Evaluating academic development in HE

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PedRIO
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

Higher Education Academy
It is challenging?

• Barriers

• Advantages

• Enablers
Why Bother? - Drivers?

• Institutional Demands
  — TEF
  — Funding justification
  — Quality Enhancement – QAA Code
  — Evidence to support Institutional change

• Personal opportunities
  — Reward and recognition
  — CPD
  — Career enhancement
  — REF opportunity
Broader Context

- Teaching and learning agendas change over time
- Increasing emphasis on quality
- Rise of the student voice
- Teaching-related CPD a staple in most universities
- Ongoing questions about CPD impact – what / who / when?
Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in contemporary HE

• Any activity ‘targeted to strengthen and extend the knowledge, skills and conceptions of teachers in a way that will lead to changes in their way of thinking and their educational behaviour’ (Fenstermacher & Berliner, 1985: 49)

• Teaching-related CPD commonplace, result of the agenda to ‘professionalise’ the practice of T&L in HE (Kandlbinder & Pesta, 2009)
  - Represents activities such as training courses (e.g. PGcert), workshops, peer review, conferences
  - Long history for new lecturers, renewed focus on ‘established’ staff (Browne, 2010)
Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory (PedRIO)
PedRIO ethos of inclusivity

Research at all levels supported

Specific events for ECRs/PhD students

Pedagogic research - 50% of REF submission in Education UoA

REF research

Research/Evaluation to improve practice

Scholarship of T, L & SE
HEA tender - Evaluating teaching development in HE: towards an impact assessment

– Literature review update Parsons (2012)
– Gauge current evaluation practice across the sector
– Develop draft Toolkit to evaluate teaching–related CPD

Six month project
https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/institutes/pedagogic/hea-cpd-framework

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/evaluating_teaching_development_in_he_toolkit1.pdf

Google:
HEA CPD Toolkit
Plymouth University
With thanks to our Project Partners & Pilots Institutions

• Nottingham Trent University
• South Devon College
• University of Bath
• University Campus Suffolk
• University of Greenwich
• University of Edinburgh
• Bangor University
• Bath Spa University
• Bradford College
• Durham University
• Greenwich School of Management
• Manchester Metropolitan University
What is the IMPACT? by When?
Context is evaluating HE CPD
BUT the toolkit / application works for all T&L interventions, at all scales.

Pedagogic Research is Research

All normal research principles and practices apply: ethics, relevant literature, good baseline data, properly defined research questions, the right data collection processes, sane sampling, rigorous analysis, evidenced outcomes, ideally research in more than one context.

Never - I changed a bit of practice, asked a few students if they liked it, and then wrote it up
Context

Prominent agendas for teaching-related CPD in HE but very little understanding of its impact and value – especially on student learning.
Literature Review (HEDERA)

- Use pre-CPD instruments to establish benchmarks and ‘gain’
- Capture longitudinal data to reflect pace of transfer
- Capture data on contexts of transfer
- Include proxies for indirect impact – i.e. student learning outcomes
- Be accessible and flexible

- Consider impact and value
- Acknowledge limitations of funding and expertise

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/evaluating_teaching_development_in_he_-_literature_review1.pdf
Bamber (2013) calls for a greater focus on ‘evidencing value’ which will encourage a move away from quantitative measures of ‘satisfaction’ with respect to whether intended outcomes have been achieved, towards more reflexive approaches that consider soft and hard outcomes.

Measuring these so-called ‘soft’ impacts, such as increased confidence, thinking differently, and a willingness to change practice, all of which benefit student learning, are challenging and require greater attention to be placed upon the process and the outcomes of CPD (Bamber, 2013).
National audit

• Online survey in Feb 2015
• 189 responses, 142 included (response rate = 16.4%)

Research questions

• What teaching-related CPD is currently offered in HEIs? What informs this choice of CPD?
• How is the impact of CPD currently evaluated?
• To what extent (if any) do institutional policies support teaching-related CPD?
• To what extent (if any) are students involved in teaching-related CPD?
## CPD provision

(N=109)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of CPD</th>
<th>Percentage of HEIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-review and observation schemes</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house teaching and learning conferences</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited academic programmes for teaching</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring schemes</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities of practice around teaching and learning</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External teaching and learning conferences</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for PG study</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action research</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching consultations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation: Accredited - non-accredited offers

133 examples

11% did not evaluate the CPD offer
15% evaluated longitudinally

• Questionnaires/happy sheets most common. Focus on satisfaction
• Lesser extent changes in conceptions and practice.
• Impact of student learning considered rarely, very few continuing to evaluate after 6 months
Institutional support for CPD

Promotional Policies

- Research-focused (N=40)
- Teaching-intensive (N=43)
- College-based (N=13)

- Single-track
- Two-track
- Three-track
- Not sure
### Institutional support for CPD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer-review and appraisal</th>
<th>Research-intensive (N=39)</th>
<th>Teaching-focused (N=39)</th>
<th>College-based (N=12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not linked to appraisal</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked in some cases</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked in all cases</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are students aware of staff participation in teaching related CPD?</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there opportunities for students to contribute to evaluation of teaching related CPD</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Learning outcomes are aligned with assessments during the course but not with evaluation.’

• ‘The evaluation we do is a judgement on the activity, not of its impact on people’s practices’

• ‘We evaluate at the end of the event, but real impact can only be observed after years and years.’

• ‘I can demonstrate that CPD around the PSF has an impact on teaching practice but to evidence the same for students is impossible to be honest’

• ‘Getting at the important stuff is so much harder, so much more expensive and will take forever. It is in the ‘too difficult box’, we don't go there. But if you want change, real change then that is what you have to do’.
Toolkit development

Guskey’s 5 levels of CPD evaluation

Adapted from Guskey, T. (2000). *Evaluating Professional Development*
Working with Guskey’s ideas

• The research identified that most developmental teaching and learning activities within academic and professional staff in HE is evaluated through post event questionnaires, ‘happy sheets’, and they tend to focus on participant’s immediate satisfaction with teaching, resources and house-keeping – that is the FIRST stage of Guskey’s model

• But we are interested in What teachers have learnt and how this is/is not put into practice

• We are interested in the support provided by the institution and the impacts upon institutional culture ---such as how ideas and new skills are disseminated to colleagues after CPD events

• We are interested in the slippery concept of the impact on students – in other words – how do we know that CPD that we engage in ultimately enhances student learning outcomes
Toolkit development - everyone is an evaluator

- Alignment
- Methods
- Timing
- Inclusion of stakeholders
- Institutional context
- Be realistic
- Consider ethics

Deliver the CPD activity & commence ongoing evaluation

Disseminate the findings at multiple points throughout the process and take ACTION
• **Alignment** - Evaluation should be built into the design of ... at the planning stage so that decisions about what will be taught and how to measure its value are made together. This helps to align the learning and intended outcomes of the activity and the subject of evaluation.

• **Methods** - Adopting a mixed methodology combining quantitative (e.g. institutional data sets such as NSS, module evaluations, student performance) and qualitative approaches (e.g. questionnaires, interviews, reflective blogs) can help to demonstrate the outcome and evidence the value of CPD. It also promotes the collection of a range of data which can be of relevance to a diverse audience. Guskey (2002) suggests that the key is to ask good questions and that a good evaluation does not need extensive resources.
• **Timing** - Evaluation ideally takes place before, during and after an activity so that both short and longer term impact and value can be evidenced. Research shows that it can take months and years for lecturers to transfer lessons learnt through CPD events into practice and that transfer is dependent on a range of local environmental factors (De Rijdt et al., 2013). Evaluation should capture this timescale.

• **Inclusion of relevant stakeholders** - For evaluation to be useful and its findings to be deemed legitimate, it is important to include all relevant stakeholders. These are likely to include the provider, the participants, students and leaders of teaching and learning (managers, heads of school, and deans).
• **Context** - A CPD activity may take place and have value for its participants, but without supportive institutional conditions its value and impact will be difficult to capture. The wider institutional context is critical to how CPD is perceived, and it can impact the extent and speed with which participants can make changes to their teaching and therefore to student learning.

• **Be realistic** - about what can be achieved; newcomers to evaluation might start by exploring value from a single stakeholder perspective, before including others. This should allow those new to the process the time to familiarise themselves with the process before embarking on the evaluation of significant interventions.

• **Ethics** - Evaluation must be conducted ethically. This means it should conform to the relevant institution's and/or professional association's ethical guidelines for research and data protection (e.g. British Educational Research Association, 2011), and to relevant teaching, learning and assessment policies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVELS OF EVALUATION</th>
<th>Pre activity</th>
<th>During activity</th>
<th>Immediately post activity</th>
<th>6 months post activity</th>
<th>12 months+ post activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation/reaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in conceptions of teaching &amp; Learning</td>
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<td>Changes in teaching and learning behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in student learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impacts on institutional culture</td>
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</table>

**Questions**

Tends to move towards more qualitative evaluation methods and to include more questions around transfer, student learning and institutional context.
Happiness or Impact

But impact?

• Tendency to focus on ‘satisfaction’, short term measures,

• Solution:
  – Evidencing Value (Bamber, 2013)
    • reflexive approaches that consider soft and hard outcomes
    • increased confidence, thinking
Recommendations

• Evaluation needs to be considered during the design stage and in line with learning outcomes

• We recommend evaluation before, during and after events, with the emphasis on repeating evaluation after 6 months and 2 years to gauge longer-term impacts

• The contributions students can make to staff CPD is an area that has received limited attention and could be usefully explored to better align CPD and the student voice.

• Evaluation is a core skill in HE teaching. For us to evaluate the impact of CPD, everyone should be an evaluator!
Discussion

- What does this work mean for your own evaluation processes and practices?
- How might you change current evaluation processes?
- How can you better embed proxies for student learning in your evaluation process?
- What questions or challenges might you encounter?
- What else do you need to know?