. They did spend less time on the skills of finance, fundraising, and

budget management, which previous work had shown to be important skills for senior staff working in athletic administration.

Research by O'Boyle et al. (2011) showed that emotional intelligence correlated with job performance although cognitive ability was still the greatest attributable factor. Emotional intelligence may be an important factor for professional staff due to the requirement both to understand the traditional academic endeavor – or have an “academic empathy” (Lewis 2014) – and to understand the requirement to manage the business with limited resources effectively and efficiently, appropriate in a new public management culture. As Whitchurch (2004, p. 295) noted, “in practice, they [professional staff] must hold on to both sets of values while pursuing institutional goals.”

Performance

There has been considerable research showing there to be a significant correlation between job performance and cognitive abilities (O'Boyle et al. 2011; and see Ree and Carretta 2001 for a review). General cognitive ability (what we normally think of as intelligence) has been shown to directly predict job knowledge, and job knowledge predicted job performance, and supervisor ratings. The more complex the job, the more valid the cognitive ability with performance correlation was (Hunter 1986; Ree and Carretta 2001, p. 176). Ree and Carretta (2001, p. 179), however, reported that job experience influenced job knowledge and job performance (which directly influenced supervisor ratings) but that the causal impact of cognitive ability was indirect. Cerasoli et al. (2014), in their meta-analysis of job performance and motivation, found that intrinsic motivation (psychological feelings of success) was a predictor for quality of performance.

Continuing Professional Development

There is empirical evidence that supports the idea that employee development is an effective means to enhance performance (Maurer and Chapman 2013). There is also a growing body of evidence to link employee development with long-term career success. For example, Hogan et al. (2013) in their review showed a moderate to low correlation between human capital development and extrinsic success. Recently, Maurer and Chapman (2013) found that early organizational support for development 10 years prior to their study contributed directly to current salary, job, and career satisfaction. Additionally, they found that aggregating development over time also further contributed to job and career satisfaction, beyond the early career support; they found that this effect was not accounted for by human capital theory but suggested that cumulative advantage was taking place. This theory suggests that high performance in the early career stages of professional staff could attract more resources and rewards, which would produce positive gains that may become greater with time.

It could be argued that continuing professional development is one way of increasing learning agility – “the willingness and ability to learn from experience, and subsequently apply that learning to perform successfully under new or first-time conditions” (De Muse et al. 2010, p. 120). Eichinger and Lombardo (2004) found that learning agility ratings were unrelated to who received a promotion but that those employees with high learning agility ratings performed better once promoted, which may impact further

promotion opportunities. Therefore, the ability to learn from experiences and training, and apply learning to new events, may prove to be the critical factor. Dries et al. (2012) found that learning agility was a strong predictor of being identified as high potential, although the direct effect of learning agility was only marginally significant.

Job Rotation

Career development opportunities within organizations may include rotations, defined as lateral movement of employees in an organization, to provide employees with varied work experiences (Campion et al. 1994). The argument is that people who spend most of their career in one job or organization have limited knowledge and sets of competencies and that having a variety of experiences allows employees to be able to extract general principles and transfer these to new situations (Dries et al. 2012). Karaevli and Tim (2006) argued that managers' variety of career experiences of functional areas, plus a breadth of institutional contextual understanding, was positively associated with promotion, salary, and skill acquisition. Campion et al. (1994) found that there were modest positive correlations between rotation and promotion and salary increase. Interestingly, Dries et al. (2012) found that people who had more varied careers were also higher in learning agility.

Networking

Networks, defined as building, maintaining, and using personal relationships, are really all about opportunities, creating them and then making the most of them (Wolff and Moser 2009). They should not be seen just for individual gain; they should benefit both parties equally. In higher education, networking is key, working in the collaborative environment both within and often between institutions. Collaboration creates social capital, defined as "any aspect of social structure that creates value and facilitates the actions of individuals within that social structure" (Seibert et al. 2001, p. 220). Halpern (2005, p. 2) suggests that "everyday networks, including many of the social customs and bonds that define them and keep them together, are what we mean by social capital."

There have been some studies on the importance of networking and career success, although many of them were backward-looking in design. However, Wolff and Moser (2009) showed that networking was related to current salary and to the growth of salary over time; it was also related to current career satisfaction. Nabi (2003) showed that networking for professional staff in universities was correlated with intrinsic career success. This may be due to the fact that people with strong relationships are likely to provide help, advice, and guidance. Seibert et al. (2001) suggested that it would be worthwhile to invest in the development of many weak ties to increase the level of social capital and then work toward strengthening the ties.

Mentoring

Mentoring has been shown to be an important career enabler, although there is conflicting evidence on the benefits of mentoring. Kram's (1983) seminal research reported that mentors could provide both career development and psychosocial development benefits. Career development functions included sponsorship, coaching,

protection, exposure and visibility, and challenging work assignments. Psychosocial functions included role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counselling, and friendship. The impact of career development functions often relies on the mentors' position and power, whereas the psychosocial functions depend on the interpersonal relationship. The evidence suggests that informal relationships, those that are set up on an ad hoc basis, are more effective than formal organizational ones (Chao et al. 1992; Ragins et al. 2000). Nabi (1999) found that mentoring was not significantly related to either objective or subjective career success for professional staff, but research by Bozionelos (2004) on professional staff found that the amount of mentoring individuals provided was positively related with both objective and subjective career success and with the amount of mentoring that they had received.

Implications for Institutions

This evidence suggests that organizations need to be aware that professional staff are concerned with managing their career within their institution and that although they show high levels of psychological mobility, they are not particularly locationally mobile. Organizations may be moving ahead of their staff in terms of desired employment contracts. Professional staff still value long-term job security and an organizational career, but the change in the numbers of temporary employment contracts highlights the disconnect between employer and employee. As Baruch and Vardi (2016) discuss, research into contemporary career orientations tend to highlight the positive aspects for staff but obfuscate the "dark side," such as the lack of job security. In HEIs this dark side of the new careers plays out in the increasing number of temporary contracts used, the lack of organizational support for career progression to the most senior level, and the erosion of employer loyalty.

Organizations can provide a more supportive culture for employees to effectively manage their careers for the benefits of both sides. Organizations which offer job security, development opportunities, and career opportunities create an organizational environment conducive to career success as employees undertake more career-enhancing strategies. Career-enhancing strategies have been shown to be related to greater levels of satisfaction (Nabi 1999), which has a number of positive organizational effects such as reduced absenteeism, low staff turnover, increased organizational commitment, and increased productivity (Yousef 2017). Therefore, universities could provide an appropriate culture by the provision of good learning and organizational development opportunities, good job design such as rotational opportunities, job security, and increased career advice and guidance.

Conclusion

Universities' professional staff, although valuing factors relevant to traditional organizational careers such as job security and promotion opportunities, also show contemporary career orientations especially self-directed career management

attitudes and psychological mobility attitudes, creating a hybrid career orientation. Universities, therefore, have an opportunity to provide a high-performing work system which includes opportunity practices such as job rotation and autonomy; ability practices such as development of skills, knowledge, and abilities; and motivational practices such as job security, mentoring, and internal promotion opportunities (Boselie 2010, p. 134). There is also scope to increase advice and guidance to support proactive career management activities, a concept known as career planning. This can be defined as “the deliberate process through which someone becomes aware of personal skills, interests, knowledge, motivations, and other characteristics; acquires information about opportunities and choices; identifies career-related goals; and establishes action plans to attain specific goals” (Dessler 2005, p. 350). Careers of professional staff are often reported to be “ad hoc,” with people following paths of interest and only after some time taking a more strategic approach to managing their career. Universities could, for example, offer the use of vocational guidance tools to help identify career-related skills and other development needs and to take advantage of this psychological mobility and desire for continuous learning and skill utilization.

References

- Arthur, M.B. 1994. The boundaryless career: A new perspective for organizational inquiry. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 15 (4): 295–306. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030150402>.
- Arthur, M.B., and D.M. Rousseau. 1996. Introduction: The boundaryless career as a new employment principle. In *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*, ed. M.B. Arthur and D.M. Rousseau, 394. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Baruch, Y. 2014. The development and validation of a measure for protean career orientation. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 25 (19): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2014.896389>.
- Baruch, Y., and Y. Vardi. 2016. A fresh look at the dark side of contemporary careers: Toward a realistic discourse. *British Journal of Management* 27 (2): 355–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12107>.
- Boselie, P. 2010. *Strategic human resource management: A balanced approach*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Bozionelos, N. 1996. Organizational promotion and career satisfaction. *Psychological Reports* 79: 371–375.
- Bozionelos, N. 2004. Mentoring provided: Relation to mentor’s career success, personality, and mentoring provided. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 64: 24–46.
- Bridgstock, R. 2005. Australian artists, starving and well-nourished: What can we learn from the prototypical protean career. *Australian Journal of Career Development* 14 (3): 40–48.
- Briscoe, J.P., and D.T. Hall. 2006. The interplay of boundaryless and protean careers: Combinations and implications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 69: 4–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.002>.
- Briscoe, J.P., D.T. Hall, and R.L. Frautschy DeMuth. 2006. Protean and boundaryless careers: An empirical exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 69 (1): 30–47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.003>.
- Çakmak-Otluoğlu, K.Ö. 2012. Protean and boundaryless career attitudes and organizational commitment: The effects of perceived supervisor support. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 80 (3): 638–646. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.03.001>.

- Campion, M.A., L. Cheraskin, and M.J. Stevens. 1994. Career-related antecedents and outcomes of job rotation. *The Academy of Management Journal* 37 (6): 1518–1542.
- Cerasoli, C.P., J.M. Nicklin, and M.T. Ford. 2014. Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentives jointly predict performance: A 40-year meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin* 140 (4): 980–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035661>.
- Chao, G.T., P.A.T.M. Walz, and P.D. Gardner. 1992. Formal and informal mentorships: A comparison on mentoring functions and contrast with nonmentored counterparts. *Personnel Psychology* 45 (3): 619–636.
- Clarke, M. 2009. Plodders, pragmatists, visionaries and opportunists: Career patterns and employability. *Career Development International* 14 (1): 8–28. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430910933556>.
- Clarke, M. 2013. The organizational career: Not dead but in need of redefinition. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 24 (4): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2012.697475>.
- Colakoglu, S.N. 2011. The impact of career boundarylessness on subjective career success: The role of career competencies, career autonomy, and career insecurity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 79 (1): 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2010.09.011>.
- Department of Education and Training. 2016. *Higher Education Statistics*. www.education.gov.au
- De Meuse, K.P., G. Dai, and G.S. Hallenbeck. 2010. Learning agility: A construct whose time has come. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* 62 (2): 119–130.
- Dessler, G. 2005. *Human resource management*. 10th ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Dries, N., and R. Pepermans. 2007. “Real” high-potential careers. *Personnel Review* 37 (1): 85–108. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480810839987>.
- Dries, N., T. Vantilborgh, and R. Pepermans. 2012. The role of learning agility and career variety in the identification and development of high potential employees. *Personnel Review* 41 (3): 340–358.
- Duncan, D. 2014. Valuing professional, managerial and administrative staff in HE. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18 (2): 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.882427>.
- Eichinger, R.W., and M.M. Lombardo. 2004. Learning agility as a prime indicator of potential. *Human Resource Planning* 27 (4): 12–15.
- Eveline, J. 2004. *Ivory basement leadership: Power and invisibility in the changing university*. Crawley: University of Western Australia Press.
- Fair Work Ombudsman. 2010. *Pay Guide - Higher Education Industry - General Staff - Award 2010*. www.fairwork.gov.au.
- Forrier, A., L. Sels, and M. Verbruggen. 2005. Career counseling in the new career era: A study about the influence of career types, career satisfaction and career management on the need for career counseling. *SSRN Journal* 1: 37. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.878279>.
- Gander, M., H. Moyes, and E. Sabzalieva. 2014. *Managing your career in higher education administration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gardner, L., Jr., T.G. Barrett, and L.C. Pearson. 2014. African American administrators at PWIs: Enablers of and barriers to career success. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 7 (4): 235–251. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038317>.
- Gerber, M., A. Wittekind, G. Grote, N. Conway, and D. Guest. 2009. Generalizability of career orientations: A comparative study in Switzerland and Great Britain. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 82: 779–801. <https://doi.org/10.1348/096317909X474740>.
- Gordon, G., and C. Whitchurch. 2007. The implications of a diversifying workforce managing human resources in higher education. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 19 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1787/17269822>.
- Graham, C. 2009. Investing in early career general staff. *Higher Education Management and Policy* 31 (2): 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600800902825868>.
- Hall, D.T. 1976. *Careers in organizations*. Pacific Palisades: Goodyear Publishing Company.

- Hall, D.T., and E. Moss. 1998. The new protean career contract: Helping organizations and employees adapt. *Organizational Dynamics* 26 (3): 22–37.
- Halpern, D. 2005. *Social capital*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hancock, M. and M. Hums. 2016. A “leaky pipeline”? Factors affecting the career development of senior-level female administrators in NCAA Division I athletic departments. *Sport Management Review* 19 (2): 198–210.
- Higher Education Statistics Agency. 2017. *Staff*. www.hesa.ac.uk.
- Hirsch, P.M., and M. Shanley. 1996. The rhetoric of boundaryless – or, have the newly empowered managerial class bought into its own marginalization. In *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*, ed. M.B. Arthur and D.M. Rousseau, 394. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hogan, R., T. Chamorro-Premuzic, and R.B. Kaiser. 2013. Employability and career success: Bridging the gap between theory and reality. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* 6 (1): 3–16.
- Hunter, J.E. 1986. Cognitive ability, cognitive aptitudes, job knowledge, and job performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 29 (3): 340–362. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(86\)90013-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(86)90013-8).
- Karaevli, A., and D.T. Tim. 2006. How career variety promotes the adaptability of managers: A theoretical model. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 69 (3): 359–373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2006.05.009>.
- Katz, R.L. 2000. Skills of an effective administrator. *Harvard* 52 (5): 90–102.
- King, Z. 2003. New or traditional careers? A study of UK graduates’ preferences. *Human Resource Management Journal* 13 (1): 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2003.tb00081.x>.
- Kram, K.E. 1983. Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal* 26 (4): 608–625.
- Laud, R.L., and M. Johnson. 2012. Upward mobility A typology of tactics and strategies for career advancement. *Career Development International* 17 (3): 231–254. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431211241072>.
- Lent, R.W., and S.D. Brown. 2006. Integrating person and situation perspectives on work satisfaction: A social-cognitive view. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 69 (2): 236–247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2006.02.006>.
- Lewis, K. 2014. Constructions of professional identity in a dynamic higher education sector. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 18 (2): 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2014.914107>.
- LFHE. 2010. *Insight into career motivation in higher education: Analysis of aggregated results from 2009 benchmarking study*. London.
- Maurer, T.J., and E.F. Chapman. 2013. Ten years of career success in relation to individual and situational variables from the employee development literature. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 83 (3): 450–465.
- McDonald, P.K., K.A. Brown, and L.M. Bradley. 2005. Have traditional career paths given way to protean ones? Evidence from senior managers in the Australian public sector. *Career Development International* 10 (2): 109–129.
- Nabi, G.R. 1999. An investigation into the differential profile of predictors of objective and subjective career success. *Career Development International* 4 (4): 212–225.
- Nabi, G.R. 2003. Situational characteristics and subjective career success: The mediating role of career-enhancing strategies. *International Journal of Manpower* 24 (6): 653–671.
- O’Boyle, E.H., Jr., R.H. Humphrey, J.M. Pollack, T.H. Hawyer, and P.A. Story. 2011. The relation between emotional intelligence and job performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 32: 788–818.
- Raeder, S., A. Wittekind, A. Inauen, and G. Grote. 2009. Testing a psychological contract measure in a Swiss employment context. *Swiss Journal of Psychology* 68 (4): 177–188.
- Ragins, B.R., J.L. Cotton, and J.S. Miller. 2000. Marginal mentoring: The effects of type of mentor, quality of relationship, and program design on work and career attitudes. *Academy of Management Journal* 43 (6): 1177–1194.

- Ree, M.J., and T.R. Carretta. 2001. General cognitive ability and occupational performance. In *Personnel psychology and human resources management: A reader for students and practitioners*, ed. I.T. Robertson and C.L. Cooper, 163–187. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ribeiro, M.A. 2015. Contemporary patterns of career construction of a group of urban workers in São Paulo (Brazil). *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 88: 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2015.02.008>.
- Seibert, S.E., J.M. Crant, and M.L. Kraimer. 1999. Proactive personality and career success. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 84 (3): 416–427.
- Seibert, S.E., M.L. Kraimer, and R.C. Liden. 2001. A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal* 44 (2): 219–237.
- Shattock, M. 2003. *Managing successful universities*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Strachan, G., C. Troup, D. Peetz, G. Whitehouse, K. Broadbent, and J. Bailey 2012. *Work and careers in Australian Universities: Report on employee survey*. Nathan.
- Sullivan, S.E., and M.B. Arthur. 2006. The evolution of the boundaryless career concept: Examining physical and psychological mobility. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 69 (1): 19–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.001>.
- Sullivan, S.E., and Y. Baruch. 2009. Advances in career theory and research: A critical review and agenda for future exploration. *Journal of Management* 35 (6): 1542–1571. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309350082>.
- Tessens, L., K. White, and C. Web. 2011. Senior women in higher education institutions: Perceived development needs and support. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 653–665. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2011.621191>.
- University and College Union. 2001. *Joint negotiating committee for higher education staff framework agreement for the modernisation of pay*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2210>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2004. Administrative managers – a critical link. *Higher Education Quarterly* 58 (4): 280–298.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. Progressing professional careers in UK higher education. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 13 (1): 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603100802596983>.
- Wild, A., and E. Wooldridge 2009. *The development of professional careers in UK higher education*. London.
- Wolff, H.-G., and K. Moser. 2009. Effects of networking on career success: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 94 (1): 196–206.
- Won, D., G. Bravo, and C. Lee. 2013. Careers in collegiate athletic administration: Hiring criteria and skills needed for success. *Managing Leisure* 18: 71–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13606719.2012.742222>.
- Yousef, D.A. 2017. Organizational commitment, job satisfaction and attitudes toward organizational change: A study in the local government. *International Journal of Public Administration* 40 (1): 77–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2015.1072217>.



Foundations of a Developmental Framework for Professional Staff in Higher Education

24

Rania Sanford

Contents

Introduction	374
The US Context	376
The Method	377
Three Stories	378
H., Associate Director, Teaching and Learning, Early Career	378
D., Director, Human Resources, Mid-Career	379
T., Executive Director of Academic Programs, Mid-to-Late Career	380
Discussion	381
Considerations of Career-Life Span	382
Conclusion	384
References	385

Abstract

This chapter is a discussion of personal and behavioral dispositions that are foundational elements for conceptualizing a framework of career development for professional staff at a US research-intensive university. Using narrative inquiry to draw meaning from the stories told by three advanced-degreed professional women staff, their experiences are analyzed using career competencies proposed by Kuijpers et al. (2006). The analysis examines the narrators' use of reflection on personal capacities and motives, exploration of career possibilities, orientation to plan and act, and self-presentation. In exploring the *ways* in which those professional staff carry out their work, six shared attributes that shaped their career trajectories and success emerged: issue/cause-oriented effort, motivation for broad impact, adaptability to new

R. Sanford (✉)
Stanford University, Stanford, USA
e-mail: raniasanford@stanford.edu

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_13

373

environments, orientation to learn, deliberate professional presence, and bias for collaborative thought and action. The findings propose a framework of three developmental stages of the professional staffer: gaining insight and building commitment, growth and skills refinement, and competence and contribution. The framework is discussed against Kegan's order of consciousness theory (1982 and 1994). The study suggests further examination of the implications of gender and ethnic identity in the careers of professional staff at universities in the United States.

Keywords

Management staff · Higher education · Research intensive · Competencies · Professional development · Attitudes · Behaviors · Career · Life space

Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of personal and behavioral dispositions that are foundational elements for conceptualizing a framework of career development for professional staff at a US research-intensive university. It has long been supported that our understanding of career success cannot be solely perceived in terms of occupational capacity or aspirations or even individual characteristics. Krumboltz (1996) argues that a static view of the individual characteristics is limited as workplaces move away from “stable occupations to team-performed tasks.” Yet, doing so should not be bifurcated from the “trajectories of development which make up the texture of lives over the life span” (Richardson 1993, pp. 20–21 in Krumboltz 1993, p. 148). Kuijpers et al. (2006) further advances this view, arguing that career competencies ought to be understood in light of workplace variables that can “be controlled and influenced” such as mobility, dynamic environments, and career support (p. 306).

A growing literature presents views of a career for professional staff at universities that present a case of evolution of this group as a distinct new class of staff in light of significant shifts in the higher education landscape. The literature has aimed to understand their experience from multiple vantage points. Studies have examined the roles and responsibilities of this new class of staff within the academic spheres, such as teaching, advising, and research (Kane 2007), while others focus on their work with students, where correlations are drawn between emotional well-being, job stress, organizational support and vision, contrasting faculty and professional staff experiences in student affairs (Violanti 2007). Professional staff who are women and advanced degree holders were found to have high levels of career motivation, occupational, home, and community salience while the recognition of the individual skills as well as good relationships with management were key to a positive career attitude (Ricketts and Pringle 2014).

While the university work increasingly depends on the business skills and expertise in essential areas that these staff bring to their institutions beyond teaching

and research, researchers argue that there is a continued lack of recognition for professional staff (Johnsrud 2004; Kane 2007) and point to the necessity for deliberate efforts by institutions to provide opportunities for career satisfaction and growth (Mader 2012). The findings by Ricketts and Pringle (2014) in their study of professional women staff at universities in New Zealand make a case for retention, where the perceived lack of career opportunity at one's university was found to significantly reduce the importance they placed on work, and where 40% of their study participants indicated plans to leave the university within 5 years.

With respect to career advancement, studies have identified areas where universities could create programs by assessing the expressed motivations of managers to pursue leadership and management training, networking opportunities, and career planning resources and advancement (Francis 2000; Sofranko 2004; Kane 2007). Other studies explored conditions of job engagement and satisfaction, such as work-life, the presence or absence of a shared understanding of organizational norms, positive interpersonal relationships (Ricketts and Pringle 2014), role definitions, and job fit (Johnsrud 2004; Hermsen 2008). *Valued dualism*, coined by Love and Estanek (2004), describes how universities that recognize and create space for connectedness among distinct roles and functions are able to engage with their professional staff better, because in the process of creating connections, the institutions become open with information and feedback and ultimately benefit from self-renewal (Mader 2012).

There is a dearth of research, however, that examines the developmental characteristics and attributes that contribute to the success of professional staff, particularly in the context of a career life-span.

Over the last decade, in the UK and Australia, nonteaching personnel at universities moved away from "invisibility" to positions within the organizational ladders that reach the upper ranks of administration and leadership (Szekeres 2004, 2011). The case in the United States is no different; a longstanding trend of rapid growth of staff compared to faculty has been noticed for over two decades. According to the US Department of Education (2016), full-time executive, administrative, and managerial staff at US institutions grew by 66.5% compared to 42% growth of full-time faculty in a 20-year period between 1991 and 2011. Private as well as public 4-year institutions reported a faculty to professional staff ratio of 1:1.5. Women occupy more than half these staff roles (US Department of Education 2016).

This growth in professional roles is arguably in response to the increased complexity of running a university enterprise. The evolution of technology, changing student demographics, and competition for institutional reputation, improving student outcomes and fundraising are new pressing realities. The nature of these realities may have led to a subsequent shift in the identity of professional administrators and staff as they adopt more project-oriented roles crossing functional and organization boundaries. (Whitchurch 2004, 2007). For the purposes of this discussion, I define "professional staff" as individuals who provide student services, academic, or professional support or management of business, financial, human resources, student, or legal affairs and that generally require an advanced degree.

The US Context

The composition of professional staff at American universities includes PhD graduates as well as individuals with advanced preparation in professional fields of practice holding degrees such as MBA, JD, or MD. A recent study by the American Institutes of Research Delta Cost Project (2014) points to the growth of professional roles at universities at rates that have outpaced all other job groups on campuses in the last 20 years, including those of executives. The study points to increased investments by universities in the creation of new roles with responsibilities such as reviewing admissions applications, counseling students, dealing with legal and human resources, providing business analysis and technology infrastructure development and support (Desrochers and Kirshstein 2014). These roles are frequently filled by PhD graduates but many are also occupied by holders of advanced degrees and certifications in professional fields.

Alongside the increased need for professional roles to run an increasingly complex university came a decline in the availability of new faculty jobs in the United States. Congress enacted a law in 1994 that prohibited a mandatory retirement age in the United States (American Council on Education 2011). The new law has arguably led to existing faculty working more years than previous generations (National Research Council 1991), representing a longer-term financial obligation for institutions. The new law took effect as higher education as a sector was experiencing significant growth in increased enrollments. Within two decades of its enactment, economic downturns contributed to a shift in hiring practices away from permanent faculty positions, known as “tenure track,” in favor of hiring adjunct and part-time faculty who are employed on term-based less expensive contracts that carry no long-term financial burden to the institutions (Halcrow and Olson 2008). Those circumstances slowly, and surely, led institutions as well as individuals to recognize that faculty careers will become harder to pursue for their graduates and led to efforts that revisited the nature of advanced academic preparation and its desired outcomes. National effort, such as the PhD Career Pathways project, a collaboration between the Council of Graduate Schools, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Science Foundation, builds on findings from the 2014 feasibility study by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Science Foundation which dispelled earlier assumptions that PhD graduates are to advance into faculty positions. These national studies began to document, if not validate, the diversity of alternative, non-faculty, career aspirations, and outcomes (Council on Graduate Schools 2015; Austin 2002).

One of the career path possibilities post-PhD, however, continued to lie within the walls of universities. Known as Alternative Academic Careers, or Alt-Ac, universities have been embracing a crop of newly minted advanced graduates who took on staff roles that are secondary, or parallel, to faculty. In doing so, I argue that universities have been creating an emergent new class of professional staff who fulfill new functions within institutions in response to new demands around teaching and learning, and in many cases, in order to alleviate the increased workload on

faculty in areas such as student advising, residential education, and research activity. Many of these staff bring advanced academic assets as relevant to their professional work, such as disciplinary preparation and an understanding of the dynamics of university environments – knowledge that garners credibility among faculty and afford them tacit knowledge to perform. Similarly, professionals with advanced degrees in business administration or law found their professional training to be relevant in a landscape that is laden with increased regulations, legal action, financial challenges, and innovations in technology.

Notwithstanding the advanced educational attainment of the individuals who come with advanced academic or professional training, many are hired with little or no formal training in the nature of responsibilities of their roles in academic institutions. The dearth of professional training described earlier presents key foundational questions: What are the *ways* in which these professional staff carry out their work? And, how can we understand the characteristics of their career success?

The Method

In order to shed light on the approaches that this new class of professionals follows in order to perform in their roles, I identified three successful career women in professional roles at a top-ranked research-intensive university in the United States. They work in the areas of teaching, human resources, and academic program administration. All three held advanced degrees and had been hired within the past 5 years at the university. I followed a narrative inquiry conceptual framework in order to explore the characteristics that shape their success and the ways in which they carry out their work. The narrative inquiry framework offers a qualitative interpretation of phenomenon or events by bringing meaning through reflection on experiences, through individual story telling. Stories represent knowledge in this framework (Trahar 2009), and they subsequently offered a lens to discern the orientation, attitudes, and behaviors that the three carried out towards work, career, and roles within an academic institution.

Narrative inquiry requires particular attention to the ways in which the stories are constructed (Riessman and Speedy 2007). Accordingly, the analysis paid attention to how those three successful women told their stories along certain dimensions of career competence: (1) Reflection on personal capacities and motives regarding a career (Meijers 2002), (2) Exploration: Willingness to explore and understand the specific campus work environment and move/change jobs (Ball 1997), (3) Control: Orientation to plan and act on one's own learning and working processes (Nabi 1999), and (4) Self-presentation: What were the capacities and values regarding work at the University (Kuijpers et al. 2006). As will be seen in the next section, each of these dimensions was salient to varying degrees in their stories. Each narrator agreed to be interviewed for the purpose of this study and only their names were withheld for confidentiality and anonymity. Each occupied distinctly different units on campus serving faculty, staff, and students.

Three Stories

H., Associate Director, Teaching and Learning, Early Career

H. joined the university as associate director in the center for teaching and learning. She has a PhD in biology. She is a woman of color who grew up in a middle class educated family in the American rural south. She went to a selective undergraduate institution where she became fascinated with how science is communicated to nonscientists. A federal fellowship that teamed her with a high school teacher introduced her to notions of pedagogy and teaching science and piqued her interest in teaching biology to university students. After being told that she needed a PhD to do so, she went on to pursue a PhD degree in biology. Having not lost her interest in teaching, she sought advice from faculty who worked in science education, who connected her to others in the field, to journals, and added her to email listservs. Through a listserv, she found a postdoctoral fellowship that had both teaching and research responsibilities, where she taught at a tribal (i.e., rural) college and implemented a new program for biology education there. She then pursued a second postdoctoral fellowship at an urban state institution, under the mentorship of a well-known figure in biology education. She co-taught a pedagogy course, got involved in program management, ran course development workshops, and planned implementation of various activities related to biology education.

H. joined the university last year as professional staff instead of accepting an offer of a tenure-track assistant professorship at a different institution. She describes her motivation to take up a nonfaculty role in relation to the opportunity for making an impact across all university departments, affecting all students, in contrast to a limited impact she would have had as a faculty member confined to one academic department. In the past year, she met notable faculty at the university in science education who now seek her input on their ideas and invite her to join campus-wide task forces on curriculum development. She feels she is respected by them and by other colleagues whom she holds in high regard.

H. reflected back on two elements of her success: her professional demeanor and her readiness to learn and adapt in new environments, both at work and socially. She talks about how she carries herself professionally, chooses a business wardrobe, and articulates her ideas and thoughts clearly and confidently. She is by far the youngest and least professionally experienced among her peers at her unit. But their confidence in her abilities reinforces her own. She also describes herself as a “social chameleon” who is acutely aware of the vibe of a place and willing to adapt to its norms and eager to learn from others. She says that having grown up in a multicultural family and graduated from elite institutions gives her the background to do so well.

H.'s journey is marked by personal characteristics that served her well. During her undergraduate and graduate school years, she sought new knowledge by reaching out to experts without hesitation. She set out to explore her interest in science teaching, which is not the norm for her peers whose inclination was strongest

towards research. She went to where the opportunities presented themselves and happily took on tasks that were administrative in nature, which gave her skills that later made her successful in her professional role (an example of her orientation to act on her learning). She describes her primary motivations in terms of breaking down barriers, whether they are learning barriers or social class barriers. She is ambitious about the impact that her work could bring to the field. She has a strong disposition to learn new organizational norms and seeks out the expertise and advice of more senior colleagues in her unit as she tackles ideas and projects. H. has also been deliberate about presenting herself; she would reach out and introduce herself to others in meetings or professional gatherings.

D., Director, Human Resources, Mid-Career

Like H., D. joined the university a year ago in a management role in a human resources unit that is charged with staff, i.e., administrative nonfaculty/non-instructional, development. She runs the management development programs for new supervisors. D. has an interdisciplinary PhD and has worked for over a decade in a business consulting practice that benefited from her disciplinary preparation. She recruited into her role through a former colleague who had joined the university earlier.

D.'s previous career in business consulting required extensive trips and long periods away from her young family; expectations that are no longer present in her current job. She describes how that was a motivation for moving to work at the university. D. talks about her work at the university as a journey of "exploration." She feels significant differences between the work culture in her past business experience and that of the university. She describes the negative feedback she received at the university when she took initiative on a task that belonged in someone else's role; she underestimated the importance of role boundaries in her unit and how they are linked to individual "classifications" and salaries. She feels that the leadership transition in her unit has hindered her ability to demonstrate her value to the university and has perhaps slowed down her adjustment to the university culture. These reflections are leading her to feel uncertain about how others in the unit perceive her or the value of her contributions. She is putting together ideas and resources that she could present to her new boss.

D. recognizes the culture at the university as relationship-based and how she is spending her initial months on the job meeting colleagues from around the campus and learning the roles and functions of different units. She describes change at the university as slow-moving, and there isn't a top-down directive as would be in a business environment. She compares her previous work where she consulted with senior chief executives at companies and how her advice to them and their decisions would be immediately executed. That is not how things work at the university, according to her, and she is adjusting to a role where she doesn't have the same extent of direct influence.

T., Executive Director of Academic Programs, Mid-to-Late Career

T. joined the university 5 years ago after a career of consulting in the high-tech industry. She has an advanced professional degree in business. She is a highly educated Indian immigrant who stepped out of her marketing job and into consulting and community work while her two daughters were in school. Her youngest daughter was in high school when T. sought work at the university. Her older daughter had been admitted as a first year student that year at the same university. T. reflects back on her background as the first in her family to go to college and how the college experience was one that distanced her from her parents. She was motivated to understand and be near her daughter's coming of age as an American young woman.

T.'s journey at the university started by her accepting an administrative support job in student affairs where she helped two married faculty members oversee one of the undergraduate student dormitories. Overqualified for the role, and recognizing that she could take on some of the tasks the couple did in order to alleviate their workload, she quickly persuaded them to expand her responsibilities. Through that entry point, she actively asked them to introduce her to professional staff within the institution, which they did. She also began to reach out and meet colleagues within the larger unit. She developed her professional persona as a resourceful, flexible, and agile staffer who is the right fit to take on a new initiative without a permanent commitment of a job. Within a year's time, T. had moved on from her initial administrative job and managed the launch of a campus-wide initiative in student affairs. She continued to seek out the heads of various campus units asking if they would be available for informational interviews in order to learn about their areas of work. Today, T. is an executive director of three new academic programs and is a frequent speaker and a resource for women students in particular.

T.'s orientation stood out in a number of ways: she was articulate and comfortable with senior professional staff. She was project-oriented in her approach to her work and presented herself with energy as an independent contributor without the inhibitions or concern for organizational boundaries. In fact, she presented herself as capable of getting things done across those boundaries. She was consistent in projecting the value added if she were to join a particular unit – an approach that was open-ended and left it up to the unit head to identify opportunities if they wished to engage her. These attitudes stood her apart from most university staff whose work is defined in a rather bureaucratic structure that is predicated on boundaries of roles, responsibilities, and authority and for whom job security was essential. T., on the other hand, presented herself as a citizen of the campus community by virtue of her daughter's affiliation and residential proximity and as a resourceful addition. She expressed a motivation based on personal values rather than career or financial ambitions. Within 5 years of T.'s joining the university, she had launched one successful student affairs program and three stand-alone academic degree programs with faculty leadership. In addition, her network of sponsors includes some well-regarded senior staff and faculty.

T.'s describes how important it is for her to work with faculty who are seeking "thought partners." She emphasizes that many faculty seek staff who would do maintenance tasks for them and that she declines such offers. She describes how deliberate she is in approaching certain individual faculty in whose ideas she sees potential for implementation that she can assume, and she makes the case for them to hire her in order to make those ideas a reality. She is proud of her particular skill and leverages her now wide campus network for that purpose. She described the importance of a community of like-minded women professional staff, whom she joins in group meetings on a regular monthly basis. She also describes how her approach in taking on a new job always entails growth in her responsibilities, and she secures the commitment from her faculty supervisors that such growth would materialize, which she ensures happen quickly.

Discussion

The literature of career development for professional and support staff identifies domains of personal skill and technical knowledge such as leadership, fiscal management, personnel management, communication, professional development, research and evaluation, student conduct, legal issues, technology, and diversity (Kane 1982; Roberts 2003; Fishbeck 2006; Lewis 2011). These skills are important to manage an increasingly complex university enterprise that not only provides teaching, learning, and research but also in response to increased regulations, legal requirements for compliance, complex finances, evolving technology, and various social shifts in the demographics of students and faculty.

Whereas performance in the above domains for a university professional is an essential part of success, the stories described here illustrate the common influences that shape these professional staff's career choices and daily work behaviors. In their narratives, the narrators reflectively talked about those characteristics as motives for their actions. Six common attributes come to light:

1. **Issue/cause-oriented effort:** The adoption of an issue or a challenge that is relevant to the institution, faculty, or students and creating work around it that advances that issue or address the challenge. This approach is in contrast to acting in a supportive capacity, managing processes, maintaining steady flow of tasks, or seeking authority by position or title.
2. **Motivation for broad impact:** Refers to the capacity to envision one's career trajectory, understand the nature and constraints of one's life stage, set a higher goal, and seek out ways to reach that goal, often without a predefined paths or the presence of others with a similar mix of background and motivation.
3. **Adaptability to new environments:** The capacity to diagnose and behave in light of new social and organizational forces, constraints, values, and norms. This includes ability to recognize one's own experiences and how they may differ, or not, from the experiences in one's new environment and respond positively to that change.

4. **Orientation to learn:** Self-awareness of the extent to which one's previous experiences or skills are useful in a new situation and leveraging such experience and skills selectively and carefully in order to advance one's efforts for a particular cause, to make impact or to adapt. This also refers to the ability to seek guidance from colleagues aggressively and often.
5. **Deliberate professional presence:** One's ability to develop and represent one's professional persona visibly and gain professional respect within a new environment or in a new network of peers or superiors. This is illustrated in choice of dress, language, and means of communication with colleagues, students, and faculty.
6. **Bias for collaborative thought and action:** The disposition to work with others across boundaries as resources and partners in thought and in action. This is also illustrated in taking on new assignments that may fall outside of the formal role definitions, initiating ideas with others and working towards implementation without a formal chain of command.

By their narrative accounts, those six attributes enabled the narrators to transcend organizational unit boundaries and to craft professional presence that reflects a newly added value to the university, whether in administrative improvements or contributions of new academic and professional programs. In each case, the narrator leveraged their tacit knowledge of academic cultures and disciplines combined with their personal background (age, experience in prior careers, family history) in order to take on a project or initiative-oriented work. They moved fluidly to advance their work across boundaries while forging new relationships with others on campus who served as sponsors, thought partners and/or partners in action.

Considerations of Career-Life Span

Those three stories point to personal motivations, commitment to issues, and capacity for action. It is important, however, to recognize that our understanding of the six attributes that their stories illustrate is incomplete without an interpretation that takes into account career and life stage or, as described by Richardson (1993), the "trajectories of development which make up the texture of lives over the life span."

To frame these attributes along a developmental continuum, I argue that three stages of career development emerge. Conceptualizing those stages is influenced by the work of Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) on adult orientations to knowledge and learning. Kegan's order of consciousness theory suggests that an adult moves from (1) an instrumental stage through (2) a socializing stage and ends with (3) a self-authoring stage (1982, 1994). In the first instrumental stage, the individual is oriented to learn from existing knowledge, gain skills, and perform in accordance to rules in order to gain acceptance. Through the subsequent stage of socialization, the individual is able to identify and fulfill broader expectations, set one's own goals and standards, and clarify one's values. In the later stage of self-authorship, the

individual takes initiative, is more self-aware, and develops his or her own standards and may further grow to realize the ideological nature of one's own assumptions (Kegan 1982, 1994; Taylor 2006).

Building on Kegan's work and using the narratives as examples, a three-stage developmental framework can be illustrated, combining a scaffold of personal and professional dimensions that represent the stages that our narrators have undergone and continue to undergo towards the final, self-authoring, presence as professional staff.

1. **Gaining Insight and Building Commitment** characterize the entry/early career stage where the individual's social and cultural identity initiates a set of motivations and interests to pursue a certain question or issue. These motivations and interests often lead to exploration of types of work and roles to pursue, for example. This stage aligns with Kegan's instrumental stage where the individual is starting to accumulate knowledge and works towards gaining acceptance. This is seen in H.'s completing a doctoral degree in a science field and specializing her postdoctoral training around teaching, in D.'s career in industry consulting which gave her the knowledge and legitimacy later as a professional at the university, and in T.'s "go-getter" attitude where she demonstrated abilities to execute on difficult projects.
2. **Growth and Skill Refinement** refer to how identity, motivation and interests further drive the individual into a mid-career stage of growth, where one acquires not only technical knowledge about his/her domain to enable action but also develops awareness of the professional space that they are in, and clarify their own priorities and values related to their role. The individual then begins to plan and act on one's learning and cultivating his or her own persona as a professional. Success in this intermediate stage sets the individual onto a path of competence and contribution. This second stage aligns with Kegan's socialization stage where the individual begins to set personal and professional goals and identify expectations from one's self and also from their workplace. In our narrator's stories, we saw examples of this stage in how H. made the decision to pursue a career in advancing science education rather than accept an offer of assistant professorship because she felt her impact would be limited and in how she was focused at this time on getting to cultivate her network and gain professional standing in the field. In T.'s story, we find her success in persuading her two faculty supervisors to expand her responsibilities and appoint her as executive director. At the time I interviewed D., she was acutely aware of the differences she is experiencing in her new university workplace culture in contrast to the business culture that she had been accustomed to. She was contemplating her interests and professional motivations as well as personal circumstances against a new organizational context that was too rigid and hierarchical for her. About 10 months after the interview, D. had left the university.

3. **Competence and Contribution** follow as a result of growth and skill acquisition and refinement where individual capacity for sophisticated levels of environmental awareness enable the individual go beyond recognizing their environment towards shaping it (whether an organizational, or related to family or work-life). This brings into focus clarity of personal and professional values which one can deploy for a larger institutional purpose, for example. Doing so requires not only introspective considerations related to one's interests and motivations but also an increased capacity for social and emotional engagement, and in some instances, risk-taking. Leadership and influence in an organization are indicative of this stage, where along with expertise in subject matter, the individual is capable of contribution to the broader organization, across organizational units and to a wider professional community outside of the organization. This stage corresponds to Kegan's self-authoring stage where there is initiative, increased self-awareness, and development of one's standards for work and life. In reference to our three narrators, H., who was the most junior, had not yet arrived to a point in her journey that corresponds to this stage. D. had departed the university after recognition that her initiative and desire to influence were incongruent with the role that the institution had defined and with the values of her personal life. Our third narrator, T. was finding satisfaction in where she had arrived professionally and was "self-authoring" her commitment and contribution to the campus community which she saw through engagements as speaker and a resource on gender to students.

Conclusion

Two main conclusions develop out of exploring the narratives of those three university professionals. First, professional staff at universities cannot truly advance without institutions providing the support for their pursuits through an organization that is sufficiently open, flexible, and accepting of innovation. D.'s experience and subsequent departure, and T.'s fast career advancement, are cases in point. Mobility and dynamic environments, as Krumboltz (1993, 1996) and Kuijpers et al. (2006) had argued, were evident in the successes of the three narrators. Universities stand to benefit from the full potential of professional staff through a lens with which the staff's position vis-à-vis the institutional landscape is understood beyond boundaries, limitations, hierarchies, and roles. The connections between individuals and units, the networks, and the possibilities within an institution create the worth and potential for professional staff to add value to their work and to the institution.

Second, this institutional context is inseparable from a personal and professional intentionality to act on a career trajectory rather than meet expectations dictated by the institution. The stories described earlier give an example of a path less traveled and illustrate six attributes that their narrators hold: orientation to work on an issue(s)

or tackle a certain cause(s), motivation for broad impact, adaptability, orientation to learn, deliberate professional presence, and bias for collaborative thought and action. These common attributes are, arguably, common foundations that may further inform the efforts to prepare future university professionals and to evaluate individual potential for long-term success. They further suggest that satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately retention, rest to a great extent on the ability of universities to create roles and opportunities that give space for their professional staff to advance through stages of career development and to create professional development opportunities that align with each of these stages in order to help advance their staff along a satisfying career life-span. The implications for practice range widely from hiring practices and selection criteria, to the creation of organizational structures and processes that would enhance the performance and contributions of professional staff.

The stories described in this chapter are examples that highlight the relevance of personal identity and motivation. Our narrator's community and familial affiliations played a role that shaped their insights and commitments for their chosen careers. Their narratives and the analysis presented here did not address the role that their gender played in their experiences. However, future research could explore the personal attributes found in this study and the proposed framework in relation to gender identity and against backdrops of social class and of ethnic affiliations. Gender issues in American higher education are salient. A study in the American context and with a larger representation of professional staff could shed further light in our understanding the nature of workplace characteristics vis-à-vis identity as it shapes the experiences and success trajectories of professional university staff.

References

- American Council on Education. 2011. *Supporting the culminating stages of faculty careers: Legal issues*. Washington, DC.
- Austin, A.E. 2002. Preparing the next generation of faculty: Graduate school as socialization to the academic career. *Journal of Higher Education* 73 (1): 94–122.
- Ball, B. 1997. Career management competencies – The individual perspective. *Career Development International* 2: 74–79.
- Council on Graduate Schools. 2015. Understanding PhD career pathways for program improvement.
- Desrochers, D.M., and R. Kirshstein. 2014. *Labor intensive or labor expensive? Changing staffing and compensation patterns in higher education*. Issue brief. Delta Cost Project at American Institutes for Research. Washington, DC.
- Fishbeck, D.K. 2006. Professional development needs of student affairs professionals within the North Dakota University System. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Francis, Susan Michelle. 2000. Career development of professional staff at the University of the Fraser Valley: Nurturing talent from within. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Halcrow, C., and M.R. Olson 2008. Adjunct faculty: Valued resource or cheap labor? *FOCUS on Colleges, Universities & Schools* 2 (1): 1–8

- Hermesen, J.M. 2008. An examination of the professional identity, work engagement, and job satisfaction of higher education staff members. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Johnsrud, L.K. 2004. Higher education support professionals: Demographics and worklife issues. In *NEA 2004 almanac of higher education*, 105–126. Washington, DC: National Education Association.
- Kane N.E. 1982. A comparative study of student affairs mid-professionals: Characteristics, perceived skill attainment and need for continued development. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Kane, K.L. 2007. University academic professional staff: Augmenting traditional faculty teaching, advising, and research roles. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Kegan, R. 1982. *Evolving self: Problem and process in human development*. Harvard University Press Cambridge, MA.
- Kegan, R. 1994. *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Krumboltz, J.D. 1993. Integrating career and personal counseling. *The Career Development Quarterly* 42 (2): 143–148.
- Krumboltz, John D. 1996. A learning theory of career counseling. In *Handbook of career counseling theory and practice*, ed. M. Savickas and W.B. Walsh, 55–81. Palo Alto: Davies-Black.
- Kuijpers, M.A., B. Schyns, and J. Scheerens. 2006. Career competencies for career success. *The Career Development Quarterly* 55 (2): 168–178.
- Lewis, Karen. 2011. Professional development strategies for professional staff within a private university in a middle Atlantic state. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Love, P., and S.M. Estanek. 2004. *Rethinking student affairs practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mader, M. 2012. Social identity and the shift of student affairs staff to the academic unit. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Meijers, F. 2002. Career learning in a changing world: The role of emotions. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling* 24 (3): 149–167.
- Nabi, G.R. 1999. An investigation into the differential profile of predictors of objective and subjective career success. *Career Development International* 4: 212–224.
- National Research Council. 1991. *Ending mandatory retirement for tenured faculty: The consequences for higher education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Richardson, M.S. 1993. Work in people's lives: A location for counseling psychologists. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 40 (4): 425.
- Ricketts, K., and J.K. Pringle 2014. Going up? Perceived career progress of female general staff across New Zealand universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36 (5): 496–508
- Riessman, C. Kohler, and J. Speedy. 2007. Narrative inquiry in the psychotherapy professions: A critical review. In *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*, ed. D. Jean Clandinin. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Roberts, D.M. 2003. Skill development among student affairs professionals in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region III. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Sofranko, K.B. 2004. Factors motivating full-time, non-faculty professional academic advisors to participate in professional development activities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Szekeres, J. 2004. The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 26 (1): 7–22.
- Szekeres, J. 2011. Professional staff carve out a new space. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33 (6): 679–691.
- Taylor, Kathleen. 2006. Autonomy and self-directed learning: A developmental journey. In *Handbook of adult development and learning*, ed. Carol Hoare. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Trahar, Sheila. 2009. Beyond the story itself: Narrative inquiry and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 10 (1): Art. 30. <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901308>.

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Spring 2014. Human resources component, Fall Staff section (table prepared February 2015). Retrieved online on March 8, 2016, from <http://nces.ed.gov>.
- Violanti, Karen. 2007. Student affairs professionals in academic roles: The investigation of stress, job satisfaction, and emotional well-being in a private higher educational setting. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2004. Administrative managers – A critical link. *Higher Education Quarterly* 58 (4): 280–298.
- Whitchurch, Celia. 2007. Who do they are? The changing identities of professional administrators and manager in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 28(2): 159–171.



Querying the P(hD)ath to Educational Development in Higher Education

25

Sophia Abbot and Emily O. Gravett

Contents

Introduction	390
The Prevalence of the Ph.D. in American Educational Development	391
Implications of the Ph.D. Requirement	392
Exposure to Educational Development	393
Our Entry into the Field of Educational Development	395
Personal Reflections from Emily	395
Personal Reflections from Sophia	396
What Is Next? We Reflect on Possible Options	397
Seek a Disciplinary Ph.D.	398
Pursue a Ph.D. Through Publication Outside of the United States	398
Seek a Master's in Education or Some Other Related Field	398
Become an Independent Consultant to Universities	399
Work Outside the United States	399
Recommendations and Final Considerations	400
Conclusion	401
References	401

Abstract

As the field of American educational development in higher education continues to grow and diversify, increasing numbers of graduate and undergraduate students may find themselves involved in the field – by producing scholarship of teaching and learning, partnering with instructors and educational developers in innovative

S. Abbot (✉)
Trinity University, San Antonio, TX, USA
e-mail: sabbot@trinity.edu

E. O. Gravett
James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, USA
e-mail: graveteo@jmu.edu

ways, or even practicing educational development themselves. These students may thus discover an interest in the profession of educational development long before completing or even entering a doctoral program; yet, in the United States, most educational developers have doctorates, and most job advertisements require them. In this chapter, we query the implications of such requirements. We review various ways young professionals can and have come into contact with educational development before attaining advanced degrees, and we ask: What is next? Ultimately, we suggest new paths need to be forged for those who realize they want to enter this field before earning a doctoral degree.

Keywords

Educational development · Academic development · Degree requirements · Doctoral degree · Ph.D. · Undergraduate students · Graduate students · Faculty

Introduction

While the field variously called “academic development,” “faculty development,” or “educational development” in higher education in the United States (and across the globe) is “hard to pin down,” we agree with former editor of the *International Journal of Academic Development* Brenda Leibowitz (2014) who understands it to be “about the creation of conditions supportive of teaching and learning, in the broadest sense” (p. 3). Of the three, we have chosen to use the term “educational development” as the most inclusive description of this profession, as Felten et al. (2007) have argued. Some scholars (like Lewis 1996) estimate that educational development in the United States is over 150 years old, with the Harvard faculty sabbatical, begun in 1810, cited as its beginning. Since then, educational development professionals have focused their support at the individual level, through one-on-one “consultations” (or conversations) with individual instructors about their teaching, as well as, in more recent years, organizational development efforts that aim to shift the culture of a higher education institution to be better supportive of the conditions that allow teachers to thrive (e.g., valuing excellent teaching in the promotion process) (Ouellett 2010).

As educational development continues to grow in American higher education (and as more institutions open or expand centers for learning and teaching), increasing numbers of graduate and undergraduate students may find themselves involved in educational development – producing scholarship of teaching and learning, partnering with instructors and educational developers in innovative ways, or even practicing educational development themselves. These students may thus discover an interest in the profession of educational development long before completing or even entering a doctoral program. Yet, in the United States, most educational developers have doctorates, and most job advertisements in this field require them. Currently, there is no doctoral degree in educational development in the United States.

In this chapter, we first briefly summarize current data about the academic background of American educational developers as well as the requirements listed

in recent job postings. We then query the implications of such requirements for the field. Next we review various ways young professionals can and have come into contact with the field before attaining advanced degrees. To provide a more nuanced understanding of these trajectories, we share our personal reflections about our entries into and experiences in the field of educational development. Our paths lead us to ask: What is next? What options exist for recent college graduates who are interested in pursuing careers in this field? We suggest several rather imperfect possibilities, which highlight the problematic state of the field for new professionals. The chapter concludes with some recommendations for remedying this problem. Ultimately, we intend to critically examine the advanced degree requirements of educational development positions in the United States and to suggest that new paths need to be forged for those who realize they want to enter this field before (or if) they seek faculty positions – the primary reason people earn doctorates in the United States (Kelly 2016).

The Prevalence of the Ph.D. in American Educational Development

Recent membership data from the 2010 Membership Survey of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) network, the premiere association for educational developers in higher education in the United States, show that the majority (76%) of American educational developers hold doctorate degrees (POD Network Research Committee 2011). This trend holds true internationally, as well. In a survey of educational developers that garnered nearly 1,000 respondents from around the world, David Green and Deandra Little (2016) found that “the majority of respondents (58.6%) held a doctorate or above” (p. 13). The United States had the highest percentage (82%) of educational developers with doctorate degrees, from any field (Green and Little 2016). Thus, questions and concerns about the Ph.D. requirement are particularly salient in our context of the United States.

Analyses of US job postings in educational development reinforce these findings. We collected every job posting listed between October 2015 and January 2016 – the apex of the job market cycle in US educational development – on three different websites or listservs: POD Network, *Chronicle Vitae* (a search engine for jobs in higher education), and *Inside Higher Ed* (a free higher education news, opinion, and job website). In total, we analyzed 50 different postings. Positions ranged from “director” to “faculty developer” to “instructional designer” at institutions across the United States, from 2-year community colleges to small private liberal arts institutions. Fourteen of the 50 jobs, or 28% of postings, explicitly *required* a Ph.D. as a minimum qualification. A further 16, or 32% of postings, explicitly *preferred* a Ph.D. Five others (10%) strongly implied a Ph.D. would be preferred through the experiential requirements of the position (e.g., experience working in higher education, teaching, etc.). This means that, of the 50 postings, 70% required or preferred a Ph.D. The remaining 30% explicitly *required* or *preferred* a master’s degree. None accepted a bachelor’s degree only. Similar qualification requirements were found in an analysis of international job postings by Alan Wright and Judith Miller (2000).

In many ways, the prevalence of the Ph.D. is fitting for the field, especially as it has emerged in the United States. The expectation remains that the vast majority of those earning doctoral degrees will continue on to faculty positions, in spite of the current job market and fluctuating state of affairs in higher education here. An analysis of recent advice pieces and editorials in the U.S.'s premier higher education newspaper, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, illuminates this expectation (see Grafton and Grossman 2011; Kelly 2016; Vick and Furlong 2016). The Ph.D. is framed almost exclusively as preparation for faculty positions, regardless of whether the degree serves as true preparation for graduate students (Austin 2002). Hence, the doctoral degree can ensure educational developers' acceptance among their primary constituency (i.e., faculty) for whom the Ph.D. is commonly thought to be the ultimate marker of expertise or credibility (Mullinix 2007; Cook and Marincovich 2010). It also implicitly honors a common path to the profession since its beginning, despite its diversity (McDonald 2010; Green and Little 2016): mid- and late-career faculty, often recognized as excellent teachers at their institutions, shift from disciplinary teaching and research to educational development, when the opportunity arises (e.g., a new center is being created and needs a director). As Tony Harland and David Staniforth (2008) conclude, "It seems that all developers must come from 'somewhere else'" (p. 675).

A Ph.D. degree can also, but not always, connote to an employer that its holder has experience in teaching. Graduate students may have the opportunity to acquire teaching experience through teaching their own courses or serving as teaching assistants for full-time faculty members' courses. Also, some doctoral programs do provide pedagogical training for their graduate students, and the teaching and learning centers of some universities provide specific support to this population (e.g., Yale's Center for Teaching and Learning in New Haven, CT, USA). If US graduate schools consistently exposed their students to robust pedagogical training and first-hand experience teaching (as Border and von Hoene 2010 recommend), this practice would further justify the prevalence of the Ph.D. as a requirement for educational developers.

Another advantage of the Ph.D. is that people are, by necessity, older by the time they finish graduate school, which would help with perceptions of credibility; faculty often resist hearing ideas and suggestions from educational developers who appear to be, based on their age, less experienced or knowledgeable (Quinn 2012) – about teaching, an institution, or faculty life. The time required to finish a Ph.D. (and, in STEM fields, the time spent acquiring a postdoc afterward) means that, at the very least, educational developers with doctorates will not be fresh out of college. In spite of these potential advantages to having a Ph.D. when entering the field of educational development, we cannot help but query the consequences of such a requirement for the American context.

Implications of the Ph.D. Requirement

Several implications emerge when considering the doctorate as a gatekeeper for working in educational development in higher education in America. First, given current demographic data (Green and Little 2016), which includes the very small

minority of practitioners without doctoral degrees, there are clearly people with the experience, skills, background, and enthusiasm who would fit well within educational development but whom a Ph.D. requirement would exclude.

A second implication of the prevalence of the Ph.D. requirement is the inverse. It may inadvertently encourage, or at least allow, people who do have Ph.D.s to pursue the career path, even if they are not fully interested in or committed to the work of educational development. While this phenomenon has not been researched, anecdotally, we know that this has occurred in a number of cases in which colleagues really desired full-time, tenure-track faculty positions but ended up “settling” for an educational development role when no such faculty positions materialized because they already possessed many of the minimum qualifications.

Third is that the Ph.D. requirement may, as we noted above, encourage people to earn advanced disciplinary degrees only in order to pursue careers not directly related to obtaining a disciplinary faculty position. If a Ph.D. in a specific field, like History or Biology, is required for entry into educational development, there could emerge a group of people who only attain degrees in order to move into educational development. Given the shrinking job opportunities in the United States for those who earn doctoral degrees (Jaschik 2016) – the result of too few job openings for too many doctorates – expectation of fidelity between degree and job may be less and less tenable for all fields. Yet, because the academic job market is shrinking and because there is thus increasing pressure on graduate programs to limit the number of applicants they admit, those prospective students who indicate in their application materials that they do not intend to pursue a career in that discipline’s field may be viewed with skepticism or even rejected (Jaschik 2016).

A final implication is that, given the financial strain earning a Ph.D. can put on students in the United States (Cassuto 2014) – from the cost of tuition and low stipends to the time required outside of the job market – and the resulting relative homogeneity of those who hold doctorates across disciplines (National Science Foundation 2014), Ph.D. requirements in educational development jobs may inadvertently contribute to the reproduction of an elite class in American higher education, which is already a major problem in this extremely stratified system (Mullen 2010; Arner 2014). If this is the case, then the field of educational development would be failing to diversify its membership and failing to more accurately reflect the population of students and faculty in higher education. This concern is underscored by continued calls to diversify educational development itself in the U.S. (Stanley 2001; Ouellett and Stanley 2004). Diversification of the field matters because a homogenous population of developers may not be able to fully consider and meet the needs of an increasingly diverse range of faculty, students, and academic disciplines.

Exposure to Educational Development

Despite the Ph.D. requirement, there are growing opportunities across the United States for undergraduate and graduate students to learn about and even participate in educational development opportunities. However, as of yet, none offer follow-up or

postgraduate opportunities for such students. The following examples, in addition to our own in the reflections below, show a range of contexts for undergraduate and graduate work in educational development and help illuminate ways institutions are recognizing and making space for such contributions.

One example of such opportunity is the Teaching-Learning Academy (TLA) offered by Western Washington University (Bellingham, WA, USA). According to its website, this academy is a forum for the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) that engages faculty, professional staff, and undergraduate students in discussions and collaborative study around various topics of teaching and learning. TLA meets bi-weekly, working toward a different goal each quarter of the academic year. For example, during the fall quarter, the group develops its “BIG question,” and during the winter, the group begins to collect data to answer the question. This process has been framed as “co-inquiry” toward institutional change (Werder et al. 2016) and exposes students to the field of SoTL, and, by association, to the field of educational development.

Another example is Carleton College’s Perlman Learning and Teaching Center (LTC) (Northfield, MN, USA), which, according to its website, exposes students to educational development through its Perlman LTC Fellows program. One of the fellows’ primary jobs is to serve as in-class student observers for interested faculty. The fellows are also responsible for designing programming for their peers to reflect on their learning and for otherwise assisting with the running of the center. In these roles, the fellows are performing work that at other centers are done by people with more advanced degrees and experiences.

A final example is from the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT) at Ohio State University (Columbus, OH, USA). According to their “About” webpage, UCAT employs a number of what they call “Graduate Consultants” and “Doctoral Interns,” all of “who[m] have experience in college teaching and supporting the teaching of others.” These employees of the center are responsible for consulting with fellow graduate teaching assistants, facilitating workshops, assisting with research projects in the office, and contributing to administrative tasks. The Graduate Consultants also have the option of continuing on to become Doctoral Interns. Interns provide the same services as consultants, but they also work to support university units, serve on campus-wide committees, and sometimes develop their own research projects. Through this experience, interns gain a robust sense of the field of educational development. Many of UCAT’s Graduate Consultants and Doctoral Interns go on to become educational developers (Bernhagen, 2016, personal communication).

In fact, like Ohio State, many institutions offer mentorship opportunities related to educational development. Yet these opportunities are usually reserved for those already in doctoral programs (Linder et al. 2011) or for those who have already been hired as developers and who need to acclimate to their new role (Kensington-Miller et al. 2012). No similar mentoring opportunities have been documented for undergraduate students also interested in a career path in educational development, despite the many kinds of programs that involve them in such work. Graduate students may complete their in-progress degrees and enter educational development fully as center

faculty or staff upon graduation, but, as we continue to examine, undergraduates exposed to the field at Western Washington University or Carleton College, for example, have no such path forward.

Our Entry into the Field of Educational Development

To add nuance to these alternative trajectories into educational development, we now offer personal reflections on our own paths into the field. We agree with Susan Wilcox (2009) that “self-study is a worthwhile undertaking for individual educational developers, an approach to scholarship that holds great promise for academic development as a field of study and practice, and for higher education overall” (p. 124). In doing so, we draw on two theoretical approaches common in SoTL and educational research, more broadly: autoethnography and critical reflection. First, we follow a recent but rich tradition in autoethnography in which researchers “foreground personal experiences in research and writing; illustrate sense-making processes; use and show reflexivity; illustrate inside knowledge of a cultural phenomenon/experience; describe and critique cultural norms, experiences, and practices” (Adams et al. 2015, p. 26). We each offer an “authentic, first-person case study with rich details” (Saldaña 2011, p. 17) about our trajectories into and inside the field of educational development. This approach allows us to share key moments and even “epiphanies in our own lives” (Ellis 2004, p. 33) as educational developers. Second, we reflect critically on our experiences, just as instructors have been encouraged to do throughout the teaching and learning literature (Elbaz 1987; Shön 1987; Brookfield 1995; Larivee 2000). Critical reflection helps us “to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame and distort so many educational processes and interactions,” as well as “to question assumptions and practices . . . that are hegemonic” (Brookfield 1995, p. 8). By situating our self-study within relevant theoretical approaches and broader contexts, we are simultaneously able to question the power structures that shape (and have shaped) each of our experiences and the field’s assumptions about the requirements of educational development.

Personal Reflections from Emily

My path to educational development began in 2011, while I was in graduate school at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA, USA. While still a student in this graduate program, I began working part-time as a Graduate Student Associate (GSA) at the university’s (formerly named) Teaching Resource Center (TRC), in order to help fund my living expenses and degree and to learn more about teaching in higher education. I joined the center’s team of several full-time educational developers, support staff, fellow GSAs, and undergraduate student workers.

My main responsibilities as a GSA were developing and supporting various pedagogical programs, such as the annual orientation for graduate teaching assistants, as well as consulting with fellow graduate students about their teaching. I also

contributed to the development of print and digital resources of the center, such as revising an online teaching handbook or writing white papers.

I experienced a number of benefits as a result of working with the TRC. I was introduced to and became much more engaged with the literature on teaching and learning in higher education. This increased engagement affected my own teaching practices in the classroom, as I tried out and refined new evidence-based strategies, activities, and assignments. I even availed myself of a number of the center's additional services. I was also introduced to the field of educational development, writ large. Prior to this experience, I had no idea that people could make entire careers out of supporting others in their teaching practices. I did not even know the field of educational development existed.

Like many other graduate students in America, in my final year of school, I went on the job market. I applied to both faculty and educational development positions; perhaps I felt an obligation to still try to pursue the path for which I had originally entered graduate school. When the first job offer I received was for a full-time faculty position, I was not excited; instead, I felt compelled to accept it simply because offers are few and far between. This is the moment I knew that a faculty position was no longer the right path for me. I was then fortunate enough to receive another job offer, and this time as an assistant director of a center for teaching and learning in San Antonio, TX, USA – a position that built on the skills that I had been developing while working at the TRC. As we discovered in our job posting analysis, the announcement for this position and others to which I applied either explicitly or implicitly required applicants to have an Ed.D. or a Ph.D. in a disciplinary field. Luckily, I had earned one of those.

There was never any question in my mind of whether I would complete my Ph.D., even once I became more interested in a career in educational development. I had invested too much time and money to simply drop out of school. Despite the fact that my aspirations had shifted, I knew that having a Ph.D. (especially after already completing so many years of graduate school) was far better than not having one at all. And, as my mentors in educational development so wisely counseled me, a Ph.D. would be preferred, sometimes even required, if I did ultimately shift over to a career in educational development.

Looking back now, I realize I had the luxury of making a career switch at that point in my life, without any ramifications. I was able to, rather seamlessly, shift into a full-time educational development role, without having to spend any time acquiring additional education or training. In no small part, my Ph.D. facilitated this move. My situation was very different than Sophia's.

Personal Reflections from Sophia

I first discovered educational development by invitation as an undergraduate, unlike Emily, who stumbled across it as a part-time employment option during graduate school. I was completing my first year at Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, PA, USA, in 2012, when a professor suggested that I apply to participate in a program called “Students as Learners and Teachers” (SaLT). The program pairs an undergraduate student with a professor. The student, called a “consultant,” is responsible

for observing the professor's class once per week, taking notes, meeting with the professor, and acting as a sounding board, offering a student perspective for the professor. No formal training was required.

In my 3 years of working as a student consultant for the SaLT program, my role took on several forms. I worked with faculty in the planning stages of several connected interdisciplinary courses, meeting with them, and responding to ideas around assignments and course design. I also brainstormed with faculty on specific pedagogical decisions, such as ways to encourage diverse forms of participation, and I offered faculty a "mirror" through which to view their own teaching (Cook-Sather 2008). Throughout my time in this position, I published reflections, research, and analyses of the work I did and of the program more broadly (i.e., Abbot et al. 2014; Cook-Sather and Abbot 2016), and in my final semester, I supported fellow student consultants by facilitating weekly group meetings. I never found that my lack of formal training in educational development held me back from contributing significantly to my partnerships. Indeed, my student expertise and content naivety (Burke 2013) was an advantage for me, because it allowed me to value the particular student perspective I had and to focus on the pedagogical decisions of the professor.

The collaborative work undertaken through SaLT changed the trajectory of my career, because I discovered a field in which I was deeply passionate. When I graduated from Bryn Mawr, though, I did not have a clear career plan forward. At this point, I still did not fully recognize that educational development existed as a field outside of the work I had done in the SaLT context.

Several weeks after graduating with my bachelor's degree, one of my faculty mentors connected me with the director of a center for teaching and learning at a university in San Antonio, TX, USA (where Emily worked), and I realized this field was one in which I could aspire to be. A short-term fellowship was offered to me in which I would design and support opportunities for student-faculty collaboration around teaching and learning, building off the work I had done in my undergraduate years. This opportunity was a rarity – from personal networking, I know of only seven others in comparable positions across the United States. Additionally, my lack of Ph.D. has made finding future work in the field difficult and upward movement in my current area impossible. Unlike Emily, I am not in the midst of a degree I can finish so that I have the qualifications to continue. Instead, I must find an alternative way forward.

What Is Next? We Reflect on Possible Options

When considering our personal trajectories, it began to occur to us that continuing in educational development would be quite complicated for Sophia, as it would be for others exposed to the profession through similar opportunities. We began to consider what options might be available for those waiting to pursue a career in educational development in higher education in the United States, which are explored next. Yet, as we will soon show, none of these options are without their serious drawbacks; these drawbacks further underscore the challenges with a Ph.D. being the primary path or credential for educational developers in the American Higher Education context.

Seek a Disciplinary Ph.D.

This first option makes a good deal of sense, given data that indicates how many educational developers in the United States report holding Ph.D.s (Green and Little 2016); indeed, this path worked well for Emily. If one wants to practice educational development full time at an American college or university, the best bet would be to enroll in a Ph.D. in some specific discipline and then move into educational development full time after its completion; in the United States this would likely take five years or more (Flaherty 2014). The problems with this path, however, may be obvious. For one, if the interested educational developer does end up completing the degree (attrition rates have been as high as 50% in American graduate schools; see Lovitts 2001), 5 years or more is a long time to spend on and keep interested in another subject while waiting to embark upon one's truly desired career path (educational development).

Pursue a Ph.D. Through Publication Outside of the United States

Relatedly, Sophia could pursue a Ph.D. by publication, a route available in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Sweden, among other countries, which rewards records of scholarly contributions (Jackson 2013). Depending on the school and the field, a Ph.D. by publication typically entails the submission to an academic committee of five to seven or more research papers published in peer-reviewed journals (Willis and Cowton 2011). Some institutions, especially in the United Kingdom, accept articles published prior to enrolling in such a Ph.D., while the majority of institutions in Australia expect one to apply to a Ph.D. by publication and complete the papers within the program (Jackson 2013). If one has already begun to publish, this option could recognize the work already completed and give her or him the primary qualification needed to continue in educational development, at least in those countries. And for others, this option offers a more individualized program that could focus on educational development in ways a traditional American Ph.D. may not. The drawbacks of this path are that publication itself is not easy and the Ph.D. by publication requires already working at or enrolling in the university from which the candidate hopes to attain the Ph.D. (Willis and Cowton 2011). This means one would need to find work at or enroll in such an institution, and for those in the United States, this inevitably means moving internationally, which we will discuss more below.

Seek a Master's in Education or Some Other Related Field

An alternative path may be to earn only a master's degree and try to pursue work in the field then. Recall that 24% of respondents of a recent POD membership survey did not hold a doctorate (2011, POD Membership Survey), so there is precedent for this path. These professionals usually hold master's degrees in related fields – social work, education, higher education, science education, instructional technology, etc. (2011,

POD Membership Survey). At least for educational developers in POD, a lack of a terminal degree has not always determined an ability to do good work. An added benefit of this option would be if one were to matriculate in a master's program at an institution, such as Penn State (State College, PA, USA), where there was also a well-regarded center for teaching and learning. This option could allow a student with an interest in educational development to take courses in his or her degree program while continuing to work part time in the field. While likely more expensive (as Cassuto 2015, recognizes, there is rarely funding for master's students in the United States), this path would allow one to return to the field of educational development as soon as possible. However, left with a master's, his or her options for upward mobility in the field – to directorship, for example – would certainly be more limited. And, as we mentioned earlier, without a Ph.D., an educational developer may struggle to gain credibility among the faculty with whom he or she works (Mullinix 2007).

Become an Independent Consultant to Universities

A fourth option banks on one's current expertise (for Sophia, centered on student-faculty collaborations around teaching and learning). An educational developer with a B.A. could try to work independently of any particular institution as an external consultant or contractor. Many prominent American educational developers (e.g., Dee Fink, José Bowen) have begun their own consulting practices, either on the side or full time, but only after they worked in a teaching and learning center for a number of years. This is also something a number of educational developers do in addition to their full-time work within a center but again typically happens after someone has been in the field for quite some time (e.g., Peter Felten of Elon University in Elon, NC, USA). If one found a niche topic and enough interested universities, one could theoretically build a full-time job around that work. However, despite being experienced and having credibility, freelancers face additional challenges, such as job insecurity, unreliable workload, long hours, financial stresses, and even strains on mental health (Janzer 2017) that make this career path less desirable.

Work Outside the United States

Sophia may have more luck finding a job in educational development internationally. In Belgium, for example, the majority of educational developers (89%) hold master's or postmaster's degrees, but not Ph.D.s (Green and Little 2016). And overall averages of global data for educational developers show 4% of developers whose highest degree is a Bachelor's or post-Bachelor's and 37% whose highest degree is a Master's or post-Master's (Green and Little 2016). While offering an opportunity for a new life overseas, this solution is imperfect for a number of other reasons, not least of which is the requirement that one uproot from family and friends, navigate emigration and visa processes (Baker 2012), and possibly lose current networks in the field to pursue a career in an unfamiliar country.

Recommendations and Final Considerations

After exploring personal experiences, critical reflections, and potential paths forward, we are now able to make suggestions for broader change in the field. Below are three ways to address, on a larger scale, the panoply of issues that have been raised here.

One simple, though not necessarily easy, solution would be for American institutions to create a doctoral degree in educational development as this would give those interested in educational development a clear path forward in gaining credibility – ideally along with practice in scholarship and the other skills needed in the field. In the POD 2010 Membership survey, in response to the question, “What education/training/experience prepared you for your work in faculty or TA development?” only 28% of respondents indicated that they attained a degree related to faculty development – and those degrees were only “related,” such as Education (POD Research Committee 2011). These data confirm that there is no doctorate in the United States for educational development. We suggest, as others have before us (Timmermans et al. 2005; Kensington-Miller et al. 2012), that it might be to the advantage of the field if more consistent instruction and training, via an advanced degree, were offered.

There is precedence for this idea in analogous Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs in higher education leadership (e.g., University of Texas at Austin, TX, USA), and in recent years with the development of a new Masters in Learning and Design at Georgetown University (Washington, D.C., USA). And this concentration does exist outside of the United States, as in the “University Pedagogy” focus in the Psychology Ph.D., for example, from the University of Bergen in Norway (“University Pedagogy” 2017). In the United States, this degree could provide students with the coursework, experience, and mentoring necessary in educational development practice, as well as basic quantitative and qualitative research methods. The degree could also include a multidisciplinary curriculum and include topics that range from common educational development services (Lee 2010), to deep knowledge and experience in learning and teaching.

To be clear, neither one of us believes that this degree should become the single requirement for entering the field. We appreciate the diverse trajectories that have brought people to be educational developers. Our reason for this recommendation is simply that it would offer an opportunity for those like Sophia, who have been exposed to the profession at a much earlier point in their professional career, a path forward, if the Ph.D. is indeed to remain a requirement for most educational development-related positions.

It may also make good sense, budget limitations notwithstanding, to create job openings for those professionals who have already been exposed to the field and who have completed, at the very least, their college degrees. Certainly, if job advertisements indicate that the minimum requirement is a bachelor’s degree, then a center should be willing to seriously consider, if not hire, someone with a bachelor’s degree. If not, then learning and teaching centers need to become more transparent about the real requirements of the position. Educational development, as we hope to have made clear, is a field of people from “elsewhere,” and practitioners often report

feeling like they exist “betwixt and between” (Little and Green 2012). If that is the case, perhaps centers can incorporate, more fully, those who may find themselves in another liminal space: no longer a student, but not yet a full-time teacher with Ph.D.

Perhaps what most needs to happen, however, is a culture shift in American higher education that disrupts the assumption that one must be a practitioner of something in order to support or critique it. Indeed, there are times when the perspective of someone from the outside can offer a clearer reflection of one’s practice precisely because there is no content understanding or expertise coloring that reflection. If we are able to find ways to value this kind of alternative perspective more broadly, the field may be better able to welcome and leverage these in-between voices.

Conclusion

Our research has affirmed that there are few paths to the field of educational development without a Ph.D., and each current possible path for individuals has significant drawbacks. The issue exists beyond individual experiences; it is due to the structures enforcing the Ph.D. as the norm and our failure as a field to adapt beyond this status quo. While we recognize the many reasons that Ph.D. requirements exist and persist in the United States, we nevertheless encourage the field to continue to find more systemic ways of including alternative perspectives, as it historically has. Ultimately, in a field that values multiple perspectives and pathways, the implicit and explicit Ph.D. requirement that serves as a gatekeeper only limits the growth and potential of the field as a whole.

References

- Abbot, S., A. Cook-Sather, and C. Hein. 2014. Mapping classroom interactions: A spatial approach to analyzing patterns of student participation. *To Improve the Academy* 33 (2): 131–152.
- Adams, T.E., S.H. Jones, and C. Ellis. 2015. *Autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Arner, L. 2014. Working class women at the MLA interview. *Rhizomes* 27. Retrieved from <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue27/arner.html>.
- Austin, A.E. 2002. Preparing the next generation of faculty: Graduate school as socialization to the academic career. *The Journal of Higher Education* 73 (1): 94–122.
- Baker, N.J. (2012). Immigration for travelling faculty members. *Inside Higher Education*. 19 Oct. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2012/10/19/essay-explores-immigration-issues-traveling-faculty-members>.
- Border, L.L.B., and L.M. von Hoene. 2010. Graduate and professional student development programs. In *A guide to faculty development*, 327–345. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S.D. 1995. *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*, 8. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Burke, H. 2013. Legitimizing student expertise in student-faculty partnerships. *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* 10. Retrieved from <http://repository.brynmawr.edu/tlthe/vol1/iss10/6/>.
- Carleton College Perlman Learning and Teaching Center Fellows. 2016. <https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/lc/student-services/fellows/>.

- Cassuto, L. (2014). How should graduate school change. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 13 Jan. <http://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Should-Graduate-School/143945>
- Cassuto, L. (2015). The degree for quitters and failures. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 1 June. <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Degree-for-Quitters-and/230533>
- Cook, C.E., and M. Marinovich. 2010. Effective practices at research universities: The productive pairing of research and teaching. In *A guide to faculty development*, ed. K.J. Gillespie, D.L. Robertson, and Associates, 2nd ed., 277–292. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cook-Sather, A. 2008. “What you get is looking in a mirror, only better”: Inviting students to reflect (on) college teaching. *Reflective Practice* 9 (4): 473–483.
- Cook-Sather, A., and S. Abbot. 2016. Translating partnerships: How faculty-student collaboration can create transformed perceptions, terms, and selves. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry* 4 (2). <https://doi.org/10.20343/10.20343/teachlearninqu.4.2.5>.
- Elbaz, F. 1987. Teacher’s knowledge of teaching: Strategies for reflection. In *Educating teachers: Changing the nature of pedagogical knowledge*, ed. J. Smyth. Philadelphia: Farmer Press.
- Ellis, C. 2004. *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about ethnography*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- Felten, P., Kalish, A., Pingree, A., Plank, K. (2007). Toward a scholarship of teaching and learning in educational development. *To Improve the Academy*, 25 (1), 93–108. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2334-4822.2007.tb00476.x>
- Flaherty, C. (2014). 5-Year plan. Inside Higher Education. 28 May. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2014/05/28/mia-report-calls-phd-program-reform-including-cutting-timedegree>
- Georgetown University Master of Arts in Learning and Design. n.d. *About*. Accessed 20 Nov 2017. <http://learninganddesign.georgetown.edu/about-program/>
- Grafton, A. T. & Grossman, J. (2011). No more plan b. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 9 Oct 2011. <http://www.chronicle.com/article/No-More-Plan-B/129293>
- Green, D.A., and D. Little. 2016. Family portrait: A profile of educational development around the world. *International Journal for Academic Development* (2, 1): 135–150.
- Hagstrom, F., J. Olson, and C. Cross. 2014. The student observer program at Carleton College: Three perspectives on supporting good teaching. *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* 13. <http://teachingandlearningtogether.brynmawr.edu/archived-issues/thirteenth-issue-fall-2014/the-student-observer-program-at-carleton-college-three-perspectives-on-supporting-good-teaching>.
- Harland, T., and D. Staniforth. 2008. Family of strangers: The fragmented nature of academic development. *Teaching in Higher Education* 13 (16): 669–678.
- Jackson, D. 2013. Completing a Ph.D. by publication: A review of Australian policy and implications for practice. *Higher Education Research and Development* 32 (3): 355–368.
- Janzer, C. (2017). Is freelancing bad for your mental health? *The Week*. 19 August. <http://theweek.com/articles/717052/freelancing-bad-mental-health>.
- Jaschik, S. (2016). The shrinking Ph.D. job market. *Inside Higher Education*. 4 April. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/04/04/new-data-show-tightening-phd-job-market-across-disciplines>.
- Kelly, C. (2016). Stop resisting nonfaculty careers. *Inside Higher Education*. 7 July. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/07/07/phd-candidates-should-consider-careers-other-faculty-essay>.
- Kensington-Miller, B., I. Brailsford, and P. Gossman. 2012. Developing new academic developers: Doing before being? *International Journal for Academic Development* 17 (2): 121–133.
- Larivee, B. 2000. Transforming teaching practice: Becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective Practice* 1 (3): 293–307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713693162>.
- Lee, V. 2010. Programs and prototypes. In *A guide to faculty development*, ed. K.J.Gillespie, D.L. Robertson, and Associates, 2nd ed., 21–34. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Leibowitz, B. 2014. Reflections on academic development: What is in a name? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (4): 357–360.
- Lewis, K. 1996. Faculty development in the United States: A brief history. *International Journal for Academic Development* 1 (2): 26–33.

- Linder, K., S.V. Rohdieck, A. Kalish, T.A. Johnson, K.M. Plank, and L.A. Maynell. 2011. Graduate student internships as a pathway to the profession of educational development. *To Improve the Academy* 30: 3–16.
- Little, D., and D. Green. 2012. Betwixt and between: Academic developers in the margins. *International Journal for Academic Development* 17 (3): 203–215.
- Lovitts, B. E. 2001. Leaving the ivory tower: The causes and consequences of departure from doctoral study. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Lanham, MD, USA.
- McDonald, J. 2010. Charting pathways into the field of educational development. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2010 (122): 37–45.
- McMaster MacPherson Institute. 2017. <http://mi.mcmaster.ca/>
- Mullen, A.L. 2010. *Degrees of inequality*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Mullinix, B. 2007. Credibility and effectiveness in context: An exploration of the importance of faculty status for faculty developers. *To Improve the Academy* 26: 173–195.
- NSF Science and Engineering Doctorates. 2014. *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities* [Data files]. Available from <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/data-tables.cfm>.
- Ouellett, M. L. 2010. Overview of faculty development: History and choices. In *A guide to faculty development*, ed. K. J. Gillespie, D. L. Robertson, and Associates, 2nd ed., 3–20. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ouellett, M.L., and C.A. Stanley. 2004. Fostering diversity in a faculty development organization. *To Improve the Academy* 22: 206–225.
- POD Network Research Committee. 2011. Analysis of several themes emerging from the 2010 POD membership survey data. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B6yUeY3EibR9b0ZYOWZBaVIBamc/edit>.
- Quinn, L. 2012. Understanding resistance: An analysis of discourses in academic staff development. *Studies in Higher Education* 37 (1): 69–83.
- Saldaña, J. 2011. *Fundamentals of qualitative research: Understanding qualitative research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Shön, D. 1987. *Educating the reflective practitioners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Somekh, B., and K. Zeichner. 2009. Action research for educational reform: Remodelling action research theories and practices in local contexts. *Educational Action Research* 17 (1): 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790802667527>.
- Stanley, C. 2001. A review of the pipeline: The value of diversity in staffing teaching and learning centers in the new millennium. *Journal of Faculty Development* 18 (2): 75–86.
- Teaching-Learning Academy. n.d.. Western Washington University. Accessed 6 Oct 2017. <https://library.wvu.edu/use/tla>.
- Timmermans, J., M.J. Martek, D. Berthiaume, L. McAlpine, and N. Arcuri. 2005. FacDev: The next generation: Envisaging a doctoral program for future academic developers. Paper presented at the *American Educational Research Association 2005 Annual meeting*. Montreal: April 11–15.
- UCAT. n.d.. About. Accessed 6 Oct 2017. <https://ucat.osu.edu/about/>.
- University Pedagogy. 2017. Hvem er vi?. Accessed 6 Oct 2017. <http://www.uib.no/uniped/54991/hvem-er-vi-gammel>.
- Vick, J.M., and J.S. Furlong. 2016. The first steps to a nonfaculty job search. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 20 Apr. <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-First-Steps-to-a/236184>.
- Werder, C., S. Thibou, S. Simkins, K. Hornsby, K. Legg, and T. Franklin. 2016. Co-inquiry with students: When shared questions lead the way. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* 4 (2): 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.4.2.4>.
- Wilcox, S. 2009. Transformative educational development scholarship: Beginning with ourselves. *International Journal for Academic Development* 14 (2): 123–132.
- Willis, R., and C. Cowton. 2011. Looks good on paper. . . *Times Higher Education*. Accessed 8 May 2016. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/looks-good-on-paper/416988.article>.
- Wright, W.A., and J.E. Miller. 2000. The educational developer's portfolio. *International Journal for Academic Development* 5 (1): 20–29.



Creating an Intentional Career Path: The Journey from Graduate Teaching Associate to Educational Developer

26

Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, Jill Marie McSweeney, and Susan Joudrey

Contents

Introduction	406
Methodology	407
Overview of Narratives	408
A Grounded Plant: Or Discovering the Field of Educational Development	409
Flowing Water: Or What Educational Development Offered Us	411
Warm Flame: Or, Nurturing Passion and Finding a “Home”	414
Kites in the Air: Or, How to Mentor and Encourage Other GTAs to Join Us	417
Conclusions and Recommendations	418
References	420

Abstract

The role of the Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) can be critical to supporting the work of teaching centers and may provide graduate students with a path into educational development (ED). At a time when many graduate students will not find traditional, tenure-track faculty positions, we must begin to examine how these teaching center roles can prepare graduate students for future ED work and what we can do to help them transition into a position in the field. Through a collaborative auto ethnographic approach, this chapter explores three educational developers’ journeys into ED and how the profession can begin to systematically prepare graduate students for a career in ED.

S. L.-M. Sheffield (✉) · J. M. McSweeney · S. Joudrey
Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada
e-mail: Suzanne.Sheffield@Dal.Ca; Jill.McSweeney@Dal.Ca; Susan.Joudrey@Dal.Ca

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_19

405

Keywords

Educational Development · Educational Developers · Graduate Teaching Associate · Graduate student · Collaborative autoethnography · Career path · Apprenticeship · Professional identity · Teaching center · Higher education · Teaching and learning

Introduction

Educational Development (ED) encompasses a broad range of activities that include programming, consulting, and resources that support educational effectiveness within higher education at individual, departmental, and institutional levels (Bédard et al. 2010; Shay 2012). This chapter, educational development is used synonymously with academic development. Working with faculty, graduate students, and administration, educational developers travel across disciplinary boundaries, bridging teaching, learning, and research (Kensington-Miller et al. 2012), aiming to “improve the effectiveness of faculty in all their professional roles” (McDonald and Stockley 2008, p. 214). Shay (2012) writes that ED is “the improvement of the quality and status of teaching in order to improve the quality of students’ experience of learning and ultimately the improvement of the quality of the graduate” (p. 313). In Canada, over the last decade, there has been increasing discussion about professionalizing ED within higher education (Gibbs 2013). The serendipity of entry into the profession from various academic roles and disciplines has been highlighted within the literature (Gosling et al. 2007; Fraser 1999), along with the need to clarify the routes into the profession while respecting the value of multiple entry points (Gosling et al. 2007; Kensington-Miller et al. 2012; Quinn and Vorster 2014).

The recent growth of ED and the increasing demand for such professionals have prompted discussion about how to raise awareness and opportunities for entry into this career (Gosling et al. 2007; Quinn and Vorster 2014). However, a survey of developers found that 50% had five or fewer years experience in the field (Sorcinelli et al. 2006), and with a lack of career benchmarks (McDonald and Stockley 2008, p. 213), how do newcomers ensure they are meeting the knowledge and competency expectations to accommodate growing demands? Some courses and programs exist for those already in the field as early developers (McDonald 2010), but many new professionals struggle to figure out how to *do* development and *be* a developer (Kensington-Miller et al. 2012; Stefani 1999).

One path into ED is through graduate-level student positions, such as Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA), within teaching and learning centers. Canadian centers that fund these positions often provide graduate students with part-time contracts (for instance, 10 hours a week over the course of the academic year) to support the work of educational development. While the type of work may vary, ideally the student will get some opportunities to organize and present at teaching events and facilitate conversations about teaching across their campus, both orally and in writing. As such, the role could be seen as an informal apprenticeship position that provides students with experience in ED, and has the potential to offer a more formalized

opportunity for professional development into the profession (Linder 2011; Vorster and Quinn 2015). While in Canada the GTA role is an obvious trajectory into ED, it has received very limited attention in the literature in this regard.

GTA positions in centers can be leveraged to provide a concrete pathway into ED and begin to systematically facilitate the growth of the profession. This chapter used collaborative autoethnographic inquiry (Ellis 2009) to draw upon the lived experiences of three educational developers, revealing their career paths and how the role of GTA provides an important avenue into the profession. We explored how these unique journeys reflect the changing expectations for entry into GTA positions, in turn revealing the evolving role of educational developers over time and the need to act intentionally to mentor GTAs into the profession. The exploration of our own experiences could aid in understanding how educational developers can begin to consider the formalization of entry into ED and how we might facilitate this, in one way, through graduate student professional development.

Methodology

Collaborative autoethnography is a qualitative method that uses individual stories within sociocultural contexts (Ellis et al. 2011), while allowing for the analysis of intersecting and overlapping experiences, which cannot occur through a single narrative (Chang et al. 2013). This approach permits researchers to not only study themselves, but also each other (Ellis 2009). In doing this, we abandoned all pretenses of objectivity and neutrality and applied an analytical interpretation to our narratives, allowing us to use our unique experiences and institutional environments as vital sources of data (Chang et al. 2013). While our journeys are unique, the overlapping and iterative steps of inquiry into our narratives allows for us, as researchers, to see similarities across these context-bound experiences.

In order for the data to be understood in context, it is necessary to first disclose our own biographies. We are three female educational developers, at different stages of our careers, from various disciplinary backgrounds, and entering the field of ED at different historical periods and through various institutions. Suzanne is currently the Director of the Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT) at Dalhousie University and began her career in ED as a GTA at York University while completing her Ph.D. in history during the 1990s. Susan became a GTA at Carleton University in the early 2000s while finishing her Ph.D. in history and is now a Senior Educational Developer (Curriculum) at the CLT. Lastly, Jill is currently working as an Educational Developer (Graduate Students) at the CLT and began there in 2013 as a GTA while completing her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies. As a research team, we all bring lived experiences that capture the varied backgrounds of educational developers (McDonald 2010), while also sharing similar entry points into the profession as graduate students.

Over 6 months, we conducted a collaborative autoethnographic process where we applied Ngunjiri et al. (2010) concurrent model of collaborative autoethnography and used five steps to explore our individual journeys into ED. First, we met several times to discuss the purpose of the process, our own experiences, and the goal of the

narrative. Through sharing our experiences and pertinent pieces of literature, we generated a set of four questions that helped guide our reflections. Second, we wrote our narratives, answering the questions generated from our previous discussions:

1. Describe your GTA role and experience.
2. How did the role shape your identity?
3. What is your current role in ED?
4. How did your GTA experiences shape your growth as an educational developer?

Our narratives were written from a first-person perspective detailing our perceptions, feelings, and accomplishments during our journey into ED (Ellis 2009). Third, we individually reviewed the texts and asked each other further questions that were triggered during our reading. Fourth, we went back to our own text and answered the questions and then shared our final expanded narratives. This process created a dialogue within the text between all of us and encouraged the exploration of our individual journeys more deeply and within the context of our lived experiences (Norris and Sawyer in Denzin 2014). The questions prompted us to return to our life history and re-contextualize our understanding of the narrative through another perspective (Denzin 2013, p. 126). Lastly, we read over the final reflections and met to discuss the themes across the narratives. What follows is an account of the thematic constructs developed by sharing our lived experiences with each other and reflecting on the narratives from the perspective of an observer (Denzin 2013; Ellis 2009).

Overview of Narratives

Based on our narratives, we suggest there is value to considering the role of the GTA as an entry point into ED, encouraging interest in the field, and the development of professional identities. Our experiences highlight that the path into ED is often a journey of exploring and “breaking away from old identities” (McDonald 2010, p. 43) and that critical questions should be addressed when fostering the development of new professionals. At the end of this chapter, we offer recommendations for how Centers can address the questions that arose from our analysis, for example: What elements need to coalesce to encourage graduate students to take up GTA opportunities in the first place? How could a graduate student in the GTA role be encouraged to consider the position as a career opportunity rather than a student job? How could an interested GTA be supported to move from this student-apprenticeship role into the profession of ED?

Playing with metaphors we have used photos to provide a unique perspective to the data that evolved from our narratives (Carpenter 2008). We have reflected on the *elements* of our disciplinary experiences that have both informed and limited our views of career possibilities and professional identities. These reflections enabled us to experience new intellectual growth and challenge our existing assumptions that are *grounded* within our disciplinary and student frames of reference. However, the GTA role allowed for the *flow* of new experiences that created opportunities for our career paths, intellectual development, professional identities, and awareness of the broader

academic world. For us, the flame of ED was *lit* from within as we found a passion for education and supporting others to excel in this field. We each found a new intellectual home in ED, a place where we felt a sense of belonging, which was warmly welcoming and supportive of what we most valued in our personal and professional identities. As a result, we felt uplifted, light, and able to move almost effortlessly towards new goals. While still drawing upon our disciplinary backgrounds, we could feel free as individuals to go where the breeze might take us – to explore the nontraditional career path of ED beyond our graduate work – where multiple opportunities existed to grow as teachers, researchers, and developers. Eventually, this led us to invite others to *soar* with us in the relatively new field of ED within higher education.

A Grounded Plant: Or Discovering the Field of Educational Development

By the very nature of the GTA position, all three of us were graduate students in different Canadian universities when we entered ED. Initially, we were firmly *grounded* in our disciplines but gradually grew beyond, as we discovered ED. None of us knew that “educational development” existed, even though two of us (Suzanne and Jill) had been participants in teaching center activities prior to becoming GTAs. As graduate students, both Jill and Suzanne completed a graduate teaching practicum/certificate; alternatively, Susan had not participated in teaching center activities prior to being a GTA. Neither Suzanne nor Jill were encouraged to undertake teaching development within their graduate program, but were self-motivated and believed it would support their academic career goals (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 *Metaphor 1 – Grounded Plant. Blossoming in a new field*



This lack of knowledge or awareness about ED can be explained by the historical trajectories of our careers. Suzanne began her GTA position in 1995 when ED was not explicitly defined as a separate profession and was largely conducted by faculty members interested in teaching and learning (Gibbs 2013, p. 10). In Susan's case, her position was embedded within her academic department. For Suzanne and Susan, then, this work seemed like a natural extension of their disciplinary teaching experience. The transition of the field of ED likely influenced these outcomes, as ED was initially grounded in improving teaching, whereas recent shifts towards "...helping colleges and universities function effectively as teaching and learning communities" is now much more evident within the function of teaching and learning centers (Felten et al. 2007, p. 93).

In contrast, when Jill began her GTA role in 2013, ED was further defined as a profession aimed at the development of teaching, which supports student learning (Gibbs 2013). Regardless of its solidification, the profession of ED was still not broadly promoted within institutions and echoes Jill's first exposure to it during a graduate teaching certificate program Suzanne taught through the CLT:

I wasn't sure where she [Suzanne] sat within the university – was she a faculty member, balancing this teaching with a full research load? Was she support staff, strictly working for the university to provide a service to graduate students? How did she get to where she was? Was this what people with Master's and PhD's in education did?

A consistent thread through our narratives was that while ED has transitioned over time (Leibowitz 2014), its profile as a profession has not increased as a clearly visible, alternative career path for graduate students to pursue.

The changing expectations for GTAs and educational developers over time reflect the increasing professionalization of the field (McDonald and Stockley 2008). For example, in applying for their GTA positions, Suzanne and Susan were only required to submit a CV and letter of application while Jill was also required to submit a teaching dossier. In 2015, when Jill and Susan applied for permanent ED positions, they were required to submit ED portfolios. This change in application process suggests that preparing to apply for an ED position now requires a deeper understanding about teaching and learning and what developers do and to demonstrate evidence of their ED experience. This shift means that it is even more imperative to explicitly mentor graduate students within GTA positions.

A common theme through our narratives, which supports previous literature, is our fortuitous entry into the ED field (Gosling et al. 2007; Kensington-Miller et al. 2012; McDonald 2010). None of us explicitly sought out our GTA opportunities. Instead, we were all specifically invited to apply by Center staff or faculty members. These explicit invitations opened doors we would have been unlikely to find ourselves, another indication that while the profession of ED has expanded and evolved, the visibility of such positions to potential newcomers is limited. Additionally, these invitations assisted us in seeing something in ourselves that we may not have otherwise noticed, as shown in our reflections below:

It was [the Associate Director of the Center's] belief in me and [their] interest in working with me that convinced me to apply [and] do this new kind of work . . . [Their] on-going support and encouragement had a significant impact on building my confidence, during this position and afterwards. (Suzanne)

I was approached by the [department administrator] to see if I wanted to take on the role of [GTA], I'm not sure why I was approached. I assumed it was probably something discussed at a Departmental meeting and the faculty who I'd TA-ed for probably thought I was a good candidate because I was a good TA. (Susan)

Without Suzanne's [Director of the Center] encouragement and the relationship we built through CNLT 5000 [the teaching and learning course], I would not have applied for the [GTA] position. (Jill)

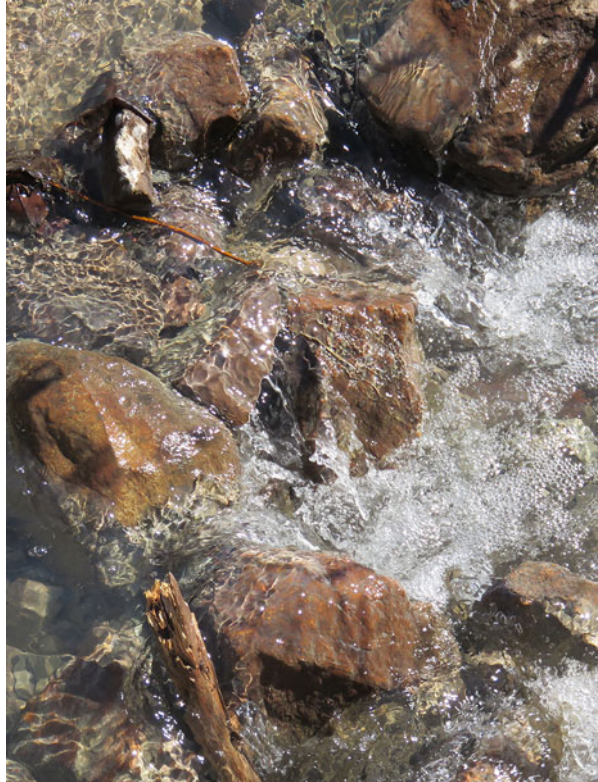
None of us would have applied for these positions, or in the case of Susan and Suzanne, even known about them if it had not been for these personal networks. Our experiences underscore the importance of ED connections with graduate students to identify individuals who might be interested in pursuing a path within this field.

We considered our new ED work as a way to build our academic careers through new experiences added to teaching dossiers and CVs. For example, Suzanne gained “. . .opportunities to develop new skills in event planning and organization.” Similarly, Jill felt the role “. . .not only provided a student with teaching experience (through workshop facilitation), it also offered critical skills in writing, public speaking, editing, collaboration, organization, etc.” In fact, ED provides graduate students with a range of versatile skills that should be captured within the requirements of any graduate education (Rose 2012). Beyond teaching, such a role requires leadership, project management, effective communication across diverse audiences, and the ability to integrate research into practice (Bédard et al. 2010; Timmermans 2014). Moreover, EDs need to develop the ability to “facilitate change in individuals” (p. 310) and for “establishing relationships and building rapport” (p. 313) (Timmermans 2014). In considering the expansion of the field, positions within centers could target students looking to facilitate the development of these skills regardless of aspiring to work within ED. Marketing these roles as such would increase the visibility of experiences for graduate students within centers and provide an avenue to introduce students to an alternative career path within higher education. Moreover, encouraging explicit reflection on the development of skills and attributes within the field would greatly benefit the development of the GTA towards a career within ED.

Flowing Water: Or What Educational Development Offered Us

Despite naiveté at the start of our GTA positions, we came to realize that the role had more to offer us than funding and was not just another contribution to our CV. ED began to *flow* into and beyond our academic and professional aspirations. We acquired new skills and gained the opportunity to learn more about how the university worked beyond our own departments (Fig. 2):

Fig. 2 *Metaphor 2 – Flowing water.* Following a different current



The GTA position also opened my eyes to the political and systematic natures of the university, which I was not exposed to in graduate school. (Jill)

The ED work experience was definitely integral to learning to be diplomatic. It provided an institutional insight that I never would have gained if I had only held a traditional TA position. (Susan)

I began to understand the different levels and aspects of the university and become aware of the politics within the university setting. (Suzanne)

As a result of our GTA experiences, we were able to consider ED positions thereafter. Although Suzanne worked as a part-time and limited term contract faculty member from 1997–2004 before moving to a full-time ED position in 2004, she could clearly connect her GTA work with this later ED work. She reflects:

My GTA experience prepared me well for this position, including the ability to juggle different work demands at one time. It did feel like a full-time extension of my GTA position, much of the work was similar.

However, it had taken her quite a few years to realize that she preferred this work to her academic positions and that she wanted a career in ED. It was really only a 10-month-contract ED position in 2002–2003 that gave an opportunity to see how the field had developed, meet other developers, and see herself in this role long term. Susan worked as a part-time academic as she finished her dissertation and mentioned that:

It wasn't until I read a posting for an Instructional Development Associate (IDA) position in a teaching and learning center that I realized my [GTA position] aligned with Educational Development.

Suzanne and Susan took longer to come to the field due to the lack of its identification as a career option for graduate students. Moreover, neither Suzanne nor Susan engaged in explicit conversations about becoming developers during the course of their GTA work. For example, Susan received little guidance into the ED field:

For the most part, I was operating very independently. I didn't receive any mentorship that would have been referred to as Educational Development. In fact, no one ever mentioned that what I was doing was attached to an emerging administrative field in higher education.

While Suzanne applied for an ED position in 1997, upon receiving her doctorate, she considered it as a bridge while she sought a position in her discipline. Susan also applied for an ED position when she moved to a geographic region where positions in her field were not readily available. Her interest in obtaining an academic position also remained.

Unlike Susan and Suzanne, Jill had conversations about ED as a career path with people within and beyond her teaching center. In fact, she applied for her current ED position while she was still completing her dissertation, entering into the field of ED more immediately than Suzanne or Susan. Of the three of us, Jill had more opportunity to consciously reflect upon, and talk explicitly about, ED as a career path. She was the most consciously mentored towards such a goal, quickly increasing her awareness and interest in pursuing an ED career.

As Susan notes “Allowing the GTA to fully act like an educational developer is crucial to the development of their professional identity.” Jill’s opportunities, mentoring and personal reflection, gave her the ability to more quickly and readily see the connections between her academic interests and ED, the applicability of her developing skills through this work, and her own personal interest in, and affinity for, ED work. Building on Jill’s experience, the GTA position could itself act as an informal “internship” program that could provide “intentional pipeline support” (Linder et al. 2011, p. 4), allowing a graduate student to gain experience in ED while the supervisor consciously provides the intern with opportunities for reflection, discussion, and growth within the role. While few formal programs exist to prepare an individual for an ED career (Bédard et al. 2010; Linder 2011), our narratives suggest that senior developers grounded in the field should consciously

mentor students within centers and expose them to ED as a career choice within the academy (Linder 2011). These more informal, but intentional, opportunities may help highlight this alternative academic path and support the increasing demands being placed on teaching and learning centers.

Warm Flame: Or, Nurturing Passion and Finding a “Home”

While being introduced into the ED community, we realized that we had something to offer students and faculty through the field and that there was potential for us to feel more “at home” here than in our academic disciplines. The warm flame of ED had been *lit* within us. The nurturing and empowering nature of the field is seen through others’ reflections of their path into ED (McDonald 2010; O’Sullivan et al. 2016; Stefani 1999). We found a sense of belonging through connecting with others in a different way than we had in our disciplines and that resonated with our values. We discovered that we had something to offer this community that welcomed us and generated a sense of belonging which facilitated our identities within the profession. For example, Jill shares “. . . I was also able to engage in meaningful research. . . and collaborate and network with individuals at Dalhousie and across Canada.” Additionally, Suzanne reflects on her own experience moving into ED “I felt like part of a team, a valued part of a team. . . a sense of a sharing community.” The often foreign lands of ED can be difficult for newcomers who are often seen as disciplinary “migrants” (Quinn and Vorster 2014, p. 255) and “refugees” (Kensington-Miller et al. 2012, p. 125). New developers may struggle to create the multifaceted identity that developers require, as our work challenges one to morph and be a “chameleon on a tartan rug” (Kensington-Miller et al. 2015; Fig. 3).

The accepting and warm community of ED is critical to the growth and formation of professional identity and has been noted as encouraging new developers to continue practicing in this discipline (McDonald 2010). Such an environment can be appealing to graduate students who are not feeling settled or welcomed, for whatever reason, within their academic departments. Graduate students increasingly need to look for alternatives to an academic career, as tenured university positions are declining (Maldonado et al. 2013). ED is a growing field within institutions that in many ways reflects an academic career including service, teaching, and research, but with different emphases and focus which may appeal to those who wish to remain within academe and move beyond their discipline.

Unfortunately, we all experienced a lack of support from our academic communities, which may be a barrier for graduate students looking to transition into an alternative profession. Our supervisors and other colleagues wanted us to seek academic positions within our disciplinary fields and/or could not understand why we might want to find work outside our PhD research. These external responses often made it difficult for us to make the transition into our ED role and impacted our experiences, for example:

While I’ve found my own identity within the field of ED, it’s been difficult for [others] to see me in this role and evolve into a non-fac career. While supportive, they continue to see this

Fig. 3 *Metaphor 3 – Warm flame. Igniting our own fire*



position as an aid to my PhD completion, but not my end goal . . . one [individual] recently asked me ‘Why would you do a PhD if you’re not going to do research?’ (Jill)

I was fortunate enough to have a PhD [mentor] who also cared about student learning, and recognized that I probably enjoyed teaching more than the dissemination of research. . . I think [they’re] happy that I’m employed somewhere, but would definitely consider me an administrator (which is less than ideal). . . [and they] never encouraged me to pursue an administrative role at the university. (Susan)

When I was hired as an educational developer in 2004, some history colleagues said, “that position will do for now until you find a ‘real’ job” and someone else told me that “it was just a waste”. In other words, why would anyone get a PhD to become an educational developer?! . . . To them, it looked like I had given up the academic track for something that was decidedly NOT academic. (Suzanne)

Our experiences align with McDonald’s (2010) study that reported how some developers receive a lack of support and disapproval from their supervisors of their choice to pursue a nondisciplinary path. In fact, many developers begin their careers in disciplines outside of ED. For example, of their sample of 959 developers from 38 different countries, Green and Little (2015) found that 58.6% held a doctorate or above and 66% had their highest degree in a discipline outside of ED.

It appears that developers often seem to start out with aspirations to enter into a traditional disciplinary career, and their interest and development of teaching opens the door to ED (Gosling et al. 2007). Thus, GTA positions present themselves as ideal entry points to ED and should be consciously highlighted by developers and Center Directors.

While many GTAs do not initially intend to pursue an ED career, later bringing a disciplinary background from outside the profession of ED can be a significant benefit for the profession and individual success. ED requires the ability to cross boundaries and communicate effectively with a variety of disciplinary audiences whose expertise is not in teaching (Bédard et al. 2010; Kensington-Miller et al. 2012). Moreover, the shift to evidence-based practices in the classroom and the growth of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) requires developers to have experience in designing and conducting research, which is attained through many disciplinary fields (Stefani 1999). There are, then, many benefits of combining and crossing disciplinary backgrounds for ED work.

The entry into the ED field at different times in our careers meant that for Suzanne and Susan, ED was attractive because of the emphasis placed on teaching and learning. Susan had thought that if she took up the TA mentor position, she “would find a position in a small, liberal arts university that valued teaching. I thought if I had experience [in] teaching teachers, it might set me apart from other applicants for teaching-intensive positions.”

As for Suzanne, in her GTA role, she thought of herself “as a ‘teacher among teachers’ rather than a ‘teacher of teachers’.” Interacting as a GTA with faculty who were focused on teaching reflected her own growing belief,

...that teaching was central to the university and to the kind of academic I wanted to be. . . I remember thinking that faculty working in centers had their eye on the way things would be in the future, and that I was at the beginning of a new wave of thinking about teaching in the university.

In 2004, when Suzanne became a full-time developer, she notes that the Director of the Center,

...had certainly encouraged me to continue to think of myself as an academic within the context of educational development. . . . [They] suggested that I think of the Graduate Certificate in University Teaching and Learning Program we were creating as a research project. But most educational developers I was meeting did not publish beyond Center newsletters, which I did engage in. This led easily from my GTA experience where I had done similar types of writing.

In contrast, a decade later, Jill reflects on how more easily ED can be viewed within an academic context:

I like that ED is a balance of research, teaching, consulting, and committee work (and much more). However, thinking about the development of the field, I’m not sure I would have pursued it if it weren’t like that. Research is a large part of my identity and it’s something

I enjoy – I like the creative aspect and the discovery – I’m not sure if I would have pursued a career in ED if my GTA experience hadn’t incorporated research.

In addition to having previous teaching experience, Suzanne and Susan have both published books and articles in their original disciplines, yet they sought ED positions to move away from research, and towards an emphasis on teaching and service. Research and publishing activities were not encouraged and rewarded in ED when Suzanne and Susan initially started their ED careers, which was also a trend elsewhere (Gibbs 2013). As Jill’s entry into the profession occurred later, after attention to SoTL increased, she was attracted to the field *because* it included research.

Regardless of the tensions between service, teaching, and research in ED, it is imperative to draw graduate students’ attention to this growing aspect of the career, in order to ensure this is indeed a path that suits their interests. (Gibbs 2013, 9–10) conceptualizes these changes as shifts from “unscholarly to scholarly” and from “amateur to professional.” Regardless of the stance one takes within these tensions, ensuring that ED continues to be a *warm*, welcoming and inviting career path necessitates that novices be aware of the full extent of the (changing) expectations of the profession when they enter. We wonder if this shift to professionalizing or academicizing through SoTL, this “rush to scholasticism” and “flight from feeling” (Gibbs 2013, p. 12) and concern for theoretical over “craft knowledge” (Shay 2012, p. 312) may deter interested graduate students who otherwise may have the personal and professional affinity for the many other aspects of ED work grounded in practice. We also wonder about the impact on broader ED work if, as is often the case in disciplinary academic fields, research takes precedence over teaching and learning and is the foci of recognition and career advancement in ED. Understanding these implications for ED will undoubtedly help to provide clarity on how to best design GTA roles within teaching and learning centers and decide how to best mentor graduate students in these roles.

Kites in the Air: Or, How to Mentor and Encourage Other GTAs to Join Us

For all three of us, our GTA experience fed clearly into our ED work and supported the building of our developer identities (Fig. 4):

While I would have been able to bring my research and teaching experience to this position, without the GTA I would not have been able to understand the identity and role of an educational developer within the university, or been prepared for the current work I do. . . This eased my transition from being a graduate student working in ED, to a new professional in a career. (Jill)

My [GTA] experience was fundamental to my success in my new position, and definitely influenced my career path. I was able to draw on workshop topics I developed as a graduate student, and conversations I had with both graduate students and faculty members. (Susan)

Fig. 4 *Metaphor 4 – Kites in the air. Rising with others*



This raises the question for ED about how we bring other GTAs to *soar* with us into ED work. Suzanne reflects that:

[T]hinking about GTA positions now that there is a clear, professional route to pursue, this route can be made more explicit. We can also build a clearer path to what it entails to grow and develop in this role. We can provide educational development mentorship through partnership and collaboration in the foundations of educational development work and by partnering to pursue course development, program evaluation, and research and conference opportunities, so GTAs may gain that experience too. (Suzanne)

Current debates about the purpose of a doctorate degree are also echoed in our narratives. There have been on-going discussions in the media and literature about raising graduate supervisors' awareness of the lack of academic positions in their fields and alternative career opportunities for graduates (Maldonado et al. 2013). In the specific context of ED, there are increasing opportunities in this field for doctorates across a range of disciplines to enter into ED. This is an opportune time to explicitly draw attention to this career through conversations and mentoring of GTAs and to raise the awareness of faculty about such opportunities for interested graduate students. Suzanne explained that the GTAs she has hired have gone on to work in a student services position, an instructor level (teaching-focused) position, and an instructional design position in the private sector, as well as one becoming an educational developer. This experience also suggests that the GTA role exposes students to the idea of alternative positions both within and outside the university. More specifically it indicates both the need and desire of graduate students to seek alternative careers outside of their academic disciplines.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The recruitment of new educational developers is critical to meet the ever growing demands of the profession (Dawson et al. 2010). As McDonald and Stockley (2008) note “[w]hat draws people to the profession, the routes that facilitate their entry and

advancement, and the contexts in which these developments happen are not clear or consistent” (p. 215). As a way to further understand the need to attract new developers to our profession and how to formalize the career path into the field of ED, we set out to explore the career trajectories of three educational developers. As a result of collective reflections on our experiences, we have been able to pinpoint the key foci for intentionally leveraging the GTA position as a path to the ED profession. Below are recommendations for future GTA professional development based on our narrative analysis. It is our hope that these recommendations will help address the need to systematically induct developers into the field (McDonald 2010; Vorster and Quinn 2015) and enhance their skills and experiences which will likely aid in their entry into a field that has a lack of pre-defined competencies and qualifications (Dawson et al. 2010; Leibowitz 2014; Timmermans 2014). The recommendations are:

- It is important for those embedded in the ED profession to reach out to those who seem interested in, or are ideal candidates for, GTA/ED work, rather than waiting for them to discover ED by happenstance. This necessitates teaching center staff continually interacting with graduate students in teaching programs with a view to consider who might be both interested and have the affinity for such work.
- Once a GTA is working in your center, mentor them as if you intend for them to become an ED. Rather than teaching them to do a graduate student job, consider that you are preparing them for a career in the field of ED.
- Consciously support the development of essential skills and highlight those skills that have value in the field of ED, while recognizing a GTA’s growth and attainment is key. Encourage written reflection on their experience of and growth within the GTA position; and encourage them to share these reflections with center staff to promote conversation and further reflection and understanding of the role.
- Promote the engagement with existing literature in the field and, where possible, support their participation in SoTL, so that they understand the research component of ED work and how they can bring their disciplinary expertise to the field.
- Have frank and honest conversations with GTAs to confront the tensions that currently exist within the ED field. Such tensions include those between emphasizing teaching expertise versus emphasizing ED expertise in the context of ED work; the favoring of an academic career versus an administrative career; or the pull between discipline-of-origin focus versus focusing on higher education as a discipline. Such open discussion could enable a GTA to be aware of and work through some of the dilemmas for themselves, or at least come to a place where they can accept or work with these tensions.
- Offer the GTA some independence to explore their own interests and to develop confidence. Each of us engaged in “value added” projects as GTAs that became our own, assisting us in building our ED identities and skill sets.

Our collective experiences underscore that the GTA position provides an excellent opportunity to intentionally prepare graduate students for entry into the

profession. The importance of this preparation to ensure growth, flow, lighting a flame of passion, and encouraging flight towards the field is crucial for the development of ED. Whether through formal programming or informal mentoring, we invite readers of this chapter who are interested in the professional development of new developers to entice graduate students to join us in our valuable academic work that feeds the minds and hearts not only of educational developers themselves, but also of the teachers and students with whom we work.

References

- Bédard, D., M. Clement, and K.L. Taylor. 2010. Validation of a conceptual framework: The meaning and scope of educational development. In *Building teaching capacities in higher education: A comprehensive international model*, ed. A. Saroyan and M. Frenay, 168–187. Sterling: Stylus.
- Carpenter, J. 2008. Metaphors in qualitative research: Shedding light or casting shadows? *Research in Nursing & Health* 31: 275–282.
- Chang, H., F.W. Ngunjiri, and K.C. Hernandez. 2013. *Collaborative autoethnography*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Dawson, D., J. Britnell, and A. Hitchcock. 2010. Developing competency models of faculty developers: Using world café to foster dialogue. In *To improve the academy: Resources for faculty, instructional, and organizational development*, ed. L.B. Nilson and J.E. Miller, vol. 28, 3–24. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Denzin, N. 2013. Interpretive autoethnography. In *Handbook of autoethnography*, ed. S. Holman Jones, T. Adams, and C. Ellis, 123–142. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.
- Denzin, N. 2014. *Interpretive autoethnography*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Ellis, C. 2009. *Revision: Autoethnographic reflections on life and work*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast.
- Ellis, C., T.E. Adams, and A.P. Bochner. 2011. Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 12 (1): Art.10.
- Felten, P., Kalish, A. and Pingree, A. and Plank, K.M. 2007. 6: Toward a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Educational Development. *To Improve the Academy* 25 (1):93–108.
- Fraser, K. 1999. Australasian academic developers: Entry into the profession and our own professional development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 4 (2): 89–101.
- Gibbs, G. 2013. Reflections on the changing nature of educational development. *International Journal for Academic Development* 18 (1): 4–14.
- Gosling, D., J. McDonald, and D. Stockley. 2007. We did it our way! Narratives of pathways to the profession of educational development. *Educational Development* 8 (4): 1.
- Green, D.A., and D. Little. 2015. Family portrait: A profile of educational developers around the world. *International Journal for Academic Development* 21 (2): 135–150.
- Kensington-Miller, B., I. Brailsford, and P. Gossman. 2012. Developing new academic developers: Doing before being? *International Journal for Academic Development* 17 (2): 121–133.
- Kensington-Miller, B., J. Renc-Roe, and S. Morón-García. 2015. The chameleon on a tartan rug: Adaptations of three academic developers' professional identities. *International Journal for Academic Development* 20 (3): 279–290.
- Leibowitz, B. 2014. Reflections on academic development: What is in a name? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (4): 357–360.
- Linder, K.E., Stephanie V. Rohdieck, Alan Kalish, Teresa A. Johnson, Kathrun M. Plank, Laurie A. Maynell. 2011. Graduate student internships as a pathway to the profession of educational development. In *To improve the academy*, ed. J.E. Miller and J.E. Groccia, vol. 30. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Maldonado, V., R. Wiggers, and C. Arnold. 2013. *So you want to earn a PhD? The attraction, realities, and outcomes of pursuing a doctorate*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.
- McDonald, J. 2010. Charting pathways into the field of educational development. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 2010 (122): 37–45.
- McDonald, J., and D. Stockley. 2008. Pathways to the profession of educational development: An international perspective. *International Journal for Academic Development* 12 (3): 213–218.
- Ngunjiri, F.W., K.C. Hernandez, and H. Chang. 2010. Living autoethnography: Connecting life and research [Editorial]. *Journal of Research Practice* 6 (1): Article E1.
- O’Sullivan, P.S., C. Mkony, J. Beard, and D.M. Irby. 2016. Identity formation and motivation of new faculty developers: A replication study in a resource constrained university. *Medical Teacher* 38: 1–7.
- Quinn, L., and J. Vorster. 2014. Isn’t it time to start thinking about ‘developing’ academic developers in a more systematic way? *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (3): 255–258.
- Rose, M. 2012. *Graduate student professional development: A survey with recommendations*. Ottawa: Canadian Association for Graduate Studies.
- Shay, S. 2012. Educational development as a field: Are we there yet? *Higher Education Research & Development* 31 (3): 311–323.
- Sorcinielli, M.D., A. Austin, P.L. Eddy, and A.L. Beach. 2006. *Creating the future of faculty development: Learning from the past, understanding the present*. Bolton: Anker.
- Stefani, L. 1999. On becoming an academic developer: A personal journey. *International Journal for Academic Development* 4 (2): 102–110.
- Timmermans, J.A. 2014. Identifying threshold concepts in the careers of educational developers. *International Journal for Academic Development* 19 (4): 305–317.
- Vorster, J., and L. Quinn. 2015. Towards shaping the field: Theorising the knowledge in a formal course for academic developers. *Higher Education Research & Development* 34 (5): 1031–1044.



Professionalizing the Learning Support Role: A UK Higher Education Experience

27

André van der Westhuizen, Phil Verrill, Simon Gamble, and Anna Limpens

Contents

Introduction	424
Principles and Methods Used to Design the Learning and Development Programme	426
The Programme of Development	428
Impact of the Development Programme on Learning Support Tutors' Understanding and Practice	429
Reflection 1: Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries	429
Reflection 2: Faculty of Science	431
Programme Designers' Thoughts on Success and Impact on the Professional Development of the Learning Support Tutors	434
Conclusion and Further Remarks	435
References	436

Abstract

This chapter explores the design and development, of a programme of professional development for learning support staff, aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). The chapter opens with an exploration of the challenges and issues surrounding professional staff in student support units and their professional standing and development, reviewing current issues and practices across a range of settings. The chapter goes on to outline the origin of the professional development programme and the internal drivers leading to the initiative, exploring the pedagogic and professional principles (dialogic and self-directed learning) on which the program was predicated, designed, and delivered. The chapter then discusses the impact of the programme institutionally

A. van der Westhuizen (✉) · P. Verrill · S. Gamble · A. Limpens
University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, Hampshire, UK
e-mail: andre.van-der-westhuizen@port.ac.uk; phil.verrill@port.ac.uk; simon.gamble@bristol.ac.uk;
Anna.limpens@port.ac.uk

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_3

423

and personally, through the use of two reflections by two former participants in the programme. The differentiation of interpretation and practice in these reflections lies in the specific and uniquely aligned scientific and cultural disciplinary approaches. The reflections also discuss the impact of the development *process* on personal and professional development and practice. The chapter closes by considering the future of such programmes of development for student support professionals across higher education and the impact of such programmes on the career development of these professionals in academic settings together with the implications of such programmes at the institutional level.

Keywords

Higher education · Dialogue · Self-regulated learning · Self-organized learning · Constructivism · Collaborative learning · Meta-cognition · Learning support professionals

Introduction

Higher Education in the UK has become increasingly competitive with students becoming ever more demanding and better informed about what services and support they can expect to receive at university. These expectations have also been influenced by a new fees regime in the UK that perhaps encourages students to think and behave more like consumers. National and international league tables and the UK's National Student Survey (NSS) are additional factors. There has been a greater emphasis on the quality of the student experience not only from a learning and teaching perspective but also driven by an economic imperative that aims to safeguard institutional existence (Brown et al. 2018). Providing an excellent student experience and high-quality outcomes linked to these imperatives is, therefore, a key part of the retention and progression of existing students and in a competitive higher education environment, to the recruitment of new ones.

Universities have invested heavily in systems and personnel to support students in achieving academic, employment, and personal success. Many universities have built on existing academic skills/study skills, and support mechanisms and structures. In some cases, they have expanded the number of professional staff who work in these areas to develop roles that have some parallels with what Macfarlane (2011) has termed para-academics. These para-academic staff tend to specialize in one aspect of academic practice and are what Whitchurch (2013) has described as “blended professionals” operating in a “Third Space” – an area between professional services and academic activity. Whereas Macfarlane (2011) and Graham (2012) argue that this “morphing” of academic practice is a retrograde step resulting in an “unbundling” or “disaggregation” of academic functions and practice, a contrary argument might well be that the development of Third Space professionals such as learning support tutors enables them to develop a wider academic interpretation of their role and in fact enables a greater sense of personal understanding, vision, and philosophy related to both their own and students' learning.

In spite of heavy investment in central support services, it is arguable that there is still a need for universities to engage more fully with the student experience of learning and how students understand both the learning process and through that learning process come to understand themselves as agents of their own and others change and development. The landscape of higher education continues to change rapidly. With the growth in student diversity, the increasing costs of delivering higher education, and the reduction in government funding and general resource constraints, delivering an excellent quality student experience has perhaps never been more challenging for universities (Brown et al. 2018).

In this new competitive, marketized environment, the role of learning support professionals assumes a more important, if not critical role in the attainment of good student outcomes (Graham 2012). At the University of Portsmouth, in common with many other UK universities, an operationally successful central academic skills service already existed but an increase in student demand for additional academic support and skills enhancement led to a strategic decision in 2011 to employ a number of additional learning support tutors to enhance the student learning experience, dealing with both generic academic skills and faculty-specific learning elements such as language and mathematical ability. Unlike existing learning support which was based centrally in a professional services department, and was mainly generic, the new appointments were faculty based according to the additional specialisms required by those faculties' students. Thus, for example, a mathematics specialist was based in the faculty of technology and a statistical analysis specialist based in the humanities faculty.

The question for academic developers became one of how to develop a *professional* development programme for these colleagues that would incorporate an understanding of learning in its widest sense, be aligned with the UKPSF and therefore lead to an appropriate level of Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), yet at the same time be grounded in the various specialisms, experiences, and practices of these particular learning support tutors. Alignment with the UKPSF was important as it provided a recognized framework, which could be used as one important measure of the success, or otherwise, of the development programme and of individual learning.

The University's strategic decision to appoint further learning support professionals (based in faculties according to specialist requirements, as mentioned previously) provided an opportunity to create a programme of professional development which was underpinned by the principles of self-regulated learning where knowledge of self, motivation of and for learning, and a focus on individual leadership in learning and teaching were the driving principles. As Weinstein et al. (2014) have noted in relation to student learning, strategic learners have the skill, will, and self-regulation needed to be effective and efficient learners in varied educational environments. From our experience, these principles related to student learning apply equally to the professional development sphere. In the design and development of the programme therefore, self-regulated learning became one of the underlying concepts and guiding principles. Underpinning the whole programme was the recognition and celebration of the prior experience, understanding, and professionalism of the participants.

Principles and Methods Used to Design the Learning and Development Programme

The programme, called LSProf (**L**earning **S**upport **P**rofessional **D**evelopment), was designed to align with institutional needs and expectations, to address the concept of Professionalism in Learning and Teaching and was based on metacognition approaches to develop self-directed learning and self-organised practice, leading to the construction of personal meaning and understanding within learning and teaching practice. Metacognitive practice may be defined as “the process of reflecting on and directing one’s own thinking” (National Research Council (2001) in Ambrose et al. 2010, p. 190). In a learning support role that is generically defined but *applied* in discipline-specific contexts, the aim of our engagement with participants was to find what Frankl (2014) calls meaning and purpose, not through the principle of homeostasis which emphasizes the maintenance of inner equilibrium but rather to disturb, deliberately, colleagues’ inner equilibrium in order to generate meaning and purpose – a process which colleagues variously described as “messing with their heads” and “poking them with sharp sticks.” Through this form of engagement it was intended to generate a healthy tension in order to create meaningful personal direction for each individual. The programme purposely generated a kind of “humble inquiry” derived from “attitude[s] of interest and curiosity” (Schein 2013, p. 19) and a liminal space in which creative understanding and practice can emerge to encourage new and alternative thinking to apply to new and different learning and teaching circumstances (Meyer and Land 2006). The dialogue, discussions, and reflections encouraged participants from different backgrounds, assumptions, and opinions about learning and teaching to come together, with the purpose of “going into the whole thought process and changing the way the thought process occurs collectively” (Bohm 2004, pp. 10, 11) and individually.

In terms of metacognitive practice, Ambrose et al. (2010) suggest that metacognitive practice forms a cycle of processes through which learners:

- Assess the task at hand, taking into consideration the task’s goals and constraints
- Evaluate their own knowledge and skills, identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Plan their approach in a way that accounts for the current situation
- Apply various strategies to enact their plan monitoring their progress along the way
- Reflect on the degree to which their current approach is working so that they can adjust and restart the cycle as needed

This self-regulated learning process was transformative in that it opened minds to new ways of viewing and thinking about the world of learning and teaching, created spaces for critical reflection and allowed for the development of resilience in dealing with the uncertainties and crises in student learning with which learning support tutors are often faced in their daily work. Bembenutty (2011) “refers to learners beliefs and their” ability to engage in appropriate actions, thoughts, feelings, and

behaviors in order to pursue valuable academic goals' and based on this the design of the development programme had at its core the exploration of the sense of self and of being a teacher, focusing on the values individual teachers held, which allowed progress toward scholarly and professional aptitude.

In order to achieve the highest possible level of "buy in" for the programme, the views of the faculties and wider university community were incorporated in an orientation, designed as an intensive 4 week programme, to explore participants' learning support and teaching experience and to examine the context in which they supported student learning, prior to their taking up their formal role. An important aspect focussed on the concept of operating and working from a "central" position (since although based in faculties they were not affiliated to a specific department) and also providing personal and emotional support in the early weeks of acculturation to the University.

Influenced by the work of Brookfield and Preskill (2005) and Preskill and Brookfield (2009), the programme incorporated collaborative and peer learning; discussion as a way of teaching; and learning as a way of leading, as methods to support the learning experience. Central to the programme was the creation of a support network through a series of peer learning sessions where the group had the opportunity to discuss and explore pedagogic and practical principles aligned with their roles. Peer-reviewed practice allowed for discussion and exploration which was fed forward into further and/or alternative development.

The LSProf programme was predicated on a particular process which involved preparing ahead of time; giving and receiving; speaking and listening; describing and witnessing – all of which helped expand horizons and foster mutual understanding under the label of professional respect for other viewpoints. This exposure increased understanding and renewed motivation to continue learning and through this process, a collective wisdom emerged that would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for individual participants to have achieved by themselves. As Brookfield and Preskill (2005) suggest, the process itself has to be exciting and enjoyable, unpredictable and indeed, risky, but nevertheless motivational and empowering.

Collaborative learning, as both principle and practice, was embedded in shared activity and learning established as practice during the orientation and in the extended peer-learning sessions. The framework and sessions were constructed as facilitated learning groups and as self-directed individual development programs. All participants in the group worked together toward a specific outcome or common understanding which allowed for meaningful learning. Learning collaboratively is widely known as a less-structured format of learning that feeds into the flexible and self-directed approach to professional learning and development which is based on the principle of group learning (Matthews 1996), and the epistemological assumption has its home in social constructivism as defined by Vygotsky (1978), Perkins (1999, 2006) and the cognitive constructivism of Piaget (1955). When individual participants across the different faculties worked together they created knowledge and explored mutual purpose and meaning together.

Collaborative learning assumes that knowledge is socially produced among knowledgeable peers (Bruffee 1998). Therefore, facilitators worked from the

principle that collaborative learning does not mean participants become dependent on the “course leader” (the facilitators) – as the authorities on either subject matter content or group process in a didactic way – facilitators were not the custodians of the process. It was not up to facilitators to monitor group learning, but as academic development professionals it was their *responsibility* to become a member of a community in search of knowledge.

The Programme of Development

Based on the principles, methods, and approaches discussed above, the whole programme was delivered over a 12-month period, with the first 4 weeks consisting of morning development sessions and afternoons spent in the respective faculties. The six interlinked elements of the programme were:

1. An initial 4-week orientation drawing on previous experience, knowledge, understanding, and exploration of expectations both individual and institutional, including interactive sessions from areas of the University’s support services, such as Mental Health, Disability Services, Counseling, Academic Skills, Technology Enhanced Learning and Library and Information Services. This provided to participants a comprehensive overview of student services, enabled exploration of already existing synergies across departments and between participants, and where potential for collaboration might be developed.
2. Monthly peer-learning sessions, which became the heart of the programme. For each peer-learning session colleagues were asked to do some preparatory reading, consisting of appropriate chapters of a recommended resource and most important for the participants, additional research/resources of their own choosing, relevant to their specific subject area/practice specialism. There were eight peer-learning sessions, which explored a whole range of topics, including perspectives on student learning, designing/planning sessions for learning, feedback for significant learning, diversity, difference and inclusiveness, and so forth.
3. As part of their own additional Continuing Professional Development (CPD), participants took part in an individualized selection of learning, teaching, and support workshops from the central Academic Development Events Program.
4. Individual mentoring which involved both the programme facilitators and faculty mentors, and included regular contact with individuals, designed around specific requests. Mentoring was either informal (over coffee) or more formal with an agreed agenda.
5. Peer review and observation of practice was carried out by paired individuals (and on request), by the programme facilitators.
6. Support for the development of applications for Fellowship of the HEA linked to the UK Professional Standards Framework. As part of the peer learning, observations, mentoring, and workshop attendance sessions, individuals created a formal Record of Learning, (RoL) focusing on reflection in practice, which fed into the applications for Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

Impact of the Development Programme on Learning Support Tutors' Understanding and Practice

The impact of the constructivist approach and alignment with self-directed, self-organized, and collaborative learning approaches is analyzed and discussed in the following two personal reflections by Learning Support Tutors involved in the program. The first reflection discusses the experience and exploration of the implementation of the role of Learning Support Tutor within the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries, while the second reflection deals with the alternative approaches and perceptions of the difficult and sometimes problematic science and mathematical methodologies and interpretations within the Science Faculty.

Reflection 1: Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries

Prior to starting the role, I had spent a decade working with higher education institutions in the UK and Europe as an education and e-learning consultant. Much of my work involved academic staff development considering pedagogical approaches to designing, delivering, and facilitating online degrees and postgraduate courses. I had also been a course tutor myself on a Master's degree, in an online environment. The new role in the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries appealed to me as it offered an opportunity to evaluate and reflect on some of my pedagogical approaches in a face-to-face student support setting. There was also an emphasis on the University's willingness to offer a comprehensive induction program and commitment to supporting staff development activities.

Initially, there was a 4-week intensive induction period bringing us together as a group in the morning before returning to our respective faculties in the afternoons. This period was well structured, covering a range of relevant topics in respect of facilitating learning and possible pedagogies. There would be some prior reading followed by activities that were dialogic and reflective in nature. Of significant impact for me was the considerable range and background of the other support tutors, and the way in which our uniqueness and autonomy in our respective roles was championed and nurtured. Rather than being presented with a monologic teaching philosophy and rigid framework, we were actively encouraged to share and explore experiences and perspectives in a discursive and supportive environment. While coming from a background that was steeped in pedagogy, I gained a great deal from having my own thoughts and practices challenged. Inevitably, in such a new role, we all met with challenges on a pedagogical, institutional, and personal level. One of the great strengths of the LSProf, and in particular of our group, was the sense that while there were strong and widely ranging opinions, it offered a safe space within which to address and explore these.

Throughout the subsequent year, the peer-learning sessions continued on a monthly basis and we were also required to take part in several University-wide staff development sessions of our own choosing. Although the focus for these sessions was loosely predetermined, the process certainly wasn't prescriptive.

I had a very strong sense throughout that the intention was to offer a dialogic and self-organized approach to professional development. The benefit of this for me was twofold. Firstly, I was able to identify and explore teaching approaches that were apposite for working with students in creative disciplines. Secondly, it allowed me to determine my own trajectory for my professional development by focusing on aspects of learning and teaching in which I had less experience. Furthermore, knowing that it would culminate in an application for FHEA at the end of the year and the way in which it aligned to the UKPSF meant that we could identify areas of interest, but more importantly areas that needed more development, and engage with the programme accordingly. The iterative nature of this development cycle allowed for continuous practice and reflection, and, although we are now several years into our roles, this is still very much the case for me as a result of the LSProf model.

Although it seems obvious in retrospect, a significant emphasis during the LSProf was placed upon thinking about the similarities and differences between our respective disciplines, our students, and what they were like as learners. There are a broad range of fields in my Faculty, ranging from Architecture, to Fashion and Textiles, to Computer Games Technology. Inevitably therefore, there are widely varying academic requirements and expectations, but creativity is central to all and it is this that motivates both students and staff. I realized that understanding the motivations of our students is critical to being able to support them. Many of the courses in my faculty are vocational and practical in nature, and this brings with it a great deal of anxiety for students about the more academic aspects of their degrees. This is particularly the case in respect of writing which tends to be the area where they require the most support. Quite often, producing an essay, literature review or project report, for example, are seen by students as “hoops” that have to be jumped through in order to satisfy the requirements for a degree. I identified the need to make sure that at the start of each teaching session, the purposes, value, and context of these activities are made explicit so that I can help motivate the students and establish why it is relevant and useful.

During discussions with colleagues in the LSProf peer learning sessions, with the focus “What are the characteristics of a student in my Faculty?” I was struck by the fact that emotion plays a greater part for my students than in some other disciplines. Where work and ideas have come from a deeply personal experience or interpretation, showing and discussing their own creative outputs can make them feel very vulnerable and exposed, particularly in Studio or “Crit Sessions” (sessions where learners self and peer critique work). The creative arts are also inherently more subjective in nature compared to other disciplines, and perhaps this also contributes to a sense of unpredictability in how their work and ideas will be received. While exploring this further, it became evident that some students found that structure and organization is sometimes at odds with the creative process and that therefore time management skills need focus.

I discovered quite early on in the role that these issues sometimes resulted in quite challenging student support sessions. While I felt there was a need to look at the required support holistically, I found that I needed to establish some boundaries both with the students and in terms of the limitations of my role. Through peer discussion,

it became apparent that there were more effective ways that I could manage student sessions and, most importantly, how to bring them to a close! It also presented an opportunity to meet with other University support services and discuss how we could work together creating a “joined-up” service, and to ensure that we were also protecting ourselves. The experience also emphasized the value and need to provide a nonjudgmental and safe environment where difference and diversity are nurtured.

I became increasingly aware that it was easy to get an impression of students from a deficit position; while they were struggling with the academic aspects of their degree, their creative skills were excellent and that I may not see the culmination of that until the Final Year Show. During a LSProf peer learning activity, I began to further explore some theoretical perspectives specifically for supporting students in creative disciplines, their learning styles and multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983), and their motivation (Csikszentmihalyi 1996; Runco 2014). As a result, I now ask them to share their practical work with me during discussions and that gave me a much more holistic view of the student. It also sometimes serves to provide a positive starting point and allows me to capture that passion and enthusiasm, motivating and encouraging them forwards with that which they find more challenging. As I have grown in confidence and understanding of the needs of my students, I am progressively more flexible in my approach to session delivery as I realize that a rigid, predetermined structure can be prohibitive.

I found the dialogic and collegial nature of the LSProf program remarkably empowering. This approach continues to have an impact on my view of teaching as increasingly, I have now come to see my role as one of a facilitator, rather than as a teacher, and take a far more phenomenographic approach to supporting learning, where an interactive dialogue is central to the learning process and forms the basis of my interaction with students (Laurillard 2002). I had always believed that I had a student-centered approach to teaching, but, as a result of some of the LSProf reflective peer-learning sessions, I realized that my teaching sessions were actually still quite teacher-centered, requiring a better balance between my input and student activity thus actively engaging them in the learning process. The programme has been transformative in terms of my philosophy and, I believe, in my skills as an educator. I very much welcome the ongoing opportunity that they offer for continuing professional development and reflection in practice.

Reflection 2: Faculty of Science

When I joined the University I had previously taught on BSc and MSc biomedical courses, and also night classes in drawing and painting. I had recently obtained a level 3 qualification in teaching adults, but had had no other formal teacher training. Having worked as a postdoctoral scientist for 15 years I was experienced in how to write good scientific English for research proposals and journal articles; to give presentations; and to make academic posters. I had also mentored and supervised many research students at BSc, MSc, and PhD level. As such, I was strong in the background and tasks likely to be expected of the students but felt that I did not

have as strong a grounding in the theory and application of learning as many of the others on the LSProf programme. I instinctively approach things in a way that is reflective of the culture I was trained in as a scientist. However, despite the cultural differences in any institution, underlying this are certain fundamentals, such as the delivery of useful and informative feedback; the role of the tutor in empowering students; and the need to create a learning environment that treats every person as equal. The development sessions made me very aware of how these areas manifest in my own approach, but also allowed me to hear the approaches of others from different academic cultures.

In the early sessions, I felt I benefitted a lot from the exploration of how learning occurs and the identification that this is not the same for all students. For example, many of the courses in my faculty are practical or vocational courses such as Dental Hygiene or Pharmacy. Students on these courses often have a similarly practical approach to studying, wanting to understand mechanisms and ways of working rather than discuss concepts. In contrast, courses such as Social Work and Psychology often require a discursive approach, requiring a more open and debate-led approach. This meant that I needed a teaching strategy which was adaptable to the different academic cultures in my faculty.

Two features of the programme were particularly beneficial in understanding the learning culture of the students in my faculty. Firstly, the programme ran alongside engagement with students, rather than happening before it, so that from the outset ideas could be tested, then results fed back to the group for discussion of what worked well and what did not. Much of the programme then dealt with an affirmation of good practice, exchange of ideas and debate around different approaches to teaching and learning. Secondly, the classroom was effectively “flipped” as reading was required for each session, and then the session was used to debate and discuss the major points raised by the readings that each participant had found. The focus was not on facts, but on ideas, philosophies, and personal experiences, all of which were used to build an understanding. The openness and adaptability of this approach meant that I could synthesize a model of working that suited my situation, rather than a handed-down, one-size-fits all approach. In the group sessions, through seeing the approaches of linguists, statisticians, mathematicians, some with many years teaching experience, it became clear that understanding our personal background and culture was one key to understanding the needs of the students in our own faculty. The shared experiences and points of view of the range of people present meant that I had counter opinions and different perspectives to draw on. All of this gave me an insight into the ways of working which I personally brought with me and also those of the students with whom I was working and also allowed me to incorporate ideas from other tutors.

In science and medical subjects, there is sometimes very little room for conjecture, with subjects demanding strong evidence on which to base an argument. This can lead to a rigidity of approach, which can be helpful in working with precise information but can inhibit the type of thinking needed for a critical approach. Having been exposed to a variety of different teaching philosophies and concepts on the programme, I realized that encouraging debate was paramount, both as a way

of countering the rigidity of thinking in some scientific subjects and also as a way of engaging with critical analysis. Across the science courses at the University there are different cultural approaches to critique. Some courses see critique as being a very methods-focussed, practical thing, whereas others see it as requiring a far more discursive, theoretical approach. Critique can, therefore, mean very different things to different students on different courses and so a student-centered approach is essential to allow the learning to happen in a way that addresses the needs and the philosophy and approach of the student themselves. In one early session on the program, we each examined our own approach to learning with my own leaning very strongly toward pragmatism. Understanding that there were many approaches to learning, therefore, demonstrated to me that how we learned on the programme was a template in how to adapt and work with students to develop their approaches to learning how to critique, sometimes very practical, sometimes much more discursive.

In many ways, the structure of the programme allowed me to adapt and refine what I had already applied in previous roles. One extremely useful exercise undertaken in our learning and development was the writing of a personal statement of our vision of learning, teaching, and student support. This acted as a highly focussed reflective document, but also as a consolidation of the learning and development to that point. Being made to recap, to reflect, and to document a personal teaching philosophy was a strongly motivating process, as it allowed me to state on my own terms what I perceived were the important behaviours, values, and knowledge that drove my teaching processes. Among the issues that were important to me were the setting of boundaries, the importance of the student's own decision making in the learning process and not taking responsibility for a student's success or failure in any given task that we had looked at together. The results of that document are still core to my practice now and have become fully embedded in my approach to teaching and support. Having the opportunity to crystallize those ideas in a document was crucial to that embedding process, as the self-awareness of approach is what can allow affirmation of good practice but also allow identification of areas for change.

The structure of the programme was also greatly beneficial when writing my application for Fellowship of the HEA. Given that the approach was not to tell us how to teach, but to encourage us to explore how we taught, then to question that and develop new strategies, or develop existing ones further, the programme helped me to evolve a set of approaches, beliefs, and values which aligned with the dimensions of the UK Professional Standards Framework, in a way that was both a personal and a direct response also to the cultural norms of my students. This was helped by being allowed the choice from a series of ongoing workshops about different aspects of student learning and teaching, which meant that the areas of personal development which I felt weakest in could be addressed.

Again this self-awareness and critique have applications in my own teaching and support role. Many of the students in health-care subjects come from nontraditional routes, either returning to education after several years working, joining through access courses rather than A-levels or perhaps through work-based promotion schemes. Many of these students benefit from self-reflection, as they frequently

express feelings of inadequacy when comparing themselves to students following traditional entry routes. By examining their own past and skills base and their own philosophy of working as a student, they frequently realize that their experiences bring strengths and skills that they would not necessarily have had, had they joined the course through a more traditional route. This is highlighted by various studies which have identified that not only do mature students fare at least as well as their traditional entry counterparts long term (Burton et al. 2011), but that the engagement with education later in life adds likelihood to the student becoming a lifelong learner (Toynton 2005). This suggests that not only does being a mature student give certain advantages in the student role; it also enhances the likelihood that learning will become a part of that person's life strategy. It is my hope that by discussing this with students and asking them to reflect on this, they will become aware and self-actualizing in their learning. Equally, this has influenced my own continuing teaching and learning strategy. Having started the programme from a position of strong science knowledge, but less on pedagogy, I too felt somewhat outclassed by those in my group who seemed much more experienced in teaching. The LSProf programme instilled a desire to reflect and also to continue to examine and learn about education, learning, and teaching. The awareness that this wasn't a course to be completed and filed, but an opportunity to discover new tools with which to continually assess and develop my own skills was also empowering. As a result, I try to keep up to date with pedagogical debate and research, by reading and attending conferences and meetings. The effect is then that I now feel far more confident and informed in my own teaching practice.

Programme Designers' Thoughts on Success and Impact on the Professional Development of the Learning Support Tutors

The professional and personal success and impact of the programme may be judged by several criteria. First, by group feedback (from both cohorts using independent group focus sessions) that was uniformly positive in terms of both process and practice. Participants did not raise any major issues. Second, the representative personal reflections in this chapter outline the enhancement in understanding and practice as a result of the development programme. Third, the fact that participants in the programme all achieved Fellowship recognition from the Higher Education Academy, thereby achieving national recognition for their professional standing is evidence of the success of the programme. Fourth, the participants set up their own network to sustain their development after participation in the programme had ended (akin to Wenger's 1998 notion of community of practice) with the network wholly owned by the Learning Support Tutors, with the development programme facilitators only acting as "managing agents," oiling the wheels of the vehicle as it were, when required. Fifth, all the faculties acknowledged the success of the programme and continue to appoint further Learning Support Tutors. In total, there are now around 60 across the university. There were no major issues with the programme. However, for time efficiency purposes, we took the decision, in consultation with the

LSTs and faculties, to consolidate the programme through reducing the time allocation of some external sessions that were not core to the work of the LSTs (for example disability services, well-being, and Mental Health services). During the initial 2 years of the programme, Learning Support Tutors were appointed en bloc and therefore was conducive to a cohort approach. However, subsequently, further appointments were made individually at varying times of the year which meant that we had to individualize the program, with a strong emphasis on mentoring. However, the content and dialogic approach remained. The decision of the University to invest in the Learning Support Tutors and this development programme lent added weight to the university's submission to the Teaching Excellence Framework, which resulted in the highest award possible – gold.

Conclusion and Further Remarks

The successful programme that was developed at Portsmouth may be a useful model for the HE sector as a whole. A major strength lay in the dialogic and developmental approach that was taken, where listening and humble enquiry and questioning were embedded in the process of learning (Bohm 2004; Brookfield and Preskill 2005; Preskill and Brookfield 2009; Schein 2013) rather than taking a narrower training or coaching approach. The programme purposefully brought into the mind and process the following elements in order to encourage professionalism in learning and teaching:

- Awareness of dialogue and self-in-conversation
- Awareness of dialogue and others-in-conversation
- Awareness of dialogue and conversation energies or fields (Ridings 2011)

A large part of its success also involved *recognition* that the colleagues the facilitators were dealing with were highly experienced and qualified and highly motivated *educators* who viewed the role of Learning Support Tutors as an academic profession in its own right rather than merely a stepping stone to other academic careers. It was also of crucial importance that after the University's strategic decision to develop this area of professionalism the appointment of the new Learning Support Tutors was made as a single cohort rather than individual appointments over time. This made it easier for facilitators to work with them as a group, as opposed to a perhaps more traditional individual induction and training approach. Returning to Macfarlane's (2011) and Graham's (2012) argument regarding the morphing of academic practice, the success of the LSProf programme perhaps shows that these perspectives and reflections provide evidence to suggest that for this particular group of academic professionals, the changing nature of academic practice, far from diminishing professionalism led to an opening up of possibilities to the benefit of both students and academic staff.

One other aspect that institutions need to take into account, if they are to adopt or adapt this model, relates to the notion of a career path for Learning Support

Professionals. Somewhat paradoxically, the very success of the developmental nature of the LSProf program led to at least one of the Learning Support Tutors moving into a full-time lecturer role (although this was not the intention at the time of appointment). A crucial point to make is that institutions need to be committed to not only fully resourcing a professional development programme in itself but also need to take into consideration at the outset the development of an appropriate *career pathway* for these Third Space (Whitchurch 2013) professionals (otherwise they may be “lost” to other areas of professional academic life) and that this aspect needs to form part of the *strategic* planning of any institution seeking to maximize support structures for student learning in a competitive and changing higher education environment.

References

- Ambrose, S.A., M.W. Bridges, M.C. DePietro, M. Lovett, and M.K. Norman. 2010. *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bembenutty, H. 2011. New directions for self-regulation of learning in postsecondary education. In *Self-regulated learning. New directions for teaching and learning*. Vol. 126, ed. H. Bembenutty, 117–124. Jossey-Bass
- Bohm, D. 2004. *On dialogue*. Abingdon: Routledge Classics, Routledge.
- Brookfield, S.D., and S. Preskill. 2005. *Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for democratic classrooms*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, N., Bossu, C, and Denman, B. 2018. Responding to a Changing Higher Education Section: The Role of Professional and Support Staff. In: Bossu C., Brown N. (Eds.). *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*. University Development and Administration. Singapore: Springer
- Bruffee, Kenneth A. 1998. *Collaborative learning: Higher education, interdependence, and the authority of knowledge*. 2nd ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Burton, K., M.G. Lloyd, and C. Griffiths. 2011. Barriers to learning for mature students studying HE in an FE college. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 35: 25–36.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1996. *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Frankl, F. 2014. *The will to meaning*. expanded ed. New York: Penguin Group.
- Gardner, H. 1983. *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. London: Heinemann.
- Graham, C. 2012. Transforming spaces and identities: The contributions of professional staff to learning spaces in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 34: 437–452.
- Laurillard, D. 2002. *Rethinking university education: A framework for the effective use of learning technologies*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Macfarlane, B. 2011. The morphing of academic practice: Unbundling and the rise of the para-academic. *Higher Education Quarterly* 65: 59–73.
- Matthews, R.S. 1996. Collaborative learning: Creating knowledge with students. In *Teaching on solid ground; using scholarship to improve practice*, ed. R.J. Menges and M. Weimer, 101–124. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, J.H.F., and R. Land. 2006. Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Issues of liminality. In *Overcoming barriers to student understanding: Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge*, ed. J.H.F. Meyer and R. Land, 19–32. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Perkins, D. 1999. The many faces of constructivism. *Educational Leadership* 57: 6–11.

- Perkins, D. 2006. Constructivism and troublesome knowledge. In *Overcoming barriers to student understanding: Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge*, ed. J. Meyer and R. Land, 33–47. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Piaget, J. 1955. *The construction of reality in the child*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Preskill, S., and S.D. Brookfield. 2009. *Learning as a way of leading: Lessons from the struggle for social justice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ridings, A. 2011. *Pause for breath: Bringing the practices of mindfulness and dialogue to leadership conversations*. London: Live It Publishing.
- Runco, M.A. 2014. *Creativity: Theories and themes: Research, development, and practice*. 2nd ed. London: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Schein, E.H. 2013. *Humble inquiry: The gentle art of asking instead of telling*. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Toynton, R. 2005. Degrees of disciplinarity in equipping mature students in higher education for engagement and success in lifelong learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 6: 106–117.
- Vygotsky, L.S. 1978. *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weinstein, C.E., D.K. Meyer, J. Husman, W.J. McKeachie, and C.A. King. 2014. Teaching students how to become more strategic and self-regulated learners. In *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*, ed. M. Svinicki and W.J. McKeachie, 14th ed., 291–304. Boston: Wadsworth/Cengage Learning.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Whitchurch, C. 2013. *Reconstructing identities in higher education: The rise of third space professionals*. London: Routledge/SRHE.



Retirement of Professional Staff in Higher Education: A Three-Phase Transition Model **28**

Seth Matthew Fishman

Contents

Introduction	440
Review of Retirement Literature	441
A Typology of Retired Staff	444
Perquisites for Professional Staff Retirees	446
Departure, Redefinition, and Re-engagement (DRR): A Three-Phase Transition Model for Retirement	447
Departure	447
Redefinition	448
Re-engagement	450
Conclusion	451
References	451

Abstract

This chapter aims to present several issues facing those approaching retirement or current retirees and their relationship to their former institution. A brief review of the higher education retirement literature provides the context to Fishman’s three-phase staff retirement Departure, Redefinition, and Re-engagement (DRR) model. The chapter next provides a classification typology to serve as a guide for institutions to gauge interest in cultivating a continuing relationship with current and future retired staff members. The chapter concludes by listing common higher education perquisites (e.g., library access, invitations to certain campus events) to provide practical utility to higher education administrators assisting those in the retirement transition process.

S. M. Fishman (✉)
Villanova University, Villanova, PA, USA
e-mail: seth.fishman@villanova.edu

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018
C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_15

439

Keywords

Staff retirement · Retirement transition · Retirement policies · Retirement resources · Older learners

Introduction

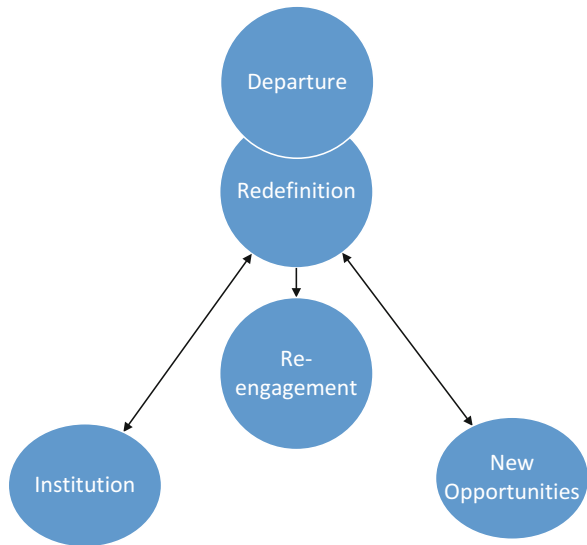
Higher education institutions employ a large number of professional and support staff. For example, US higher education institutions employ almost four million staff (Knapp et al. 2012), while in the United Kingdom, there are approximately 210,000 non-academic staff (HESA 2017; Universities UK n.d.). Higher education institutions invest significant resources in developing their professional staff, from campus orientations to continuous professional development opportunities (e.g., technology training, sponsored study, professional conference, and seminar attendance). Many of these individuals have been employed at one particular institution for a long period of time, often resulting in the staff member's strong identity to the institution and profession. As the number of older staff members increases, Human Resources offices have begun to offer retirement transition services and other opportunities to maintain and foster relationships with retiring and retired staff. From an HR's perspective, assisting staff members in retirement increases fiscal and staffing planning. Some institutions may solicit future donations while others may seek service assistance (e.g., a retiree serving on a scholarship committee, returning for temporary or part-time work, or in a consultative role).

The practice of compulsory retirement ended in the United States in 1994, in the United Kingdom it ended in 2011. As such, the topic of retirement has recently garnered attention from many UK universities mainly for its fiscal and staffing implications. However, an area often overlooked is the retirement process of professional staff, as research on higher education staff has thus far been largely limited to studies focused on academics, e.g., Davies and Jenkins 2013; Dorfman 1997, 2002, 2009; Fishman 2010, 2012; Hartman 2009; Tizard 2004. Despite the fact that there has been some discussion on succession planning for librarians, in which organizations have acknowledged the potential loss of talent and organizational knowledge (Sobel and Drewry 2015), these conversations and others related to human resource planning appear to end when staff leave the institution (Sobel and Drewry 2015). This chapter focuses on the following one major area of inquiry: What assistance could an institution provide to facilitate a staff member's transition into retirement?

To address this question, the chapter discusses various issues surrounding retirement transition for professional staff and of current retirees, including brief discussion of some of the potential benefits an institution may receive through involving retired staff and assisting those in retirement transition planning. An individual's retirement transition pathway varies, and an understanding of potential pathways is useful for staff as to navigate their own future preparation, as well as assist those professional staff members who are charged to serve as resources for these individuals.

The literature review focuses on psychosocial aspects related to retirement. In addition, the literature review provides a classification typology to serve as a helpful

Fig. 1 DRR three-phase retirement model (Adapted from Bridges 2004)



guide for institutions to gauge interest in cultivating a continuing relationship with all current and future retired staff members. A selection of common higher education perquisites (e.g., library and fitness center access) that could be useful to higher education administrators assisting those beginning the retirement transition process also serves as introduction to the next section, which is the use of Fishman’s (2010) three-phase retirement model and exploration of its applicability to professional staff (see Fig. 1). The model involves three major transition phases: Departure, Redefinition, and Re-engagement and considers the relationship between a retired staff member’s transition and identity. In this chapter, the model will be applied to retired professional staff and future researchers could then apply the model with case studies to determine quality of fit or to revise the model as it exists.

Further, the chapter will illustrate the importance of institutions practicing an “involvement without intrusion” approach (Fishman 2012) and discuss practical ways to effectively implement the approach. An institution that utilizes an involvement without intrusion approach provides sufficient though optional involvement opportunities to assist with the retirement transition. These are not mandatory, leaving the choice to participate at the discretion of the individual. Personal control is an important value in a life transition process (George 1993).

Review of Retirement Literature

Schultz and Wang (2011) define retirement as an individual’s decision to leave the workforce, often accompanied by shifts in psychological and behavioral commitments. There are numerous competing models and concepts of the retirement process created within a broad range of disciplines (George 1993; Hershenson 2016; Wang

and Shi 2014). One major concept is grounded in the psychosocial perspective, which evolved from adult development models. It is important to keep in mind that professional staff careers often span decades, and late adulthood has been identified as periods of recognizable adult development (e.g., Erikson 1959; Levinson 1986; Sheehy 1996).

One of the key psychosocial models was developed by Wang and Shi (2014), which provides a useful categorical approach that organizes the retirement literature into several categories and encompasses two major transition theories: role theory and continuity theory. This section focuses on three of these, as they are most relevant to retirement transition and focus on the retirement process: (1) retirement as decision-making; (2) retirement as an adjustment process; and (3) retirement as a career development stage. Each of this will be explained in further detail.

The first category, *retirement as decision making*, reasons that when individuals consider retiring, “. . .they make a motivated choice to decrease their psychological commitment to work and behaviorally withdraw from work-related activities” (Wang and Shi 2014, p. 211). This is the stage when potential retirees review external and internal factors in determining whether retirement is feasible. It is also during this period that they tend to consider the opportunity to pursue new leisure activities or a changing attitude towards one’s job may nudge the potential retiree toward concrete retirement planning (Barnes-Farrell 2003). Numerous theories, including continuity theory, role identity, and expectancy theory, are important in the decision-making process (Davies and Jenkins 2013). For example, role theory addresses the changes people face after departing the workforce and how they create new roles or adjust to a new identity (George 1993). George (1993) also notes these new roles create new social statuses. A university “retiree” is a status, and many retirees are concerned about how they are perceived by their former colleagues. “Pulling the retirement trigger” is a difficult decision rarely done without extensive planning and self-reflection (Fishman 2010; Wang and Shi 2014). Fishman (2010) noted the importance of acknowledging that there are circumstances where retirement is not voluntary. An individual’s personal health, obligation to family members, and organizational changes at work are but some examples of nonvoluntary circumstances.

In the second category, *retirement as an adjustment process*, potential and current retirees are concerned about retirement as an adjustment process and ask themselves questions such as: “Is this the right time for me to retire?” and “What will I do with myself in retirement?” (Wang and Shi 2014). These questions demonstrate an integration of psychosocial and biological perceptions of realities. In some cases, individuals who retire may look for opportunities to continue aspects of their previous role to assist with the adjustment. For example, a retired college event planner may decide to help organize civic association events or help a nonprofit train volunteers on budget management. This retiree may have an emotional connection and feel like they are contributing to the local community, sharing their extensive skills. Sometimes this transition is a phased, gradual approach involving part-time employment and their previous institution or in a similar role elsewhere. In other circumstances, particularly for current retirees, finding a similar but perhaps less

physically or emotionally stressful opportunity to continue aspects of their former profession may assist in the adjustment process. A former supervisor managing a large number of professional staff may look for a future role that does not involve the stresses and complexities of managing staff. A campus groundskeeper may organize a community cleanup, which involves less physical demands.

Wang and Shi (2014) mention that the adjustment process category encompasses another key model of retirement, Atchley's (1989) continuity theory. This emphasizes the importance of life routines, patterns, and how an individual adjusts to change. For example, many retired university employees found themselves engaged in routines and predictable patterns during their employment years. As an individual adjusts to retirement, their self-concept may change as they transition to a new role/status as a retiree. The adjustment process usually involves long-term transition planning; however, the actual role adjustment varies by individual (Wang and Shi 2014).

The concept of selective optimization with compensation (Baltes 1993) is particularly salient – an individual tends to focus on maintaining activities where he or she has a higher level of competency and enjoyment and exerts less energy in those areas in which he or she may have less competence or interest. For example, most retired academic staff do not miss department meetings, but they often miss their colleagues and students. This explains the high rate of return of retired academics to the classroom in a part-time teaching role. Similarly, a retired university librarian may volunteer her time at a local school focusing her efforts on student assistance rather than worrying about staff meetings and performance appraisals in academia.

The adjustment process also involves utilizing resources in retirement to aid in adjustment. University staff often have access to take campus academic courses for free or at a reduced tuition rate to further their educational interests. While this tuition discount is usually reserved for currently employed staff, there are alternative learning opportunities. For example, in the United States, many institutions offer college courses organized through lifelong learning departments. These departments often charge retirees modest membership for access to lectures and similar short-term courses. Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton, Florida, charges members \$60 USD annually to receive reduced rates in order to attend short and semester-long courses and lectures with FAU academic staff and affiliated scholars, including retired academic and professional staff (FAU Lifelong Learning Society 2016). Since 1974, the office of Distance and eLearning at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, has developed a program called "Program 60," which focuses on continuing education for Ohio residents aged 60 and over (The Ohio State University n.d.). Retired staff not only can enroll in such courses but may have the opportunity to teach courses too.

The third category, *retirement as a career development stage*, is an important concept which is further addressed in the Departure, Redefinition, and Re-engagement model (DRR) (Fishman 2010) discussed in the next section. In this category, instead of viewing retirement as an end point, the career development approach identifies retirement as a continuation of one's life work and a potential renewal (Wang and Schultz 2010). A challenge in a potential retiree fully realizing this

approach is often one of institutional resources and responsibility. Indeed, should institutions (from both a financial and community service perspective) provide opportunities to its retired staff to continue career development as a form of lifelong learning?

This is a complex issue, and one that is not resolved within the discussion of this chapter, but instead key issues are noted. First, the financial implications, which include both resource usage and human resources costs when staff members have a percentage of their responsibilities dedicated to working with retired staff. Individual institutions have to determine if there will be a return on investment – perhaps such goodwill events may yield future fiscal contributions or donation of one’s time (e.g., volunteering as a museum docent, reviewing scholarship applications).

In America, many states have laws that require state public institutions to permit retired state residents to audit courses at its institutions without cost upon satisfaction of certain criteria (age and residency) and space availability (The Ohio State University [n.d.](#)). While beneficial to many senior state residents, institutions are faced with the financial burden of this unfunded mandate, raising numerous implementation concerns (see Fishman [2012](#), for an overview of the lifelong learning debates). The financial costs associated to operate such programs are largely related to staff time – maintaining records, registering students, maintaining course lists, and addressing inquiries.

A Typology of Retired Staff

An individual’s level of continued involvement is often based on his or her affinity to his or her former institution and colleagues. Typologies can be useful tools for those human resources and other staff members that work with engagement activities, such as institutional fundraisers or lifelong learning centers. Davies and Jenkins ([2013](#)) created a five-category typology model based on their interviews with retired academic staff (faculty and administrators). The five typologies were descriptive: (1) Clean Breakers, (2) Continuing Scholars, (3) Opportunists, (4) The Reluctant, and (5) Avoiders. Over one-third of the participants were classified as Continuing Scholars, as academic staff planned to continue in aspects of their scholarly activities in the future, a finding that the authors noted was aligned with continuity theory.

Fishman ([2010](#)), on the other hand, developed a simple typology that allows administrators to consider dispositions of professional staff retirees. There are two categories of retired professional staff: Unattached and Attached, with six subtypes of individuals: Encore, Socializer, Missing You, Door Closer, New Opportunity, and Life Circumstancer (Fishman [2010](#)).

Unattached	Attached
Door Closer	Encore
Life Circumstancer	Socializer
New Opportunity	Missing You

Within the first category, the Unattached, represents retirees who normally have left the university and have had little or no contact since. The first subtype of individuals within this category is the Door Closer, an individual who on their last day of employment turns in the office keys, cleans out the office, and walks away, having little contact or no interest in maintaining the relationship with the employer and/or fellow colleagues. In some cases, the Door Closer provides the minimal leave notice (2 weeks' notice at most American higher education institutions) and expresses no desire to have a celebratory event of any sort.

The second subtype of individuals is the Life Circumstancer. These individuals tend to leave the institution because of life circumstances beyond their control, because of relocation or because of an unexpected budget cut or reorganization. For example, an individual may face serious health issues which make working full-time difficult or impossible. They may become caretakers for other family members. Proximity to the former institution is often influential in determining the likelihood of a continuing relationship with the institution. A cross-country relocation may generate the "out of sight, out of mind" mentality (Fishman 2010).

The New Opportunity is the last subtype of individuals within the Unattached category of retired professional staff. This group of individuals tend to be ready to make a change and pursue different opportunities unrelated to their career. In this subtype, individuals tend to be mentally tired and may have an opportunity to pursue a dream, prevented earlier by time constraints; for example, extensive travel, time with family, or embarking on a new endeavor.

The second category of retired professional staff is the Attached. These staff members are still interested and active with the institution and/or their departments to which they feel a strong connection. This category has three subtypes. The first one is the Encore staff, which represents those who continue performing some aspect of their previous work. Some retirees may have always had a disposition toward their profession and are fundamentally inclined to continue working on scholarly pursuits of their choosing. The Encore staff may return to work as part-time employees or as consultants. A librarian who has a love of books and other scholarly pursuits may use this time for one encore performance – writing a book or organizing a special collection for a library. An admissions counselor may volunteer with lower income high school students on their college applications or advise parents on college financial planning.

The second subtype of individuals in this category is the Socializer, who tends to be primarily interested in social opportunities. Many retired staff members may miss socializing with former colleagues with whom they have developed lifelong friendships over the years. This socialization of retired staff members is an area in which institutions can easily implement. For example, a department of student housing could invite local department retirees to the annual staff picnic. Many of the retirees would likely attend, particularly those involved in facilities and campus dining, transforming into a highly anticipated annual event among the department retirees. From the institutions perspective, the perceived goodwill may encourage retirees to volunteer in activities that may assist the institution on campus or in the local community. It may also provide a visible reminder to those staff considering

retirement that they would have opportunities to maintain their relationship with the institution.

The final subtype of individuals in the Attached category is The Missing You, which are the individuals who tend to be ingrained in the department or institution to the point that while they are formally retired, they are often to be found on campus. This subtype may not have been provided with transition services during the retirement planning process or may not have been emotionally prepared for retirement life. As a result, these individuals struggle in redefining themselves outside of the institution and may cling to their professional identity and campus affiliation.

Switching between categories and subtypes is expected and clear overlaps exist. Opportunities not previously realized or available could emerge, assisting retirees to make transitions from one category and/or subtype to another. Despite the potential fluidity between categories and subtypes, these distinctions may prove useful to institutions considering ways in which to engage (or re-engage) retired staff members. An institution, through their human resources department or a retiree association, could generate a brief survey for recent retirees about what involvement opportunities, if any, they would like to have with their former institutions and utilize that data to classify faculty in the aforementioned typology, or another similar one (i.e., Davies and Jenkins 2013).

Perquisites for Professional Staff Retirees

In the United States, most higher education institutions provide guidance regarding retirement benefits such as pensions and health care. However, an area that is often overlooked is campus perquisites, which are a type of privilege associated within the work environment. Higher education institutions often offer generous perquisites to its current employees, which can continue into retirement (Fishman 2010, 2012). The rationale for the continuation of some of these “perks” is low-cost ways to involve retired staff in university activities and functions. Many perquisites are viewed as “standard privileges.” Standard privileges are privileges that staff expect to continue having while retired and which have minimal institutional cost, such as library facility and e-mail access. A few standard privileges may have a higher cost, such as hosting an annual retiree reception, or providing free access to a campus amenity, such as recreation facilities.

Other perquisites, known as “extended privileges,” are more extensive and provide additional involvement opportunities but tend to have a high institutional cost, such as online access to library resources (Hartman 2009), special ordering of books, and technical computer support. For instance, during an individual’s time at an institution, his or her technology questions (whether related to work or personal) are often answered by campus IT staff and many higher education institutions offer its employees software for use at work or home at significantly discounted rates. Fishman (2010) found that many academics were unaware of numerous potential perquisites offered to retired academic staff. While there is not data available on professional staff awareness of potential perquisites, it is good practice to ensure

such prerequisites and other relevant retirement information is clearly conveyed through multiple distribution mediums. It is important for human resource staff and employee supervisors to convey such available privileges to retirees. Fishman (2010, 2012) suggests that institutions should develop and make available to retirees, either academic or professional staff, a prerequisite checklist to be discussed with the retiree during their exit interview. The checklist should also be available online and accessible through the retiree association website if one exists, which will allow future updates and continuous availability.

The following tables provide a list of prerequisites, standard, and extended, often found at colleges and universities for retired staff:

Standard privileges	Extended privileges
Annual retired staff reception	Library privileges
Campus computer network log-in ID	Computer technical support
Campus ID card	Bookstore and software discounts
E-mail forwarding/access	Free access to recreation facilities
University publications	Campus parking/free intracampus transportation
Event and activity discounts	Shared office space
Library access	
Recreation and wellness discounts	

Departure, Redefinition, and Re-engagement (DRR): A Three-Phase Transition Model for Retirement

This three-phase retirement transition model for professional staff in higher education builds upon previous work by Bridges (2004). To clarify, Fishman utilizes the term “phase” in a similar way that Hershenson (2016) utilizes the term “status” – both indicate the mobility and permeable ways individuals navigate the retirement transition. Fishman’s model (see Fig. 1) accounts for the cognitive dissonance individuals may face as they move through each phase. The model also allows for the possibility of individuals skipping the redefinition phase or retreating into a particular phase and acknowledging the prospect of potential overlap, recognizing that transitions do not always represent a “clean-break” occurrence. Another important aspect is that the model factors in the relationship that an individual may have with his or her former institution as part of the individual’s retirement transition. All individual stages are discussed in detail below.

Departure

Letting go includes the often symbolic act of departure. However, departure involves more than just one moment in time. The retirement departure act marks a major moment when an individual transitions from one phase to another. Often, a life

event, such as retirement, can be viewed as both a milestone that shapes an individual's life and a process (Levinson 1986; Reeves 1999; Sargent and Schlossberg 1988). Higher education institutions are full of ritual activities, including graduation to retirement ceremonies, which are an integral part of the campus experience. According to Magolda (2003, p. 780), exit rituals symbolically represent dominant institutional values, which are seldom explicitly scrutinized. The examination of rituals in general and exit rituals in particular illuminates the socialization, political, and inculcation processes that are inevitable on college campuses.

In the retirement literature, the act of retiring, often celebrated by a symbolic going-away event, is seen as a rite of passage (Szinovacz 2003). For example, in a rite of passage at Osaka, University in Osaka, Japan, a retiring academic routinely presents a special honorary lecture (Osaka University 2016). Retirement celebrations can vary in size and scope and allow colleagues to pay tribute and celebrate the careers of the retiree with the intent (and hope) that the retiree departs on a positive note.

As mentioned before, not every retirement is planned, as an unanticipated life event may lead to an unanticipated retirement. Often this is a health issue or other life circumstance, such as caring for a family member; an organizational change, such as a budget cut or reallocation of resources (Fishman 2010); or changes at a national level, such as a recession or social security program (Gustman and Steinmeier 2008). For example, an administrative assistant at Villanova University unexpectedly retired early to not only care for her elderly mother but also to help raise her grandchildren. Since her retirement, she has occasionally returned to the university to visit her former office colleagues and friends in other departments. An administrative change at an institution can also result in unexpected retirements. Many colleges and universities undergo regular organizational restructurings in which employees' responsibilities change, reporting lines shift, or in some unfortunate cases, positions are eliminated. In the United States, outsourcing of campus auxiliaries, such as dining services and custodial services, has forced staff members to early retirement or to entirely shift roles.

Redefinition

The redefinition phase is an integral life assessment. Many higher education retirees have access and opportunity to financially plan for retirement. Institutions provide retirement funding packages, which include individual and institutional financial contributions to retirement accounts in defined benefits and defined contribution plans (known as "pension schemes" in the UK). In addition, they receive financial planning with retirement fund providers (e.g., Vanguard, TIAA_CREF) offering regular consultations. Less institutional support often exists for the psychosocial aspects of retirement: role identity, relationships, finding a sense of purpose, and continuing certain activities the retiree enjoyed during his or her career at the institution (Fishman 2010). Retirement could present retirees with a luxury with which to pursue new opportunities: time (Bridges 2009; Fishman 2012; Wang and

Shi 2014). Time can be an exciting or daunting concept, depending on how the individual manages the opportunity in exploring new pursuits.

It is important to consider that the greater a life circumstance alters an individual's role, routine, status, or relationship, the greater the transition will affect the individual (Anderson et al. 2012; Bridges 2009; Sargent and Schlossberg 1988; Zemke and Zemke 1995). While there are many staff members who are counting down the days until retirement, which is not unique to post-secondary employees, many others dread the prospect of retirement. There are multiple reasons for this fear, self-identity is often ingrained through their work and they have a difficult time envisioning themselves not associated with a particular occupation), they may have financial concerns, or a worry of how they will occupy their time (Zemke and Zemke 1995), or a combination of these (Barnes-Farrell 2003). There is a strong connection between a person's occupation and his or her perception of self and of societal roles (Barnes-Farrell 2003; Levinson 1986; Szinovacz 2003). Levinson et al. (1978, p. 9) wrote:

A [individual's] work is the primary base for his life in society. Through it he is "plugged into" an occupational structure and a cultural, class and social matrix. Work is also of great psychological importance; it is a vehicle for the fulfillment or negation of central aspects of self.

Retirees often find themselves suddenly deprived of certain satisfactions and look for new interests and activities with which to occupy their time, which can provide a reflective life opportunity (Scitovsky 1976; Zemke and Zemke 1995). This period of time also serves as a period of redefinition. How can higher education institutions assist its staff who are contemplating retirement or have recently retired navigate the retirement process, including the potential loss of role-identity? These individuals may need guidance as they redefine their self-identity and plan for future endeavors. They may question what relationship, if any, will they have with their former institution or may need career assistance if they wish to continue to work in a new field.

To answer how higher education institutions can assist their staff transition into retirement, institutions such as the Australian National University and Oxford University have crafted guidelines which follow a more phased retirement approach, geared towards assisting managers in "tailor[ing] flexible later career pathways" for retiring staff (Australian National University 2015, p. 1). This approach provides a broad policy that allows supervisors to consider each staff member's retirement situation while providing basic managerial guidelines. This may include a reduced work schedule, shift of responsibilities, and special project assignments.

Higher education institutions can provide retirement counsellors and seminars and planning workshops to assist retirees. For example, the University of Oxford (UK) provides a planning for retirement seminar for its employees (University of Oxford 2017). In fact, a useful suggestion for institutions to consider is to organize a panel of retired staff members to share their experiences and provide advice.

Re-engagement

As Sheehy (1995) forecasted and mass media has popularized, the upcoming generation of retirees look forward to vibrant retirements; the biological age designation norms are shifting towards more youthful connotations. After progressing through the redefinition stage, retirees can be actively re-engaging in new opportunities, which could mean a later career changing. At The Ohio State University (USA), the Office of Career Alumni Management developed sessions for those older alumni seeking additional income or exploring opportunities that have a social welfare component (OSU 2016). For others, it is an encore performance, perhaps continuing aspects from their previous career in a new role. A retired librarian may start an after-school reading program at her local school or a retired landscaper may teach gardening workshops and write articles for the local paper. There may be part-time employment opportunities, particularly where certain trades and skills are in demand. A retiree's former institution may wish to continue its relationship with him or her.

The US public university, George Mason University (GMU), in partnership with local nonprofit organizations, offer a leadership speaker series for retired university employees and local retirees as part of a larger, community-focused retirement program offering, called Lifetime Leadership Program. They state that their "...Lifetime Leadership for retirees, based on the belief that they can offer a wealth of experience, leadership, and vitality to the community while enriching their own lives" (American Council for Education n.d.). This is a compelling argument, one which demonstrates a mutually symbiotic relationship between the institution and their retired staff. Retired staff have long-term institutional perspective through their experience and skills, which they can share with others, particularly since they will have more discretionary time, and in return, continue professional and personal enrichment. This offers societal benefit beyond GMUs campus. This particular program emphasizes a commitment to the local community through volunteer opportunities in Fairfax County, Virginia, where GMU's main campus is located. There is a \$500 USD enrollment fee per participant.

Retired employee associations offer individuals numerous opportunities to stay engaged with their former institution. However, only a minority of higher education institutions have retired staff organizations. For example, the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education [AROHE] estimates that out of the over 4000 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, less than 250 have a formal retiree association on campus. A handful of the colleges and universities have a retiree center though these generally cater to academic staff (AROHE, July 2015). In response, some institutions have created associations that cater to both retired academics (often known as by honorific title of emeriti in the United States) and professional staff. For example, University of California (UCLA) has an Emeriti/Retirees Relations Center (ERRC). Initially founded as an academic staff organization, the center later expanded to serve all retired staff members. Today, the ERRC serves over 8500 retired academics and professional staff (UCLA n.d.) as an umbrella center, housing both an emeriti group and a retiree group and sharing

resources. Similarly, the University of California, in Berkeley, has a retirement center which houses four different retiree groups (University of California, Berkeley n.d.). The University of California, Davis (UC Davis), maintains an extensive website for retired staff, which includes a section for volunteer opportunities.

Conclusion

Retired higher education professional staff generally wish to maintain a relationship with their former institution. There are a variety of ways in which higher educational institutions can develop, sustain, and enhance their relationships with retirees to create symbiotic relationships, such as the ones offered to participants of GMU's Lifetime Leadership Program. The three-phase DRR model of retirement transition and the retirement typology can provide supervisors and other institutional administrators with helpful guidance when developing ways in which to continue relationships with retired staff. These same models also allow retired staff members to ascertain what relationship, if any, they currently have or desire with the former institution. The perquisites checklist may be of particular value for a university's human resources staff as they counsel staff members transitioning into retirement. As discussed in this chapter, higher education institutions have a whole range of reasons to continue pursuing a relationship with their retired professional staff, including creating opportunities that are mutually beneficial to the institutions and individuals.

References

- American Council for Education. n.d. Faculty retirement transitions. Retrieved from <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Faculty-Retirement-Transitions.aspx>.
- Anderson, M.L., J. Goodman, and N.K. Schlossberg. 2012. *Counseling adults in transition*. 3rd ed. New York: Springer.
- Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education. July 2015. AROHE business plan under development. Retrieved from <http://www.arohe.org/Resources/Documents/Communications/AROHE%20Matters/Newsletters2015/july%20pdf.pdf>.
- Atchley, R.C. 1989. A continuity theory of normal aging. *The Gerontologist* 29 (2): 183–190.
- Australian National University. 2015. Guideline: Transition to retirement. Policy Library. Retrieved from https://policies.anu.edu.au/pp1/document/ANUP_000792.
- Baltes, P.B. 1993. The aging mind: Potential and limits. *The Gerontologist* 33 (5): 580–594.
- Barnes-Farrell, J.L. 2003. Beyond health and wealth: Attitudinal and other influences on retirement decision-making. In *Retirement: Reasons, processes, and results*, ed. G.A. Adams and T.A. Beehr, 159–187. New York: Springer.
- Bridges, W. 2004. *Transitions: Making sense of life's changes*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
- Bridges, W. 2009. *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia: Da Capo Press.
- Davies, E., and A. Jenkins. 2013. The work-to-retirement transition of academic staff: Attitudes and experiences. *Employee Relations* 35 (3): 322–338.
- Dorfman, L.T. (1997). *The sun still shone: Professors talk about their retirement*. Iowa City, Iowa: The University of Iowa Press.

- Dorfinan, L.T. 2002. Stayers and leavers: professors in an era of no mandatory retirement. *Educational Gerontology* 28 (1):15–33.
- Dorfinan, L.T. 2009. Ten Years Later: A Follow-Up Study of Professors Still Working After Age 70. *Educational Gerontology* 35 (11):1032–1045.
- Erikson, E. 1959. *Identity and the life cycle*. New York: Norton.
- Fishman, S.M. 2010. *Faculty Emeriti: Retirement reframed*. Electronic thesis or dissertation. Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>.
- Fishman, S.M. 2012. The merits of emeriti faculty: Providing campus community to retired faculty. *Academe* 98 (3): 39–41.
- Florida Atlantic University Lifelong Learning Society. 2016. Winter 2016 registration booklet. Retrieved from <http://www.fau.edu/divdept/lifelong/Winter2016CatalogWeb.pdf>.
- George, L.K. 1993. Sociological perspectives on life transitions. *Annual Review of Sociology* 19: 353–373.
- Gustman, A.L., and T.L. Steinmeier. 2008. *How changes in social security affect recent retirement trends*, Working paper 14105. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Hartman, K.A. 2009. Retaining intellectual capital: Retired faculty and academic libraries. *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 48 (4): 383–390.
- Hershenson, D.B. 2016. Reconceptualizing retirement: A status-based approach. *Journal of Aging Studies* 38 (5): 1–5.
- HESA. 2017. Staff in higher education 2015/2016. Retrieved from <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications/staff-2015-16>.
- Knapp, L.G., J.E. Kelly-Reid, and S. Ginder. 2012. *Employees in postsecondary institutions, Fall 2010, and salaries of full-time instructional staff*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012276.pdf>.
- Levinson, D.J. 1986. A conception of adult development. *American Psychologist* 41: 3–13.
- Levinson, D.J., Darrow, C.N., Klein, E.B., Levinson, M.H., and McKee, B. (1978). *Seasons of a man's life*. New York: Ballentine.
- Magolda, P. 2003. Saying good-bye: An anthropological examination of a commencement ritual. *Journal of College Student Development* 44 (6): 779–796.
- Osaka University. 2016. Lectures by professors retiring in 2016. Retrieved from http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/en/news/event/2016/01/0107_01.
- Reeves, P.M. 1999. Psychological development: Becoming a person. In *An update on adult development theory: New ways of thinking about the life course*, ed. M.C. Clark and R.S. Caffarella, 19–27. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sargent, A.G., and N.K. Schlossberg. 1988. Managing adult transitions. *Training and Development Journal* 42 (12): 55–60.
- Schultz, K.S., and M. Wang. 2011. Psychological perspectives on the changing nature of retirement. *American Psychology* 66 (3): 170–179.
- Scitovsky, T. 1976. *The joyless economy: An inquiry into human satisfaction and consumer dissatisfaction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sheehy, G. 1995. *New passages: Mapping your life across time*. New York: Random House.
- Sobel, K., and J. Drewry. 2015. Succession planning for library instruction. *Public Services Quarterly* 11 (2): 95–113.
- Szinovacz, M.E. 2003. Contexts and pathways: Retirement as institution, process, and experience. In *Retirement: Reasons, processes, and results*, ed. G.A. Adams and T.A. Beehr, 6–52. New York: Springer.
- The Ohio State University. 2016. Bill and Susan Lohta Office of Alumni Career Management. Retrieved from <https://www.osu.edu/alumni/services/career-management/>.
- The Ohio State University. n.d. Office of Distance and eLearning: Program 60. Retrieved from <https://odee.osu.edu/program-60/history>.
- Tizard, B. 2004. Support for retired academic staff: University policies and practices. *Oxford Review of Education* 30 (2): 257–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498042000215557>.

- Universities UK. n.d. Higher education in numbers. Retrieved from <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/Pages/higher-education-data.aspx>.
- University of California, Berkeley. n.d. Emeriti and retiree associations. Retrieved from <http://retirement.berkeley.edu/join>.
- University of California, Los Angeles Emeriti/Retiree Relations Center. n.d. Emeriti/Retirees relations center history. Retrieved from <http://www.errc.ucla.edu/History>.
- University of Oxford Personnel Services. 2017. Retirement for academic and non-academic staff. Retrieved from <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire/>.
- Wang, M., and K. Schultz. 2010. Employee retirement: A review and recommendations for future investigation. *Journal of Management* 36 (1): 172–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309347957>.
- Wang, M., and J. Shi. 2014. Psychological research on retirement. *Annual Review of Psychology* 65: 209–233. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115131>.
- Zemke, R., and S. Zemke. 1995. Adult learning: What do we know for sure? *Training* 32 (6): 31–40.



Future Considerations for Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education

29

Carina Bossu, Natalie Brown, and Vanessa Warren

Contents

Introduction	456
Representation and Voice	456
Key Themes and Values	457
Opportunities for Further Inquiry and Key Recommendations	458
Conclusion	461
References	461

Abstract

In this final chapter of the book *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*, we reflect on the contributions that this book brings to the literature regarding professional and support staff in higher education. We briefly explore the representation of professional staff included in the book and discuss key findings of a content analysis based on the concluding sections of all chapters in this book. The findings reveal strong thematic overlaps and recurring concerns that transcend the topics grouped in the book. Based on these findings and gaps in the literature, we then discuss some opportunities for further inquiry and provide some key recommendations for future work in this field.

Keywords

Professional staff · Support staff · Professional staff in higher education · Support staff in higher education · Higher education · Future considerations for professional staff

C. Bossu (✉) · N. Brown · V. Warren
University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS, Australia
e-mail: carina.bossu@utas.edu.au; natalie.brown@utas.edu.au; vanessa.warren@utas.edu.au

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2018

C. Bossu, N. Brown (eds.), *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*,
University Development and Administration,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6858-4_30

455

Introduction

This book, *Professional and Support Staff in Higher Education*, is part of a 25-volume series titled *University Development and Administration Handbook*, which addresses a diverse range of issues in higher education globally. This particular volume has focused on the issues and experiences of professional and support staff in higher education, as reported through an open call for contributions from both professional and academic staff in higher education institutions and networks around the world. The chapters that were received and ultimately accepted for publication span a broad range of topic areas, ranging across professional practices and identity, leadership, inclusion in higher education, professional development, and how the current higher education landscape impacts on their work, careers, aspirations, and performance. Some common topics emerged spontaneously from the submitted chapters, which were grouped under the headings of *Identities and Third Space; Concepts, Practice, and Representation; Leadership and Collaboration; and Career Development and Progression*.

As described in the introductory chapter of this volume, the broad aims of this book were to contribute to the limited body of knowledge regarding professional and support staff in higher education, to explore the key issues facing these professionals today, and to represent and give them the opportunity to be heard. This chapter will reflect on the success of this book in reaching these aims and highlight key recommendations for higher education stakeholders and opportunities for ongoing inquiry in this field.

Representation and Voice

Many of the forces that have shaped the contemporary higher education environment, such as globalization, corporatization, and growth agendas, cannot really be considered new, however they do continue to influence the environment in evolving and emergent ways. Their impact, and institutional responses to their impact, remains in flux. It is not surprising then that the scholarly examination of these issues is not yet mature. In particular, perhaps due in part to the constant climate of change in higher education that has directly impacted on the roles professional and support staff perform within their organizations (Hogan 2011), there is a distinct gap in the literature when it comes to the deliberate examination of professional and support staff in higher education.

What little is already published in this area is largely dominated by a few key authors or sits within a few specific forms of academic discourse. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the orientation of most professional roles toward service and action, much of the published work for and by professional staff is practice or case study-based. While this work is important, it does not provide enough scope for the deep and ongoing inquiry necessary for a truly comprehensive picture of contemporary higher education to evolve. Beginning to bridge such gaps in the literature was one of the motivations for producing this book. In doing so, the editors hoped to create space for

professional and support staff to contribute to the scholarship of their field on their own terms, as a distinct and significant entity (or collection of entities) in their own right.

From numerous submissions around the world, this volume ultimately included 29 unique chapters, from 51 individual authors. The published chapters originated from Australia, New Zealand, the USA, Canada, the UK, and China, and all were authored by university and college staff, including early-career, mid-career and established professionals, academics, and experts. Several chapters were written, or co-written, by first-time authors. Submissions from professional staff were dominated by educational developers/designers. This is perhaps not surprising, as staff in roles such as these tend to identify most strongly with para-academic or “third space” paradigms (Whitchurch 2009, p. 407), and for many an engagement with scholarship is a necessary part of their professional practice. Interestingly, however, other professions that also require a strong engagement with scholarship, such as library and information science (LIS), are not directly represented in this book. Indeed, the editors received no submissions from any LIS professionals in the call for chapters. Such a gap may be partially explained through the fact that there is already a robust field of LIS scholarship. However, this omission, and others such as the limited geolinguistic diversity of the book’s chapters, and the narrow range of professions discussed in the chapters, also reflects the limits of the field, the book’s methodology, and the editors’ own professional networks.

Key Themes and Values

Given the variety of roles, practices, and norms to be found across the range of professional and support staff in higher education, we expected to find that chapters submitted for this book would produce conflicting even contradictory arguments and results. In this instance, however, this has not been the case.

While the chapters in this volume were organized into broad sections based on their topics, a content analysis reveals deeper thematic overlaps and recurring concerns that transcend the topic categorizations. This commonality of themes – despite the range of topics and professional contexts of the individual authors – may be taken as a promising sign pointing to the legitimacy and development of a nascent disciplinary ontology.

Content analysis is a common qualitative methodology, used in the analysis of documents and cultural artifacts to identify emergent patterns (Vaismoradi et al. 2013). In this chapter, we have used conventional content analysis techniques, including open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Haney et al. 1998; Hsieh and Shannon 2005), to identify the common themes shared by the chapters in this book. The analysis undertaken here assists readers to gain a broader view of what has been explored in the book and where some of the gaps are. This may assist future researchers to identify topics and themes that need further exploration.

The concluding sections of each chapter in this book (including “Recommendations” sections, where present) were closely and systematically analyzed and emergent themes identified, coded, categorized, and quantified using a spreadsheet. Themes that simply restated the existing topic groupings were excluded from this

analysis (e.g., “third space,” which also appeared frequently across different topics), as were themes that appeared in only one chapter. There was no limit placed on the number of themes that could be identified from any one chapter, and indeed each chapter did contain a number of different themes.

We would like to highlight that this was not a keyword analysis, in which the verbatim occurrence of certain words are noted and quantified (Vaismoradi et al. 2013); rather, this was an evaluative analysis in which text was subject to a process of judgment and critical analysis to identify and articulate overt and underlying themes. This is an inherently subjective process, potentially open to various influences (e.g., disciplinary, linguistic); other researchers may have interpreted the text differently (Greenbank 2003). The table above (Table 1) shows the themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the chapters in this book.

The majority of themes (79, of the identified 113) fall under relational, or outward facing, categories *Modes of engagement* (33) and *Support and identity – extrinsic factors* (46), while the two categories dealing with identity (*Roles and identity – intrinsic factors* (19) and *Support and identity – extrinsic factors* (46)) totaled 65 appearances in the 29 chapters. Across all of the chapter topics, there was a concentration of attention on interactions with, and the perceptions of, others (other professionals, other academics, institutional norms, and hierarchies) and the impact this has on the roles and activities of professional and support staff, both practically and symbolically. This pervasive preoccupation with identity is in part reflective of the amorphous third space that many of the authors in this volume identify with. It may also relate to employment insecurity and the perpetual out-group status of working in the academy, without being of the academe.

Identity insecurity in higher education is not limited to professional and support staff (Knights and Clarke 2013), but rarely are academics shown in the literature to be debating the validation of their roles and identities in direct response to their interaction with professional and support staff – the exception being the contempt that can emerge when professional and support staff are collectively assigned the role of unwelcome managerialist bogeyman (Dobson 2000). The consistency with which these themes appear throughout this book, even when they were not always the primary topic under discussion, shows how intertwined they are with the experiences of professional and support staff, both at the level of everyday operations and within the bigger questions of value and purpose. The interaction of all these issues, and the attendant unease and opportunities they manifest, is far from resolved within institutions, or within the literature, and deserves more attention in the future.

Opportunities for Further Inquiry and Key Recommendations

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the sections in this book arose organically from the chapters submitted to consideration; authors were not asked to write to a particular theme or topic. The content analyses performed in both the development of the book and in this concluding chapter revealed the importance of this volume

Table 1 Thematic groupings from content analysis of chapters

Broad category (total number of chapters referencing category)	Shared theme	Number of chapters referencing theme
Modes of engagement (33)	Cross-disciplinary and collaborative work, communities of practice	9
	Contribution to institutional agenda as strategic orientation	6
	Blurring/bridging/intersections	6
	Agents of change, facilitation, and consultation	5
	Activities vs. agendas as motivation	3
	Risk, control, and creativity	2
	Online and blended environments	2
Contribution to institutions, scholarship (15)	Value	8
	Inclusion	5
	Field of educational development	2
Roles and identity – intrinsic factors (19)	Professional identity	6
	Influence and autonomy	4
	Fragmentation, ambiguity, heterogeneity	3
	Discursive identity	3
	Reconceptualizing and reimagining practice	3
Support and identity – extrinsic factors (46)	Need for institutional support	12
	Recognition, legitimacy, and status	9
	Workload and turnover	8
	Role of professional development	5
	Territorial attitudes and alignment	4
	Visibility/invisibility	3
	Expectations of others	3
	Assumptions	2
Structures and privilege	2	

and its contribution to the body of knowledge in the field, as well as some of the common concerns of the authors. The limitations of this volume do, however, leave some gaps for future inquiry and contributions.

To begin to bridge these gaps and build on the momentum of scholarship in professional and support staff as a distinct domain, we (as contributors, colleagues, and more broadly as institutions) must take some deliberate steps to promote greater inclusion amongst authors contributing to research regarding professional and support staff, especially those who do not currently see themselves as part of the scholarly conversation. Professional and support staff within higher education are diverse, their roles multifaceted, and their contribution and experiences under-examined. Comprehensive and rigorous scholarly inquiry in this area should engage with and interrogate this diversity.

We believe that as important as it is to examine professional and support staff independently and distinctly, rather than in constant afterthought or asides in discussions about academic staff, purposeful comparisons within the institution can be useful and insightful. Examining the similarities, differences, and sources of tension between the experiences, expectations, needs, and priorities of academic and professional and support staff is important as they help reveal real and imagined binaries within higher education workforces and provide greater insight for all parties to work together to achieve scholarly and institutional ends. It may also be revealing to examine the comparative experience of professionals within the academy to those outside higher education – their corporate, governmental, or NGO counterparts – though this appears to be almost nonexistent in current literature on professional and support staff, save for a few instances in some specific bodies of literature (such as library and information science). Of course, some professional roles in higher education, particularly those identified as occupying a “third space,” may not have easily comparable industry counterparts.

Although some topics related to management in higher education, such as “leadership” and “career progression,” have been explored in this book, there has been little or no mention of the impact and input of professional and support staff on policy development, marketing, finance, and human resource management. We are aware of the increasing importance and contribution of these professionals, and their related professional associations and networks such as the Society of University Lawyers, Universities Human Resources, Council of Australasian University Directors of Information Technology, and Council of Australian University Librarians, to the smooth and strategic operation of universities. Where identified, these groups were invited to contribute to this book, but unfortunately, no submissions were made, which would explain the gaps mentioned above. Engagement with such professionals would provide a better understanding of the range of professionals in our own organizations, as well as insights on their experiences and perspectives as professional and support staff in higher education.

We understand that getting involved in scholarship might not be of interest to all professional and support staff, but we strongly believe that more support and opportunities should be given to those who aspire or are interested in contributing to this important field of inquiry. These opportunities could be in the form of encouragement and support (e.g., in resources and time) to publish and to conduct research and related professional development, for example.

Before concluding this chapter, we would like to raise some considerations for individual staff, higher education leaders, and institutions. Given the environments of change and uncertainty inhabited by many professional and support staff, the chapters in this volume have shown how valuable it is to search for and create strategic opportunities and to contribute to and take advantage of internal and external professional and academic networks for mutual benefit. Doing so creates better professional outcomes, stronger connections, and a greater sense of belonging among and across professional and support staff within universities and beyond. Universities must engage meaningfully with the range of broad and specific issues related to their professional and support staff; they also stand to benefit by creating

more opportunities for professional and support staff to build their capacity and support greater collegiality and collaboration between academic and professional staff. Leaders are strongly encouraged to listen to and support their most precious asset, their staff, so that they can perform their best and continue making substantial contributions to student learning, professional bodies, academics, institutions, and the sector as a whole.

Conclusion

This chapter presents a snapshot of the book and explores, through a systematic content analysis, key themes and values discussed throughout the chapters. The chapter also highlights some opportunities for further inquiry and key recommendations. We hope that both the results of the content analysis and our recommendations would assist readers and future researchers in identifying gaps and topics regarding professional and support staff in higher education that need further investigation.

This book has provided a platform for the examination of professional and support staff in higher education on their own terms and within their own developing disciplinary field to make a valuable contribution to a growing body of knowledge. This volume will assist a range of higher education stakeholders including educators, senior executives, policy makers, government bodies, and professional and support staff themselves to have a better and deeper understanding of the issues and opportunities facing professional and support staff in higher education in many parts of the world. By uncovering and reflecting on these issues, readers of this volume are able to identify opportunities for improvement, as well as learn from successful encounters. Readers also have the opportunity not only to learn from key experts in the field but also to hear the experiences and perspectives of first-time authors. We are grateful for these authors' generous contributions to this book, and we hope that they inspire readers as much as they have inspired us in strengthening higher education, and research into professional and support staff in particular, as a vigorous and renowned field.

References

- Dobson, I.R. 2000. 'Them and us' – General and non-general staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22 (2): 203–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1713678142>.
- Greenbank, P. 2003. The role of values in educational research: The case for reflexivity. *British Educational Research Journal* 29: 791–801.
- Haney, W., M. Russell, C. Gulek, and E. Fierros. 1998. Drawing on education: Using student drawings to promote middle school improvement. *Schools in the Middle* 7 (3): 38–43.
- Hogan, J. 2011. Is higher education spending more on administration and, if so, why? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education* 15 (1): 7–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2010.532316>.

- Hsieh, H.-F., and S.E. Shannon. 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research* 15 (9): 1277–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>.
- Knights, D., and C.A. Clarke. 2013. It's a bittersweet symphony, this life: Fragile academic selves and insecure identities at work. *Organization Studies* 35 (3): 335–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613508396>.
- Strauss, A., and J. Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Vaismoradi, M., H. Turunen, and T. Bondas. 2013. Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences* 15: 398–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12048>.
- Whitchurch, C. 2009. The rise of the blended professional in higher education: A comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education* 58 (3): 407–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9202-4>.

Index

- A**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 175, 176, 178–180, 182, 187
 - Academic developer, 73, 83
 - See also Educational developers
 - Academic development, 390, 395
 - auto-ethnographic vignettes, 26
 - distinctive profession, 28
 - under erasure, 27
 - fault lines (see Fault lines)
 - five tiered evolution, 29
 - Foucauldian conceptions of discourse, 26
 - as fragmented, 24
 - informal and formal teaching, 29
 - institutional goals, 25
 - pedagogy, 29–30
 - philosophical approach, 25
 - poststructural agency, 28
 - stages, 29
 - student retention, 28
 - writing under erasure, 27
 - Academic Enhancement Centre (AEC), 61
 - Academic professionals, 231
 - Academics and professional staff
 - academic culture, 316
 - academic identity, 317
 - quality of facilitator's skills and expertise, 315
 - student-centred learning experience, 315
 - Academic Skills and Learning Centre (ASLC), 40
 - employment status, 41
 - practitioners, 42
 - students' skills and literacies development, 40
 - Academic staff, 59, 251, 252
 - expertise and skills, 334
 - responsibility, 333
 - Action-research empirical projects, 233
 - Activity system, 195
 - community, 202
 - course team, 203
 - curriculum design team, 203
 - digital learning resource, design and development of, 198
 - digital resource team, 203
 - eight step model, 196
 - goal/motive of, 199
 - governance team, 203
 - learning resource development, contemporary collaborative model of, 198
 - learning resource development, traditional model of, 196, 197
 - rules of engagement, 202–203
 - Administrative salaries, 249
 - AEC, see Academic Enhancement Centre (AEC)
 - Alternative Academic Careers (Alt-Ac), 376
 - advice, 378
 - ANU educational fellowship scheme
 - application process, 285
 - HEA fellowship applications, 283
 - post-recognition outcomes, 287
 - professional staff, 284–285
 - success on individuals, 287
 - teaching and learning, 283
 - writing process, 286
 - AS, see Academic staff (AS)
 - ASLC, see Academic Skills and Learning Centre (ASLC)
 - Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM), 245
 - Association of Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) in Australia, 362

- Association of University Administrators (AUA) in UK, 362
- Attitudes, 374, 377, 380, 383
- Australian higher education, 295
- Autoethnography, 395
- B**
- Behaviors, 377, 381
- Blended professional(s), 41, 231
- Blended staff, 278
- Blurring, 120
- Boundaryless career, 361, 362
- Boundedness, 118, 119
- Bureaucracy, 14
- C**
- Career(s)
- advisor role, 321
 - attitudes, 374
 - career-life span, 382–384
 - categorization, 364, 365
 - competencies, 365
 - continuing professional development, 366–367
 - control and self-presentation, 380–381
 - counselling, 321
 - definition, 358
 - development, 349
 - enablers, 364–368
 - exploration, 379
 - factors, 362–363
 - in higher education institutions (HEIs), 359–360
 - hybrid career, 364
 - implications for institutions, 368
 - management, 364
 - organizational type, 363
 - personal capacities and motives, 378–379
 - professional organizations, 362
 - satisfaction and growth, 375
 - success, 358, 367
 - theory, 360–362
- Career development learning (CDL), 314
- Career enablers
- job performance, 366
 - job rotation, 367
 - mentoring, 367–368
 - networking, 367
- Career theory variables, 362
- Center for Learning and Teaching (CLT), 407, 410
- Centre for Higher Education Learning and Teaching (CHELT), 43
- Certificate in Professional Studies (CPS) programme, 61, 63, 64
- Chinese educational development, 59
- Chinese higher education, 59
- Collaboration, 210, 211, 215, 217, 218, 220, 222, 314, 316, 318
- strategic support, 210
- Collaborative adoption, 85
- Collaborative autoethnography, 407
- Collaborative learning, 427, 429
- Collaborative practice development
- with academic colleagues, 49–50
 - across the sector, 50–51
 - projects, 50
- Collaborative working, 303, 304
- Community partnership, 13
- Competencies, 374, 377, 383–384
- Conceptualizing blended leadership, 235–236
- Constructivism, 427
- Contacts for Academic Technologies (CATs), 222–223
- Contemporary career, 360
- Content analysis, 457
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD), 61, 366, 428
- CPS, *see* Certificate in Professional Studies (CPS) programme
- Critical reflection, 395, 400
- Cultural historical activity theory (CHAT)
- community, 202
 - course team, 203
 - curriculum design team, 203
 - definition, 195
 - digital learning resource, design and development of, 198
 - digital resource team, 203
 - eight step model, 196
 - Engestrom's activity system model, 196
 - goal/motive of, 199
 - governance team, 203
 - instruments/tools, 199–202
 - learning resource development, contemporary collaborative model of, 198
 - learning resource development, traditional model of, 196, 197
 - rules of engagement, 202
- Curriculum design intensive process, 116
- Curriculum developers, *see* Educational developers

D**Data**

- completeness, 160
- MOOCs, 169
- presenting, 162
- qualitative, 159
- quantitative, 159
- retain for review, 159
- selection, 161
- skills, 162
- training, 167–169
- update, 161–162
- usage, 162–163
- using, 157–158
- visualization, 163–167

Data-driven decisions, 162**Data visualization**

- design, 166
- format, 164
- message, 164
- results, 166–167

DataViz, *see* Data visualization**Decision-making, 159, 161****Degree requirements, 391–393****Demography, 248****Departure, 447****Departure, redefinition, and re-engagement (DRR), 447****Developing and Supporting Student Leadership (DaSSL) Framework, 134****Dialogue, 426, 431, 435****Digital media, 192****Distributed leadership approach, 233, 234, 236****Doctoral degree, 390, 392, 393, 400****E****6E conceptual model of distributed leadership, 234****Educational design, 73**

- Australian universities, 72
- collaborative adoption, 85
- instructional design, 73
- student learning theory, 73

Educational designers, 72

- academic developer, 73
- academic development, 82
- e-learning administrator, 82
- ethnographic methodology, 78
- multimedia production team, 80
- vocational educational and training (VET), 80

Educational developers

- academic staff, 59
- China, 59–60
- Chinese higher education, 59
- CPS programme, 63–65
- educational development, 67
- institutional context, 60–63
- institutional positioning, 67
- integrate faculty-based teachers, 67
- organizations, 58
- PGR programme, 63, 65–67
- professional staff, 58–60
- in Saudi Arabia, 59
- terminology, 57
- in transnational context, 67
- UK Quality Assurance Agency, 57

Educational development (ED), 406, 416, 417, 419

- academic career, 411, 414
- academic position, 413
- career advancement, 417
- career in, 396, 397
- as career path, 413
- collaborative autoethnography, 407
- definition, 406
- and faculty, 396, 397
- formal training, 397
- graduate education, 411
- growth of, 406
- GSA, 395
- GTA role (*see* Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA))
- independent consultant to universities, 399
- job posting analysis, 396
- lack of knowledge/awareness, 410
- Master's degrees, 398
- mentorship opportunities, 394
- Pearlman LTC Fellows program, 394
- Ph.D (*see* Ph.D.)
- POD, 399
- professional identity, 414
- SaLT program, 396, 397
- SoTL, 395
- student-faculty collaboration, 397
- teaching practices, 396
- TLA, 394
- UCAT, 394

Educational Fellowship Scheme (EFS), 43

- ASLC team, 44
- opportunity *vs.* lack of opportunity, 44–45
- professional conversations, 45
- team benefits, 44–45

- Embedded intergroup relations
theory (EIRT), 95
- Employability, 314, 321
- Engagement, social and emotional, 384
See also Professional staff in higher education, United States
- Engestrom's activity system model, 196
- Enterprise Bargaining (EB) Agreement, 182
- Excel, 162, 164, 168
- F**
- Faculty, 374, 377, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394–397, 399, 400
advice, 378
career, 376
growth, 375, 376
See also Alternative Academic Careers (Alt-Ac)
- Faculty level organization, 246
- Faculty managers
academic staff, 251
accountability demands, 254
administrative entity, 246
Association for Tertiary Education Management, 245
Australian University, 256
budget management, 256
change management, 255
demography, 248–249
emergence of designation, 247
general administration, 253
leadership role, 254
management functions, 253
negative terminology, 247
nomenclature, 245–246
number of academic staff, 252
number of professional staff, 252
organizational change, 255
personal activities, 254
salaries and classifications, 249–250
skill requirement, 256–257
staff management, 250
strategic planning, 253
student enrolments, 251
student management, 246
surveys, 247
university administrations, 246
university management, 251
- Fault lines
centripetally/centrifugally, 33–34
discipline X/discipline Y, 31–32
expert/vanguard, 32–33
fragmented conceptions of identity, 34
navigating pedagogy, 30–31
- Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA), 425, 428, 430, 433
- First Australians, 175
- G**
- General management, 253
- Globalization in higher education, 131
- Graduate Student Associate (GSA), 395
- Graduate students, 392–396
- Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA), 408, 412, 419
changing expectations for, 410
conversations and mentoring of, 418
experience, 417
as informal 'internship' program, 413
role, 410, 416
- H**
- HEA, *see* Higher Education Academy (HEA)
- Higher education
academic developers in, 112
CHAT framework (*see* Cultural historical activity theory (CHAT))
collaborative team, 194
community partnership, 13
curriculum design and development, 194
ED (*see* Educational development (ED))
educational designers in, 111–112
educational development in, 112–113
globalization, 131
increase participation in, 130, 134
institutions, 168
learning development and academic practice, 13
massification of, 317
online learning, 13
professional and support staff in, 132, 134, 162, 193
professional in, 13–17
roles and identity in, 323
sector, 167
technology enhanced learning and teaching, 131–132
workforce, 163
- Higher Education Academy (HEA), 281, 425, 428, 430, 433
- Higher education employment, 179, 182

- Higher education, in UK
 collaborative learning, 427
 CPD, 428
 HEA, 425
 individual mentoring, 428
 interactive sessions, 428
 'learners' beliefs, 426
 learning support tutors (*see* Learning support tutors)
 metacognitive practice, 426
 monthly peer learning sessions, 428
 para-academic staff, 424
 peer learning sessions, 428
 peer review and observation of practice, 428
 professional development programme, 425
 self-regulated learning process, 426
 student diversity, growth in, 425
 University of Portsmouth, 425
- Higher education, professional staff
 engagement, 385
See also Professional staff in higher education, United States
- Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA), 51
- Higher education teaching and learning, 281
- Hybrid career, 364
- Hybrid staff, 278
- I**
- Indigenous Australian professional staff, in higher education
 challenges, 178
 cultural identity, 178
 indigenous talent management and career development, 179
 job satisfaction, 180
 scholarships, 180
 traineeships and cadetships, 179
 at UTAS (*see* University of Tasmania (UTAS))
- Indigenous Australians, 175, 176, 180, 181
See also Indigenous Australian professional staff, in higher education
- Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC), 179
- Indigenous Higher Education Officers, 177
- Indigenous Liaison Officers, 177
- Indigenous professional staff in higher education in Australia, *see* Indigenous Australian professional staff, in higher education
- Institutional services, 301
- Instructional design, 73
- J**
- Job performance, 366
- Job rotation, 367
- K**
- Knowledge era, 271
- Knowledge in universities, 103–104
- Knowledge sharing, 210, 222
- L**
- Leadership
 conceptualizing blended leadership, 235
 development program, 143
 energy management, 264
 in higher education, 271
 knowledge work (*see* Maslow's hierarchy of needs)
 literacies, 267
 and management, 271
 motivations by professional staff in Australia, 267
 practicing blended leadership, 236
 professional staff energies and motivations, 266
 responsibilities, 264
 support professionals, 425, 436
 in universities, 232–235
- Leadership Grants Scheme Program (LGSP), 232
- Learning Support Professional Development (LSPProf) programme, 426–430, 431, 434
- Learning support tutors
 Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries, 429–431
 Faculty of Science, 431–434
 professional development of, 434–435
- Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics, 158
- Library and information science (LIS), 457
- Life space, 385
- Logistics, 331, 339
- M**
- Management staff, 375
- Managerialism, 230
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 265
- Massification, 296
- Mentoring, 367
- Metacognition, 426
- The Metric Tide*, 156

- Midlevel administrators, 246
- Motivational drivers, 267–270
- Motivations
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 265
 - professional staff energies and, 266–267
 - work by professional staff in Australia, 267–270
- N**
- National Indigenous Higher Education Workforce Strategy (NIHEWS), 179
- Networks, 367
- O**
- Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE)
- expertise and skills, 333, 334
 - Harden, 329
 - higher education workforce, 331
 - internal and external stakeholders, 337, 338
 - invisibility of professional staff, 329
 - key areas of responsibility, 332
 - leadership roles, 337
 - process, 335
 - professional and academic staff responsibility, 333
 - program, 336
 - structure, 329
 - student experience, 338
 - working relationships, 334
- Older learners, 440, 450
- On-campus employment, 142, 144
- Online jobs portal, 143
- Online learning, 13
- Organizational change, 255
- Organizational development, 210, 211, 218–219
- Organizational groups, 94
- and discourses, 94–95
 - embedded intergroup relations theory (EIRT), 95–96
 - parallel process, 96
 - in third space professionals, 97–99
 - in universities, 96–97
- Organization charts, 14
- OSCE, *see* Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE)
- P**
- Participants identity and organizational group membership, 99
- PD, *see* Professional development (PD)
- Pedagogical partnerships
- Australian higher education, 295
 - student expectations and massification, 296
 - student outcomes, 296–297
 - UTS (*see* University of Technology Sydney (UTS))
- Pedagogic screenwriting
- framework, 201
- Pedagogy, 302
- Peer observation of teaching (POT)
- core principles, 46
 - cyclical process, 46, 48
 - drawbacks, 46
 - model, 48
 - observation feedback, 46
 - pre-observation and post-observation conversation, 46
 - teaching activities, 48
- Peer programs, 144
- Perlman Learning and Teaching Center (LTC), 394
- PGR, *see* Post Graduate Research (PGR) programme
- Ph.D.
- advanced disciplinary degrees, 393
 - career path, 393
 - demographic data, 392
 - financial strain, 393
 - full-time, 398
 - prevalence of, 391–392
 - by publication, 398
- Post Graduate Research (PGR) programme, 61, 63, 65
- Practicing blended leadership, 236–240
- Prebble Propositions, 299
- Professional and Organizational Development (POD), 391, 398, 400
- Professional and support staff examination, 460
- scholarship in, 459
- Professional developers, *see* Educational developers
- Professional development (PD), 18–19, 381, 385
- Academic Skills and Learning Centre (ASLC), 40
 - collaborative practices, 49–51
 - educational fellowship scheme (EFS), 43–45
 - learning and teaching through fellowship, 43
- Professionalism, 13, 15, 16, 19

- Professional practice
 energy management, 264–265
 in higher education, 271
 leadership and management, 271
 Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 265–266
 motivations by professional staff in
 Australia, 267
 professional staff energies and
 motivations, 266
 self determination theory, 271
 T-shaped professional practice, 272
- Professional recognition
 ANU educational fellowship scheme, 283
 Australian universities, 284
 EFS application process, 285
 higher education teaching and learning,
 281–282
 mixed methods approach, 282
 post-recognition outcomes, 287–288
 success on individuals, 287
 teaching and learning, 283
 teaching quality, 278, 280
 university teaching, 278–281
 writing process, 286–287
- Professional staff, 3, 12, 14, 16, 19, 252
 career development, 348, 349
 career progression, 349, 351
 careers of, 350
 career trajectories of, 348
 development of, 349
 expertise and skills, 334
 in higher education, 5, 7, 130, 348, 456
 impact on student experience, 338
 invisibility, 102–103, 329–331
 responsibility, 333
 student outcomes, 339
 in universities, 349
See also Professional recognition
- Professional staff in higher education, United
 States, 376–377
 adaptability, 381
 collaborative thought and action, bias for,
 382
 commitment, 383
 competence and contribution, 384
 control and self-presentation, 380
 engagement, job, 375
 exploration, 379
 growth and skill refinement, 383
 issue/cause-oriented effort, 381
 motivation, 381
 narrative inquiry, 377
 orientation to learn, 382
 personal capacities and motives, 378
 satisfaction, 375, 385
- Professional staff participants, 267
 Professional staff pedagogical partnerships, 302
 Professional Staff-Student Outcomes
 (PSSO), 297
 Protean career, 361
- R**
 Redefinition, 448, 449
 Re-engagement, 450
 Relationships, 375, 382
See also Behaviors
 Research-intensive university, 374, 377
 Retirement
 as adjustment process, 442
 as career development stage, 443
 as decision making, 442
 policies, 449
 resources, 440, 444, 446, 448, 451
 transition, 440, 442, 447, 451
- S**
 Saudi Arabia, educational development in, 59
 Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL),
 394, 395, 416, 417, 419
 Self-determination theory (SDT), 271
 Self-organised learning, 426, 429
 Self-regulated learning, 426
 Service providers, 231
 Shared responsibility, 213
 Skill requirement, 256
 Socializer, 445
 Staff developers, *see* Educational developers
 Staff management, 250
 Staff retirement, 440, 442, 443, 446,
 447, 448
 Stakeholders, 5
 Storyboarding, 205
 Strategic support, 210, 212, 217
 Student employment, in higher education,
see University of Tasmania (UTAS)
 Student enrolments, 251
 Student experience strategy, 142
 Student learning theory, 73
 Student management, 246
 Student retention, 301
 Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT),
 396, 397
 Student Services Officers, 177
 Student success, 303

Supply chain model, 216
 Support staff, 3
 in higher education, 5, 456
 (see also Indigenous Australian
 professional staff, in higher education)
 professional identities, 6
 Surveys of faculty managers, 247

T

Teaching assistants (TAs), 61
 Teaching-Learning Academy (TLA), 394
 Teaching Resource Center (TRC), 396
 Technology enhanced learning and teaching
 (TELT), 131
 Third space, 231, 315, 319, 331, 336
 independent space, 17
 integrated space, 17
 semi-autonomous space, 17
 Third space professionals
 discourses, parallel process and visibility,
 100–101
 knowledge in universities, 103
 participants' identity and organizational
 group membership, 99–100
 professional staff and invisibility, 103
 specialization and expertise
 acknowledgement, 101–102
 three online resource development
 projects, 99
 Traditional career, 361
 Traditional instructional design, 84
 Training
 barriers, 168
 future of, 169
 Transnational education, 12
 T-shaped professional practice, 272

U

UHEC, *see* University human ethics committee
 (UHEC)
 UK Professional Standards Framework
 (UKPSF), 281, 425, 428, 430
 UK Quality Assurance Agency, 57
 Unbounded staff, 278
 Undergraduate students, 390, 394–396
 United States, educational development,
 see Educational development
 Universities Australia (UA), 179
 University Center for the Advancement of
 Teaching (UCAT), 394

University human ethics committee
 (UHEC), 79
 University of Tasmania (UTAS), 181–182
 collaboration with, 144
 graduate employability, 149
 high quality teaching, 142
 Indigenous student experiences, 183–184
 leadership development program, 143
 on-campus employment, 142, 144
 online jobs portal, 143
 opportunities, 147–151
 peer programs, 144–147
 professional identity, 150
 professional staff recruitment, retention and
 staff capacity building, 182–183
 recognition scheme, 143
 relationship with HR team, 143
 Riawunna Centre, restructure of, 184–187
 staff members, 142
 student employment opportunities, 143
 student experience strategy, 142
 student staff, 145, 146, 150
 UTAS Aboriginal Employment Strategies
 (AES), 182
 UTAS Staff Agreement, 183
 University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
 analytical model, 307
 comprehensive range of facilities and
 services, 301
 epistemological approach, 307
 guidelines, 301
 higher education worker, 299
 matrix model, 306
 pragmatic constructivist approach, 297
 Prebble Propositions, 299, 302
 professionalization, 304–305
 professional staff pedagogical partnerships,
 302–304
 professional staff-student outcomes, 297
 roles matrix, 305, 306
 single pay spine, 306, 307
 successful student outcomes, 303
 US Department of Education, 375
 UTAS, *see* University of Tasmania (UTAS)

V

Valued dualism, 375
 Victoria University of Wellington, 211–212
 DigitalVision, 212–213
 eResearch Capability Report, 213
 Victoria Capability Strategy, 213

Video designs, CHAT, *see* Cultural historical activity theory (CHAT)
 Video production discourse, 200
 Virtual Central Support Unit (CSU) model, 210, 213–215
 CATs, 222
 development and teaching, 220
 features, 217
 organizational development activities, 218
 organizational outcomes, 215
 Spotify's model, 215, 216
 training planning, 219–220
 Virtual teams, 210, 217
 shared responsibility, 210
 Vocational educational and training (VET), 80

W

Working relationships, 334
 Work of universities, 230–232

X

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU)
 Academic Enhancement Centre, 61
 Certificate in Professional Studies programme, 61
 Confucian learning approach, 62
 Continuing Professional Development, 61
 educational developers in (*see* Educational developers)
 Higher Education Academy, 62
 independent learning skills, 63
 internationalized approach, 61
 joint venture, 60
 learning and teaching, 61, 62
 peer learning principles, 63
 Post Graduate Research programme, 61
 professional development, 61
 teaching assistants, 61
 teaching quality, 61
 trust building and professional respect, 63