



Peer Review of Teaching

Collegial conversations | Enhancing scholarly practice

Developing a culture of peer review of teaching through a distributive leadership approach

Final Report 2014

Queensland University of Technology

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- The project partner organisations: Curtin University, Queensland University of Technology, The University of Adelaide, and University of Technology, Sydney, along with the senior sponsors in each project team university.

List of acronyms used

LeaD-IN	Leadership, Development and Integration
LTU	Learning and Teaching Unit
PRT	Peer Review of Teaching
PRTDL	Peer Review of Teaching through Distributive Leadership Project

Executive summary

Teaching is a core function of higher education and must be effective if it is to provide students with learning experiences that are stimulating, challenging and rewarding. Obtaining feedback on teaching is indispensable to enhancing the quality of learning design, facilitating personal and/or professional development and maximising student learning outcomes. Peer review of teaching has the potential to improve the quality of teaching at tertiary level, by encouraging critical reflection on teaching, innovation in teaching practice and scholarship of teaching at all academic levels. However, embedding peer review within the culture of teaching and learning is a significant challenge that requires sustained commitment from senior leadership as well as those in leadership roles within local contexts.

Aims and deliverables

The project aimed to:

- Investigate, discuss, and debate the challenges, benefits and strategies for embedding peer review as part of the teaching and learning culture within higher education.
- Develop, pilot, implement and evaluate a distributive leadership model for embedding peer review within a cross-disciplinary context.
- Develop a resource pack for dissemination across the university sector.

A leadership model for embedding peer review within diverse disciplinary contexts was developed and is referred to as LeaD-IN. The LeaD-IN model highlights three key elements—Leadership, Development and Integration—as central to the work of embedding peer review within academic cultures. The model was informed by a thorough review of literature, focus group discussions with academic staff, advice from the Project Reference Group and the critical reflections of the project team. Feedback on the model was gathered throughout the project and used to modify and refine its final iteration. To implement the model, a range of strategies were undertaken within the organisational setting used by each partner university for the purposes of this project. Case studies describing the implementation journey in each of the four contexts, and outcomes to date, have been developed. A set of professional development resources was developed that includes an overview of peer review as a collegial, non-judgemental process, peer review workshop materials, video vignettes highlighting the process of peer review and strategies for embedding peer review within institutional contexts, and sample peer review tools. All resources produced by the project are available on the project website at <http://www.peerreviewofteaching.org>.

Dissemination

The project outcomes were disseminated by means of a successful series of locally delivered peer review workshops, presentation at national conferences, and a national symposium. These activities were designed to not only communicate the aims and products of the project to stakeholders, but to also facilitate discussion and debate about peer review of teaching and encourage staff at all levels to engage with the process.

Conclusion and recommendations

As universities across Australia focus on the quality of teaching and learning, there is a concomitant need to review processes and strategies for facilitating scholarly teaching practices. Peer review is an approach to the evaluation of teaching that capitalises on the expertise and experience of academic peers, can provide valid comment on teaching and curriculum, and is consistent with scholarly teaching practice. The LeaD-IN model developed by the project team offers a useful framework for developing peer review within the diverse range of teaching and learning environments across the higher education sector.

Recommendations

In response to the findings of the project, the project team offers the following recommendations:

- That universities ensure that they regularly review policies to support developmental peer review as a key strategy for academic staff to obtain 360° feedback on their teaching, including workload models that recognise the role of peer review as a fundamental component of scholarly teaching practice, and promotion policies that recognise evidence presented through summative peer review processes. The particularities of peer review within a diverse range of teaching contexts should be evident in all of the above.
- That ongoing professional development programs be offered to support the skill development of staff engaging in peer review, including basic strategies for both peer reviewees *and* peer reviewers, and more advanced skills in developing the scholarly dimension of peer review.
- That Peer Review Networks (or equivalent) for all levels of academic staff be fostered within institutions and sponsored by senior leaders. They should provide a platform for collaborative dialogue regarding learning and teaching issues, particularly with respect to quality and standards at the teaching interface, and the development of sustainable infrastructure to support peer review within each institutional context.
- That academic departments and faculties include as a strategic priority local approaches to supporting peer review, and recognising peer review champions and teaching scholars as part of a broader, aligned strategy for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

Preamble

Teaching is a core function of higher education and must be effective if it is to provide students with learning experiences that are stimulating, challenging and rewarding. Obtaining feedback on teaching is indispensable to enhancing the quality of learning design, facilitating personal and/or professional development and maximising student learning outcomes. Peer review offers a contemporary strategy to evaluate teaching that capitalises on the expertise and experience of academic peers, can provide valid comment on teaching and curriculum and is consistent with scholarly teaching practice. Despite these advantages, however, peer review has variable 'buy in' at the academic coalface and is not universally practised.

This collaborative project developed a distributive leadership model (LeaD-IN) for embedding peer review within cross-disciplinary contexts. The *embedding* context of the current project adds to the valuable body of work undertaken earlier in relation to peer review, in particular *Peer Review for Promotion Purposes* (Crisp et al., 2009) which focussed on the development of processes and protocols specifically for the summative peer review of teaching, and *Social, communicative and interpersonal leadership in the context of peer review* (Sachs & Parsell, 2013) which focussed on developing the PEER model which has 3 interrelated elements: leadership, review and communication. The current project is closely aligned to one of Sachs and Parsell's key recommendations, that for peer review to be systematically and widely supported requires a shared account of leadership that recognises the value of both formal and informal leaders (2013, p. 4). Over the course of the project each of the four partner universities experimented with implementing the LeaD-IN model using approaches that 'fitted' their individual contexts.

Background

While teaching in higher education can be rewarding and team orientated, it can also be an isolating experience that challenges our capacity to understand and respond to the changing contexts of learning, student experience and pedagogy. Peer review of teaching in higher education is an example of professional innovation, which if sustained, can become an effective, ongoing strategy for academic development. Evidence demonstrates, however, that achieving sufficient commitment from stakeholders for success can be a significant challenge. Peer review of teaching is recognised increasingly as one strategy for academic development (Barnard et al., 2011; Bell, 2001; MacKinnon, 2001; Magin, 1998) even though historically peer review of teaching is 'a largely unfamiliar activity' that is 'generally unsupported by policy and culture in Australian universities' (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 11). Higher education leaders report that academics generally do not engage with peer review of teaching in a systematic or constructive manner (Bolt & Atkinson, 2010; Harris et al., 2008).

Within the Australian context, focus on economic imperatives holds the higher education sector increasingly more accountable for the expenditure of government funds to sustain national economic priorities through meeting a range of efficiency driven performance

indicators. To measure institutional success, comparative data on the performance of institutions in widening participation, student retention, learning and teaching output, research, and employment of graduates, is collected on an annual basis (Blackmore, 2005, p. 219). In this environment, staff outcomes are typically assessed through a process of performance appraisal where a supervisor monitors and gives feedback on staff performance (Blackmore, 2005). In the higher education context, one method of appraisal has been described as the 'managerial approach' (Gosling, 2002), which may involve peer observation where managers observe teaching often for audit and quality assurance reasons. Peer observation is sometimes associated with classroom visits from more senior academic managers, quality auditing teams or academic developers (Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004; McKenzie, 2011), and it is not surprising that peer observation of classroom teaching behaviours has been found to increase anxiety (Bell, 2001; Kell & Annetts, 2009), and has sometimes been described as a process 'to be endured' (Blackmore, 2005, p. 227). This process tends to be built around uninspiring performance checklists, peer review of materials, accessibility of materials and availability of facilities for student interaction (McKenzie, 2011).

By way of contrast, a developmental approach (Barnard et al., 2011; Bell, 2005; D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005) formative reflective practice and a cyclic process of) emphasises engagement with colleagues and praxis. Harris et al. (2008) emphasises preconditions for successful and sustained peer review that include concepts of collegial trust and respect, supporting guidelines, resources, advice, and the incorporation of peer review in policies relating to staff appraisal, promotion and special recognition (McKenzie et al., 2008, p. 12). Opening the communicative space and discourse between academics for effective peer review needs to include conversations about purpose, and Harris et al. (2008) highlight a strong case for the establishment of peer review of teaching based first and foremost on the fulfilment of developmental objectives designed to help individuals to achieve insight into their teaching practice. Successful peer review within an organisation needs to have an explicit emphasis on encouraging open sharing of views and ideas (p. 8).

Peer review in academic contexts

Teaching is a core function of higher education and must be effective if it is to provide students with learning experiences that are stimulating, challenging and rewarding (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2008, p. 2). Even though there is little agreement in the literature, or in practice, about the measurement of quality teaching and learning outcomes in higher education (DEEWR, 2008, p. 37), it is clear that peer evaluation can play a central role in teaching quality (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005; Taylor & Richardson, 2001, p. 49). Peer review in higher education is one of a number of mechanisms to provide feedback on learning and teaching activity and according to some literature it can be an effective strategy for academic development (Barnard et al., 2011; Bell, 2001, 2005; Bell & Cooper, 2013; MacKinnon, 2001; Magin, 1998). Peer review of teaching, however, does not occur in all disciplines, or in all universities, despite an emerging emphasis on evaluation of courses and teaching confirming the importance of effective strategies for quality assessment of learning and teaching practice (Byrne & Flood, 2003; Harvey, 2003). The pressure for peer review of teaching and learning reflects an emerging higher education reality. Taylor and Richardson (2001, p. xi) highlighted the need

for innovation and change in the area arguing that ‘most academics express few concerns about peer scrutiny of research activities’, yet ‘they tend to be sceptical of any process of peer review involving teaching’.

Higher education literature has focused increasingly on the benefits of peer support and scholarship of teaching as an overarching framework for teaching and learning development within organisations. For example, Boyer (1990) explained scholarship of teaching as a four-dimensional model of: *discovery*—doing research; *integration*—making connections across disciplines; *application*—using research results and recommendations; and *teaching*—educating and stimulating future scholars and practitioners. Further to this, Hutchings and Shulman (1999) highlighted inter-relationships between ‘excellent teaching’ and the ‘scholarship of teaching’ when they argued that in addition to being ‘scholarly’, teaching needs to be public, open to critique and evaluation, a comprehensible model for colleagues, and a continual development of practical techniques. More recent research has again demonstrated that successful partnerships between academic staff encourage individual and group development of teaching best practice (Bell, 2001; D’Andrea, 2002; Ferren, 2001; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004; Keig & Waggoner, 1995). The challenge is to find ways to encourage academics to engage in peer review as one avenue to inspire better teaching practice and enhance the value of teaching and learning success (Bell, 2005). In reality, there are few guidelines or validated examples available to assist design and implementation of peer review of teaching; new ways need to be identified to achieve the task.

Distributive leadership

In a practical context, if an organisation or faculty is seeking genuine commitment of staff to quality improvement through peer review, the process needs to be a sustainable addition to practice. It must not be implemented as a managerial activity driven only by a desire to obtain performance measures. Differences exist between a managerial (performance driven) approach and a developmental (person-centred) approach to peer review. Questions need to be asked about what else ‘I/we’ need to achieve in order to broaden and maximise uptake of peer review of teaching as a goal within an organisation for the ultimate achievement of improved student learning and quality teaching.

It is unrealistic to expect that after first taking the step of developing a peer review process, everyone will embrace it and automatically participate without the need for further assistance and leadership. Distributive forms of leadership seek to enable shared leadership responsibility at all organisational levels. Historically, leadership tends to be informed by assumptions in which hierarchical prerogative and managerial privilege dominate and activity is characterised by the leader ‘imposing their agendas on those who they lead’ (Fryer, 2011, p. 26). However, this widely accepted concept of impositional leadership is less successful when seeking cultural change, especially in critically sensitive academic cultures (Calás et al., 2003).

Distributive leadership emphasises the role of leaders in the development of a culture of positive working relations and integrated strategies to solve complex problems (Fryer, 2011, p. 32). This is a shift away from a focus simply on the individual or ‘heroic’ leader (Timperley,

2005, p. 395) to a focus on examining the influence(s) around the leader (Hoch et al., 2010; Pearce, 2008; Yukl & Rubina, 2010), the 'followers' (Riggio et al., 2008), and how parties interact and co-create a context with the leader. This is a departure from traditional notions where influence and decision making 'travel downstream' from the vertical leader to the followers (Day, 2004; O'Connor & Day, 2007; Pearce & Sims, 2002). The shift is away from a downstream approach toward reciprocal relations in which people and context are acknowledged for their part in influencing outcomes and success.

There are a range of 'post heroic' distributive leadership theories including collaborative leadership (Rosenthal, 1998), distributed leadership (Jones et al., 2012, Gronn, 2002, Spillane, 2005, Spillane & Diamond, 2007), shared leadership (Spillane, 2005; Pearce and Conger 2003), and transformational leadership (Parry & Bryman, 2006). Each of these theories is cognisant that various forms of leadership, ranging from impositional to distributive are necessary and valued. This argument is reinforced by others (Bolden, 2011; Gosling et al., 2009) who caution against the polarisation of distributive and impositional forms of leadership, arguing that context is important (Currie & Lockett, 2011, p. 297). The popular Gronn (2002) model of distributive leadership is based on collaborative principles and participation. This model is characterised by openness of the boundaries of leadership, and a broadening of the conventional 'net of leaders' to include other contributors (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 7). The defining characteristics of this model are 'concertive action' and 'conjoint agency', where people work together to pool their initiative and expertise (Gronn, 2002, p. 431).

In peer review of teaching informed by a collaborative approach, the intent is for every participant to have opportunity to demonstrate leadership and responsibility. Leadership under these conditions is grounded within concepts of shared facilitation, shared responsibility and joint concern for outcomes. Encouraging everyone to seek empowerment through a distributive form of leadership is fundamental to the long-term value of peer review of teaching.

Project aims

The overall aim of the project was to improve student learning through building the leadership capacity of academic staff to embed peer review within the culture of teaching and learning. More specifically, the project objectives were to:

1. Investigate, discuss, and debate the challenges, benefits and strategies for embedding peer review as part of the teaching and learning culture within higher education.
2. Develop, pilot, implement and evaluate a distributive leadership model for embedding peer review within a cross-disciplinary context.
3. Develop a resource pack for dissemination across the university sector.
4. Develop guidelines for transference of the project outcomes to other universities.

Approach and methodology

The project used a two-phase 'cascade' design that included the following key activities:

- *Development of LeaD-IN model*

Drawing upon theories of distributive leadership and culture change, and the commentary from focus group discussions and key stakeholder interviews, the LeaD-IN model highlights three key dimensions as fundamental to embedding peer review within cultures of teaching and learning:

- Leadership—a key driver in facilitating any form of cultural change
- Development—building capability and supporting engagement
- Integration—alignment of purpose, policies, processes.

The model provides a frame, or lens, for focusing on the work of developing peer review within the culture/s of teaching practice. It is designed to enable individuals, groups and leaders to see the 'big picture' but be able to focus on particular roles and responsibilities as well. By asking the question '**What do each of the key propositions mean in my context and/or with my focus?**' the model can be a catalyst for developing peer review within particular teaching and learning contexts.

- *Delivery of capacity-building workshops*

A second key strategy of the project was the implementation of capacity-building workshops at each partner university to facilitate uptake of peer review by academic staff. The workshops provided staff with an approach to peer review based on a developmental framework that offered a means for staff to reflect on and refine their skills and knowledge in a supportive and collaborative environment.

- *Promotion of organisational engagement*

To complement the capacity-building workshops, a range of strategies were undertaken to promote peer review within the leadership context that was relevant to the organisational setting used by each partner university for the purposes of this project. These included developing a network of local 'champions', providing project briefings to key academic leaders within the relevant organisational unit (heads of school, executive deans, etc.), and creating strategic linkages with the university's Learning and Teaching Unit (or equivalent) where appropriate.

- *Creation of a purpose-built website to support embedding processes*

A purpose-built website—*Peer Review of Teaching: Collegial conversations/Enhancing scholarly practice*—has been developed to facilitate the development of knowledge about peer review and provide ideas and strategies for embedding peer review within the culture of teaching and learning. Basic website design principles such as page layout, navigation, graphics and information content (Burgess et al., 2009) have been applied to enhance usability and functionality of the site. Access to video content is supported by the provision of text-based transcripts. The Peer Review of Teaching (PRT) website provides a range of resources for academic staff at all levels.

Chapter 2 : Development of the LeaD-IN model

A cross-disciplinary leadership model (LeaD-IN) for embedding peer review of teaching has been developed by the project team. LeaD-IN is underpinned by theories of distributed leadership, culture and cultural change (Roxa, Martensson & Alveteg, 2011; Robertson & Cox, 2009; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Spillane, 2005). The work of previous ALTC grants has also been taken into account, particularly that of Lefoe and Parrish (2008) and Harris et al. (2008). The model is also informed by themes emerging from focus group discussions undertaken during the course of the project (Appendix A), feedback from conference presentations and the national symposium, discussions with the Project Reference Group and the critical reflections of the project team.

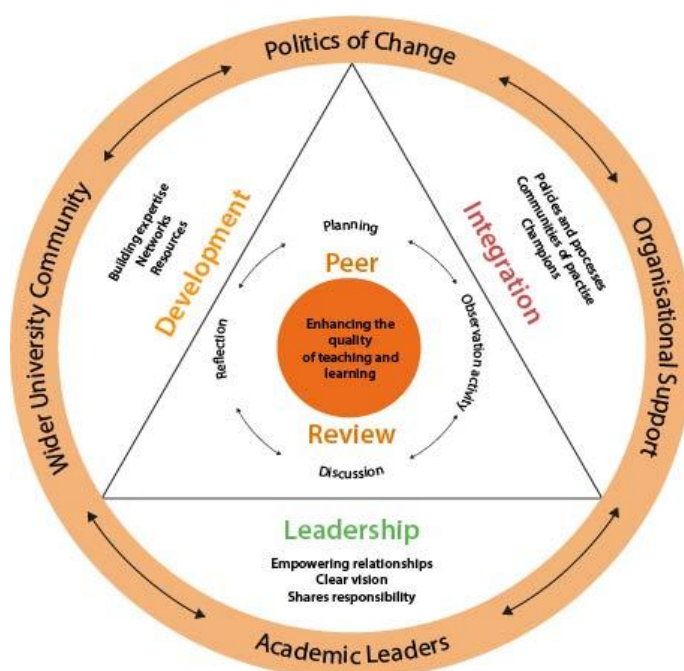


Figure 2.1: The LeaD-IN model—a distributive leadership approach to embedding peer review within the culture of teaching and learning

As shown in Figure 2.1, the model highlights three key elements as central to the process of embedding peer review within the culture of teaching and learning: Development, Integration and Leadership. These elements are described in more detail below but broadly focus on staff capacity-building strategies that are scaffolded by a network of relationships among people, structures and processes (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003) and supported through a distributed, or integrative, leadership approach that embodies *shared* purpose, collaboration and respect among all key stakeholder groups (Zepke, 2007). The model also proposes a reciprocal relationship between these processes and broader factors operating in the wider social context, for example, academic cultures, organisational support, the wider university community and the politics of change.

The model provides a frame, or lens, for focusing on the work of building peer review within the culture/s of evaluating teaching practice. It emphasises that the essential purpose of peer review is enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning. Importantly, LeaD-IN is designed to enable individuals, groups and leaders to see the 'big picture' as well as focus on specific roles and responsibilities. By asking the question 'What do each of the key propositions mean within my/our context?' the model offers a useful lens for developing peer review across the diverse range of teaching and learning environments within the higher education sector.

Leadership

Leadership actions are a key driver in facilitating any form of cultural change. Within the context of potentially sensitive academic issues, such as peer review of teaching, the types of leadership strategies employed are vitally important to successful outcomes. Achieving the genuine commitment of staff to peer review of their teaching requires, amongst other things, that the process is seen as a valued and sustainable addition to their academic practice. Further, issues of trust, respect, collegiality and collaboration are fundamental to attaining 'buy in' from academic staff.

Consistent with principles of distributive leadership (Gronn, 2002, p. 431), the model represents the process of embedding peer review within cultures of teaching and learning as a shared activity where each academic has the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and responsibility. Leadership under these conditions is grounded within concepts of shared facilitation, shared responsibility, and joint concern for outcomes. Key considerations for all stakeholders include a shared vision of excellence in teaching practice as well as the value and purpose of peer review as regards quality teaching. Peer review processes and practices should reflect shared ownership and responsibility for teaching quality and be supported by tangible demonstrations that new behaviours are valued.

For peer review success there is a need to foster and support investment and commitment from all levels of leadership. Sustainability and effectiveness is dependent on institution wide support and commitment to a new culture of teaching development and feedback (Smigiel et al., 2011). Success has been found to be 'critically dependent' on the level of support individuals receive at all levels of the institution, including chancellor, faculty, school, and individual academics. The support for peer review of teaching provided by colleagues, senior academics and mentors has been found to be critical to the success of distributive leadership approaches (Smigiel et al., 2011, p. 22).

Development

Embedding peer review of teaching within the culture of teaching and learning requires staff to have the capability and desire to engage productively with the process. Activities that can facilitate this goal include the building of expertise through workshops, the formation of support networks and accessible resources that enable participation in these activities.

Workshops are essential as they provide staff with the opportunity to discuss the underlying principles of peer review, gain insights and tools that will assist them in engaging constructively and productively with peer review of teaching, and help to reduce their fears

and concerns (Bell & Cooper, 2013). They can provide staff with a range of strategies, insights and tools that develop their capacity to engage in peer review of teaching. Workshops that address 'local' needs and issues are also an important means of developing staff ownership of the process and the sense that peer review presents a value-add opportunity rather than something that has been 'mandated from above' (Shortland, 2004). The opportunity for staff to engage in collaborative peer participation and review, to critically reflect on teaching, and constructively evaluate practice is fundamental to achieving quality and sustainable change.

Authentic learning in real contexts has been identified as a crucial factor in terms of facilitating further development (Davison, Pharo, & Warr, 2011). In this regard, collaborative spaces such as successful communities of practice and/or learning communities (Stoll & Louis, 2007) are examples where continuous reflection can occur in a supportive and encouraging environment (McDonald & Star, 2011). Recent research highlights the importance of communities of practice for engaging staff in successful peer review processes (Barnard et al., 2011; Bolt & Atkinson, 2010). If well supported, they can provide an interdisciplinary communicative focus where faculty and professional staff can collaborate on joint ventures. Creating a genuine environment that emphasises personal responsibility and supports it with targeted policy, integrated resources and leadership networks can be instrumental in encouraging and sustaining a culture of change.

Integration

Integration of policies, processes and networks is fundamental to the success of embedding peer review. There is a need to communicate clearly the goals and values of innovation; align practices with key issues and concerns of academic staff; actively involve faculty staff in learning about the innovation through organised activities that can be carried out in a collegial group setting; and finally, there is a need to provide a safe space in which questions and concerns can be raised (Furco & Moely, 2012, p. 132). Opportunity to participate in a range of social network strategies—including face-to-face meetings, accessing important sources of information, contributing to debate, attending workshops, gaining knowledge and participating in networks—all ultimately grow shared understandings and support for innovations including peer review (McDonald & Star, 2010).

Policy alone is largely insufficient in motivating behaviour change at the local level, especially in relation to teaching practice. Local processes and roles need to be created (or existing ones utilised) to facilitate the adoption of new practices, along with an environment in which people are encouraged to discuss and raise issues openly. *Champions* are also important because, as well as being the 'go to' people that others can turn to for advice, they can act as 'local' role models who reinforce the desired practice through their actions. Champions have been identified as contributing significantly to building capacity in the creation of a culture of peer review. Taylor et al. (2011) describe the dynamic nature of leadership that can be initiated and driven by champions, described as 'emergent leaders' (p. 412). In a multiple case study examining typical champion driven leadership processes in six organisations, champions were found to be highly dynamic, context sensitive, and involved many other leaders to overcome complex problems (Taylor et al., 2011).

In particular they exhibited 'transformational behaviors' (Taylor et al., p. 414) in the initial project phase, which included coordinated forms of distributive leadership and an ability to exercise influence to advance innovation.

Politics of change

There is emerging evidence supporting the potential of distributive leadership to have a positive effect upon organisation development and change (Leithwood et al., 2007). Evidence indicates also that once certain structural and cultural barriers are removed, distributive leadership has a greater impact (Harris, 2004). There are challenges that need to be considered including entrenched leadership styles and difficulties related to the lack of formal authority within a distributive framework (Timperley, 2005). Notwithstanding, for innovation such as peer review the authority of professional expertise, self-regulation, academic freedom and autonomy is more often respected in academic institutions than traditional forms of positional power (Bento, 2011). The concept of collegiality is deeply embedded in academic environments (Middlehurst, Goreham, & Woodfield, 2009) even though distributive leadership as a discourse of collective participation and democracy is embedded in a context of shifting power relations (Bento, 2011).

While followers might be encouraged to share leadership, there are often limits to this due to professional hierarchy, different stakeholder perspectives, and accountability pressures on managers that will need to be addressed if success is to be achieved. Partly for these reasons, tensions can arise in the shifting power balance from positional forms of power to less structured and less tightly managed systems (Middlehurst et al., 2009). Indeed, some question if it is possible for distributive leadership approaches to occur within existing education institution hierarchies (Timperley, 2005). However, others detect that existing structures are changing to accommodate new ways of working (Butt & Gunter 2005).

There remains a need for significant lobbying and communication to bring about organisational change. Strategies for teams to enact a movement toward change include identification of axis points where decisions are made, and could include individual meetings with leaders, presentations to key stakeholders and committees, and the lobbying of persons in positions of power. The ability to provide evidence of likely success arising from prior achievements and evidence in the form of pilot work should not be underestimated, nor should a team history that might include successful competitive funding. Accountability is required if the team wishes to alter organisation direction and disrupt collegiate arrangements.

Chapter 3 : Outcomes

This chapter highlights the outcomes from the two key strategies that were implemented during the course of this project: 1) Building the capacity of academic staff to act as leaders in relation to the incorporation of peer review within their own practice as regards evaluation of teaching and encouraging others to do the same, and 2) Promoting engagement of organisational areas with peer review as a strategy for evaluating teaching practice.

Academic staff capacity-building

Workshop program

Over the course of the project, a rolling series of workshops was conducted for academic staff in each of the partner institutions. In total, approximately 250 staff attended (140—Faculty of Health, QUT and the ECARD program at QUT; 70—Curtin Business School; 25—Adelaide Law School and School of Architecture at The University of Adelaide; and 19—Faculty of Health, UTS). Further workshops are being conducted in August 2013 as part of a ‘Teaching the Law’ Seminar Series at The University of Adelaide.

The main theme of the workshops was ‘de-mystifying’ peer review as a process for evaluating teaching, providing a set of principles for contextualising the process, connecting peer review with scholarly teaching practice and encouraging staff to use peer review as a strategy for reflection to further improve teaching practice. An outline of the workshop content is presented in Appendix A.

As shown in Table 3.1, the workshops were very well received by academic staff.

Table 3.1: Participant ratings for the Peer Review Workshops (n=44)

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly agree 5
Did the workshop enhance your knowledge of Peer Review of Teaching?	0	0	15.9%	54.5%	29.5%
How likely are you to include peer review as part of your teaching evaluation process?	0	0	2.2%	20.5%	77.3%
Overall, was participation in the PRT workshop a useful experience?	0	0	2.2%	45.5%	52.3%

Written feedback from staff strongly supported these positive ratings. Representative comments included the following:

Great workshop, will find the Blackboard community page very helpful. The video was very helpful – made processes very clear. Understandably this may be difficult with varying numbers of people in workshops with time constraints but would be great to have opportunities for discussion around each person's philosophy/beliefs about teaching, strategies they implement in teaching and why they are interested in peer review.

I would recommend spending more time on strategies of feedback rather than the rationale as we are here at the workshop due to already having/seeing value in peer review.

I overcame some of the intimidation and fear about the process

Perhaps make it more obvious whether peer review can be used for promotion and review, even though it is meant to be developmental.

Staff engagement in peer review

In an attempt to measure the attitudes and perceptions of academic staff regarding peer review of teaching and their intent to use peer review in evaluating their teaching practice, the project team designed a relatively short questionnaire that was administered online at two time points during the course of the project (towards the end of Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively). The *Peer Review of Teaching—Phase 1* questionnaire was informed by work undertaken by Adshead, White and Stephenson (2006), and refined through consultation with the Project Advisory Group and critical reflection by the project team.

The questionnaire was administered as an online survey (using Key Survey) by three of the four partner institutions to all academic staff within their respective faculties/schools. At Curtin Business School (CBS) the six business managers/heads of School were asked to forward the survey invitation to academic staff in their area. Except for CBS, two reminders were sent at fortnightly intervals. The data were collated and analysed by the QUT team.

Survey results: Phase 1

At the first time point (Phase 1) a total of 146 staff across the four partner universities completed the survey questionnaire (Appendix B). As expected, the sample consisted mainly of Lecturers or Senior Lecturers (67.1 per cent) and Sessional teachers (17.1 per cent), with a smaller proportion of staff at associate professorial or professorial levels (15 per cent). Almost half of the respondents had been teaching within the university context for 10 years or less (45.2 per cent).

Of the remainder, 24.2 per cent had 11–20 years of experience and 13 per cent had been teaching in a university context for more than 20 years. Respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 29 years (6.9 per cent) to more than 60 years (6.8 per cent) with the majority aged between 40 and 59 years (67.1 per cent).

Table 3.2: Demographic characteristics of respondents to the *Peer Review of Teaching—Phase 1* survey

	<i>f</i> <i>n</i> = 146	%
Age:		
20 – 29 years	10	6.9
30 – 39 years	25	13.2
40 – 49 years	52	35.6
50 – 59 years	47	31.8
> 60 years	10	6.9
Gender:		
Female	90	61.9
Male	65	38.1
Academic role:		
Sessional Teacher	25	17.1
Lecturer	58	39.7
Senior Lecturer	40	27.4
Associate Professor	11	7.5
Professor	11	7.5
Teaching experience in university context:		
1–5 years	42	27.9
6–10 years	39	27.3
11–15 years	25	13.2
16–20 years	16	11.1
>20 years	23	13.1
Usual teaching role:		
Tutor	16	11.2
Lecturer	119	81.5
Other	7	4.8

As shown in Table 3.2, respondents indicated generally positive attitudes toward peer review as a strategy for evaluating teaching practice and as part of scholarly teaching. A large majority of respondents (82.9 per cent) indicated that evaluation of teaching is taken seriously in their workplace contexts, and almost all respondents were of the view that peers can provide a uniquely valuable source of feedback about teaching practice (97.3 per cent). Around ninety per cent of respondents did not believe that peer review is an intrusion into academic work (86.9 per cent) or that it challenges academic freedom (90.7 per cent). Similarly, there was very strong agreement that peer review can provide an effective measure of teaching practice (85 per cent) and should be included by academic staff as part of their evaluation of teaching practice (92.5 per cent).

Table 3.3: Academic staff responses to the *Peer Review of Teaching—Phase 1* survey (n=146)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Some- what agree	Some- what disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%					
Evaluation of teaching is taken very seriously in my workplace context.	19.2	36.3	27.4	8.2	6.8	2.1
Reflective practice is a fundamental aspect of scholarly teaching.	54.8	34.2	7.5	0.7	2.1	0.7
Teaching is a scholarly activity which should be open to critique.	48.6	41.1	8.9	0.7	0.0	0.7
Peers can provide a uniquely valuable source of feedback about teaching practice.	32.9	50.7	13.7	0.7	0.0	0.7
All academics should include peer review as part of their evaluation of teaching practice.	25.3	43.2	24.0	3.4	2.1	0.0
Peer review of teaching is valued in my workplace context.	6.8	28.1	39.7	11.0	7.5	4.8
It is too time consuming to engage in peer review of teaching practice.	5.5	13.7	24.7	24.0	24.0	5.5
Peer review of teaching benefits both the reviewer and the reviewee.	30.1	45.2	18.5	3.4	0.7	0.7
Peer review of teaching is essential to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.	26.7	32.9	28.8	4.1	3.4	1.4
Engaging in peer review of teaching is not worthwhile.	1.4	0.7	3.4	15.8	45.9	30.8
Peer review of teaching is an intrusion into my academic work.	0.7	3.4	5.5	17.8	43.8	25.3
Peer review of teaching challenges my academic freedom.	2.1	2.1	5.5	19.2	43.2	26.0
Peer review can provide an effective measure of teaching practice.	13.0	33.6	38.4	6.8	3.8	0.7
Peer review is a good way for academic staff to develop their potential as teachers.	19.2	52.7	19.2	2.1	3.4	1.4
Peer review would not add to what I already do to evaluate my teaching.	2.1	3.4	4.1	21.9	48.6	17.8

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had undertaken a peer review of their teaching within the past 12 months. This timescale was chosen because, within the partner institutions, it was felt that most academics were unlikely to undertake peer review more than once during a 12 month period. Thus, in an attempt to capture as much peer review ‘activity’ as possible, a 12 month timeframe was chosen for the purposes of this project. Less than half of the sample indicated that they had participated in peer review at some time during the past 12 months (39.7 per cent). Of those who responded ‘Yes’ to this question, the majority reported that it had enabled them to reflect critically on their teaching (96.5 per cent), increased their confidence as a teacher (93.1 per cent) and had encouraged them to try new things (86.2 per cent). Almost all respondents (96.6 per cent) agreed that peer review is a valuable strategy for evaluating teaching (Table 3.3).

Table 3.4: Phase 1 responses of academic staff who had undertaken peer review of teaching within the past 12 months (n=58)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Some-what agree	Some-what disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%					
Peer review of teaching increased my confidence as a teacher.	15.5	46.6	31.0	3.4	1.7	1.7
Peer review of teaching provided me with insight into my teaching.	29.3	48.3	19.0	1.7	0.0	1.7
Peer review of teaching decreased my feeling of isolation as a teacher.	10.3	37.9	27.6	15.6	6.9	1.7
Peer review of teaching encouraged me to try new things in my teaching practice.	20.7	41.4	24.1	8.6	3.4	1.7
I would like to share the outcomes of my peer review in discussions with my supervisor.	20.7	37.9	22.4	10.3	5.2	1.7
Engaging in peer review helped me to critically reflect on my teaching practice.	27.6	51.7	17.2	1.7	0.0	1.7
Overall, peer review is a valuable strategy for evaluating teaching.	43.1	41.4	12.1	1.7	0.0	1.7

Survey respondents were also asked whether there were any comments they wished to make. Approximately forty per cent (40.8 per cent) of the sample provided comments and, in general, were supportive of incorporating peer review in the evaluation of teaching. Representative comments included the following:

I think peer review is highly valuable

I would find it (peer review) useful to participate in

I have undertaken peer review throughout my academic career ... I am encouraged to continue

I have found peer review very helpful for improving my teaching. I think all academics should be encouraged to participate.

However, participants also raised several issues that they believed should be taken into consideration in terms of facilitating effective outcomes. The key issues raised, together with representative comments, are given below:

The model of peer review being utilised

Peer review can and cannot be beneficial ... if it is something where you are being assessed by an auditor or inspector then it will be seen as an intrusion.

Peer review works best when it is encouraged within a culture of critical reflection and collegial engagement.

The process needs to be standardised so that there is consistency of practice. All academics need to be reviewed without bias. Also ... the process could easily be manipulated to achieve unfair or unjust outcomes.

Peer review is something that needs to be handled as a School or Faculty-wide process. I've seen 'mate to mate' processes that reinforce practitioners' views of their self-worth.

Experience and expertise of peer reviewers

Peer review is an art, both reviewer and reviewee need to be appropriately prepared for good and bad communication/discussion that ensues.

The effectiveness of the process depends on the motivation and experience of both parties.

It will only be valuable if the peer is professional.

Organisational constraints to be overcome

The time commitment needed to do a good job needs to be recognised

The university needs to appreciate participation in peer review. It's only emphasising research activities and output.

I support peer review but current workload is so great that I see peer review as just more work.

Survey results: Phase 2

In an attempt to track staff engagement in peer review at a second or later time point in the project, it was decided to administer a Phase 2 survey questionnaire approximately 12 months after the Phase 1 survey.

Similarly to Phase 1, the *Peer Review of Teaching—Phase 2* questionnaire was administered online. However, due to contextual issues, only two partner universities were able to participate in this activity. Being mindful of the challenge involved in achieving staff participation in a second questionnaire, it was decided to focus the Phase 2 questionnaire on engagement in peer review, perceptions of the process and outcomes in terms of teaching practice (Appendix C).

A total of 47 staff across two of partner universities completed the Phase 2 survey questionnaire. Similarly to Phase 1, the sample consisted mainly of Lecturers or Senior Lecturers (70.2 per cent), however there were relatively more at associate professorial or professorial levels (19.2 per cent) with a lesser proportion of Sessional teachers (10.6 per cent). Almost half of the respondents had been teaching within the university context for 10 years or less (46.8 per cent). Of the remainder, a greater proportion than in Phase 1 had 11–20 years of experience (40.5 per cent) with fewer who had been teaching in a university context for more than 20 years (12.8 per cent). As in Phase 1, the majority of respondents were aged between 40 and 59 years (74.5 per cent).

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had undertaken a peer review of their teaching within the past 12 months. A slightly higher proportion than in Phase 1 indicated that they had participated in peer review at some time during the past 12 months (40.8 per cent). However, for the Phase 2 questionnaire, staff who responded ‘No’ to this question were also asked whether they *intended* to undertake peer review in the next 12 months. Of these, just over half indicated that they intended to undertake peer review within the next 12 months (52 per cent).

With respect to those who responded ‘Yes’ to this question (that is, they had undertaken peer review within the past 12 months), all participants reported that it had enabled them to reflect critically on their teaching (100 per cent), provided insight into their teaching (100 per cent) and increased their confidence as a teacher (100 per cent), while a lesser proportion indicated that it encouraged them to try new things (76.5 per cent). All respondents (100 per cent) agreed that peer review is a valuable strategy for evaluating teaching (see Table 3.5). Although the size of the Phase 2 sample precludes generalisation of the results, there is a great deal of consistency in the perceptions of those who had undertaken peer review with respect to its value as a strategy for evaluating teaching practice. We also believe that the high proportion of those that hadn’t undertaken peer review in the previous 12 months but *intend* to undertake a peer review within the next 12 months is an encouraging result.

Table 3.5: Phase 2 responses of academic staff who had undertaken peer review of teaching within the past 12 months (n=18)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Some-what agree	Some-what disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%					
Peer review of teaching increased my confidence as a teacher.	23.5	47.1	29.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Peer review of teaching provided me with insight into my teaching.	11.8	64.7	23.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Peer review of teaching decreased my feeling of isolation as a teacher.	11.8	35.3	23.5	11.8	11.8	5.9
Peer review of teaching encouraged me to try new things in my teaching practice.	17.6	47.1	11.8	11.8	11.8	0.0
I would like to share the outcomes of my peer review in discussions with my supervisor.	11.8	35.3	23.5	5.9	17.6	5.9
Engaging in peer review helped me to critically reflect on my teaching practice.	17.6	58.8	23.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Overall, peer review is a valuable strategy for evaluating teaching.	29.4	52.9	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

The Phase 2 questionnaire asked participants who had undertaken peer review during the past 12 months to comment on three outcomes that resulted from participation in peer review, as well as their comments on peer review. The key themes that emerged are as follows:

Three outcomes that resulted from your participation in peer review

- New ideas regarding teaching methods, for example, 'suggestions for alternative approaches', 'exploring other ideas re classroom presentation', 'amending my style to be less didactic' and 'better set of assessment items for the students'.
- Better understanding of myself as a teacher/my impact on students' learning experience, for example, 'reflection on my role in student learning', 'an awareness of the flow within my lectures' and 'a better understanding of how I come across to students'.

- Validation of teaching approaches being used/myself as a teacher, for example, 'reinforcement that I am an engaging teacher', 'confidence in what I am doing', 'confirmation of things I do well'.

Participants' comments about the peer review process are summed up by the following responses:

A very worthwhile activity. Less time consuming than I expected. Enjoyed interacting with a colleague in a discipline other than my own.

It is a two way street. I benefit from feedback on my teaching and from observing others. PRT builds collegiality.

Organisational engagement

In addition to the capacity-building workshop program, a range of strategies were undertaken to promote peer review within the leadership context that was relevant to the organisational setting used by each partner university for the purposes of this project. These included developing a network of local 'champions', providing project briefings to key academic leaders within the relevant organisational unit, for example, heads of school, executive deans etc., and creating strategic linkages with the university Learning and Teaching Unit (or equivalent) where appropriate. To provide an account of the journey within the organisational setting, interviews were held with key stakeholders, and each partner university was asked to provide a brief case study that described their context, strategies undertaken, outcomes, facilitating/inhibiting factors and plans for the future. The outcomes are presented below.

Interviews with key stakeholders

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with seven leaders ranging from early adopters who are championing peer review at the operational level through to leaders at the senior level of higher education responsible for and leading peer review implementation and design. All stakeholders were change agents who had experienced the many opportunities and challenges associated with introducing peer review of teaching. Questions asked of all stakeholders were open ended and designed to reveal experiences related to the development of cultural change and sustaining peer review of teaching in stakeholder organisations. Using the grounded theory method of analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), six themes or emergent propositions were identified that can be listed under the three broad categories of *university culture*, *peer review* and *workload*:

University culture

1. Learning and teaching is increasingly devalued in a culture that rewards research based activities.

There was a view expressed that most higher education organisations in Australia have a research focus to the detriment of learning and teaching. This was best explained by one participant who stated that:

The money, the kudos comes from sciences. That's on the whole where most of the grants money goes. My faculty brings in the bulk of student money to the university and we subsidise that money into research.

The perceived devaluing of teaching was best expressed by one participant as *'there's an attitude that anyone can teach, and they can teach anything. We're all interchangeable'*. An example provided by another participant that expresses a similar perception is that:

One of the things that people tend to do also that devalues teaching in the faculty from my point of view, is when they do their yearly plans they just tick about teaching and then all they talk about is research.

2. Achieving cultural change requires a shift in thinking that rewards learning and teaching to the same extent as research-based activities.

Typical of comments were that *'a cultural shift' is needed so that 'the teaching part of our work becomes equivalent to the research part of our work in its quality, in its transparency and in its centrality to what we do'*. This was explained further to mean that, as with research where there *'doesn't seem to be an immediate pay-off'*, this same type of thinking needs to extend to teaching. The following participant argued that *'a lot of our teaching is last minute, seat of the pants, private. So that the scrutiny is never really there'* and nor is a long-term developmental view.

Peer review

3. Peer review is an excellent model of teacher evaluation and, where introduced, has been well received.

Participants commented that, in talking to people about peer review, there was *'a lot of demand' for 'the expert model'* from people seeking assistance for *'a very specific purpose'* to improve the quality of their teaching. Although some people are *'looking for a summative review' for 'promotion or for an award'*, with the new developmental model the emphasis is on *'the reciprocal nature and emphasising the importance of engagement and partnership and collaboration'*.

Participants were very positive about their experience of taking part in peer review and some said they were *'huge supporters'* and had *'been using it a lot'*. They stated it provides *'a framework where both parties have agreed and feel comfortable about how you're going to observe'*.

4. The introduction of the peer review model requires support at all levels, from the VC, Deans L&T, and faculty staff, ongoing promotion across the university as a valued activity, and increased incentives to participate in peer review.

Participants often referred to the need for supportive Vice-Chancellors and Deans of Learning and Teaching because of the significant leadership role they play in achieving *'a much greater commitment to learning and teaching'* across a university. While support for learning and teaching at senior levels was highlighted, other participants also commented on the need for support, particularly for peer review, at a *'decentralised level'* particularly from within schools rather than peer review being just *'another top down thing'*. One participant expressed this view in the following way:

I actually think there's probably some benefit in me or someone like me sending it out [promoting peer review] because I'm not very threatening. I'm the bottom of the tree. And so I think with making it sustainable it is about getting a critical mass engaged in it as a habit rather than having it be something, another thing that's kind of legislated from the top.

Participants indicated while there is a minority of people who will *'stick their hands up and be involved'* that the problem is *'getting to the other people'*. Participants made a number of suggestions about how to motivate staff to undertake peer review and these included the champions, mentors, organised learning and teaching plans, and promotional purposes. However, some thought the most important aspect of the whole process was getting *'buy-in'* particularly from *'supervisors'* at the time of *'roll out'* of a peer review model.

Workload

5. Despite enthusiasm and willingness, teaching workload requirements reduce incentive for learning and teaching activities including peer review.

Participants suggested that it can be difficult to make a commitment to another colleague to assist with peer review as *'there's so many other things up the priority list that need to be done'*. Further to this, participants explained the experience for some people was more demands on top of unreasonable workload expectations as reported by this participant:

Most people are on what's called like the teaching scholar, so they're predominantly teachers rather than researchers. They would be teaching four out of five days a week. So it doesn't leave a lot of time. And coordinating huge subjects, like six hundred students and lots of casuals.

6. Increasing number of casual teachers (remunerated for teaching and marking and with few opportunities for any other activities including peer review).

Participants commented on an increasing number of casual and sessional staff in higher education teaching roles, which has meant that experienced teachers are having to spend a lot of time *'managing coordinating subjects with a bunch of casuals and a bunch of new staff who've not really taught'* and that in *'some subjects, there might be one person who's full-time and the rest are casuals'*. There are obvious issues of potential quality variation as well as removal of energy and knowledge of experienced full-time staff toward dealing with sessional or casual staff since they need to concentrate on *'keeping them and knowing who they are and maintaining their quality'*. Participants commented that more senior management did not appear to be concerned so long *'as the casuals are there and people are standing in front of the class'*.

While casual and sessional staff are often *'incredibly enthusiastic and really keen they don't and can't bring what a mature teacher can bring, what a great researcher can bring'*. Other difficulties noted by participants were that sometimes sessional staff are *'working in isolation'* and they can *'feel really quite isolated'*, leading one participant to describe them as *'lone rangers'*.

Institutional case studies

Case study: Queensland University of Technology

The Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is leader for the OLT Peer Review of Teaching through Distributive Leadership Project. The faculty offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses across a broad range of discipline areas across seven schools (Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Exercise and Nutrition Sciences, Nursing, Optometry and Vision Science, Psychology and Counselling, and Public Health and Social Work) and enrolls over 9500 students. Full-time staff vary in their teaching responsibilities according to workload categorisation based upon a range of criteria including research activities, academic/leadership responsibilities, etc. Prior to 2011 there was no formal university PRT program, but there had been work undertaken by a group of QUT Teaching and Learning Fellows in 2007–2008, followed by continued involvement in peer review by interested individuals. By 2011 an organisational commitment had emerged to review and reconceptualise the system being used for evaluating teaching across the university.

Purpose and significance

The project purpose was to investigate and implement strategies for embedding peer review as part of the teaching and learning culture within the Faculty of Health. The work undertaken in this faculty built on previous work and is a demonstration of the level of commitment needed to build change and sustainable growth over time. Significantly, the PRT program developed by the team has been institutionally endorsed by QUT and from 2013 has been adopted as a university-wide peer review of teaching program in combination with a range of options available for staff to evaluate their teaching practice. This has been a significant achievement and a cultural change and was built from modest beginnings. The university and the faculty are fully supportive of the collaboration demonstrated by this project and the direction in which peer review of teaching has progressed under the team's leadership. From the perspective of the Faculty of Health, the following purposes have been of most importance:

- Building staff capacity to engage effectively in peer review of teaching.
- Refining our approach to peer review so that future strategies are best targeted to meet staff, course and organisational needs.
- Building 'buy in' from staff with key leadership roles across all schools of the faculty.
- Strategically aligning the work of the project with university priorities in the area of teaching and learning.

Outcomes

The work of the project at QUT was undertaken through a staged approach.

Stage 1

The focus of Stage 1 was on developing staff awareness regarding peer review of teaching across the Faculty of Health, lobbying the wider organisation for adoption of peer review, and evaluating staff involvement in peer review practice. The team focused on development of leadership and capacity across the faculty through identification of champions, the instigation of regular information sessions and workshops to educate and support staff, and evaluation of participation in peer review of teaching. At the same time, because of the prior development of peer review of teaching strategy and resources by the team, there was emphasis also on stakeholder presentations, and lobbying significant people at a school, faculty, and organisational level. Examples of the activities undertaken include:

- Presentations to faculty and school committees, Faculty of Health Executive (including all heads of school) and QUT's Learning and Teaching Unit (LTU) to gain support of the peer review strategy. Our PRT strategy was supported at faculty level and endorsed by the LTU as the recommended peer review strategy across QUT from 2013.
- Identification and support of Faculty of Health champions.

- Establishment of an interim QUT Blackboard community site and the development of resources for use in the Faculty of Health and by project partners.
- Rollout of multiple Peer Review Workshops to support uptake and capacity-building across two campuses with presentations to 120 staff (faculty and university).
- Evaluation of workshops demonstrated overwhelming support for peer review of teaching and readiness to engage in peer review of teaching.

These activities occurred at the same time that QUT was undertaking a review of learning and teaching evaluation. The team was able to demonstrate the effectiveness and resource development of the Faculty of Health PRT program, and as a consequence it was adopted as part of a new broader university-wide teaching evaluation strategy from 2013 known as *ReFrame*.

Stage 2

The focus of Stage 2 was on encouraging, facilitating and evaluating PRT. Staff from across all schools within the Faculty of Health continued to contact the project team, attend workshops, and at an organisational level began engaging with the university's Learning and Teaching Unit. Since the peer review of teaching program had, from 2013, been adopted university wide, the focus of attention moved to supporting organisational implementation both through a network of QUT-appointed faculty mentors/champions (which had been appointed from 2013) and at a local level through the ongoing provision of Faculty of Health support across QUT. There was an emphasis on drop-in sessions for advice, presenting at individual school staff meetings, discussing peer review with individuals at fortuitous times, presenting workshops on peer review practice, and information sessions. There emerged a sense that implementation had in some ways moved outside the direct control of the research team since university-wide strategies such as workshops, online resources, designated staff employed at the LTU and an overall university-wide *ReFrame* evaluation strategy had emerged for 2013. The 'local' focus on peer review of teaching had emerged to be organisational. There remained, however, an emphasis on capacity development within the faculty, networking with champions across the faculty and university, and the need to sustain the momentum that had been created.

Commentary on the outcomes

Progressing PRT within the Faculty of Health and QUT more broadly has been rewarding, with a steady gain in interest and momentum. There is general support for PRT, however translating support to participation demands a number of important considerations:

- *Organisational readiness*: When there was increasing focus on teaching quality there was support for evaluation strategies that included peer review of teaching.
- *Leadership*: Faculty leadership, particularly at the senior staff school level, was fundamentally important for the success of the project, as were the identification of champions amongst teaching staff and early adopters.

- *Gaining commitment for PRT:* Staff did commit to peer review of teaching if they were able to see tangible benefit arise from it. As a personal choice they needed a reason to do it, but those who did engage were encouraged by the focus that was clearly on ownership, confidentiality and supportive development.
- *Buy in:* Not every academic was interested in peer review of teaching and that was okay—the intent has been to encourage those who will, and model the benefits to others.
- *Sustainability:* Growth of a culture conducive to acceptance of peer review of teaching has taken a lot of time and requires ongoing commitment from every level of leadership.
- *Changes to teaching quality:* Short-term assessment of peer review of teaching outcomes is not realistic and would not adequately measure its impact on teaching quality. There is often outcome lag since staff draw on a range of evidence to inform their teaching and need to develop skills and commitment to begin to gain best benefits of peer review.

Future plans

Building support and a culture of interest and engagement takes time and demands ongoing commitment to success. Project leaders at QUT have obtained organisational funding from QUT to continue capacity-building of staff across 2013–2014 to improve sustainability of project outcomes. Building staff capacity will take the form of regular workshops on peer review in practice, identification of mentors for networking with staff, incentives for staff participation, and linking of mentors across faculties at QUT with likeminded staff.

Case study: Curtin University

Peer Review of Teaching (PRT) was implemented within Curtin Business School (CBS) at Curtin University, Western Australia. As the largest teaching area, CBS comprises seven schools and enrolls over 15 000 students. During this project CBS was preparing for the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. As transnational education is embedded in CBS courses, unit coordinators commonly manage large units with high numbers of students and tutors in dispersed settings, both onshore and offshore. The PRT project involved unit coordinators based at Bentley (main campus) and Curtin Sydney, and tutors in offshore locations such as Curtin Sarawak and Curtin Singapore. Six schools within CBS participated in the PRT project (see Figure 3.3); the Curtin Graduate School of Business located in Perth was not a participating school.

Prior to this project, CBS engaged with PRT at the school level (the School of Information Systems and School of Economics and Finance), facilitated by academics with teaching and learning leadership roles. However, these school-based PRT programs had ceased and a faculty-wide program had commenced prior to the start of the OLT project in 2011. Commencement of a faculty-wide PRT program began in 2009 when the School of Information Systems sought a different approach to PRT, including facilitation by a faculty-based teaching and learning academic outside of the discipline.

This external consultant strategy provided a basis to advance a systematic approach to PRT, consistent with Gosling's (2002) developmental model. In 2010 the School of Accounting opted into the program. With implementation of the OLT project 2011–2013 and the aim of embedding a culture of PRT through distributive leadership, participation has increased to include all Curtin's Bentley-based schools.

Purpose and significance

To embed PRT within the teaching and learning processes, the aims and ethos of the program had to be established and clearly communicated. The CBS PRT program aimed to:

- Facilitate professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning in CBS.
- Align with strategic imperatives of accreditation and regulatory bodies.
- Develop capacity to engage review of teaching through a distributive leadership model.

The ethos of the program aligns the principles (Harris et al., 2008; Gosling, Mason, & Connor, 2009) and contemporary research on PRT (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007) with Curtin University's core values, as shown in Figure 3.1.

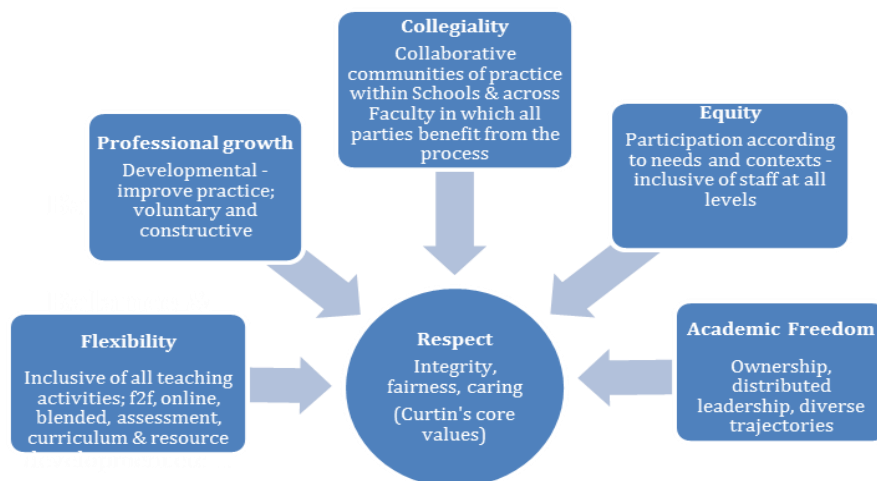


Figure 3.1: Ethos of the PRT program in CBS (adapted from Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007)

Essentially, the CBS PRT program supports professional growth through experiential and social learning conducted over three phases. In keeping with a developmental capacity building ethos, participants experience PRT in Phase 1 by having their teaching observed, then reflecting on their own teaching prior to engaging in a conversation with the colleague who observed them to deepen reflection and assist action planning. At the end of each semester, participants within each school are encouraged, collaboratively, to reflect on their experiences of peer review of teaching in a group debriefing session. In Phase 2 participants are coached to act as observers, provide a supportive learning experience for participants and facilitate a quality assurance process within the program itself.

This process enables immersion in a voluntary, constructive, developmental process. In Phase 3 participants are recognised for their participation in PRT and encouraged to continue engaging with the process within their schools and across the faculty.

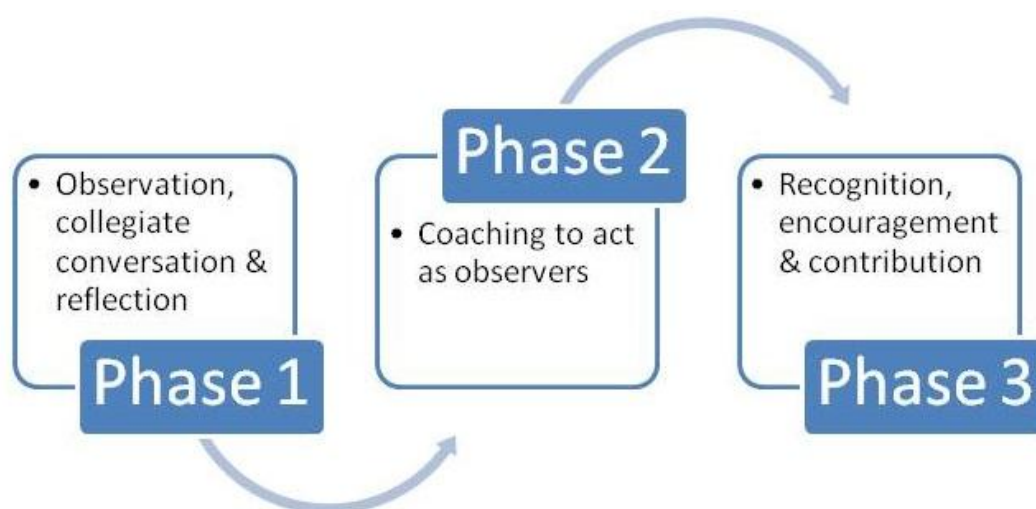


Figure 3.2: An experiential and social learning PRT process (CBS)

Outcomes

The ALTC/OLT project team developed a model for embedding peer review of teaching through cultural change (Figure 2.1). The CBS peer review process included opportunities for both individual and group reflection and allowed for coaching to enhance observational skills and was similar to the process identified in the centre of Figure 3.2. More broadly speaking, the CBS experience was consistent with other elements of the LeaD-IN model. For example, peer review across disciplines fits into *Development*. The resultant CBS networks have informed academics' understanding of how to build on the kind of knowledge and learning experiences/skills that students gain from other units within the same major. It has also prompted discussions about how we can improve the student learning experience within the unit in general by knowing more about what we each do and therefore scaffolding knowledge and skills.

Other outcomes described in this section include achievement of the aims of the PRT program, increased participation in PRT (see Table 3.6) and broader distribution of leadership (see Figure 3.3).

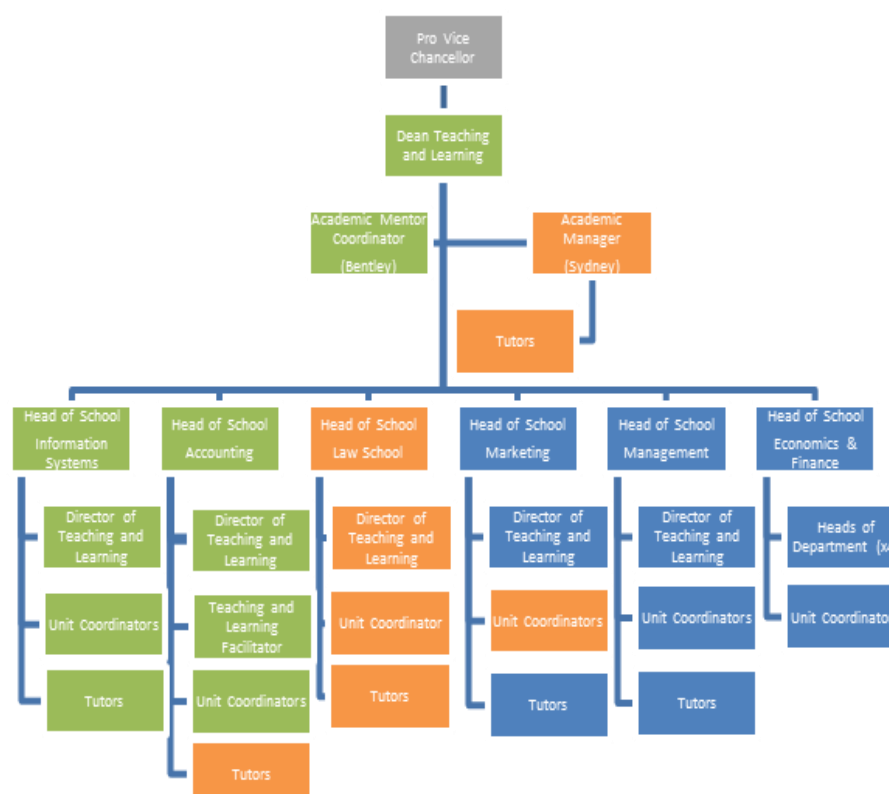


Figure 3.3: Distributive leadership model of peer review of teaching in CBS 2011–2013
 Legend: **Green** = 2011, **Orange** = 2012, **Blue** = 2013, **Grey** = PVC

Achievement of the aims of the program

1. Facilitate professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning in CBS:
 - All participants reflected on their teaching and exchanged ideas about teaching practices.
 - Surveys indicated 70 per cent of participants initiated innovations to their teaching as a result of participation in PRT.
2. Align with strategic imperatives of accreditation and regulatory bodies:
 - AACSB Standard 12: Evidence of processes to enhance teaching and support continuous improvement.
 - TEQSA requirements to support and ensure quality teaching and learning.
3. Develop capacity to engage with peer review of teaching through a distributive leadership model:
 - Increased participation shown in Table 3.6 and in Figure 3.3.

Table 3.6: Participation in peer review of teaching in CBS 2011–2013

Year	Number of schools	Number of observations	Number of reviewers
2011	2	20	5
2012	4	35	12
2013	6	In progress	In progress

Factors enabling the peer review of teaching in CBS

- Leadership from executive (essential).
- Recognition of the role of PRT in teacher professional development.
- Time allocation in Academic Workload Management System to allow staff to engage.
- The dissemination of philosophy and aims of program throughout the faculty at ‘town hall’ information sessions.
- Making it clear to staff that the peer review of teaching in this case was for developmental purposes and not about performance management.
- Voluntary nature of the program.
- Having experienced and trained mentors to be involved from the outset.
- Use of procedures, guidelines and supporting documents (see Appendixes).
- Ensuring that capacity was built up by a step-by-step approach (for example, first being observed, then observing a colleague with the support of a mentor; then observing independently).

Factors found challenging to the peer review of teaching in CBS

- Overcoming a ‘natural’ resistance to having a peer observe your teaching.
- It was challenging for some observers to provide feedback to colleagues with similar amounts of teaching experience as themselves, or in positions of power, or with more teaching experience.
- University-wide shift in emphasis to a research-intensive university caused upheaval. Some found it challenging to see the relevance of teaching quality improvement when their student evaluation scores were above university average.
- With more reviewers and some line managers undertaking peer review it has been challenging to emphasise the developmental aspect of PRT rather than allowing managerial elements to take hold, for example, requests for evidence that feedback has been reflected on and changes implemented.

- Entrenched beliefs about the way a discipline can be taught and the role of face-to-face teaching.
- Sessional staff often felt constrained by unit coordinator expectations. Consequently, there was a reluctance to move away from what they believed unit coordinators wanted. To resolve this issue, peer review champions need to work with unit coordinators to ensure there is a shared responsibility for guiding and developing sessional teaching staff.
- Time to engage.
- An inevitable evolution could occur as more people participate in peer review of teaching, more could be expected (by management) and people could be expected to participate in a review. It might even be that results of peer observations are expected to be communicated as part of, say, a promotions process.
- Other issues related to coordination and leadership, follow up, achievement of scale, a supportive policy environment, provision for casual teaching staff to participate and sustainability will need to be addressed.
- Now more than ever, with the emphasis on research outputs, teachers need to be able to collaborate and share in order to support each other in the changes to teaching in higher education, and PRT needs to be harnessed to support quality teaching development.

Advice for others

In addition to any guidance that readers might have gleaned from reading this case study, the following advice is offered:

- Ensure the PRT process is streamlined and targeted to what participants say they want. Time is the biggest challenge.
- The language of teaching is worth spending time on because with fluency comes a 'shorthand' and shared understanding.
- Ensure there is some affirmation for the participant—for some people it is quite challenging to open up their paradoxically 'private practice' of teaching to peer observation.
- Ensure that PRT retains very clear objectives that are not related to performance management or other objectives that might be pursued from time to time.

Future plans

The establishment of the Curtin Learning Institute and opportunity to attend the Peer Review of Teaching Symposium on 21 June 2013 have provided an excellent opportunity to promote and embed peer review of teaching across the university. However, with distributive leadership comes diversity of ownership and priorities. Accordingly, the different types of peer review of teaching (evaluative, developmental and collaborative) present challenges and tensions that cannot be ignored. Evidence has shown that the

different types of PRT set within a supportive policy environment appear to exist simultaneously in some universities, albeit with distinct cultural differences evident in different countries. Considering the different types of peer review of teaching and based on my experiences over the past few years with peer review of teaching in CBS, in alignment with the model, the following recommendations for embedding a culture of peer review of teaching at Curtin University are offered.

Recommendations

1. Embed a developmental approach to peer review of teaching.
2. Integrate supportive policies and practices through communities of practice and champions.
3. Provide leadership that articulates a clear vision and demonstrates respect for the shared responsibilities of staff development to meet individual and organisational needs.

Some strategies to achieve these recommendations

1. Development of university PRT guidelines and support strategies.
2. Recognition of PRT champions and teaching scholars within each faculty.
3. Getting commitment from line managers to a 2–3 year plan for PRT.
4. Allocation of time for staff to undertake PRT.
5. Allowing staff to voluntarily participate on a rotational basis.
6. Coaching to accommodate views about ‘the way to teach’.
7. Professional development to enhance academics’ understanding of conceptions of, and approaches to, teaching in higher education.

Case study: The University of Adelaide

The University of Adelaide is a research intensive, ‘Group of 8’ institution, established in 1874. The university has a commitment to valuing and promoting the quality of its learning and teaching, placing learning at the centre of its focus in both research and student activities. The university has five faculties, and the PRT activities relevant to this project were conducted in the Faculty of the Professions, comprising Schools of Law, Architecture, Economics, Business and Education.

The Faculty of the Professions includes over one third of the university’s students, including the majority of the international students, many enrolled in postgraduate coursework programs. The faculty has a high *staff:student* ratio, with large classes and many core (compulsory) courses, and many of its programs are subject to external accreditation. Under these circumstances, while the faculty shares the university’s commitment to research intensity and quality of learning, teaching activities necessarily provide many challenges in these circumstances.

Peer Review of Teaching Pilot—Faculty of the Professions, 2010

In 2010 the faculty introduced a pilot program of Peer Review of Teaching, with two schools (Law and Economics) participating. Each review was undertaken by a discipline expert plus a learning and teaching expert. There was some preliminary training for the reviewers, and it was planned for the pilot to be rigorously evaluated and a report made to the schools and faculty. The peer review process was proposed and planned as a mutual process, delivering value to both the reviewees and the reviewers: all involved in the review process were enabled and encouraged to share the learning and teaching insights gained from the review process, with the review as a sharing and collaborative process with significant benefits in the discussion and reflection on the process.

The process adopted in the pilot was a standard peer review process whereby the reviewers and the 'reviewee' met prior to the review session, chosen by the reviewee, and discussed any particular matters on which the reviewee wanted feedback. The observation then occurred in the class, generally of only one teaching session and one form of teaching. The observation was followed by a quick class debrief and general reflection from both sides. It was intended that a written report would follow within two weeks, addressing the dimensions of teaching; the intentions of the reviewee as disclosed in the documents and the discussion; and the post-class discussion.

The pilot proceeded in Semester 2, 2010 with seven participants, and subsequently an evaluation of the process was undertaken. A number of themes emerged from the evaluation and led to recommendations to the faculty. All participants were reported as enthusiastic about the underlying process of PRT, and believed that participation had been beneficial for both reviewers and reviewees. Issues concerning the time of the semester when the process was undertaken, the time it had taken to provide written feedback, and the reliance on one person (the Faculty Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching) to promote and undertake the process were seen as issues to be addressed. There was some support for any mandating of the process, tied in with strong mentoring support, but this was also seen as problematic, with concern that it could diminish the overall value to reviewers and reviewees, and raise issues of acceptance of the reviewers and their judgment.

There was strong support for the continuation of the process and some formalisation of it so it could be available and accepted as an appropriate and valuable form of professional and teaching development.

Peer Review of Teaching—The University of Adelaide partnership in OLT-funded project **Distributive Leadership and Peer Review of Teaching**

The university's engagement in this project emerged directly from its 2010 pilot program and the recommendations in the evaluation of the pilot. One of the primary recommendations pointed clearly to the need for the development of distributed leadership as an essential aspect of cultural change necessary to recognise and sustain an effective and valuable PRT process.

Stage 1

Dr Alan Barnard, one of the lead investigators for the OLT-funded project, addressed a Faculty of the Professions Community of Practice on 19 July 2012 to start the Stage 1 rollout of a new trial at The University of Adelaide under the auspices of the project. The two local research associates, Kathleen McEvoy and Dr Susan Shannon (who had led the 2010 pilot), took the view that, as much as is possible, the strength of the evaluation of the utility of the process adopted in the project pilot needed to be tested by a rollout in identical form at the partner universities. The research culture of The University of Adelaide and the circumstances of the Faculty of the Professions create a particular teaching and development environment and in that environment, peculiar among the partners in the project, that the reciprocal developmental model needed to be tested for efficacy.

Ms McEvoy (Law) and Dr Shannon (Architecture) took the view, in planning for the Stage 1 Community of Practice session, that there was good support within the university for broadening the basis for understanding the student experience through PRT, and that regulatory agencies would, in their auditing of teaching quality, expect a higher level of accountability than student evaluations alone can provide. Their view following the 2010 pilot was that a significant benefit of PRT lay in its capacity to demonstrate a commitment to the professionalism of teaching and improvement in the quality of learning through bringing teaching into the same peer review processes expected of research. Associated with this is the capacity of the process to remove teaching from being an essentially private process, to open it to the same scrutiny and accountability as in research, and thereby enhance its quality and value. The Community of Practice model with which Peer Review of Teaching has been linked in the Adelaide experience—providing an open, cross-disciplinary opportunity for discussion and development of views on learning and teaching—calls for an openness and preparedness to support colleagues in an improvement of teaching of all types.

The Community of Practice at which Dr Barnard spoke included both continuing and sessional academic staff at different levels of seniority. At the end of the Community of Practice several ‘pairs’ were formed immediately to engage in the process, and 25 staff subsequently participated in the Stage 1 rollout in Semester 2, 2012. There was considerable enthusiasm and the peer review process proceeded with little further intervention.

An evaluation of the process was conducted through focus groups at the end of 2012, and all participants took part. The key elements established through the Stage 1 trial were that best practice for peer review is that it be conducted within an environment of reciprocity; that it is best regarded and practiced as a formative and developmental process; that the reviewer be asked to focus upon one or two identified matters only; that feedback addressed only the agreed areas for review; that feedback is confidential to the reviewee; and that the process is best conducted every year or so. Adelaide attendees who had previously been involved in a PRT process said that it was the reflective phase that was of most benefit to them and their students as they considered the review’s commentary, and responded to it in their teaching. All participants reported that they would continue to use PRT processes as a means to further develop and enhance the quality of their teaching.

Purpose and significance

The Peer Review of Teaching process that has been promoted and developed at Adelaide, both prior to and during the work on this project, has focused on reciprocal PRT, for developmental, not summative, purposes. Its significance is seen in two contexts: the first being the support and development on a personal level of academic and other teaching staff; and the second being the need to address the university's (and outside agencies') requirements for a demonstration of teaching quality and development. As well as providing participants with personal development, the process also enables them to demonstrate commitment to excellence in their teaching and learning activities, useful evidence for tenure, promotion and awards, included in a teaching portfolio. The process promoted in Adelaide has emphasised that these benefits are available for both the reviewer and the reviewee, as the process is seen as a mutual and collaborative one.

Outcomes

All Stage 1 participants reported during evaluation that they benefitted from PRT, and that they would continue the process as an integral part of their learning and teaching activities. There has been some consolidation of the peer review process in particular in the Law School, where academic and sessional staff have used the process in 2013. In particular, a specific, faculty-based plan for the training and support of sessional teachers includes a peer review process, and this is also adopted as a formal and required component in the support for postgraduate Law students who engage in sessional teaching.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Engagement) recommended showcasing this opportunity at the annual university *Festival of Learning and Teaching* in November 2012, and the discussion of the project and the Stage 1 activities was well received.

Commentary on the outcomes

Within the faculty there is a well-established Learning and Teaching Community of Practice that provides a supportive forum for the discussion and development of this initiative. In addition, supportive senior management both within the faculty and the university have indicated public support for the process, promoting it in a number of forums. Nevertheless there are clearly still challenges that needed to be overcome and which are addressed in this project and in the material provided and presented in the Adelaide Stage 1 rollout.

Primary among these challenges is the fact that academic staff already have a full profile of expectation, and there is a need to overcome the anxiety that any further professional development commitment will be time consuming and will displace more essential (and perhaps more rewarding) activities. Although the peer review model that is promoted in the project and in this university to date is not a 'top down' model (rather, it is one that needs to grow 'virally'), nevertheless it requires university support—both from top university management, in assurances that commitment to, and engagement in, teaching quality and development is valued and will be rewarded; and at middle (school) management, with support and encouragement for the development of teaching quality through this as well as other activities.

The provision of effective and supportive materials accessible online will provide significant support for the encouragement and development of peer review activities and processes.

Future plans

Planning for the Stage 2 rollout at The University of Adelaide is well underway. A learning and teaching seminar promoting PRT was presented in the Law School to academic staff and postgraduate students engaged in sessional teaching was presented in a two-hour orientation and information session in August. Within the wider faculty a Community of Practice discussion on the outcomes of this project is scheduled for later in 2013 for dissemination and promotion of local outcomes, and an invitation has been received for a presentation on the project, as well as orientation and information on PRT from the University of South Australia.

Academic staff who engaged in the Stage 1 process have indicated commitment to engagement in the process, and in some schools have moved to extend and embed to the process. This includes the promotion of the process through the learning and teaching seminar in the Law School, as well as embedding peer review processes in the formal support available for sessional teachers in the faculty. Postgraduate students in the Law School who engage in sessional teaching have undertaken to participate in a peer review of teaching process as part of a 'Teaching Fellowship' that supports their research and academic work.

The journey at The University of Adelaide toward support and promotion of peer review of teaching as a means for mutual collaborative and reflective learning and teaching development, bringing learning and teaching activities into the same realm as research activities in terms of their accountability and acknowledged value, is well underway but clearly not completed. Participation in this project has provided valuable resources, including materials, that will assist in this journey and there is already a core of participants distributing leadership and commitment to this process.

Case study: University of Technology, Sydney

The Faculty of Health, University of Technology Sydney (UTS) is a partner site for the Peer Review of Teaching through Distributive Leadership (PRTDL) Project. The faculty offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Health Service Management, Midwifery, Nursing, Nurse Practitioner, Public Health in Complementary and Alternative Medicine, and Exercise and Health. Student enrolment across all disciplines numbers 3000. The Faculty of Health has 80 full-time academic staff teaching across its courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and employs approximately 50 sessional teaching staff each semester. Full-time staff can vary in their teaching responsibilities according to a workload categorisation based largely on research output. Up until the year this project began, no faculty-wide peer review activities had been undertaken.

Purpose and significance

Two academics within Health were involved with developing and supporting PRT: Suzanne Rochester and Cheryl Waters. Their ongoing interest in peer review grew from the renewal of the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) program, which they managed to completion in 2010. This process of renewal highlighted the need for greater focus on teaching and learning development. It was apparent that traditional approaches such as instruction were insufficient to truly renew staff teaching in line with curriculum goals; goals that are concerned with the contribution of active learning processes to the attainment of graduate abilities. One means of achieving this was to open teaching to peers in a positive, mutually strength building and sustainable fashion. Suzanne and Cheryl undertook a pilot study on Reciprocal Peer Review in one subject in 2011 that, from focus group data, proved to be highly successful for participating staff (six staff). Later in 2011, Robyn Nash invited UTS Health to collaborate in the PRTDL Project. Both the university and faculty were supportive of the collaboration and Suzanne and Cheryl lead the project on this site.

From the perspective of Health the following purposes of the project are of most importance:

- To enhance teaching and learning development for all levels of academic staff and increase teacher self-awareness in relation to the relevant curriculum pedagogies.
- To demonstrate the value of reciprocal peer review as a means of improving the quality of teaching and learning in an environment where teaching teams are an increasing mix of full time and casual staff.
- To refine the peer review strategy tested by this research so that future strategies are well targeted to meet staff and course needs.
- To provide faculty with a method of demonstrating (for performance review purposes) a method of assuring the quality of their teaching.
- To decentralise leadership and individual leadership capability in learning and teaching to increase faculty capability for those who wish to sustain quality improvements.

Outcomes

The work of the project at this site has been undertaken through a staged approach.

Stage 1

The focus in this stage was raising awareness of the project with faculty management and staff. The UTS project leaders met with the dean and the associate dean, teaching and learning (AD T&L) requesting their support. An important outcome of this activity was that staff were encouraged to participate in the project and faculty management referred to the importance of the project in staff communications and meetings.

A workshop for staff that focused on the goals and processes of PRT was conducted in September, 2012. Nineteen academic staff attended. The resulting evaluations demonstrated overwhelming support for the project. A Blackboard community site was established using the resources and was made available, and faculty staff have been encouraged to explore it. Staff interested in undertaking PRT posted their names to the site. Presently, twenty-six academic staff are listed.

Professor Robyn Nash and Dr Alan Barnard from the lead university, QUT, visited the faculty on 12 February 2013 and presented the PRTDL project at the annual Faculty Teaching and Learning Forum. This presentation was very well received and resulted in more staff nominating to be involved in peer review. A potential champion's lunch was organised on the same day as the forum. Staff members key to promoting the project were invited, including the associate dean (teaching and learning), program directors, academic supervisors and staff from the Institute of Interactive Media and Learning who support teaching and learning innovation across the university. Robyn Nash and Alan Barnard attended the lunch and all who were there benefited from the opportunity to discuss the project model with the project leaders.

Subsequent to the lunch meeting, academic supervisors (line managers) who attended have suggested peer review as a positive undertaking for the development of teaching and learning attributes and the demonstration of quality enhancement or assurance to the staff they supervise.

Stage 2

The focus of this stage has been encouraging and facilitating participation in PRT. To date, seven staff dyads have been formed and are at different stages of reciprocal peer review. The 'local' Blackboard site is continuing to be developed but will be superseded by the project website. Project leaders continue to advocate for PRT within the faculty, both by email and personal discussion as appropriate opportunities present.

Commentary on the outcomes

Progressing PRT within the faculty has been both rewarding and challenging. Rewarding in that there is, in general, very strong support for the initiative; however, translating this to actual participation has been impacted by the following elements:

Developing a culture of peer review of teaching through a distributive leadership approach

- High academic workloads and, in many cases, increased teaching hours.
- Less obvious impacts on workload such as increased casualisation and changes in student cohort characteristics.
- Increased focus on research outcomes.
- Many other projects and activities competing for an academic's time.

Future plans

It is essential that the project leaders at UTS work beyond the term of the project to embed PRT within Health to truly distribute the shared responsibility and ensure sustainability. There remains a need to encourage more staff to take up the opportunity and to provide support for this to occur. Plans include the following:

- To advocate for the adoption of systemic triggers such as the inclusion of PRT in academic yearly plans and promotion criteria as this would do much to assist sustainability, and would be a priority for the stage of development past completion of the project. Such inclusions, however, would need to be debated within the faculty and university.
- To disseminate the design, activities and evaluation of this initiative, to academic staff across the faculty, university and the wider academic community through presentations and publications.
- To develop processes to capture and report on PRT activities taking place.
- To integrate this study with other university projects related to peer review and the quality management of teaching and learning.

Other comments/issues

The project leaders at UTS are hopeful that the project will lead to the following outcomes for the Faculty of Health over time:

- That participants in this project can potentially influence and renew teaching by opening student-facing, teacher-led activities to evaluation, discussion and exchange in a way that is collaborative, positive and strength building. This could be particularly beneficial for casual staff with limited access to developmental activities, teaching feedback opportunities and scholarly discussion.
- That this project can potentially support, facilitate and develop teaching effectiveness in alignment with curriculum goals.
- That the work of this project can provide a foundation and model for peer review within the faculty that will sustain high quality teaching, staff development and career progression.
- The development of teaching scholarship so that the results of this research can be shared with other academics through discussion, publication and conference presentation.

Chapter 4 : Dissemination

This chapter highlights the outcomes from the two key dissemination strategies that were implemented during the course of this project: 1) a national symposium, and 2) presentation at two national conferences.

National symposium

In order to disseminate the outcomes of this project and provide a forum for discussion and debate, the project team conducted a symposium at the Queensland University of Technology in June 2013. The symposium was attended by 74 participants from across Australia.

The symposium agenda included an overview of the project, 'snapshot' presentations of the journey undertaken by each of the partner universities, two keynote presentations by Professor Suzi Vaughan (QUT) and Associate Professor Kay Martinez (who spoke about her work whilst at James Cook University), and an interactive 'Hot Topic' session involving all participants (Appendix D). Participants engaged enthusiastically in the symposium activities, indicating not only their interest in the issues being discussed but also the importance of peer review, more generally, within teaching. As shown in Table 4.1, the symposium was very well received by the attendees.

Table 4.1: Participant ratings for the Peer Review of Teaching Symposium (n=28)

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
This symposium lived up to my expectations.	0	0	16.7%	25.0%	58.3%
The content was useful for my purposes.	0	0	12.5%	37.5%	50.0%
The symposium activities challenged my thinking.	0	12.5%	29.2%	16.7%	41.7%
The symposium has motivated me to learn more.	0	0	20.8%	45.9%	33.3%
Overall, this was a useful experience.	0	0	12.5%	33.3%	54.1%

As part of the evaluation of the symposium, participants were asked to indicate two 'most/least' aspects of the symposium: the two most important things they had gained from attending, and two things they intended to do as a result of attending the symposium. A summary of their responses follows.

Two *most* useful aspects of the symposium?

The overriding theme in participants' responses to this question was that the symposium had provided '*inspiration*' for further thinking and action regarding peer review. Typical comments were that '*it was great to hear the insights of the keynote speakers*', and that the discussions had been '*intellectually stimulating*'. Participants also commented that '*sharing ideas with others*' had helped to dispel myths regarding peer review.

Typical of comments were that '*a cultural shift*' is needed so that '*the teaching part of our work becomes equivalent to the research part of our work in its quality, in its transparency and in its centrality to what we do*'. This was explained further to mean that, as with research where there '*doesn't seem to be an immediate pay-off*', this same type of thinking needs to extend to teaching. One participant argued that '*a lot of our teaching is last minute, seat of the pants, private. So that the scrutiny is never really there*' and there is no long-term developmental view.

Two *least* useful aspects of the symposium?

There were only a few responses to this question. Those who did respond were generally of the view that it had '*all been useful*', however a small number noted that there was '*not enough time*' in relation to discussions regarding the 'hot topics'.

Two *most important things you have gained* from this symposium?

Two key themes were apparent in participants' responses to this question: 1) a deeper understanding of the peer review, and 2) motivation to 'get going'. Representative comments included the following:

I got lots of ideas about peer review in a teaching context

Much better understanding of peer review – it doesn't have to be painful

Reflecting on my uni culture and how to begin a conversation at my uni

A way to embed PRT in my uni

Two *things you intend to do* as a result of attending this symposium?

Consistent with participants' responses to the preceding question, the overriding theme in participants' responses to this question strongly reflected the intention to pursue peer review within their institutions:

I'm going to share ideas from today with colleagues

Intend to promote peer review with my line managers / L&T colleagues / DVC

I'll be reporting to my faculty about cultural change in relation to peer review

As a starting point, I intend to work on staff in my school

Responses to the 'Hot Topic' discussion starters

As part of the symposium activities, participants were asked to discuss an assigned 'Hot Topic' question with their table groups and report their reflections and suggested strategies to the symposium audience. The 'Hot Topics' that were devised for discussion were:

- What are key strategies for sustaining cultural acceptance of peer review of teaching?
- How important is language to the acceptance of peer review?
- What strategies are likely to promote peer review as scholarly practice?
- Can an emphasis on both formative and summative peer review be sustained?
- How can the outcomes of peer review be measured?

There were several common themes in the reflections of the table groups that can be summarised as follows:

- The importance of a 'bottom-up/top-down' approach to achieving sustained outcomes regarding peer review of teaching. Specific comments included:
'framing within policy provides a legitimisation' and would 'facilitate a joined up approach'
this needs distributive leadership
'associate deans, heads of school etc. are influential' as are
'champions at the ground level who can make connections visible across functional boundaries'
- Promoting a 'new' culture of peer review within teaching and learning through strategies such as:
building up stories of success
'using language that everyone can understand' and 'presents peer review as a positive, eg. This is a good thing to do because'

- Professional development is necessary and must be sustained as “we need people who actually understand this space”. Suggested strategies involved:

including peer review as a normal expectation within all induction programs

upskilling sessional staff in ‘crash courses’ on Teaching at Uni and facilitate them to engage on Peer Review at the end of the course and reflect on outcomes

coaching is needed for peer reviewers.

Conference presentations

To date, two national conference presentations have been made regarding outcomes from the project and a third international conference presentation is scheduled for October 2013. Abstracts pertaining to these presentations are as follows:

HERDSA 2012

Toward a sustainable culture of peer partnership

This project is a two-phase design working in partnership with five universities to develop, implement and systematically embed a distributive leadership model that aims to embed peer partnership (review, development) within the culture of teaching and learning excellence. This presentation will posit a ‘prototype’ peer review leadership model based on ongoing research that brings together both the fundamentals of peer review with the broader importance of context and persons. It will be argued that essential to teaching development is a need to address not only the implementation of peer partnership programs but also strategies to influence and change both the contexts of teaching and the advantages for colleagues. Peer review as a strategy to develop excellence in teaching needs to be considered from a holistic perspective encompassing all elements of the teaching environment. The emphasis is on working to foster the type of conditions needed for leadership and change to begin and be sustained. The work has implications for policy, research, leadership development and student outcomes and has potential application world-wide. Phase 1 has collected focus interview and questionnaire data to inform the research and is being analysed using a thematic qualitative approach and statistical analysis. Evidence is emerging currently as the project is ongoing.

HERDSA 2013

Building and sustaining a culture to support peer review of teaching

This paper addresses issues related to pedagogy development and highlights research undertaken to embed and sustain peer review of teaching within the culture of 5 Australian universities. While teaching in higher education can be rewarding and team orientated, it can also be an isolating experience which challenges our capacity to understand and respond to the changing contexts of learning, student experience and pedagogy. The presentation builds on evidence that successful peer review requires an ‘across-the-board’ commitment to embed change, and inherently demands a process that co-creates. Developing a culture of peer review of teaching through a distributive leadership approach

connection across colleagues, discipline groups, and the university sector. Peer review of teaching in higher education will be highlighted as a professional process for providing feedback on teaching and learning practice, which if sustained, can become an effective ongoing strategy for academic development. The research affirms that using developmental peer review models (Barnard et al., 2011; D'Andrea, 2002; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004) can bring about successful implementation, especially when implemented within a distributive leadership framework. The old adage that 'those who teach learn twice' holds true for peer review of teaching, especially when embedded as a supportive process characterised by reciprocal relationships that, in the case of this project, not only highlight peer review of teaching but the bringing together of people to build connection and different pedagogy.

ISSOTL 2013

Developing a culture to support peer review of teaching in higher education

This presentation addresses issues related to leadership, academic development and scholarship of teaching and learning, and highlights research funded by OLT designed to embed and sustain peer review of teaching within the culture of 5 Australian universities: Queensland University of Technology, University of Technology, Sydney, The University of Adelaide, Curtin University, and Charles Darwin University. Peer review of teaching in higher education will be emphasised as a professional process for providing feedback on teaching and learning practice, which if sustained, can become an effective ongoing strategy for academic development (Barnard et al., 2011; Bell, 2005; Bolt & Atkinson, 2010; McGill & Beaty, 2001, 1992; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The research affirms that using developmental peer review models (Barnard et al., 2011; D'Andrea, 2002; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004) can bring about successful implementation, especially when implemented within a distributive leadership framework (Spillane & Healey, 2010).

The project's aims and objectives were to develop leadership capacity and integrate peer review as a cultural practice in higher education. The research design was a two-stage inquiry process over 2 years. The project began in July 2011 and encompassed a development and pilot phase followed by a cascade phase with questionnaire and focus group evaluation processes to support ongoing improvement and measures of outcome. Leadership development activities included locally delivered workshops complemented by the identification and support of champions. To optimise long-term sustainability, the project was implemented through existing learning and teaching structures and processes within the respective partner universities. Research outcomes highlight the fundamentals of peer review of teaching and the broader contextual elements of integration, leadership and development, expressed as a conceptual model for embedding peer review of teaching within higher education. The research opens a communicative space about introduction of peer review that goes further than simply espousing its worth and introduction. The conceptual model highlights the importance of development of distributive leadership capacity, integration of policies and processes, and understanding the values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviours embedded in an organisational culture.

The presentation overviews empirical findings that demonstrate progress to advance peer review requires an 'across-the-board' commitment to embed change, and inherently demands a process that co-creates connection across colleagues, discipline groups, and the university sector. Progress toward peer review of teaching as a cultural phenomenon can be achieved and has advantages for academic staff, scholarship, teaching evaluation and an organisation, if attention is given to strategies that influence the contexts and cultures of teaching practice. Peer review as a strategy to develop excellence in teaching is considered from a holistic perspective that by necessity encompasses all elements of an educational environment and has a focus on scholarship of teaching. The work is ongoing and has implication for policy, research, teaching development and student outcomes, and has potential application worldwide.

Chapter 5 : Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

Based on the evaluation data and outcomes achieved, the findings of this project indicate that the LeaD-IN model developed by the project team has potential to facilitate embedding peer review within the culture of teaching and learning. Consistent with the literature regarding peer review, the experience of project team members and advice gained from key informants, the model has been carefully conceptualised within a distributive leadership context and can be flexibly applied within the diverse range of institutional and local organisational environments across the higher education sector.

The Peer Review of Teaching survey results strongly suggest that academic staff regard peer review as a potentially valuable strategy for evaluating their teaching. A large majority of survey respondents endorsed the views that teaching is a scholarly activity that should be open to critique, that peers can provide a uniquely valuable source of feedback about teaching, and that all academics should include peer review as part of their evaluation of teaching practice. Those who engaged in peer review were also strongly of the view that peer review had provided them with insights into their teaching, had increased their confidence as a teacher and had encouraged them to try new things in their teaching. However, there were some important qualifications to these views that suggest elements that are essential for achieving successful outcomes in terms of ‘growing’ peer review within the culture of teaching and learning:

- The model of peer review needs to be collegial and collaborative in nature. This principle needs to characterise the way in which peer review is implemented across an institution or organisational unit.
- Peer review needs to ‘driven’ by the peer *reviewee* and implemented in a way that enables feedback on aspects of teaching that are nominated by peer *reviewees*.
- The process needs to be constructive and confidential.

Despite the strongly positive views of staff regarding the value of peer review, it is clear that many do not use it as a strategy for evaluating and improving their teaching practice. However, our Phase 2 data suggest that a slightly higher proportion of staff than in Phase 1 had participated in peer review at some time during the past 12 months. Additionally, 52 per cent of staff who had not undertaken peer review within the previous 12 months indicated their intent to do so within the next 12 months. Although the size of the Phase 2 sample precludes generalisation of the results, this is an encouraging result and provides some validation of the distributive leadership approach that was taken to facilitate the embedding of peer review within the culture of teaching and learning.

The results of the focus group discussion and key informant interviews also support the need for leadership at all levels to promote cultural change in relation to evaluation of teaching.

Consistent with the cultural change literature, a strong theme emerging from the data reconfirms the proposition that an aligned ‘top-down and bottom-up’ approach is likely to be more successful than relying on implementation at a ‘grass roots’ level alone. In order to achieve sustainable outcomes it is clear that strategic approaches are needed to build the level of commitment required for peer review to be integrated into ‘everyday’ teaching practice. It is also clear that, whatever the chosen set of strategies, the overall commitment needs to be for the ‘long haul’ as culture change takes time and, unless the approach taken involves organisational policy changes such as mandating peer review, achieving success will be an incremental process.

Recommendations

On the basis of the project findings, discussions within the project team and the feedback from our Project Reference Group, it is recommended that:

- Universities ensure that they regularly review policies to support developmental peer review as a key strategy for academic staff to obtain 360° feedback on their teaching; workload models that recognise the role of peer review as a fundamental component of scholarly teaching practice; and promotion policies that recognise evidence presented through summative peer review processes. The particularities of peer review within a diverse range of teaching contexts should be evident in all of the above.
- Ongoing professional development programs be offered to support the skill development of staff engaging in peer review, including basic strategies for both peer reviewees and peer reviewers, and more advanced skills in developing the scholarly dimension of peer review.
- Peer Review Networks (or equivalent) be fostered at the institutional level, sponsored by senior leaders and include a mandate for bilateral consultation with regard to teaching and learning issues, particularly with respect to quality and standards at the teaching interface.
- Academic departments and faculties include, as a strategic priority, local approaches to supporting peer review and recognising peer review champions and teaching scholars as part of a broader, aligned strategy for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

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Appendix A: Themes emerging from focus group discussions with academic staff

1. How would you describe the culture of teaching and learning practice within your academic context?

In response to Question 1, much of the discussion centred on the predominant research focus, which was believed to be to the detriment of learning and teaching.

Research focus/push for research

One participant explained the research focus with the following comment:

The money, the kudos comes from sciences. That's where, on the whole, the Nobel prizes come from. That's on the whole where most of the grants money goes. My faculty brings in the bulk of student money to the university and we subsidise that money into research. Research is subsidised but very little teaching is subsidised. There isn't that sort of cross subsidisation.

Another participant commented that 'the only currency is research, you know, sort of high ranking journals. And grants'.

Others suggested that while in recent times there had been an increase in focus on learning and teaching, that research was still the major focus as indicated in the following comment:

While there has been some more focused interest paid to learning and teaching, I think in the end it's not been something that has really had commitment from high levels of leadership. And I think that's quite a significant issue in a research rich university.

Many suggested that they believed the increasing focus on research output 'came at human cost' in that there was less of a focus on teaching as a result. This perception was best expressed by the following participant:

I would say that the astronomical rise in the faculty's research output came at a cost. The faculty has changed so remarkably in the last four years you wouldn't believe it. Before, the only professors we had were like five clinical professors, clinically based. Now we have professors everywhere. I'm just saying that in the last four years the face of the faculty has changed remarkably.

Another participant added that there's 'an attitude that anyone can teach, and they can teach anything. We're all interchangeable'.

Learning and teaching fragmented as a philosophy

Within this research focused culture, the perception is that learning and teaching is '*fragmented as a philosophy*'. When asked by the researcher to explain this perception, one participant responded as follows:

There were pockets of huge energy and investment and thought about pedagogy and learning and teaching in different pockets within programmes. So initiatives maybe started by people and then abandoned over time... so I think it was quite fragmented. So, for example, in Business there'd be a big thing on the Bachelor degree at first year where there were a lot of very committed, engaged academics who tried to promote learning in different ways and collaboratively. And then I think there's also pockets of unit coordinators who were really disinterested in learning and teaching and didn't engage with any of the learning and teaching initiatives at the university at all.

There's a perception that some staff are employed as '*research staff*' who '*do one tutorial*' to be '*seen in the classroom*' because they '*don't want to be accused of doing research only, but that's essentially what they do*'.

Increasing workload/increasing casuals

There was considerable discussion about recently introduced workload models at some universities that participants indicated had significantly increased their teaching loads. It seems that workload models may be inconsistent across universities as one participant advised there was a reasonable workload at his university where '*teaching for a full-time academic, say myself, would be ten hours a week*'. However, at some universities, participants indicated that there were '*a lot of inequities*' in workload models and one participant reported that during the 14 week semester, '*in the ten weeks the students were there they were doing 22, 23 hours a week [ie teaching]. And trying to mark in the four weeks the students were on clinical*'. Others interjected suggesting that in their faculty '*it was a lot more than that*'.

Another participant explained the unreasonable workload expectations as follows:

most people are on what's called like the teaching scholar, so they're predominantly teachers rather than researchers. They would be teaching four out of five days a week. So it doesn't leave a lot of time. And coordinating huge subjects, like six hundred students and lots of casuals.

Others reported that workload policies '*were really set by faculties*' rather than at the organisational level and that:

the uni was obviously involved...they were sort of rubbing their hands together thinking well if this gets through...we can roll this out across all the faculties. I don't think they were agin what's happening at all.

Some participants suggested that it was more difficult to make a commitment to another colleague to assist with peer review as *'there's so many other things up the priority list that need to be done'*.

In addition to the teaching workload concerns, participants commented on the increasing number of casual and sessional staff which meant that they were *'managing coordinating subjects with a bunch of casuals and a bunch of new staff who've not really taught'* and that in *'some subjects, there might be one person who's full-time and the rest are casuals'*.

One participant highlighted that part of the problem with sessional or casual staff is *'keeping them and knowing who they are and maintaining their quality'*. Participants commented that more senior management did not appear to be concerned so long *'as the casuals are there and people are standing in front of the class'*. Another suggested that casualisation is *'especially a problem in professional areas'* where your top researchers *'get to buy themselves out of some teaching time and they get replaced by twenty-one year old sessionals'*. While these staff are often *'incredibly enthusiastic and really keen they don't and can't bring what a mature teacher can bring, what a great researcher can bring'*.

Other difficulties for sessionals, noted by participants were that sometimes they are often *'working in isolation'* where *'they can feel really quite isolated'* and one participant described them as *'lone rangers'*. Another participant commented that they *'have less networks...less training and less experience'*.

One unit coordinator expressed the view that *'most sessionals want to know whether they're doing a good job'* and he could see a *'good argument'* for explaining to sessionals that *'if you want to work in my unit one of the things I'll ask you to do is do a peer review. I don't want the results but I want you to team up with someone to see how you're going and to get some feedback'*

The devaluing of teaching was best expressed by one participant as *'there's an attitude that anyone can teach, and they can teach anything. We're all interchangeable'*. An example provided by another participant that expresses a similar perception is that:

One of the things that people tend to do also that devalues teaching in the faculty from my point of view, is when they do their yearly plans they just tick about teaching and then all they talk about is research.

Within this research focused culture, the perception is that learning and teaching is *'fragmented as a philosophy'*. When invited to explain this perception, participants typically made the following comments:

There were pockets of huge energy and investment and thought about pedagogy and learning and teaching in different pockets within programmes. So initiatives maybe started by people and then abandoned over time... so I think it was quite fragmented.

2. Where will the culture of teaching and learning be in 3–5 years?

In response to Question 2, participants commented that *'we've got to use technology much more and much more effectively'* and that there will be an increased focus on *'research led teaching'*. Some commented that there would be less *'face-to-face'* lectures and more *'technology, online access'* and *'blended learning'*. One participant reported that at his university the Vice-Chancellor had remarked that in addition to investment in buildings at his university *'there will be an equivalent investment in IT that is unseeable to the building ... that will happen in the next three years'*.

While seeking to maintain face-to-face lectures, participants recognised that they *'can't rely on the traditionals, we've got to look at the non-traditionals. And with that comes the expectation that people will not attend lectures'*. As an example one participant said she had *'noticed people are thinking about different ways of teaching and asking each other about it, for example, the blackboard upgrade'*. Her view was that *'some of the people who wouldn't have considered things before are [now] considering them'*. When invited to identify what was leading this change, one participant commented that *'the peer review project'* was one of the drivers where staff wanted to *'ensure that students do have that learning and meet those objectives by the time they're finished their course'*.

In terms of learning and teaching, some participants commented that they hoped *'the focus on quality learning'* would be *'strengthened'* in the next few years. Some were hopeful that this would be case and one participant gave an example where the new head of school was looking for *'very big changes in engagement with students'*. She commented that:

He's only been there for five months and his focus is absolutely on student engagement with things that he thinks will prepare them for the professions that they aim to enter. He doesn't think there's been enough focus on that.

3. What has been your experience of peer review?

In response to Question 3, participants were very positive about taking part in the process and some said they were *'huge supporters'* and had *'been using it a lot'* and that it provides *'a framework where both parties have agreed and feel comfortable about how you're going to observe'*. One participant described the peer review model as *'perfect because I got a lot more out of that than I ever did from the feedback on LEX'* while another described it as *'fantastic'* and commented they *'enjoyed having someone sit in ... because it sort of formalised it and we agreed upon what I wanted to get out of it at the beginning, I really did get something out of it'*. There was *'surprise'* expressed by some participants about those who participated in peer review because they were thought to be generally *'disengaged'*. One participant explained that:

They've actually been the ones that have come and talked to me a lot. They've sometimes even gone to a different school to find a colleague that they really wanted advice from on one particular area. So I don't think you can actually predict who's going to pick it up and run with it.

Overall, participants expressed comments that suggested that universities are accepting the model and seem to:

think it's worth something, as in we're endorsing it and we're saying if you have to develop a personalised evaluation strategy, which you do, it's up there in the top three things we're suggesting you put in it.

The general consensus of experience of peer review was typically that participants had found that most staff seemed to 'like the model' once 'it's properly explained'. The 'three characteristics' that 'seem to win people over' were outlined by one participant as:

finding somebody that you're comfortable to engage in the process with; the person being evaluated setting the agenda; and it's not compulsory to present this at promotion, I think is also really important.

When invited to comment on the key dimension that made peer review a positive process, participants described the 'two way conversation' and 'having an open discussion about an issue that I wanted to fix' as important. Others commented that the model provides 'a tool to take control of some of your evaluation' and that the process 'respects that academics can do this'. The following comments typify the view of participants about the process:

I like the fact you could talk to your buddy about what was the issue. And it was a two-way conversation, it wasn't that one-way. Just to say what do you mean by this? Because you don't want to be making changes unless you're certain about what it is that they actually need.

You get to ask questions and it's a continuous dialogue rather than this one-off stamp on your teaching. I think people just feel more comfortable because they're part of the process, they're not just having it all done to them.

The integration of peer review into current activities was also highlighted as a benefit in that the process encourages you to have colleagues to give feedback on your teaching 'in the same way as peer reviewing our articles' and that it could be promoted in those terms.

Overall, participants viewed the peer review process as an important addition to their teaching portfolio that not only benefited students but could also be 'part of a suite of tools that can be used at promotions tenure'.

4. What are the facilitators/barriers to peer review?

In response to Question 4, participants commented that *'in talking to people about peer review' there was 'a lot of demand' for 'the expert model' from people seeking assistance for 'a very specific purpose' to improve the quality of their teaching. Previously, it was thought that people were 'looking for a summative review' for 'promotion or for an award' and now with the new model the emphasis is on the 'the reciprocal nature and emphasising the importance of engagement and partnership and collaboration'.*

Others described the model as *'well thought through' and 'scholarly' that 'should appeal to academics who are looking for a scholarly approach to what they're doing'*. One participant remarked that:

It's not just a kind of professional development course that the centre's determined and is imposing. It's something that you can, if you want to pursue it, get support for.

Overall, participants expressed comments that suggested that universities are accepting the model and seem to *'think it's worth something, as in we're endorsing it and we're saying if you have to develop a personalised evaluation strategy, which you do, it's up there in the top three things we're suggesting you put in it'*.

Participants often referred to the need for supportive Vice-Chancellors and Deans Learning and Teaching because of the significant leadership role they play in achieving *'a much greater commitment to learning and teaching'* across universities. One participant said that the focus of the new VC at her *'sandstone'* university was on the *'quality of the student experience'*. She went on to comment that while *'lip service'* had been given to learning and teaching in the past she thought that *'quality and focusing on quality, and rewarding quality, is going to change with much greater leadership and emphasis from the top'* with the appointment of the new Vice-Chancellor. While support for learning and teaching at senior levels was highlighted, other participants also commented on the need for support, particularly for peer review, at a *'decentralised level'* particularly from within schools rather than *'another top down thing'*. One participant expressed this in the following way:

I actually think there's probably some benefit in me or someone like me sending it out [promoting peer review] because I'm not very threatening. I'm the bottom of the tree. And so I think with making it sustainable it is about getting a critical mass engaged in it as a habit rather than having it be something, another thing that's kind of legislated from the top.

Another participant supported this view and commented that he had *'seen a kind of growing buy-in' from staff 'who are in the mentor role' because 'they're interested, and are creating tools and sharing them and giving talks at the school meeting'*. He went on to comment that *'you can see how that kind of grassroots interest will keep growing there in a way that a centralised workshop won't'*.

Overall, there was a perception that staff at the 'local level' can 'change things in our schools or argue for change in our schools' and 'that things can happen at local levels in universities as well as in an overarching way'.

Champions

The important role played by champions in promoting peer review was also discussed by the participants. Some champions who took part in the focus groups explained their roles as encouraging and motivating others to take part in peer review. One champion said that he was thinking of:

sending an e-mail to my school and saying who's interested [peer review]? I'm happy if you want to tell me your preferences for who you'd like to work with, catch me at the water cooler if you don't really want to work with someone. But I'm happy to pair you up if that's convenient and easy and helps you get the commitment done. Otherwise create pairs yourself.

Another participant suggested 'having a once a semester champion meeting or something like that when the champions get together' for the purpose of 'sharing ideas about what are you doing, is it effective? Did it work last semester?' Another champion explained his role as 'talking to lots of people', 'putting flyers around', 'talking at staff meetings' and 'distributing forms'. However, he commented that once semester started he didn't have much time to continue.

One of the participants (a unit coordinator) suggested that while he had not 'applied this or tried to encourage it necessarily' he thought unit coordinators could be 'champions' because 'you're going to end up getting better outcomes to the unit' as a result.

Peer review mentors

Closely associated with communities of practice was the idea of having peer review mentors who 'would help drive that [peer review] in a more localised way'. This was thought to be important because it was thought that 'a lot depends on individuals, the support that they get and the interest they're getting from the centre in pursuing those lines'. One participant provided an example of a peer review program to explain the role of mentors in a program that he had developed as follows:

There were a couple of units where they worked through the issues and problems online. Then they had to have... they had to keep a reflective journal about some of their teaching. And they had to have a mentor, who was usually their course coordinator that they were teaching with but didn't have to be. So the mentor would see the reflective journal and discuss it with them. And then the third part was a peer review process. They had to sit in on someone else's class but they then had to be reviewed themselves. They weren't necessarily reviewing that other person's class. And that, I think that has been really effective.

Decentralised buy-in

In addition to communities of practice and mentors, any initiatives at the local level to promote and support peer review were recommended. One of the common themes throughout the focus groups was the need for *'grassroots' participation and 'buy-in' at the school level*. There was a widespread view that a *'decentralised interest is what's going to make people buy in'*. One participant commented that he had *'seen a kind of growing buy-in' in schools 'where there are people in the mentor role, because they're interested, have created tools and are sharing them and giving talks at the School meeting'*. He commented further that he could see *'how that kind of grassroots interest will keep growing there in a way that a centralised workshop won't'*. Another participant claimed that it is the *'focused, home grown development ... within certain pockets'* that will achieve change. Another commented that she thought that peer review did *'not necessarily need to be School based'* but that it was important to *'talk about peer review in a decentralised way'*. She thought that this was important for sustainability, rather than top-down *'generic emails'* that *'go out across the university'* in a way that seems to have a *'really short life'*.

Communities of practice

Some participants commented on the importance of having a *'communities of practice model'* where there are *'people within faculties and schools talking about why they've done peer review'* or *'what they've learned from peer review or the benefits of peer review'*. One participant commented that this approach *'starts to build a kind of localised interest and understanding of what the approach is all about'*.

Barriers to success

However, despite the success of the model, participants indicated while there's a minority of people who will *'stick their hands up and be involved'* that the problem is *'getting to the other people'*. When invited to explain this further, one participant responded that *'we need to help them know it's there and understand its benefits'*.

Many commented that *'time is probably one of the biggest barriers to people taking it up'* and when asked why some people might resist peer review, one participant explained that *'evaluation of teaching is always tied in a lot people's minds around their job security and around promotion. And so I wouldn't say that the evaluation culture in my environment is as positive as it could be at the moment'*.

5. What are specific strategies to embed peer review?

In response to Question 5, some participants commented that *'a cultural shift'* is needed so that *'the teaching part of our work becomes equivalent to the research part of our work in its quality, in its transparency and in its centrality to what we do'*. This was explained further to mean that as with research where there *'doesn't seem to be an immediate pay-off'* that this same type of thinking needs to extend to teaching. Instead of that, this participant argued that *'a lot of our teaching is last minute, seat of the pants, private. So that the scrutiny is never really there'*.

In achieving a shift some other drivers for change identified by participants ranged from change that would be achieved because of *'a number of people reaching retirement age'* and with a *'big turnover'* of staff in the next 10 years with *'new young academics ... in every discipline'* who *'will come in with a different set of expectations'*. Not that this was intended to imply that change *'is going to be better'* only that the appointment of new staff has the *'potential'* to drive change. Others commented that *'change at the management level'* would also drive change.

Ongoing promotion across the university

The impact of government funding initiatives such as Carrick, the ALTC and now the OLT was thought to have given a profile and reward system for learning and teaching. This was expressed by one participant who commented that when he first commenced there *'were very few people [who] would think about their teaching. It was just something to get done and get out of the way'*. However, he went on to say that the profile had changed since grants had been introduced for learning and teaching initiatives through *'Carrick and then (ALTC) and then (OLT) ... which has given it a bit more of a profile'*. He added that *'there's a bit more motivation because I think there is some kind of profile and reward for it'*. In addition to promotional activities associated with government grants, others suggested that *'stories about how powerful it [peer review] can be'* could be *'part of the way in to persuading people'*. Others joined in suggesting *'vignettes would have an impact'* as *'what persuades you are those kinds of stories about how it transformed what you did'*.

Participants suggested that ongoing promotion at the faculty level in the form of reminders to staff would also be useful. One participant suggested that *'if an e-mail came up that said start thinking about this again and here's some meeting dates ... and with the template attached'* that would be helpful. Participants thought that the timing of emails was important and that an email *'just before semester starts'* would be better than in the middle of semester during peak times. Others thought that a *'personal invitation'* from a senior person would more likely obtain a response. For example, one participant said that *'as soon as I see his [the senior person's] name in there I automatically go that's about peer review and I have a quick look, but if it's coming from an automatic one, I'll probably look at it on the weekend'*.

Some other participants said that they could be of *'personal influence'* in promoting peer review to *'their colleagues to keep teaching high on the agenda'*.

Link with academic promotion

One incentive suggested is to include peer review assessments as part of the academic promotion process. This would mean *'recognition of your teaching from a person able to give you feedback'*. This would be in addition to *'formative review of supporting each other with our teaching'* so that *'if you wanted to go for promotion you might approach a level three reviewer, and say can I get a more robust, formalised review?'* While not a consistent view across all focus groups, participants at one university commented that there was *'institutional evidence that's growing that QUT takes it seriously'* and *'that research outputs in learning and teaching are seen as valuable as research outputs within discipline areas'*.

Another participant commented in support of this view as follows:

You've got just as much chance of being promoted now with teaching evidence as you have with research evidence. For example, the (OLT) grants now are category one, the same way that (ARC) grants are category one. Research outputs in learning and teaching are seen as, as valuable as research outputs within discipline areas.

One participant commented that in addition to the 'formative peer review' it was important to have a 'summative' model to 'sit alongside' the 'reciprocal model' for use in applications for academic promotion. This was to ensure that the reciprocal model does not 'become overly bureaucratic' as a result of staff 'looking for extensive written reports because they are using it for dual purposes'.

Improved rollout

Participants made a number of suggestions about how to motivate staff to undertake peer review including the role of champions, mentors, learning and teaching plans, and for promotional purposes. However, some thought the most important aspect was getting 'buy-in' particularly from 'supervisors' at the time of 'roll out' of the peer review model. This was because 'at PPR supervisors are looking for hard statistics' and this is when holistic tools are 'quickly abandoned ... in favour of things that'll deliver the hard statistics'.

With regard to rollout, one participant, a peer review champion, expressed her concern that 'there hasn't really been sufficient thought to roll out' in terms of ensuring 'continuity'. She explained that in the previous year while she had helped develop 'the workshop' and helped to 'identify mentors and get a group going', that she had then 'stepped back', which had 'dropped all the richness in terms of making an impact'. She suggested that this time more thought could be given to rollout and strategies for continuity.

Teaching and learning plans

Other incentives could be achieved by including peer review 'on the teaching and learning plan as an option' so that it could be 'seen' or made visible as 'an activity that would be seen as worthwhile'. Others joined in commenting that this would be good because although 'it's not mandatory ... at least it's there visibly on the pro forma for the yearly plan'. However, the success of the incentive might be limited given that other participants reported that 'it's been so long ... I never seem to do formal work plans' and that he 'didn't know why'. While another participant indicated her surprise and commented that she 'didn't know you get away with that'. The extent of the problem became apparent when another participant also claimed that he 'never does' a teaching and learning plan and he explained that when he raised this with his 'line manager' she said 'I don't believe in those and she walked off'.

Time effective

A common theme across all focus groups was the importance of being able to factor in time for reflection and learning and that in their crowded working lives, finding time for professional development was challenging. In this context, peer review was seen as a time effective process, with one participant commenting that she understood the commitment required for peer review had been estimated '*at perhaps three hours a year*' and that it '*should be sold in those terms*'.

Appendix B: Survey questionnaire—Peer Review of Teaching (Phase 1)

Peer Review of Teaching

Collegial conversations / Enhancing scholarly practice

Survey questionnaire

About you

1. Which of the following best describes your academic role?
Sessional teacher
Lecturer
Senior lecturer
Associate Professor
Professor
2. For how many years have you been teaching within a university context?
1–5 yrs
6–10 yrs
11–15 yrs
16–20 yrs
>20 yrs
3. Which of the following best describes your most usual teaching roles?
Lecturer
Tutor
Laboratory/Practical supervisor
Clinical supervisor
Other
4. What is your gender?
Male
Female
5. What is your age?
20–29
30–39
40–49
50–59
60 years or more

6. What is your faculty/disciplinary background?

Health
Business
Law
Other

About peer review

Indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of the following using the accompanying scale (1 = Strongly agree to 6 = Strongly disagree):

7. Peer review of teaching is valued in this faculty/school/department
8. Reflective practice is a fundamental aspect of scholarly teaching
9. Teaching is a scholarly activity which should be open to critique
10. Peers can provide a uniquely valuable source of feedback about teaching practice
11. All academics should include peer review as part of their evaluation of teaching practice
12. Evaluation of teaching is taken very seriously in this faculty/school/department
13. It is too time consuming to engage in peer review of teaching practice
14. Peer review of teaching benefits both the reviewer and the reviewee
15. Peer review of teaching is essential to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning
16. Engaging in peer review of teaching is not worthwhile
17. Peer review of teaching is an intrusion into my academic work
18. Peer review of teaching challenges my academic freedom
19. Peer review provides an effective measure of teaching practice
20. Peer review is a good way for academic staff to develop their potential as teachers
21. Peer review would not add to what I already do to evaluate my teaching

Participation in peer review

22. During the past 12 months, have you participated in a peer review of your teaching?

Yes Please go to Q. 23

No Do you intend to participate in peer review of your teaching in the future?

Yes No Please go to Q. 30

23. Peer review of teaching increased my confidence as a teacher

24. Peer review of teaching provided me with insight into my teaching
25. Peer review of teaching decreased my isolation as a teacher
26. Peer review of teaching encouraged me to try new things in my teaching practice
27. I would like to share outcomes from my peer review in discussions with my supervisor
28. Engaging in peer review helped me to critically reflect on my teaching practice
29. Overall, peer review is a valuable strategy for evaluating teaching
30. Are there any comments you would like to make?

Thank you for participating

Appendix C: Survey questionnaire—Peer Review of Teaching (Phase 2)

Peer Review of Teaching

Collegial conversations / Enhancing scholarly practice

Survey questionnaire

About you

1. Which of the following best describes your academic role?
 - Sessional teacher
 - Lecturer
 - Senior lecturer
 - Associate Professor
 - Professor
2. For how many years have you been teaching within a university context?
 - 1–5 yrs
 - 6–10 yrs
 - 11–15 yrs
 - 16–20 yrs
 - >20 yrs
3. Which of the following best describes your most usual teaching roles?
 - Lecturer
 - Tutor
 - Laboratory/Practical supervisor
 - Clinical supervisor
 - Other
4. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
5. What is your age?
 - 20–29
 - 30–39
 - 40–49
 - 50–59
 - 60 years or more

6. What is your faculty/disciplinary background?

Health
Business
Law
Other

Participation in peer review

7. During the past 12 months, have you participated in a peer review of your teaching?

Yes Please respond to Q. 9–18

No Do you intend to participate in peer review of your teaching in the future?

Yes Please go to Q. 20

No Please respond to Q. 19–20

8. Do you intend participating in a peer review of your teaching during the next 6 months?

Yes Please go to Q. 20

No Please respond to Q. 19–20

9. Peer review of teaching increased my confidence as a teacher

10. Peer review of teaching provided me with insight into my teaching

11. Peer review of teaching decreased my isolation as a teacher

12. Peer review of teaching encouraged me to try new things in my teaching practice

13. I would like to share outcomes from my peer review in discussions with my supervisor

14. Engaging in peer review helped me to critically reflect on my teaching practice

15. Overall, peer review is a valuable strategy for evaluating teaching

16. Three key outcomes that have resulted from participating in a peer review of my teaching are:

17. Three comments that I have about participating in the peer review of teaching process are:

18. Any other comments you would like to make?

19. What are the main reasons for not participating in a peer review of your teaching?

20. Any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for your contribution to this survey

Appendix D: National symposium agenda

Peer Review of Teaching

Collegial conversations / Enhancing scholarly practice

Activity	Time	Speaker/Facilitator
Welcome	10.00–10.05	Professor Robyn Nash (QUT)
Overview of the project	10.05–10.15	
Partner University 'snapshots'	10.15–11.00	Dr Alan Barnard (QUT) Dr Susan Shannon & Associate Professor Kathleen McEvoy (The University of Adelaide) Ms Suzanne Rochester & Dr Cheryl Waters (University of Technology Sydney) Dr Susan Bolt (Curtin University)
Morning tea: Central Open Space, 11.00–11.15		
Keynote 1: The approach at JCU	11.15 – 12md	Associate Professor Kay Martinez, JCU
Keynote 2: The approach at QUT	12md–12.45	Professor Suzi Vaughan, QUT
Q & A with keynote speakers	12.45–1pm	Associate Professor Kay Martinez and Professor Suzi Vaughan
Lunch: Central Open Space, 1–1.30		
Hot Topic session	1.30–2.00	Participant discussion; table groups will identify 1) suggested strategy in response to a Hot Topic, and 2) a critical question for the project team
Q & A session	2.00–2.30	Participants and project team
Participant planning session	2.30–3.00	Participants have the opportunity to develop PRT plans for their organisational contexts, and discuss with other participants
Plenary: Where to from here?	3.00–3.15	Summary and wrap up Project team