Defining the scholarship of teaching

The scholarship of teaching involves research into classroom related activities and assessment to improve teaching and to add to a body of useful knowledge about practice. It is informed by educational philosophy, self-reflection and a review of teaching delivery and resources, and includes peer collaboration and feedback. Transnational education is a rapidly growing discipline that has distinct challenges. Given this, it is important that academic and teaching staff teaching offshore become actively engaged in the scholarship of teaching by developing their personal expertise as a transnational teacher as well as contributing to RMIT’s ability to continually improve the quality of transnational education.

Developing a scholarly approach to teaching

The most valuable resource you have in developing your scholarship as an academic or teacher is your experience, insight and passion as an educator. Engaging in scholarly activities involves continuous reflection on your practice and making decisions about improving the quality of your teaching. There are a range of activities that can help you deepen your knowledge about your discipline, and your teaching skills in a transnational environment:

- Look for opportunities to involve yourself in research, to present and publish your work at conferences, workshops and in publications. Author or co-author with colleagues.
- Build relationships with colleagues, engage in collegial discussions and activities like peer assessment and mentoring. Is there a willing mentor with whom you could undertake action research of your teaching?
- Engage in an action learning cycle with colleagues and students to improve teaching approaches offshore – for yourself and others. Review or redevelop existing resources to your suit transnational contexts.
- Promote your teaching and research through grant and award activities.
- Keep up to date with research publications about teaching in your discipline and in higher education.
- Design scenarios, models or case studies that suit your transnational context, and have them peer reviewed.
- Develop a list of journals, websites and newsletters to help you stay in touch with developments in teaching in your own discipline or profession.
- Seek out and participate in seminars, courses or conferences that focus on learning and teaching.

What we urgently need today is a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar – a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching.”

(P. Palmer cited in Boyer, 1990: 24)
What are others doing?

An e-portal for best practice in study tours
This project designed and developed a study tour e-portal to store and disseminate curriculum resources. The E-portal and blogging technology is being used within RMIT Australia before being extended to offshore academics and enterprises. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=rlailpqeue76z

Models of industry feedback for WIL programs
A model for industry supervisor feedback was developed for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) courses and activities. Samples, templates and guidelines were designed after consultation with students, industry supervisors and academics. It grew from an earlier Learning & Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF) project. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=o84120ttbjb6z

Using online simulation for small, medium & large class
Online role-plays are an authentic learning and teaching strategy that allows students to participate in simulated ‘real life’ world experiences that connect with industry relevant scenarios. Students enrolled in three courses in the School of Accounting and Law, and in the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning were asked to participate in as well as design the role-plays. The online tools used included e-journals, wikis, blogs and e-portfolios. http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=tbydlpqeue76z

Summary
The pursuit of quality teaching at RMIT requires an active commitment to:

• Continuous improvement in teaching practice
• Maintaining currency of knowledge and contributing to new knowledge
• Critical reflection, review and analysis of trans-national teaching delivery
• Contributing to communities of practice to share your good practice and ideas
• Dissemination of successful trans-national teaching approaches and strategies

Useful resources
The Academic Development Group or Learning & Teaching specialist in your College or School will be able to assist you in contacting the most appropriate staff specialist. Areas of scholarship include:

Transnational education – Teaching strategies, issues and successes, contextualisation and internationalisation of curricula.

Lectopia, Blackboard and e-learning pedagogy– Lecture and presentation recordings, online learning management systems, e-learning, blended learning and pedagogy.

e-Portfolios – Evidencing formal and informal learning, and evidencing graduate and professional capabilities.

Team-based Learning – Team-based multiple choice questions, Case studies and peer evaluation

Academic Development Group – PD sessions:
Browse RMIT Professional Development programs
http://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/professionaldevelopment

Academic awards and grants:
http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse;ID=sdtb88vs65i21

Learning & Teaching Investment Fund (LTIF):
http://www.rmit.edu.au/teaching/ltif

Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT)


