

Encouraging good teaching as professional development: The Learning and Teaching Certificate

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It is vital that today's universities attend to the need for advanced understanding of learning and teaching in their entire academic workforce, including matters of professional learning, reward and recognition. This showcase presentation outlines the emergence of a pilot professional development programme on "Learning and Teaching" in a university setting and presents the findings of a research project that has evaluated its outcomes and effectiveness. The foundational assumptions of the programme included notions of reflective and deliberative practice. The study engaged a number of participants who had enrolled in this voluntary professional development programme. Surprisingly, a cross-section of academic and professional staff was involved, although only new staff members were expected to attend. Drawing upon post-positivist theoretical frameworks to investigate the perspectives of academic participants, the research project utilised the principles of a case study. The data analysed included online discussion posts, reflections, assessments and teaching observations together with participant interviews. This showcase seeks to provide illustrative examples of the concepts of professional learning and recognition and to present specific findings and considerations for the design of relevant current and future academic professional development programmes in higher education. These findings include the extent of the influence of personal and discipline experiences of 'good teaching' and student learning and ways in which evidence of the impact of professional practice on student outcomes can be used as a design principle.