Reform, Quality Agendas and Professional Development: Reflections on Engaging Academics in Technology and Change

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Dec 2011

Reform

Reform in Australian higher education over the last 10 years has been protracted, intense and unprecedented and have resulted in a range of contradictory pressures on academics.

Of concern to the authors is the unprecedented growth in the practices surrounding the 'quality agenda'.

There is an underlying assumption in national and institutional policy that greater Quality Assurance will create world class universities, and promote excellence in enhance learning and teaching.

Quality Assurance V Quality Enhancement

QA: relates to the system and structure that manages the educational system.

QE: refers to the student learning experience and focuses on improvement of existing teaching and learning practices

Both are admirable…..but which one dominates your life?

Contradictory Pressures

- Research intensive   *Tension*   Teaching focused

- Accountability   *Tension*   Innovation

- Corporatization   *Tension*   Collegiality*

- Online   *Tension*   Face to face*

- Greater participation   *Tension*   Student centred learning*

- Industry focus   *Tension*   Theoretical requirements*

- Standards   *Tension*   Individual professionalism

Can you please do both, with integrity, and have the report to me by next Friday?

* online push

Faculty Leaders

 * Pressure has increased on faculty based, learning and teaching leaders and developers to engage academics in the technological and educational professional development (PD) required to meet change.

PD and resistance to change

- Academic feedback : workload is skewed to performance rather than innovation.

- Time and relevance is a major problem.

- Academics are disengaging from traditional PD.

- Head Office think technology is the answer (they always do!)

- Rapidly changing environment; LMS, Blackboard upgrades, administration tools, video conferencing, audio recordings, blogs, wikis, YouTube, SMS ,Web 2 etc.

- Workshops alone doesn't change classroom practice. New models are required.

Principles

■ PD is based on a curriculum design approach for both online or face to face. Which means:

☐ Support starts with accreditation.

☐ QA and QE are dealt with holistically.

☐ Technology innovation is seen as a key element of curriculum renewal.

☐ PD is clustered around the 'task at hand'.

☐ Look to sustainability through diversity.

☐ Share good practice and celebrate staff achievements.

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First attempts

- Established competitive, funded SoTL projects (3 e-Tech ones)

- Seek internal funding for discipline projects (Science Communications)

- Teaching Tasters – academic snapshots (e-Tech focus)

- Guest speakers that workshop not lecture. (student engagement)

- Faculty based learning and teaching awards (themed)

- Send out the presentation (Lectopia)

- Faculty Learning and Teaching web site. (hhhmmmmm!!)

- Foundations course for sessionals (embedded eTechnology)

What can you tell us?

We are here to learn.

Please tell us what you are doing?

Conclusion

Thank you for your support and ideas.