‘How can we measure Teaching Excellence?’

Dr Pam Parker
Associate Director LEaD
P.M.Parker@city.ac.uk

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Outline of the Presentation

• Change Academy and reasons for undertaking this project

• Project team and aims

• Award scheme

• Methodology

• Themes and criteria and Assessment

• Recognition

• Sharing Good practice

• Lessons learnt

• What next?
HEA Change Academy

• In the summer of 2012 the HEA had a call for a change academy focused on Recognising Teaching Excellence

• The Change Academy brings together cross-institutional teams and should support finding the time and space to think creatively and develop a major change initiative

• It is a year-long process that includes specific development opportunities such as workshops and an ongoing support network
Rationale for participating

• There was a new university vision which identified two activities as “supporting and encouraging our staff in pedagogical innovation and educational development” and “recognising excellent staff performance in education and capturing and sharing models of good practice”.

• The university had an award scheme which had run since 2000 and there had been some changes made but it was a good time to undertake a more strategic review

• A need to have a clearer link to the HEA fellows and the UKPSF standards

• A need to look at how this might feed into a development route to NTFS
Beyond the institution

- The recognition and reward of teaching excellence has been a subject of interest and discussion for many years with comments about this in the literature since the 1980’s

- In the UK the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme offered by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) from 2000 was seen as an important step in gaining recognition for teaching excellence

- Many HEI’s around this time also then introduced their own award schemes but these have been varied and have been criticised in relation to the lack of transparent and clear criteria (Chalmers 2011, Gibbs 2008, Skelton 2004, 2005, 2009 & Young 2006)
Project Team

Julie Attenborough Associate Dean for Education School of Health Sciences,

Maggie Cunningham Development Support Manager Academic Services,

Dr Wayne Holland Associate Dean Education Cass Business School

Dr Pam Parker Associate Director LEaD (Project Lead)

James Perkins Student Union Vice President Education
Project Aims

We were very ambitious at the beginning and had the following as aims:

• Explore the current recognition and award processes and analyse the criteria used within this scheme for teaching excellence

• Examine individual discipline criteria for teaching excellence and draw out core teaching excellence principles for the whole University

• Define a development and recognition process that is aligned to the UKPSF for Teaching Excellence

• Facilitate the individual’s development and progression through the scheme to National Teaching Fellow or equivalent

• Outline and enhance the student voice within the scheme

• Enhance our current process for disseminating good practice
University Award Scheme

At the start of this project there were two sets of awards given for teaching

• The student voice awards led by the student union and supported by LEaD were all student nominated with four broad questions used to collect information.

• School awards which were operated slightly differently in each school both in terms of criteria but also nomination and assessment.
Methodology

An evaluative approach was chosen so that the worth of the current scheme to be explored (Robson 1993). The context of the institution was also felt to be important and so Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) naturalistic inquiry approach was felt to be the most appropriate.

Research Questions

Two very broad research questions were as a focus for the study:

• What do staff and students consider to be characteristics of teaching excellence?
• What evidence can be used to make judgements about teaching excellence?

Ethical approval was gained for the project.
Data Analysis

The data was analysed qualitatively looking for rich descriptions of views.

We undertook analysis iteratively so we could share findings at workshops and conference presentations after we had undertaken activities to gather participants views.
Data collection

• Literature review

• 53 students from a walk way stand in December 2012

• 21 Learning Development Fellows from a workshop in March 2013

• 39 staff involved in a survey about the MA Academic Practice programme April 2013

• 20 staff from a workshop in June 2013 at our Learning at City conference

• 22 participants at a workshop in July 2013 at an international learning conference

• 35 participants in a SEDA workshop in November 2013

• 13 staff from a survey about the award scheme

• Analysis of criteria used in the various award schemes
A wordle created from students’ views
Personal attributes of the teacher

The comments made in relation to this were very focused around inspiring students so included:

- Enthusiasm
- Passion
- Creativity

“Her enthusiasm and warmth about her subjects of interest and her role as a teacher are always obvious”
The teacher’s role

Comments here focused on:
• authentic student engagement,
• stimulating students to think
• Focuses on the real world and relevance

‘Makes the subject more exciting instead of just reading through the slides’

‘keeps us engaged by using contemporary examples that relate to us!’

‘Maintains engagement with students easily and uses innovative teaching methods’.
Teacher – student relationship

Comments for this were very focused on building an authentic relationship with the students and included:

- being approachable
- having time to listen
- learning students’ names

‘Creates a stable and truthful relationship’

‘Makes herself available beyond set learning times to assist in module work as well as a career advice’
“what would teaching excellence in your discipline look like”

Many staff drew pictures to represent this and they included:

• A conveyor belt of tools all needed at different times

• A gardener sowing seeds and nurturing growth

• A beautiful woven tapestry including knowledge, skills, behaviours, ideas

• Dead Poets Society video clip- inspirational

• All aspects of the profession – in the office, on site and with the raw materials
Scholarship and Personal Development

In the last two workshops at conferences and possibly due to the different nature of participants this fourth theme arose. This had not been previously commented on. However in the conferences there were references to:

- engaging in reflection
- having good subject knowledge
- being up to date
- using a variety of teaching and assessment strategies
- sharing their knowledge with colleagues
Changes during the project year

The project did raise the profile of teaching so there was much more discussion about teaching excellence.

The Vice Chancellor introduced a University Education Excellence award.

There was discussion and agreement about using the themes from the project but concerns were raised about ensuring the criteria were not exclusive to only lecturers, the criteria were examples and not absolute and the links with the current NTFS criteria were explicit.

All these were taken into account and for 2013-2014 one set were used across all awards.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Attributes</th>
<th>Promoting Learning Success</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students cite this person as inspiring and motivating them to learn and achieve</td>
<td>Uses innovative and creative approaches to teaching, assessing and/or supporting learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion and enthusiasm for their discipline/role and support of learning is obvious</td>
<td>Provides up to date knowledge and relates this to the “real world” recognising the need for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to all</td>
<td>relevance to the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communications skills with all students demonstrating knowledge of student</td>
<td>Consistently uses activities to promote student engagement and challenges them to develop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual needs and how these can be met for individuals</td>
<td>their knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability to support students’ needs and learning</td>
<td>Individual excellence: evidence of enhancing and transforming the student learning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognising individual differences</td>
<td>(NTFS)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship with Student</th>
<th>Scholarship and professional development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides a supportive, challenging but non-threatening environment for students to</td>
<td>Raising the profile of excellence: evidence of supporting colleagues and influencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learn</td>
<td>support for student learning; demonstrating impact and engagement (NTFS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engages with students to provide effective feedback and advice to encourage growth</td>
<td>Ability to influence positively the wider community in higher education through dissemination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates interest in students as individuals and promotes their confidence as</td>
<td>of activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>a learner</td>
<td>Demonstrates a critical reflective approach to own professional practice and the use of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scholarship to support practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is approachable and responsive to communication from students in a timely and</td>
<td>Demonstrates leadership within department, school, University or nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate manner ensuring students feel valued as individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is student centred in their role listening to their feedback and acting upon</td>
<td>Developing excellence: evidence of commitment to ongoing professional development with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where appropriate</td>
<td>regard to teaching and learning and/or learning support (NTFS)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Has gained recognition for excellence through awards and funds where able to do this</td>
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How can we measure the criteria?

During the project we also asked about how the criteria could be measured/demonstrated. We identified five areas that could be used:

- peer review
- student feedback
- education documentation
- evidence of impact
- evidence based practice

We discussed a range of approaches during the project again to make things inclusive.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer review and esteem</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer review and feedback, mentoring others, membership of University Committees/working groups, nominations for awards, invitations to give key notes/plenaries, external examiner role, reviewer for programmes externally, peer reviewer/editorial role with a journal/feedback from presentation</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Student Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student staff liaison committees, Module evaluations, NSS, PTES, PRES, Student Voice Award nominations</td>
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<table>
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<th>Education Documentation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student information leaflets and guidance, Session plans, curriculum documents, assessment tasks, teaching portfolio, teaching philosophy</td>
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<th>Evidence of impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student feedback from above, Students results, employer feedback, implementation of processes or systems that enhance student activities, dissemination of innovative practice at conferences, journal articles and case studies</td>
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<tr>
<th>Evidence Based Practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in process linked to evidence of good practice and enhancement, use of techniques linked to research/theory, evidence of CPD</td>
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</table>
How should we recognise and reward this?

- Capturing student feedback
- National standards for awards
- Showcasing
- Being asked to share knowledge with and by other staff
- Opportunity to exchange with other institutions
- Freedom to choose your own recognition within reason
- Honor space, professor
- Not over burdening afterwards
- Promotional opportunities
- Ethos of institution embedding with research
- Trophy
- Kudos
- Money
- Consistency
- Time / sabbatical
- Visual acknowledgement
Sharing Good Practice

There was a lack of planned dissemination of good practice from these awards which others such as Halse, et al (2007), Palmer & Collins (2006) and Skelton (2004) had noted.

Limited use was made of those who won awards in terms of mentoring others (Little et al 2007).
Lessons learnt

We were too ambitious for one year and so the aim of examining individual discipline criteria for teaching excellence and draw out core teaching excellence principles for the whole University did not get completely achieved.

We have not yet been able to define a development and recognition process that is aligned to the UKPSF for Teaching Excellence in part due to permitting differences for disciplines in terms of assessment.

Gain senior management support for the project.

Do not assume everyone will be as excited about the project.
What Next?

2013-2014 award scheme used the criteria and assessment guidance for all awards.

Evaluation of some panel members to date suggests that the themes are appropriate but that more examples for the criteria would be useful.

We will continue to use these and ask applicants this year about the criteria and how they used these when preparing their applications.
References


References Continued


Articles from this study