MODERATION FOR FAIR ASSESSMENT IN TRANSNATIONAL LEARNING AND TEACHING PROJECT

ALTC Moderation for Fair Assessment in Transnational Learning and Teaching Project 2008-2010
Project Partners

University of South Australia*
Curtin University of Technology
Southern Cross University
Taylor’s University College (Malaysia)
* Lead institution
Project Team Members

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Project Aims

- Identify key processes, principle and issues associated with a range of moderation practices in a variety of transnational teaching modes.

- Identify and promote good practice across disciplines in processes associated with moderation of assessment from both quality assurance and quality control points of view.
Project Deliverables

- Online, downloadable toolkit for involving the whole teaching team, including partner organisation staff, in assessment moderation practices;

- Collaboratively authored glossary of TNE terms.
Key Research Concerns

How notions of ‘equivalence’ and ‘comparability’ play out in the design, implementation, and moderation of assessment in TNE in terms of:

• assessment tasks and moderation activities

• contextual issues

• induction and other professional development activities and resources
Project Outcomes

1. Collation of moderation related information in TNE

- Review of the literature
- Map of staff experiences
- Identification of challenges
- Identification of good practice

2. Development of a transnational community of practice through the research framework

3. Creation of a critically-negotiated framework of inclusive practice for moderation of assessment in TNE settings
## Project Schedule

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<th>Duration</th>
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<td>Literature review and ethics approval</td>
<td>October 2008-May 2009</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Australian and transnational data collection</td>
<td>June-December 2009</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Data analysis, production of preliminary toolkit, and further dissemination</td>
<td>June 2009-July 2010</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Implementation, evaluation and refinement</td>
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The research sample is drawn from three Australian universities and for each, three of their partner institutions

PLUS

Anonymous and confidential contributions from non-project partner staff on their positive and/or challenging TNE moderation experiences.
Data Collected

- Primary data collected by face to face interviews, and online surveys
- Interviews with academic and administrative staff in Australia and overseas
- 85 interviews conducted in eight different sites
- Over 100 responses received to online surveys
- Toolkit pre-test and trial feedback
Data Analysis

- Qualitative data analysed using Nvivo 8
- Survey data analysed using SPSS
- Interviews recorded and transcribed selectively
- Around 30% of survey data from academics in Australian universities other than the project partners
Online Survey Results

- There were 103 valid responses. Australian based staff form the majority (71%) of total survey respondents.

- Majority of respondents (72%) were from the discipline of business. Other disciplines represented are humanities (11%), engineering (7%) and health sciences (2%).

- Majority of respondents (65%) are lecturers. Program directors comprise 21% of respondents.

- Approximately half of all Australian staff have a PhD, while 16% of TNE partner staff have a doctorate.
Online Survey Results

- Approximately half of all TNE partner staff and one fifth (22%) of Australian staff have less than five years of TNE experience.

- Approximately 78% of Australian based TNE staff travel overseas to TNE locations. Half of those who travel take 1-2 trips per year. The most common trip duration is 4-6 days.

- Half of all respondents have variable frequency of communication with their TNE counterparts with respondents estimating 81% of communication is using email.
Online Survey Results

- Overall 58% of respondents believe communication is satisfactory. A higher proportion of TNE partner staff (68%) consider communication as satisfactory as compared to Australian staff (53%).

- Overall 53% of respondents believe moderation is satisfactory. A higher proportion of TNE partner staff (64.5%) consider moderation as satisfactory as compared to Australian staff (47.2%).

- Strong correlation found between satisfaction with communication and satisfaction with TNE moderation.
Interview Findings

Candidates for good practice:

- Induction and ongoing professional development
- Clear guidelines around processes, responsibilities and expectations
- Clear and regular communication
- Provision of feedback (to partner institution staff)
- Courses being run synchronously in Aust and at the TNE site (aids the overall process)
- Co-publication (an indication of close collaboration)
- Development of strong relationships

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Interview Findings

Candidates for good practice (cont):

- Use of marking schemes/guides/keys/rubrics
- Newsletter update (one institution’s way of keeping in touch)
- Onsite visits where possible (both ways)
- Collaborative setting of assignments and marking
- Supply of materials to facilitate processes
- Swapping texts (e.g. sending examples of marked work of Australian students to partner institution staff)
- The importance of a team approach
Interview Findings

Challenges:

- Some partner institution staff are unhappy with the Australian centric content of TNE courses
- It can be difficult to build relationships
- High changeover of staff, both in Australia and at TNE sites
- Communication media difficulties — time zone and bandwidth
- Cultural expectations — both sides
- Expectations around culture and communication — both sides
- Inexperience of Australian and partner institution lecturers
- Locus of control — Australian unis sometimes overbearing and
Challenges (cont):

- Blow-outs in marking turnaround
- Staff feeling like they’re out of the loop
- Perceived arrogance of some Australian staff
- Disjuncture in policy and practice
- Limitations of what sessional staff can/should contribute
- Confusing terminology (e.g. unexplained acronyms)
- Timing issues — when courses don’t line up neatly in Australia and at the TNE site
- Variability of experiences overall
Please be involved

- Visit our wiki: http://altc-tne-moderation.wikispaces.com
- Contact Gavin Sanderson (gavin.sanderson@unisa.edu.au) or Shelley Yeo (s.yeo@curtin.edu.au) about any aspect of this Project.
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