

# Utilising the educational resource development process to scaffold the professional development of university teachers

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**Abstract:** Utilising the educational resource development process to scaffold the professional development of university teachers

## Introduction

Traditional professional development activities designed for University teachers, such as workshops, seminars and lecture programs are not always effective in transferring skills. The type and number of tasks that a University teacher must engage in are becoming more complex. Lecturers increasingly report having less time to undertake all the tasks necessary to be successful in their careers. Professional development activities are often the first to drop off the 'to do' list, as it is seen as disaggregated from their main job.

There is a telling quote from a reported experienced teaching academic in Dearn et al (2002, p.35) relating to the types of professional development models for University teaching. It talks about the complexity of the University academics' role, of the increasing level and types of skills required. It suggest that professional development be organised around the key tasks that academics perform, of which teaching and learning "... is a huge one". It talks about using a range of activities, which would make the 'experience' more realistic. Another experienced academic (ibid.) talks about the activity of attending professional development workshops and although intellectually stimulating "... they don't actually translate into much behaviour change." As Steel (2004, p.865) says of the traditional professional development process "To some extent workshops disaggregate innovation into less integrated aspects of development (e.g. technical skills, teaching approaches, assessment, etc.)."

How do we develop meaningful activities that engage staff? According to Herrington and Oliver (2000) useable knowledge is best gained in learning environments which feature the following characteristics from situated learning environments: authentic contexts; authentic activities; access to expert performances and modelling; multiple roles and perspectives; collaborative construction of knowledge which prompt reflection, articulation, coaching and scaffolding and; authentic assessment. The model to be dis cussed in this paper is one of utilising the

situated learning environment that is created by a University-wide scheme for educational resource development to scaffold the professional development of university teachers.

## References

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