PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
FOR ACADEMIC STAFF TEACHING IN TRANSNATIONAL PROGRAMS

What critical roles do Australian-based and partner-institution staff play in teaching the transnational education program? How might Australia-based and local tutors be involved in mutual, collaborative professional development? What principles should provide the frame of reference for professional development in transnational education?

Successful implementation of transnational teaching team processes will contribute to ongoing learning for team members and enhanced opportunities for students' achievement of consistent learning outcomes that span partnership and delivery models and cultures.

The Professional Development Principles for Academic Staff Teaching in Transnational Programs have been developed through the course of the Transnational Teaching Teams project 2013-14. The project involved transnational teaching teams from Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam. The principles expand upon those developed by Leask et al. (2005) *A Professional Development Framework for Academic Staff Teaching Australian Programs Offshore*. These interdependent principles are intended to support the design of professional learning opportunities for transnational education.

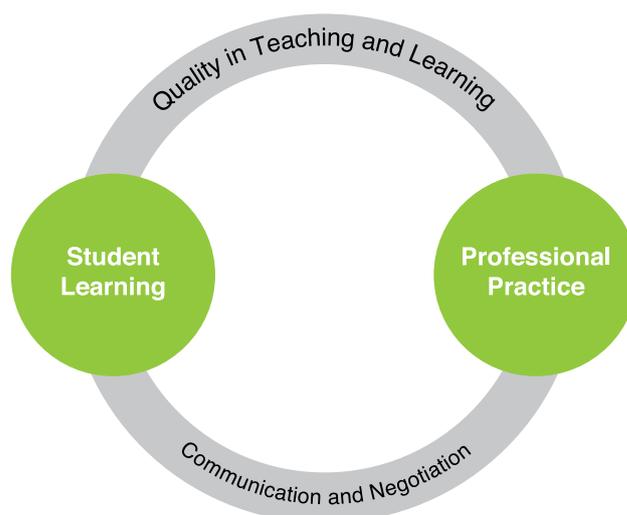## The framework for Effective Transnational Teaching Teams

The complex layers of institutional and cross-campus accountability in transnational education have a direct impact on teaching and learning. The framework below represents four interrelated operational processes that have critical importance to the effective operations of transnational programs.

The model interprets the seven project principles, showing that the two strong threads, Communication and Negotiation and Quality, underpin both Student Learning and Professional Practice. Each of the four processes is integral to the development and maintenance of a robust transnational teaching team characterised as a partnership of equals.

Professional Development Principles

Transnational Teaching Teams are sites of rich professional learning when they are supported by professional development that:

- is practice-based
- builds trust and a sense of belonging
- involves all members of the teaching team
- addresses the intercultural nature of transnational teaching
- harnesses the diversity of the teaching team
- promotes distributed leadership
- is flexible and context-sensitive.

Diagram: circular model with outer ring labelled "Quality in Teaching and Learning" (top) and "Communication and Negotiation" (bottom), with two nodes: "Student Learning" (left) and "Professional Practice" (right).

Rationale and related questions

Principle 1 - practice-based

It is important that professional practice development opportunities situate transnational teaching teams as learning-conducive sites. Related questions include:

- What unique opportunities for professional development are offered by transnational teaching?

- In what ways can all members of the team be supported in extending the scope and deepen understandings of their practice?

- Is it appropriate to anchor professional development in the everyday work practices of transnational teaching teams?

- How might professional practice development create opportunities for teaching team members to engage with and learn from each other as they undertake an extended range of day-to-day practices?

Principle 2 - builds trust and a sense of belonging

Communication and negotiation are keys to building and maintaining effective teaching teams. Related questions include:

- How can professional development be designed to enhance a sense of connectedness and collaboration amongst the teaching team members?

- How can professional development opportunities be built around existing collaboration?

- How might professional development be designed to enhance relations of respect and trust amongst transnational teaching team members despite power inequalities and unavoidable differences?

Principle 3 - involves all members of the teaching team

All members of the teaching team play an important part in collaborative professional development. Related questions include:

- What critical roles to Australian-based and partner-institution staff play in teaching the transnational education program?

- How can both Australia-based and local tutors be involved in mutual, collaborative professional development?

- What sorts of resources and infrastructure are required to ensure that sessional teachers are included in professional practice development with transnational teaching teams?

Principle 4 - addresses the inter-cultural nature of transnational teaching

Transnational learning sites are by nature inter-cultural. Related questions include:

- In what ways is transnational teaching similar to and different from any other form of teaching activity?

- What are the issues for learning within the inter-cultural space?

- How can professional development for academic staff address the inter-cultural nature of transnational teaching?

Principle 5 - harnesses the diversity of the teaching team

Each team member's needs and experiences are recognised in the professional development program. Related questions include:

- How can professional practice development be designed to harness the diversity of transnational teaching teams for maximum benefit and learning?

- In what ways do the professional development needs of transnational teaching staff vary?

- How can professional development activities and resources be made flexible and sensitive to the experience, knowledge and situation of the individuals involved?

- How can the various experiences and skills of team members be utilised in the professional development program?

Principle 6 - promotes distributed leadership

Distributed leadership within teaching teams suggests a context and a culture of trust, respect, recognition and collaboration. Related questions include:

- Are all members of the team involved in leadership roles?
- Is leadership conceived as a condition of position or as practices distributed amongst group members?
- Is professional practice development supportive of leadership development for all team members?

Principle 7 - is flexible and context-sensitive

Professional development consisting only of generic, de-contextualised workshops is unlikely to adequately meet the needs of transnational teaching teams.

There will be specific issues at particular sites that need to be addressed. For example, in one case study the team were unable to use skype for communication; in another the Chinese students could not utilise the web fully as sites were blocked. Related questions include:

- How well does the professional development program recognise the varied needs of particular teams, sites and individuals?
- Does the program recognise and build on the explicit context of the team?
- How can professional learning that is collective, dynamic and anchored in the everyday work practices of transnational teaching teams, be encouraged and resourced?

Transnational
Teaching
Teams

Professional development for quality enhancement of learning and teaching