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**Leading global teacher development in Higher Education**

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**Introduction**

Across the globe, the massification of Higher Education has seen a rising proportion of people attending University. In some countries such as India and China, this is partially as a result of demographic change but, in other countries, it is the outcome of deliberate attempts to widen participation (University of Oxford, 2017). Research by the OECD predicts that there will be 262 million students participating in Higher Education by 2025, representing a greater than tenfold increase since 1970 (OECD, 2014). The global transformation of Higher Education from elite provision, where less than 15% of the population, towards mass provision, where 50% of the population accesses Higher Education, has resulted in changes to the market with the expansion of existing institutions and the establishment of new providers (OECD, 2017). This expansion has been particularly marked in countries like China with the equivalent of a new University opening each week since 2010 (University of Oxford, 2017). The rapid expansion of Higher Education globally has raised concerns about quality and the availability of suitably qualified and experienced academics to undertake University teaching. In some countries quality control has lagged behind the expansion with an over emphasis on rote learning, faculty shortages and with students feeling ill prepared for future employment beyond university (British Council, 2014).

Widening participation is driven by a desire to develop a knowledge economy and by the rapid expansion of industry and manufacturing in countries such as China. The British Council (2012; pp 1) describe how “education is increasingly seen by governments as a major contributor to national wealth and economic development”. This has resulted in a growing role for national governments in Higher Education with many setting out ambitious plans to develop Higher Education to meet their economic aspirations. At the same time, Higher Education has been challenged by consumerism and competition. Generation Z and those born after the millennium seek experiences, which are often very different from traditional didactic approaches to knowledge acquisition (Fernandez-Cruz and Fernandez-Diaz, 2016). In response to these challenges, individual Universities and governments have sought to develop their academic staff to improve the quality of teaching and to promote the development of the higher education sector.

**Teacher Development and Professionalisation**

Globally the professionalisation of teaching in Higher Education is been prioritised in response to changes in the scale and nature of educational provision. Such approaches include formal teaching qualifications, teaching standards and benchmarking of individuals and institutions against such standards. O’Connor (2010) describes how effective teaching is vital for student learning in Higher Education. Teaching quality is a concern across the world and the European Science Foundation (Standing Committee for the Social Sciences, 2012) suggests that academics in Europe are not as prepared for a teaching career as they are for research. Recently the drive towards improving teaching quality has promoted the view that teacher preparation was essential. This has led to a number of countries, notably in Europe and Australia, developing programmes for teacher development. Such programmes recognise the importance of classroom teaching to the overall quality of Higher Education and acknowledge that excellent teachers need development (Posteretf et al , 2007). The staff development offered should consist of a well-designed sustainable programme of study (Stes et al, 2010). Such approaches require more than training in pedagogical practices; they need sustained leadership, which creates a culture to drive teaching transformation (Stes et al, 2010).

Alongside staff development programmes and the promotion of formal Higher Education teaching qualifications, the UK and Ireland have developed professional standards for teaching for example, the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework (PSF). Professional recognition and the award of Fellowship against the PSF was established in 2005. To date this successful scheme has achieved over 112,000 Fellows in the UK and across the world. The PSF has proven transferable to other countries with more than 4,500 Fellows in over 80 countries (HEA, 2016). The PSF has shown itself to be very transferable to the Higher Education sectors in other countries with the widespread promotion of professional recognition in the Gulf and Australasia. Professional recognition and teacher development programmes built around the PSF standards form the basis of the two case studies discussed in this chapter. The PSF consists of standards around areas of activity, knowledge and professional values, which are collectively referred to as the Dimensions of Practice (HEA, 2011). They are shown diagrammatically in Figure7.1.

[Insert Figure 7.1 here : Dimensions of Framework diagram from UK Professional Standards Framework © 2011.  Advance HE, Universities UK and Guild HE. All rights reserved.]

Since 2015, Advance HE (formally known as the Higher Education Academy) has designed and led a significant number of staff development interventions, from short teaching skills development workshops, lasting two to five days, to longer modular certificate programmes spread over a period of six to nine months. Whether the desired outcome for participants is to gain recognition for their teaching against the appropriate category of the PSF or the aim is purely to enhance professional practice, it has been beneficial to structure the participant learning on all the delivered programmes around the dimensions of the PSF framework.

The following two case studies illustrate how professional development can be led from both an Institution and a Government perspective and identify some of the drivers and barriers to the sustainable transformation teaching practice.

**Government Initiatives**

Advance HE have worked with governments in Myanmar, Bahrain, Pakistan, Uruguay and Thailand, to develop programmes of staff development activity. The characteristics of this activity is that it involves short 2-4 day programmes, which are:

1. offered to participants are from a range of institutions across the host country;
2. designed to meet needs of a specific cohort, for example teachers from specific discipline(s), those leading learning and teaching or to address specific needs e.g. using technology in learning and teaching;
3. focused on course participants disseminating their learning at their home institution.

**Institutional Initiatives**

Individual institutions, identifying the need for academic development activity, which meets their own strategic objectives, can drive teaching transformation. This has led to the collaborative development and co-delivery of academic development programmes between the institutions and the HEA, such as the Professional Certificate in Academic Practice and Teaching Skills Workshops.

Within both approaches, there is an expectation that participants will return to their departments and Universities and disseminate good practice by sharing examples, role modelling and supporting others to change their teaching and assessment. This is an approach is a form of distributed leadership which is an approach whereby leadership as a process is dispersed throughout an organisation (Bolden, 2011), sometimes referred to as leadership at all levels. Distributed leadership approaches often involve the devolving of influence to lead which in turn this helps shape individual academics perceptions of identity, participation and ability to influence (Bolden, 2011). Spillane (2004) believes that from a distributed perspective leadership practice takes shape in the interactions of people and their situation rather than through the actions of an individual hierarchically determined leader. As a result, distributed leadership challenges the traditional hierarchical approach in order to develop a culture, which supports the transformation of teaching and learning and other aspects of academic practice (Hofmeyer et al, 2015).

**Case Study 1: Government Initiative in Myanmar**

**Context**

In 2017, the HEA was invited to work with British Council (BC), Burma to improve and enhance the quality of teaching of academic staff working in public universities in Myanmar. The BC, Burma, had organised a visit to the UK of a high-level delegation from the Ministry of Education of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, which had led to a decision to pursue a national training programme for staff.

This programme took the form of short four-day interventions for two groups of staff in different regions of the country. In addition, ongoing online support for staff was provided as part of the BC’s ‘Supporting Teaching Excellence’ programme. Public universities in Myanmar were in the very early stages of developing international collaborations and development of staff teaching skills was seen as a necessary precursor to meet the aspiration to ‘develop a world-class higher education system’ (National Education Strategy Plan, 2016).

Despite progress to develop the public universities in the preceding four years, which included the establishment of Quality Assurance units and centres of excellence and ongoing discussions around a National Qualifications Framework, there was a need to understand the context for academics in these universities. Discussions with in country staff and an online pre-course survey of participants (n=53) developed by the HEA course tutor revealed that there were issues with HE infrastructure, such as lack of reliable access to the internet, and resourcing. In addition, there had been a lack of staff development opportunities for teaching staff to engage with more interactive modes of delivery. In the survey, participants reported a lack of confidence in ‘modern’ teaching methods, out of date facilities and lack of teaching resources. Gaining insights into the context, practices and resources available to staff enabled a more tailored approach in the workshops. The baseline data extracted from the pre-course survey also enabled tracking of practice to take place. The survey at the end of both four-day workshops measured ‘intention to change’ and a final survey completed after six months provided data on actual change. Results at all stages of the project were disseminated back to the BC and the Ministry of Education as well as key messages being shared with participants themselves.

**The workshops**

The 58 participants, split across the workshops, came from 40 of the 171 public universities in Myanmar. This represented a reach of 23.4% into the sector. Participants were selected on the proviso that they would disseminate their learning on their return to the home university and lead on teaching developments in the Institution. As described earlier, this waspart of a system to develop the distributed leadership of learning and teaching within Institutions.

Online contact with participants was maintained in the six months after the two workshops in order to support and encourage the innovations that they were introducing but also to provide participants with resources and news on developments in learning and teaching in HE. The workshops themselves modelled good practice in planning for student learning, using technology in learning, assessment, curriculum development and crucially were designed to engage participants in activities which could be used with their learners.

The staff development project was informed by the principle of recognising and valuing the local context, culture, values and practices (Lim et al, 2019). A key element in design and delivery was building trust and credibility between tutor and participants and amongst the participants themselves, most of whom had never met each other, and in developing a collaborative community of practice, which could extend beyond the temporal boundaries of the workshop. Whatever the prevailing ‘in country’ learning, teaching and assessment practices are, celebrating the good practice that exists and the knowledge and skills of those in the room is essential in developing mutual respect (Crandall, 1983).

In some cases, participants had heard about new approaches, mostly through keynote lectures from mostly western experts. However, it was the implementation of new practices, which presented a challenge. Throughout the workshop, knowledge and skills were delivered through the practices themselves: simulation, gamification, the embedding of technology-enhanced learning, practical and creative learning activities in groups, all designed to engage learners. Throughout the workshops, time was allowed to discuss the possible translation of these approaches into their own practice, encouraging ‘organisational translators’ or brokers who are able to frame new knowledge, skills and understandings into the local and disciplinary context (Brown and Duguid, 2002; Rudduck et al, 2000). This was a deliberate strategy to enable participants to work out how they might develop new approaches as part of the culture within their own organisations.

**Changes to Professional Practice**

All respondents to the impact survey carried out six months post-workshop reported changes in their teaching practice following attendance at the workshops. This was authenticated by photos and messages submitted by the participants to the online collaborative workspace. There had been an increase in the use of interactive approaches and the use of technology in participants’ classes. Despite the lack of facilities and resources, participants used what resources their students had to circumvent issues such as lack of a data projector. In the survey participants reported use of Padlet, Facebook, Kahoot, Polling tools, NearPod and lecture capture with students. In addition, having explored the concept of students as partners over three quarters of respondents reported that they were actively seeking student views on learning and teaching.

In all discussions and information shared before the delivery, it was clear that there was a dependence on end of term / year examinations as the method of assessment. However, in the six-month impact survey, four fifths of respondents reported that they had changed their approach to assessment to include formative assessment activities including online quizzes and plenary activities to check knowledge and understanding.

At the outset of this project, participants were aware that it was an expectation that new practices from the workshops should be disseminated within their home Institution and that they would be expected to role model and lead such dissemination. Within the first six-months, over three quarters of respondents had shared their learning with colleagues within their university. In terms of successful transfer of practice, the results were evidence of what can be achieved in just four days of face-to-face contact.

The open comments also attested to the impact of the workshops. One participant from a workshop reported that the HEA supported their professional development because it

*‘introduced me some technology (sic) that can be used in the classroom. Before I attended HEA workshop I don’t know much about technology that are helpful, interesting and motivated (sic) to students. For example kahoot and poll everywhere…. Learners are more motivated and I can also improve my teaching.’*

Results of the impact study revealed that following attendance, several participants who adopted new approaches had presented or were due to present papers at national and international conferences. One participant had presented her work on using technology in learning at conferences within Myanmar and to the wider ASEAN academic community:

*‘I love to be part of the global education family because of the knowledge gained from HEA. …….I have come to know a little bit of how the teachers globally are conducting their classes. Intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks….In short, HEA has transformed my teaching practices …..’*

**Benefits and challenges of working on a national scale**

With national initiatives of this type, attendance at the courses has a high status for participants, as reported during the course and in the subsequent survey, and as a result of having been selected by the national ministry, motivation is high and participant success is visible on a national scale. The senior manager at the home university is also invested in the development of the member of staff nominated for the programme and anticipate that they will contribute to the transformation of learning and teaching through distributed leadership at a department and programme level.

Whereas delivery in an individual institution can be tailored to meet local needs, this is not possible when working with diverse participants from across a country. There may also be little control of what messages are transmitted locally from the national event or any quality assurance of the effectiveness of the transfer. It is more challenging for tutors to build trust quickly with a group of participants who have never met before and do not share the same institutional background and culture. In addition, the universities represented in each cohort differ so it is difficult to ensure continuity of relationships.

**Case Study 2: Institutional Initiative: Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan**

**Context**

As part of the reform of the Higher Education sector in Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev University (NU) was established in 2010, *“as a model for a new type of free and independent institution”* (Matthews, 2012: 23). Despite a large and diverse Higher Education sector, and work to improve the quality of teaching in Kazakhstan, it remains overly reliant on didactic approaches, which, combined with long contact hours, reduced the opportunity for promoting independent learning, the development of critical thinking skills as well as other desirable graduate attributes (Ahn, Dixon and Chekmoreva, 2018). In a bid to reform the Higher Education, the President of Kazakhstan, founded Nazarbayev Univerisity (NU) in 2010 to be *“a model for higher education reform in Kazakhstan”* (Nazarbayev University, 2017). NU commissioned the HEA to develop and deliver a Professional Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP). The PCAP was designed in collaboration with the Provost Office to ensure it met the development needs of the participants, would build institutional capacity and supported staff in sharing best practice across their Schools. The Certificate programme was delivered alongside a Train the Trainer programme, which was designed to support local staff to deliver the PCAP programme going forward. Again, this approach was building the distributed leadership of learning and teaching across the Institution.

**Approach**

The PCAP programme comprised of three modules. Each module comprised of four days intensive face-to-face delivery, supported by course materials and activities in the Nazarbayev University Virtual Learning Environment, and through practical learning, peer action learning groups and peer review of teaching. The PCAP modules took participants through theories of learning approaches to teaching such as gamification, active learning, developing interactive lessons and the use of technology. The modules included role modelling of approaches and opportunities for participants to try out new approaches to teaching and learning and contextualise them to their own subject areas.

In Kazakhstan, we discovered that over 76%of participants had changed their teaching practices following a short two-day intervention. One participant described how the workshop made him realise that he needed to change the way he planned and delivered lesson in order to harness learning excitement.

*‘Taking the workshop as the departure point, we started the journey to the world of student centered learning. As I think about the way I would typically organise my lecture sessions before PCAP, I realise that there is no way it is to be sufficient again. Having explored learning taxonomies and their application, I feel clear vision of the need to utilise learning excitement students experience when they discover.’*

One participant described the process of developing their teaching practice up to one year after the workshop describing how the approaches had positively impacted on the student experience.

*‘Over the past year, we, as a group of educators, were tasked to integrate novel concepts into our teaching practice. My personal experience is with flipping classes. From what we learned, it adds value to understanding the material, and most importantly – given clear learning outcome – helps students to contextualize new knowledge with their previous experiences and classes, enforce informed learning.’*

**Benefits and challenges of an Institution-led approach**

Working with a single institution over a period of two years developed mutual trust and understanding between the institution, the participants (from across a wide range of subject disciplines) and the trainers. The two trainers from the HEA had the opportunity to develop their understanding of the learning and teaching culture and the Institution. By working with cohorts of twenty-five participants within the same institution, communities of practice evolved naturally allowing for the development of a critical mass of leaders within departments. Having a core of academic staff (n = 25 from each cohort) that have completed the programme, can provide the catalyst for development of other activities to share good academic practice. The institution also has a stake in providing supporting activities, which can include celebrating success through the university’s social media and web pages. They also provided practical support through providing repositories to share teaching resources, or by organising internal Teaching and Learning conferences to share good practice.

The main challenge is the slow pace of change to some extent this reflects the time it takes to develop a culture associated with distributed leadership for learning and teaching. For future deliveries, it may be better to work on having local leaders for learning and teaching before the programme commences as this could accelerate the pace of change.

**Conclusions**

Our experiences suggest that there are several components, which lead to successful outcomes in international staff development. Whatever level of initiative, there is a need for active support and involvement by either the Ministry or the Institution throughout the project’s duration. In the early discussions with these bodies the desired national or institutional outcomes for participants should be set in advance and communicated to participants. These usually include the requirement that learning is cascaded to others within their home university, that participants are expected to take a leading role in learning and teaching locally.

As evidenced in the preceding case studies, it is important to ensure sensitivity to the home context and to avoid appearing to be imposing teaching practices which are established in the West into a different cultural context. This involves valuing the knowledge, skills and experiences of all participants and using their expertise to enhance the delivery of the programme.

In the commissioning of an international staff development programme, the delivery team selected to lead and facilitate courses should have credibility with participants emanating from their experience of having successfully implemented a range of high impact pedagogies and assessment practices in their own teaching and their willingness to actively model and deconstruct such practices for the participants. Preparation for delivery needs to include the creation of private online spaces for communication and community building, as well as for sharing resources used in delivery. We sought to build a sustainable collaborative community of practice throughout the taught programmes, which outlive the contractual period.

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**7. Reader’s Response**

***Ian Davies***

This article investigates how the quality of student learning experiences are managed against the growing consumerism facing higher education on a global stage. The article is designed around two case studies. The first describes work that had taken place in Myanmar (formerly Burma), and the second considers work in Kazahstan.

Advance HE had been delivering a Certificate program in Myanmar, Advance to local Universities in this region. In the description of this work three key areas are explored, firstly the nature of the delivery itself, secondly the use of distributed leadership to disseminate the information given to few could be disseminated to the many, and finally the role of the scheme has in influencing specific changes in practice. I would urge the reader to consider a specific perspective here and question how influential the colonial history could be in this setting? There appears to be an assumption that cultural habits such as, the process of dissemination, or the impact of changes in practice be unquestioningly accepted as culturally normalised outcomes to learning. What is done successfully is the careful description of the use of ‘brokers’ or ‘institutional translators’ in each of the workshops used to ‘frame the new knowledge into a local disciplinary context’. As readers we could add to this report by applying a post-colonial critical lens which doesn’t just manage the ‘problem’ of cultural translation but uses it as a way to generate further knowledge.

The second case study considers work done by Advance HE in Kazahstan at Nazarbayev University. Which once again relies on a distributed leadership model. The contract was set up via the local government to achieve a national objective of improving the quality and reputation of higher education in the region. Once again there is a focus described with the article on both the assumption that using distributed models of leadership would facilitate the further dissemination of the information delivered. Also, the requirement to measure impact based on the idea of there being a recognised change in practice. I would urge the reader to once again apply a critical lens to the requirement for change and its use an indicator for impact or success. Within the pedagogy of professional development there is often a stress on validating current practices, encouraging reflection and structuring peer feedback mechanisms. None of these practices appear to be part of what is offered within the given structure. What does this mean therefore for organisations like Advance HE going out into a global market without the critical understanding of the potential colonising practices they are involved in?

I would urge readers to view the interesting work Advance HE is doing using the lens of the post-colonial theorist G. Spivak. Spivak asks that we learn how to reflect on dominant tropes that influence our attitude and approach to working interculturally. Specifically, she outlines the rhetorical notion that the western world is more civilised, democratic and developed than the non-western world’ (Morton, 2002: 2). Spivak requires that we attempt a process of ‘unlearning’, specifically unlearning our racial, social and educational privilege. She sees this unlearning process as ‘the beginning of an ethical relation to the other’ (Landry & MacLean, 1996: 5). She clarifies that she is referring to ‘how to behave as a subject of knowledge within the institution of neo-colonial learning’ (Danius & Jonsson, 1993: 24), she describes her own process of unlearning as sometimes embarrassing but encourages us to join her in her ‘sort of stream of learning how to unlearn and what to unlearn because [our] positions are growing and changing so quickly’ (Danius & Jonsson, 1993: 25).

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