

Project Resources

A strong focus in the original project proposal was the production of a range of resources adapted from the Academic Leadership and Management courses that CEDAM has run. These deliverables arose from a conceptual model based on self-facilitated learning groups, dependent on alumni from CEDAM (who were to be appropriately trained and resourced) to underpin area-based communities of practice. Key members of these communities would have access to training and resourcing. The project sought to adapt Academic Leadership and Management course materials into self-contained and sequenced modules on topics such as performance management, leading a small collaborative team, course convening etc. As project reports have indicated there has been a substantial shift away from this concept and consequentially the resource focus of the project too has shifted.

In the first six months of the project recognition began to filter through of the need to align the form and type of resources with approaches we were using based on communities of practice. A consideration for the project team at this stage was that inherent flexibility had to be built into resource delivery to meet the self-determined preferences for interaction by communities of practice. It became apparent that the conversion of pre-existing ALM to an online environment was not a matter of direct translation of content and stimulus material. There were specific issues concerning the types of engagement and interactions the project was seeking to make available to individuals, groups and communities of practice. Communities expressed a more immediate need for general information on core project concepts such as communities of practice and leadership in teaching and learning.

The attempt to migrate Academic Leadership and Management course material to an online environment was gradually abandoned for a variety of reasons:

- staff targeted by the project not seeking overt capacity development but rather a more informal approach, of working from where they were at;
- unforeseen difficulties in the Academic Management and Leadership course convenor participating in materials conversion from face to face to digital resources; and
- the community of practice approach being orientated to surfacing tacit knowledge.

In summary there was a shift from codified and explicit knowledge based transmission and resourcing to support for tacit, informal, and emergent forms of learning and resourcing.

Case studies

The project team redirected its energies to developing a series of stimulus case studies towards the middle of the first year of the project. The suite of case studies was a way of exploring linkages between development of leadership competencies and excellence in learning and teaching, and on communities of practice, based on interviews with ANU staff. Four case studies pursued:

- Dr Barbara Van Leeuwen, Senior Lecturer, School of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Carrick Award for Teaching Excellence, Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning
- Dr John Close, Physics, Faculty of Science, Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning
- Ms Susan West: Senior Lecturer, School of Music, Carrick Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning (not finalised yet)
- Mr Charles Tambiah, Manager, Research Facilitation & Strategy, ANU Institute for Environment (not finalised yet)

The last two of these interviews are still in process. Two case studies and other video material derived from a seminar the project ran on communities of practice were used as pre-workshop materials for the *Practice in Leadership Workshop*. Participants and academic development units were issued with a reflective action learning sets to prompt their engagement with key project concepts in advance of the *Practice in Leadership Workshop*.

The completed case studies are available through the project website. Two remaining case studies remain in editorial processing.

Teaching and Learning Communities
institutional leadership project website

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The Promoting Learning & Teaching Communities: Institutional Leadership Project

This project was managed by the [Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods](#) and funded by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education.

The project used a group rather than a one-on-one approach to build skills and networks so that staff could problem-solve, plan and work towards their shared goals related to teaching and learning. Such groups were resourced as [communities of practice](#) with the intent of fostering shared, collegial leadership capability across the Australian National University.

'If you want to be a leader, you have to be a real human being. You must recognise the true meaning of life before you can become a great leader. You must understand yourself first. (Master Nam.)'

Quoted in Presence, (pg 180), Otto Scharmer et al

NEWS
HERDSA Conference 2008
Engaging Communities, 1st-4th July 2008, Rotorua, NZ
Promoting Teaching and Learning Communities Project: Final Report
Available in PDF

Swiki

swiki

action research
communities of practice
GROUP FACILITATION
leadership learning communities
reflective practice
research-led education
teaching and learning

Support for this project has been provided by The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training

carrick INSTITUTE

moodle

Website

A project website was established early in 2007, and hosted externally to the ANU on an EdNA groups based platform. The site address is <http://leadershipcops.edu.au>. This site is a basic information tool to provide an overview of the project to the sector and interested parties. It is linked to a Moodle-driven groups site for participating communities of practice and for participants who attended the *Practice in Leadership Workshop*. Despite some training for ANU staff, and several reconfigurations of communications tools, the project experience has been that staff strongly preferred face to face, rather than virtual forms of engagement. Specific communities of practice have also migrated to using a Sakai based site called Alliance at the ANU that is being developed to resource projects and those seeking a robust communications tool base. As the funded stage of the project draws to a close, CEDAM has migrated the project site to its own website.

Project documentation

In developing the final project report the team has been through a distillation of learnings, and is confident that some of the report material could be usefully adapted for a wider audience in the sector.

Practice in Leadership Workshop

The *Practice in Leadership Workshop* was both a dissemination and capacity development event for other research-intensive universities in the sector. As indicated elsewhere, a report is being finalised for participants that combines the evaluation data with analysis from the project team. This will also be made available online.

Living resources

The shift in project focus over its lifetime has meant most project resourcing has been invested in developing embodied resources at ANU. Our community of practice participants are the important legacy that the project has nourished at the Australian National University. Additionally the university is benefiting from the evolving discourse and the new insights surfacing concerning practice-based knowledge.

The project has in fact regretted not having had the time or budget to conduct some one-on-one interview with community participants to capture something of their journeys.