THE SEVEN THINGS LEARNING LEADERS CAN DO TO ACHIEVE QUALITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEARNING AND TEACHING

Associate Professor Alan Bain
Faculty of Arts and Education, CSU
OVERVIEW

- Make the Case for doing things differently- The Gap

- “Seven things” You can do To build a model of Learning and teaching- Filling the Gap

- Explain the Ways you can employ the “Seven Things”
Learning Leaders are expected to make a scalable, institution-wide impact on the quality of learning and teaching.”
“Look at any university strategic plan.”
Excellence at both a teaching and learning level is rewarded and celebrated, with excellence evidenced, in part, by continuing national recognition as a leader in learning and teaching and as a valued partner internationally. (Strategic Planning Statement)
“To offer all students a truly distinctive learning experience”

“To be a National Leader”

“To be World Class”
Imply institutional level *professional control* over learning and teaching

Visible

Comparable

Workable Distinctions

Bowker & Star, 2000
LEARNING LEADERS DESCRIBE THEIR JOBS

“like trying to drive a nail into a wall of blanc-mange- little resistance but no result”

“being the minister of a church where only the converted come”

“living in a medieval castle”

“rowing with one oar.”

(Scott, Coates & Anderson 2008)
WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

LEADING LEARNING AND TEACHING IS OFTEN....... 

• MISUNDERSTOOD

• ISOLATING

• FRUSTRATING

• FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
To influence learning and teaching at organizational scale the organization needs to understand what it means by quality learning and teaching ....

“Few Do”
"The conditions rarely exist for systemic scaled up impact"
“The panel looked carefully at the prospects for developing the kinds of comprehensive learning quality measures needed... We would have liked nothing better than to propose such measures but, unfortunately, we were forced to conclude that this will not be possible anytime soon.”

Most of the variance in student performance is predicted by their characteristics at entry. The gains in performance from entry to graduation are small and there is much more variability in student performance within universities than between them indicating the lack of variance contributed by a university’s approach.

(ACT, 2009; Liu, 2008; Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005).
In describing what was effective teaching the prevailing view was that good teaching was directly related to having a doctoral qualification in their research discipline.... “all you need to be a good teacher is to have your doctorate”

(Scott & Scott, 2015, p.8).
What about Standards?

We should not confuse compliance and accreditation with quality. The evidence indicates they do not covary.

• Teaching and learning activities are arranged to foster progressive and coherent achievement of expected learning outcomes throughout each course of study.

(TEQSA Higher Education Standards Framework, 2015)
"When in doubt there's always benchmarking"

Peers
Process
Connoisseurship
“Educational quality is the ‘elephant in the room’ in most discussions of higher education productivity.”
The more we change........

The lack of enduring and unique identities in higher education offers an opportunity for education leaders, as it indicates there are a host of undifferentiated brands ripe for disruption. (Dvorak & Busteed, 2015, p. 2).
The 4 R’s
Rankings, Research, Real Estate, Reputation (Rah)
(Craig, 2015)

Measure what you have........

Efficacy and quality measured by often unrelated inputs?
UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS
UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO SERIOUS CAREER CONFOUNDING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING LEADERS
“To help us understand what is required to create the conditions for institution-wide change”
“What do we need to have in place to make scalable improvement in learning and teaching?”
Using these ideas:

- As a Schema for Understanding a Wicked Problem
- As a Model for Explaining the Problem (Schema) to others - a Leadership Team
- As a set of Action Items
UNDERSTANDING A KEY RELATIONSHIP

- **IMPACT**
- **PRODUCTIVITY**
- **QUALITY**

**PROFESSIONAL CONTROL**
Measuring Productivity without Quality?

Activity + Resources + Time

Completions

Massy, (2016)  Re-engineering the University
MAKING LEARNING AND TEACHING VISIBLE, COMPARABLE, AND SUBJECT TO WORKABLE DISTINCTION

Bowker & Star 2000; Dreengenberg & Bain, 2016
HOW?

SEVEN THINGS
NUMBER 1: MAKE POLICY MATCH PURPOSE

- Ensure you have them
- Approval Policies
- Review Checklists
- Committee Decision-making Guidance And Process
Example

“Course design and development at the University is a systems approach, which is an institution-wide, quality-assured, collaborative approach.....”
Policy:

• Commitments
• About “How” as well as “What”
• Beliefs about Practice
• Set the scene
NUMBER 2: MAKE LEARNING AND TEACHING THE FOCUS OF FEEDBACK

Student
Peer
Course
Program
NUMBER 2: STUDENT FEEDBACK

WHAT WE FOUND

• “SEEMED HELPFUL AND APPROACHABLE?”
• DEMONSTRATED CONCERN FOR STUDENT LEARNING?
• STIMULATED YOU INTELLECTUALLY? (SES, 2018)

WHAT WE NEED

• THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA WERE EASY FOR ME TO UNDERSTAND
• THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES HELPED ME TO COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT TASKS.
• THE FEEDBACK I RECEIVED WAS LINKED TO THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA.
• THE TEACHING FOCUSED ON MASTERY OF THE CONTENT.
Subject ESS422: Assessment and Evaluation for Learning

Overview

Outcomes
- ESS422.1 Purposes of Assessment
- ESS422.2 Classroom Ecology
- ESS422.3 Curriculum-Based Meas... (continue for more outcomes)

Learning and Teaching Strategies
- Purposes of Assessment
- Classroom Ecology

This subject builds students' capacity with curriculum-based, authentic assessment and the use of standardised assessment. With a focus on literacy and numeracy, these approaches can be employed to differentiate the learning for all students. The subject addresses assessment at both school/setting and classroom levels and how assessment and evaluation information can be employed at whole-of-organization scale for instructional decision-making using an MT approach to inclusive settings.

Feedback

Round Started 21 Mar, 2018

Select an opinion to provide feedback:
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

7. The assessment tasks are represented in the descriptions of the learner outcomes
Select an opinion to provide feedback:
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
NUMBER 3: RECOGNISE AND REWARD QUALITY LEARNING AND TEACHING

ALIGN PROMOTION CRITERIA WITH THE SKILLS AND EXPERTISE REQUIRED TO DESIGN, DELIVER AND MANAGE HIGH QUALITY LEARNING AND TEACHING
• **What We Found**

• Adoption of teaching resources by other universities
  Peer reviewed grant reports National Fellowships
• Publishing or Researching in Learning and Teaching
• Peer Support with Generic Process

• **What to Do**

• Can design criterion based Assessment Tasks with clear Discernable criteria
• Can provide support and feedback to others about the Design of Criterion-based Assessments (or anything Else)
• Can lead collaborative decision-making teams to produce practical solutions to learning and teaching Problems

“Help Others to Help Yourself”
NUMBER 4: MAKE YOUR TECHNOLOGIES EDUCATIONAL
THE “TOOL TAIL” WAGS THE DOG

Chat Room

Chat Room Use

How to improve your chat room use
NUMBER 4: MAKE YOUR TECHNOLOGIES EDUCATIONAL?

WHAT WE FOUND

- EMS Tools are more about organizing than designing
- They drive a construction of teaching
- They are not connected to learning and teaching

WHAT TO DO

- Recognize the difference between technology for managing versus educational technology
- Use tools that help designers to build quality courseware
- Make the tools reflect your institutional priorities/process

(Zundans- Fraser & Bain, 2016)
Given module learning, readings, and completed assessment tasks students will build an assessment schedule/matrix for a classroom/school for the purpose of making a valid and reliable determination of student growth and then build a rationale for the schedule/matrix as described. The experience draws together learning about curriculum-based and standardised tests and outcome measurement in schools/settings.
NUMBER 5: MAKE THE DATA YOU GATHER THE DATA YOU NEED NOT JUST THE DATA YOU HAVE
The tool we have drives the data we gather

“As these systems become more incorporated into everyday academic practices, they will work to shape and even define teachers’ imaginations, expectations and behaviours.”

(Coates, James & Baldwin, 2005, p. 27)
This subject builds students’ capacity with curriculum-based, authentic assessment and the use of standardised assessment. With a focus on literacy and numeracy, these approaches can be employed to differentiate the learning for all students. The subject addresses assessment at both school/setting and classroom levels and how assessment and evaluation information can be employed at whole-of-organization scale for instructional decision-making using an MT approach to inclusive settings.
NUMBER 6: MAKE YOUR CAPACITY BUILDING THE GLUE NOT THE MODEL?

- Timing
- Target
- Context
NUMBER 7: JOIN THE DOTS - BUILD A MODEL

Your Model
Your Words
Your Decision-making
Your Promotion Criteria
Your Feedback
Your Data
Your Tools
Your Capacity

PROFESSIONAL CONTROL
CONTEXT

Visible
Comparable

Workable Distinctions
LEADING LEARNING AND TEACHING

Low Disruption

Less

POTENTIAL IMPACT

More

High Disruption

Status Quo

Followers

LEADERS

Distinctive Model

Change Agents

LEADERS’ MAGNITUDE AND DIRECTION CONTINUUM
“FOLLOWERSHIP” IS NOT ALWAYS YOUR FRIEND”

“like trying to drive a nail into a wall of blanc-mange-little resistance but no result”

“being the minister of a church where only the converted come”

“living in a medieval castle”

“rowing with one oar.”
USING THESE IDEAS

• AS A SCHEMA FOR UNDERSTANDING A WICKED PROBLEM
• AS A MODEL FOR EXPLAINING THE PROBLEM TO OTHERS– A LEADERSHIP TEAM
• AS A SET OF ACTION ITEMS
REFERENCES


Drengenberg, N., & Bain, A. (2016). If all you have is a hammer, everything begins to look like a nail – how wicked is the problem of measuring productivity in higher education? Higher Education Research & Development, DOI: 10.1080/07294360.2016.1208640


