

Promoting quality learning and teaching pedagogy: Evaluating a targeted localised academic induction program (AIP) for the impact on continuing professional development

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Despite their position as providers of tertiary education, universities sit beyond normalised discourses of education where qualifications, registration, and continuing professional development are concerned. In this case study, we explore how participation in an academic induction program (AIP) builds foundational andragogy knowledge and skills and fosters individual commitment to continuing professional development (PD) for the critical engagement, maintenance, and enhancement of quality teaching practices. Through a poststructuralist lens, we gathered triangulated evidence via surveys (n=32) and attendance data (n=190). Our findings indicate a positive correlation between AIP attendance and initial PD engagement but identifies a 35% decline in PD uptake six-month post-AIP. Survey responses indicate that while an AIP is a valuable tool for prompting initial engagement in learning and teaching PD, the role and function

of teaching within universities needs to be elevated in order to support a career-long commitment to academic enhancement.

Keywords: *Academic development, academic induction, learning and teaching, professional development, lecturer development*

Introduction

Traditionally, the purpose of universities has been to create intellectual spaces of inquiry, where academics critique, innovate, and contribute to scholarly literature that extends the dominant ideologies of a society (Giroux, 2016). The traditional value of these intellectual spaces has been situated within the opportunities afforded to students to build their social and intellectual capital around particular discourses while developing essential knowledge and skills for particular professions (Inglis, 2016). The intellectual capital gained by students as they undertake a university degree is said to impact positively on their critical thinking skills and provide them with greater access to higher economic opportunities (Matricano, 2019). However, as government bodies, or agencies funded by them, have been positioned increasingly as the legislative authorities of higher education in neo-liberal 21st Century societies, discourses of consumerism, performance management and capitalism have come to dominate core university functions (Tinto, 2006). Appearing to be at odds, at least in part, with the traditional values and purpose of universities. Such neo-liberal ideologies shift the focus from intellectual advancement to product quality and control.

In the age of metric-driven, competency-focussed, evidence-based education systems, the ideological shift away from intellectual advancement has resulted in the zealous assessment of quantitative data to a measure of the success and quality of undergraduate programs as dependent on students' experiences and perceptions. The definition of quality in these contexts, however, often lacks definition and becomes a contested term where conflated meanings arise (Warner, 2016). In this paper, we use the term to describe the ways in which pedagogy focussed on equity aligns with student learning needs and outcomes, teaching platforms, and accreditation requirements to facilitate success. The concentration on success and quality is due largely to the impact-for-investment conditions

of government funding consistent with neo-liberal agendas. Under this system, how satisfied students feel about their tertiary education experiences from one semester to the next, and rates of retention, have come to function as normalised validity tools that measure the effectiveness of teaching practices – albeit absent of personal, academic, or disciplinary context. Over the past 20 years, the link between student retention and quality teaching practices has become a key neo-liberal concern for university governance (Weuffen, Fotinatos, & Andrews, 2018).

One way in which universities have attempted to address and improve the perception of teaching quality, and by extension students reported-levels of satisfaction of the teaching they receive, is via implementation of Academic Induction/Development Programs (AI/DPs) (Boyd, 2010; Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015; Martinez, 2008; Roxa & Martensson, 2017). The purpose of these AI/DPs is to acknowledge and address significant deficits in andragogy possessed by newly employed tertiary teachers (TT), and their pre-existing attitudes, beliefs, and views of learning (Christie et al., 2015). In doing so, AI/DPs focus on developing foundational pedagogical skills, knowledge, and practices for successful transition from industry, or completion of Ph.D. degrees. The need for AI/DPs is particularly pertinent as Logan et al. (2014) state, because many TT underestimate “the [academic] role [as] challenging [and the importance of ongoing] support for the development of teaching skills” (p. 42). Within this context, we present a case study situated in regional Victoria, Australia that foregrounds the voices of TT to examine the capacity to which participation in an institutionally-focussed AI/DP builds foundational andragogy knowledge and skills, and fosters communities of practice focussed on continuing professional development for the critical engagement, maintenance, and enhancement of quality teaching practices.

Literature

The literature surrounding the need for AI/DPs appears to be encapsulated around three interwoven topics. First, the increased funding associated with student success data has resulted in a growing concern by university governance for the provision of quality student learning experiences (Wellings et al., 2019). Within neo-liberalist ideologies, the focus of student satisfaction surveys as the absolute quantitative measure by which teaching quality is assessed, positions students as consumers and teachers as the deliverer of an education product (Boyd, 2010; Chalmers & Gardiner,

2015; Martinez, 2008; Roxa & Martensson, 2017). This shifts frameworks of understanding of teaching quality away from the establishment and enhancement of intellectual capital. In order to supply the student consumer with a superior education product in the competitive tertiary education sector, universities have increasingly implemented mandated professional development (PD) sessions focussed on improving the quality of teaching (Reddy et al., 2016). While in general, the acquisition and enhancement of practice is a standard endeavour, the perception that PDs focussed on improving teaching quality will impact student retention rates, silences the associated benefits for staff, such as, increasing foundational andragogy knowledge and skills, and creating reflexive communities of practice focussed on enhancement (Christie et al., 2015).

In June 2019, the Australian Minister for Education announced that in order to create more accountability for the spending of public money and enhance the development of quality learning and teaching (L&T) experiences, financial incentives based on performance metrics would be implemented in 2020. The reasoning was to ensure Australian universities perform “strongly, sustainably, and responsibly” (Wellings et al., 2019, p. xii). We assert, that a focus on the four student-centred measures – student success, equity group participation, graduate outcomes, student experience – within the grant scheme appears to perpetuate neo-liberal ideologies of universities as capitalist endeavours, with teaching quality viewed as a measurable product of the business by its consumers.

Concern for teaching quality in the politically controlled, yet institutionally competitive nature of the tertiary education sector, has led to notions of quality education and career outcomes being considered essential markers of student achievement (Bennett et al., 2018; Tinto, 2016). In the Australian context, triangulation of student satisfaction and achievement data, from the quality indicators for learning and teaching (QILT) (<https://www.qilt.edu.au/>) and Australian Government Department of Education and Training respectively, is used as “the yardstick by which teaching quality should be assessed” (Coe et al., 2014, p. 2). Over the past twenty years, however, there appears to have “been no major change, upwards or downwards, in student retention rates internationally” (Weuffen et al., 2016, p. 2). This assessment is supported by the latest data for the period 2005–2015 highlighting that success rates for undergraduate students have fallen only by 0.61 with retention down nationally 0.82 (Department of Education and Training, 2017). Therefore, the use of this data alone to determine whether or not a

TT's practice is considered quality is problematic. It implies that the impact of teaching may be observed, and entirely dependent, on students' self-reported perceptions and levels of satisfaction.

As a means of reinforcing the dogma that student retention is to be addressed by improving teaching quality, whether portrayed overtly or not, universities employ various strategies to address attrition (Bowles et al., 2014; Lau, 2003; Fotinatos & Sabo, 2018). Given the increasing non-traditional student cohorts – students over 25 years of age – enrolling in undergraduate programs over the past thirteen years – an average growth of 58% compared to traditional undergraduate cohort growth of 18.5% (see Figure 1), Milheim (2005) argues that universities “must respond to [their] needs as effectively as possible in order to remain competitive and accessible” (p. 122). With this in mind, the literature highlights a need to examine and evaluate ways in which academic teachers may be supported to develop better L&T experiences through continuing PD for the purposes of good teaching as realigned to the quintessential purposes of universities as intellectual spaces of inquiry. This is because there has been a tendency to focus on evaluation and impact, which as Amundsen and Wilson (2012) argue, “may not be the best questions to ask [if we want to] deeply understand practice and build a solid foundation for further practice and research” (p. 111).

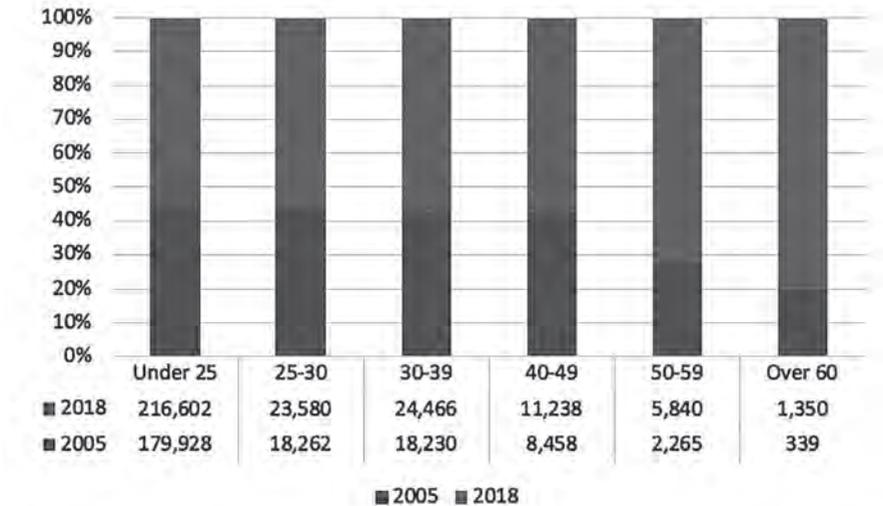


Figure 1: Commencing undergraduate students by age and year in Australian universities (Australian Government, 2019)

Educating academic teachers

The notion of academic teacher training as a means of supporting individual pedagogical growth and institutional development has gained momentum during the last 20 years (Silander, & Stigmar, 2018). Perhaps this is in response to the reality that employment as a TT in Australian and International universities requires no formal education qualification, nor is there a formal registration body, or mandated minimum PD hours, to ensure the maintenance of high-quality contemporary pedagogical practice. Rather, TTs within universities are employed overwhelmingly because of their industry expertise and/or research output (Bennett et al., 2018). Yet, in a study conducted by Dunkin (1991) nearly twenty years ago, TTs reported that as their careers progressed, tasks associated with either teaching and research intertwined to become the brick-and-mortar of teaching quality.

In Australia, formal education qualifications, registration with a central regulatory body, and evidence of ongoing PD are required for employment as a teacher within all areas of education; early childhood, primary and secondary schools (Victorian Government, 2015), and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) (Victorian TAFE Association (2019), but not higher education institutions. The assumption seems to be made within the university sector:

That once an academic holds a Master's degree or PhD in their discipline, they can share knowledge and teach students effectively ... [but, this results in] many lecturers feeling like they have been thrown in the deep end at the start of their careers (Quinn & Vorster, 2015).

As a means of addressing the increased calls for teaching quality accountability, one way in which universities are attempting to assist the provision of better L&T experiences for students is by way of Academic Induction/Development Programs (AI/DPs) (Boyd, 2010; Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015; Martinez, 2008; Roxa & Martensson, 2017).

Scholarly analysis of the literature indicates that explorations of the role of AI/DPs internationally have also gained momentum over the past 20 years. The focus of these studies has tended to centre around analysing the impact of AI/DPs on the perceived role of TT (Chadha, 2014; Owens, 2015), and effectiveness to facilitating pedagogical enhancement

(Higgins & Harreveld, 2013; Stein et al., 2012), with recent research focussed on benchmarking and contextualising AI/DP programs across Australia (Hicks et al., 2010; Sugrue et al, 2017). In general, studies tend to use interviews, questionnaires, surveys, or narrative self-study to gather participant satisfaction data relating to AI/DP attendance and the perceived influence on pedagogical changes. While the bulk of studies report positive correlations between AI/DPs attendance and changes in pedagogical practice, Chalmers and Gardiner (2015) argue that evaluation techniques exploring the impact of AI/DPs lack rigour. They state:

Without a rigorously developed and relevant education instrument, the effectiveness of teacher development programs will continue to be assessed through limited tools such as participation satisfaction surveys which do not provide evidence of the immediate and long-term impact of the programs on teaching, learning, and the institutional culture related to teaching and learning (p. 55).

Despite the tools used, the major theme relating to the need for, and attendance at, AI/DPs appeared to be situated on the notion of teacher's transition from industry / other education sectors to the university environment. The reason being to maintain quality teaching practices within higher education particularly where blended pedagogy is concerned (Nguyet Diep et al, 2019).

The key tenant of transitional challenges that emerges for TT is the notion of survival skills. Isaacs and Parker (1997) identified that newly employed academic teachers considered practical information on how to teach, over theoretical aspects of academia, as most valuable to supporting transition. This is supported by Martinez (2008), who highlighted that TTs face major challenges when transitioning from classroom / industry to campus, in particular, the development of knowledge and confidence relating to the normative universities' work, research, and promotion culture. In order to support transition, Ambler et al. (2016) argue that better processes for mentoring ought to be employed as a means of facilitating increased job satisfaction and a culture of professional learning. Because of this, there is a need to develop AI/DPs that are a:

Well-articulated, integrated package that better reflects the lived experiences of new academics juggling the demands of teaching, research, administrative and service components of their new work (Martinez, 2008, p. 49).

While Logan et al. (2014) identified that mandatory AI/DPs within their study were perceived as having little value to the transition journey from industry to academia, Reddy et al. (2016) highlight the “importance of deliberate institutional intervention in developing” (p. 1830) a culture of academic PD. A prominent suggestion is for more longitudinal research to be conducted that focusses on investigating conducive processes of transition and induction (see Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015; Roxa & Martinez, 2017; Stein et al., 2012).

In the international arena, formal AI/DPs have been designed, implemented, evaluated, and reviewed regularly, to address the issue of teaching quality specifically (Jaaskela et al, 2017). In the United Kingdom, for example, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) (Advance HE, 2018) has established their position as the “national body that champions teaching excellence”. Through fellowship programs, the HEA supports AI/DPs for individual teaching and support staff in universities, with the express purpose of “raising the quality and status of teaching” (Advance HE, 2018). Tertiary staff wishing to apply for a fellowship are required to progress through a rigorous application and registration program that “demonstrates a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in L&T in higher education” (Advance HE, 2018). While it is beyond the scope of this manuscript to explore the HEA in depth, we raise it here as a means of highlighting the juxtaposition between international and Australian education spaces in promoting and enhancing ongoing participation with L&T PD to enhance teaching quality in universities.

In the absence of an Australian national body for teaching excellence, the Australian Government Office of Learning and Teaching offered¹ fellowships to “advance learning and teaching in higher education by supporting leading educators to undertake strategic, high-profile activities in areas of importance to the higher education sector” (Australian Government, 2017). In 2016, Kym Fraser was awarded a fellowship for the program: “A national, open-access learning and teaching induction program for staff new to teaching”, with an aim to “develop a self-

paced, semester long, national, open-access Learning and Teaching Induction Program for teaching staff in the Australian Higher Education Sector” (Australian Government, 2016). Delivered as a massive open online course (MOOC), the “teaching induction course provides key introductory L&T concepts and strategies for those who are in their first few years of university teaching” (Canvas Network, 2018). Critical analysis of the MOOC indicates that the program presents generic pedagogical approaches to L&T via content such as: theories, assessment and feedback, quality teaching practices, and designing curriculum for diverse learners. However, generic approaches to standardising academic professional induction are problematic because they “result in a dislocation from experience that makes little concession to individuality or to institutional context or conditions” (Daniels, 2017, p. 170). Rather, the literature suggests that solutions lie with “the need for a balance between immediate and ongoing support offered through continuous development programs” (Reddy et al, 2016, p. 1825), in order to reduce TT’s “sense of being overwhelmed and frustrated at being unable to meet the diverse demands of the job” (Logan et al. 2014, p. 43). Nevertheless, AI/DPs as a survival kit for the commencing TT raises questions about the capacity to which participation in such programs builds foundational andragogic knowledge and skills and continuously supports development of quality L&T practices for career longevity.

Project context

Federation University Australia is a multi-campus, regionally-focussed, dual-sector tertiary education provider in Victoria, Australia, and a member of the Regional Universities Network (RUN). According to the 2017 Student Experience Survey National Report (QILT, 2018), Federation University is ranked above the national average (80.9%) for teaching quality, with 82.9% (n=3167) undergraduate students indicating a positive experience. The university is recognised as placing “great emphasis on the quality of our teaching and learning, [by] delivering a range of innovative programs” (Universities Australia, 2018). This emphasis is reflective, in part, to figures highlighting that over 29% of students come from a low socioeconomic status and are often first-in-family to attend university (Devlin & McKay, 2017). However, these figures should be not be viewed through a deficit lens because students from these backgrounds are often “hardworking, high

achieving, and determined to succeed” (Devlin & McKay, 2017, p. 359). Federation University’s commitment to providing high quality L&T environments is perhaps cognisant also of the anecdotal evidence that a proportion of the academic teaching population is also first-in-family; the authors themselves are predominantly first-in family.

The Federation University AIP was implemented in 2015 to provide newly employed academic teachers with centrally-based information, resources, supports and services to assist in the survival of the first teaching semester, and to provide a foundation on which to build ongoing quality L&T practices. Since 2015, the AIP has undergone rolling reviews to maintain contemporary pedagogical relevance and the evolving needs of newly employed academic teachers. For the period June 2015 – December 2017, the AIP was delivered as a face-to-face two-day workshop, however in February 2018, due to the increasing regional multi-campus reach of the university, the AIP was, and continues to be, delivered as a one-day facilitated face-to-face workshop, with 8 hours of self-paced online learning. Face-to-face workshop topics focus on introducing principles of quality L&T in a range of learning environments, navigating the learning management system (LMS), and promoting academic resources, supports, and PD opportunities. Online self-paced topics focus on introducing learning, teaching, and assessment frameworks and structures, student diversity and embedding academic support programs, promoting enhanced scholarly pedagogical practice, and providing online supports – forums and virtual learning sessions – to address transitional issues.

Methods

This case study employs a poststructuralist framework to examine staff perceptions regarding the capacity to which the Federation University AIP fosters ongoing participation in L&T PD. Poststructuralist concepts, such as normative discourses and power/knowledge relations (Foucault, 1977) are used as an overarching lens to critique the purpose of AI/DP’s within the higher education sector; highlight ways in which university governance positions responsibility for teaching quality squarely on the shoulders of TT, and explore how TT themselves take up their constructed roles. To explore the capacity to which the AIP builds foundational andragogy knowledge and skills, and fosters continuing professional development for quality teaching practices, the research

team decided that collection of triangulated and trustworthy attendance data with self-reported perceptions about changes in L&T was essential to “gain more than one perspective” (Zeegers, 2015, p. 80), and “check the credibility of data [to] minimise the distorting effects of personal bias upon logic of evidence” (Lather, 1986, p. 86). The project received Federation University Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approval in June 2018 (B18-094).

Attendance data of newly employed academic staff (n=190) completing the AIP, and attending centrally-offered and internally-facilitated PD sessions was collected by the central L&T unit (Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice (CLIPP)) between the period of 2015–2018, and recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. In order to qualify for selection, TT's needed to be newly employed in any capacity (ongoing, contract, sessional) at the university for the AIP operational period of 2015–2018.

Data relating to staff perceptions about the participatory value of the AIP was generated via an online anonymous survey hosted by LimeSurvey (<https://www.limesurvey.org/#>). The survey consisted of n=33 questions, presented as a range of Likert scales, yes/no selection, and multiple-choice questions, designed in four major sections. The first section was designed to capture information relating to the educational / industry background of staff participating in the AIP, their perceptions of quality L&T, and the capacity to which they participated. The subsequent three sections were designed to invite dialogue and develop discourse about their perceptions, values, and engagement of a) PD to enhance L&T practices, b) networks and services to advance L&T practices, and c) student study support resources and services to support improved student learning outcomes. The survey questions were validated by the research team in collaboration with the AIP program leader.

Invitations to participate were disseminated via email by a CLIPP staff member who was not part of the project team. No remuneration for participation was offered or provided. A total of n=32 responses were received, indicating a below average response rate (17%) compared with similar non-incentivised research projects employing surveys (Deaker, Stein, & Spiller, 2016). Despite the small effect size, given that we conducted simple calculations and grounded thematic analysis through the lens of poststructuralism, in combination with the responses and

statistics feature of LimeSurvey, participant experiences, rather than taken-for-granted assumptions, about TT's participation in the AIP and subsequent L&T PD is a trustworthy method for this project. Triangulation through the lens of trustworthiness – over validity as a positivist tradition – is used throughout the project to “check the credibility of data and minimises the distorting effects of personal bias upon logic of evidence” (Lather, 1986a, p. 86), and to “gain more than one perspective on what is being investigated” (Zeegers, 2015, p. 80).

Findings and discussion

A thorough analysis of data highlights a positive association between AIP attendance and PD engagement. Staff completing both the face-to-face familiarisation component, and the online introduction component of the AIP, were more likely (58%, n=190) to engage with at least one type of L&T PD. Of this cohort, 63% (n=70) undertook general L&T focussed PD opportunities within their respective schools / departments, 37% (n=41) undertook award/non-award L&T PD offered centrally within Federation University, with respondents indicating a preference for self-paced units of learning (56%, n=18).

Participation

In general, PD for continuing improvement of employee practice is not a new phenomenon. In the tertiary education sector, programs focussed on enhancing L&T pedagogy via continuing PD engagement are beginning to gain momentum (Canvas Network, 2018; Advance HE, 2018); there exists a resounding silence of a collective academic voice around any sector-driven requirements. When asked to consider the minimal annual hours of PD that should be undertaken by academic teachers to support the development of quality L&T practices, 25% (n=8) of survey respondents cited between 11–30 hours per calendar year were required to maintain contemporary relevance. A smaller percentage (16%, n=5) suggested that staff with a formal education qualification should not be required to complete any PD at all, or that hours should be negotiated with line managers. While PD as a form of continuing development is a normative function of industry practice, the relative silence of academic voices in relation to sector-driven requirements constructs, and continuously reinforces the notion, that PD is not an essential endeavour for tertiary academic teachers. Yet at

the same time, programs such as the UK's HEA push back against such normative discursive practices to construct counter-narratives that posit PD as essential to the enhancement and advancement of L&T pedagogy. The importance of engaging in PD, and perhaps even mandating a minimum number of hours per annum for staff in our study, is highlighted by the following anonymous survey response:

Even if you have teaching qualifications and you've been teaching for years – it is still extremely important to maintain currency and up-to-date knowledge of teaching practices. New technologies are available every year. In many cases now, the students are coming from high schools better equipped and using the latest types of platforms for learning; learning is not like it used to be 30 years ago.

Such responses reflect Torrisi-Steele and Drew's (2013) presupposition that PD in the education sector ought to support the "transformation of practice [that] facilitates integration of technology to create innovative or improved student-centred, meaningful learning experiences" (p. 378). When counter-narratives emerge suggesting that PD is essential to the transformation and enhancement of L&T pedagogy, discourses of tertiary teaching are disrupted; the quintessential image of the professor as the privileged knowledge holder orating their superior content knowledge to a lecture hall of ignorant students is laid open for interrogation. This enables the mobilisation of other discourses that foregrounds the importance of working in partnership with students, aligns curriculum to modern industry requirements, and integrates contemporary L&T pedagogical practice for the advancement of teaching in universities.

Correlation between AIP attendance and PD engagement

Attendance data collected by CLIPP indicates that a total of n=190 academic teachers completed the AIP, 58% (n=111) of which attended one form of central PD or another, between the period 2015–2018.

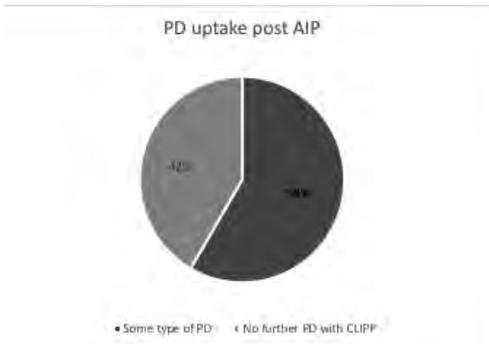


Figure 2: PD update post AIP participation

Of participants undertaking L&T-focussed PD post-AIP completion (n=111), 30% (n=33) studied a formal award qualification via the Graduate Certificate in Education (Tertiary Education) (GCETE) only, 55% (n=61) undertook non-award L&T PD in the form of blended teaching modules, peer-enhancement workshops, and faculty specific workshops only, with 15% (n=17) undertaking both award and non-award PD. A break-down of attendance rates, per award / non-award category is provided in Figure 3.

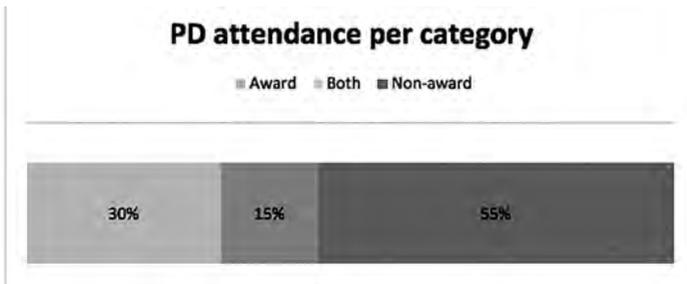


Figure 3: Break-down of AIP attendees at PD per category

As a means of examining whether participation in PD as a result of AIP attendance drops-off for our cohort, we asked participants to report on the types of PD attended within the first semester of employment and compared this with attendance in the last 12-months; for some participants this may be two-years post AIP engagement, but for others only one year. The break-down of PD participation per type is provided in Figure 4.

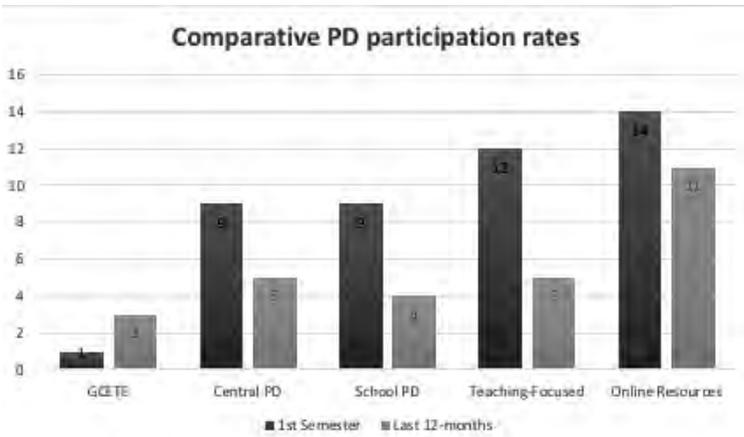


Figure 4: Comparative PD participation rates of survey respondents

Analysis of Figure 4 indicates that participation rates in L&T PD are higher on average in the first six-month period post-AIP attendance. Anecdotally, this is possibly due to the influence of direct sign-posting provided by facilitators in the AIP, as an:

[i]deological commitment that teaching needs to accomplish much more than simply detailing what we know and establishing a familiarity with the basic techniques of the domain (Duschl, & Osborne, 2002, p. 40).

The function of facilitator sign-posting of L&T PD opportunities within the AIP could be considered an action of resistance to the dominant research versus teaching positioning of universities. While such actions may not be enacted consciously by the facilitator, the push and pull factors against such positioning challenge the perceived dominance of research practice. As Thorndyke et al (2006) express:

The sink-or-swim mentality that was previously the modus operandi of academia is slowly being replaced by the concept of stewardship or investment, and the need for faculty development in now increasingly appreciated (p. 668).

A small number of survey participants indicated that they did not undertake any PD in the first semester of employment (n=3), or the past-twelve month period (n=2), with one reason cited for nil

engagement centring on conditions placed on sessional employment², as highlighted below:

I am a sessional staff member. My faculty only allowed me to do the AIP once they knew I would likely be continuing to work for them. They have not encouraged me to do any professional development at all.

I am sessional and not [been] encouraged to participate in any professional development. I have had meetings with CLIPP staff when I have had specific needs regarding the use of Moodle³.

While it is beyond the scope of this manuscript to explore the complexities of sessional employment and impact on PD engagement, previous studies note that discourses of precariat contractual employment and expectations of unpaid labour are significant contributing factors (Andrews et al., 2016; Whelan et al., 2013). Despite this, analysis of participation rates suggests that newly employed academic teachers' participation in the AIP correlates positively to a higher uptake of subsequent L&T PD opportunities, particularly within the first six-month of employment.

Survey results indicate a 38% decline in PD engagement between the first six-month (total n= 45) and the previous 12-month period (total n=28); consistent with other studies (see Reddy et al, 2016; Spowart et al., 2016). Perhaps this decline is reflective of Warhurst's (2006) claims from over 10-years ago that systematic development of L&T practices and engagement in PD occurs more effectively when embedded within group learning activities. Our analysis of participation, however, demonstrates that regardless of the adversarial positioning of research versus teaching in universities, the AIP is a valuable tool to foster academic teachers' continuing participation of L&T PD, which consequently impacts positively their knowledge of, and engagement in, L&T pedagogy. We put forward the proposition that the focus of foundational andragogy knowledge and skills support for L&T provided by AI/DPs in general needs to shift from focussing on the practicalities of teaching and research – *the how* – to critiquing and analysing the possible different pedagogical approaches – *the why*.

Limitations and future research

There are several limitations that frame this study. As is the nature of case study research, all of the data presented in this manuscript is collected from, and concerned with, one institution. The small survey response rates raises potential limitations for generalisability. It would be valuable for future research to undertake interviews with those participants who undertook multiple forms of PD to determine the contributing factors that encouraged / supported their ongoing attendance in a wide range of PD. While it is beyond the scope of this initial manuscript, supplementary interview data with those who attended multiple offerings and consistently, as well as the non-attenders, would provide more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

The other limitation of this project is the collection of data relating to PD engagement as a result of participation in the AIP. Future research capturing data from staff attending AIPs, but not participating in L&T PD, would provide greater understanding of trends and verify whether the positive correlation between AIP and ongoing PD attendance to enhance L&T pedagogy identified in this study exists for the non-attending cohort.

Implications and conclusions

Despite their position as providers of tertiary education, universities sit beyond normalised discourses of education where qualifications, registration, and continual professional development are concerned. While there has been an increasing defensible correlation between teaching quality and student success outcomes, universities continue to employ academic teachers largely on the basis of their content / industry expertise, over pedagogical skills and knowledge gained from formal education qualifications. This results in higher employment of academic teachers who lack foundational pedagogical knowledge for teaching cohorts of adult learners, yet at the same time tasks them with the responsibility of addressing student attrition. While AI/DPs support the development and promote the benefits of continuing L&T PD, an argument could be made that in reality they function as a band-aid solution to greater issues of pedagogy deficits within universities. Yet, as these programs are delivered with the express aim of advancing and enhancing academic teachers' L&T pedagogy, the dominant nature of research is challenged

to include Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoLT) practice. This in turn elevates the role and function of teaching within universities to a space where education qualifications, registration, and opportunities for professional development are considered essential to academic teachers' employment and the ongoing enhancement of student learning.

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