

Not for Publication

Grants Scheme

Progress Report - May 2011

Demonstrating distributed leadership through cross-disciplinary peer networks: responding to climate change complexity

LE9-1183

Lead institution: The University of Tasmania

Partner institution/s: The University of New South Wales, The University of Wollongong and Murdoch University

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Please refer to the document [Project Management Information](#), available on the ALTC website, <http://www.altc.edu.au> for information on completing and submitting reports.

1. Progress against specified outcomes and deliverables

Stages 2 & 3 – Network Consolidation/Cascading: deliverables

Now six months into Year 2 of the project, each of the partner institutions are progressing deliverables from their respective stages (Stage 2 – UoW, MU and UNSW, Stage 3 –UTAS). Examples from each of the institutions are outlined against deliverables below.

Stage 2 (UoW, MU, UNSW)

- a. *Documentation of network consolidation, including recruitment of new members and network renewal.*

Each of the Network Integrators has continued to document the recruitment of new members through quarterly progress reports and the ongoing writing of case studies for the final report. These have been collected and collated by the Project Leadership Team.

- b. *Updates to cross-disciplinary, online climate change resource site.*

Updates to the online resource site have been held over in line with the decision taken by the Project Team in November 2010 to create a more cohesive and engaging curriculum resource as a final outcome of the project. In contrast to the collation of curriculum materials envisaged in the grant application, the new focus of the curriculum resource will be less on providing static materials, of which there is already a great deal related to climate change available, and more on providing 'active' or narrative accounts of teaching practice using examples of pedagogical approaches, classroom activities and curriculum materials from the project. This decision was made based on research undertaken by the Project Leaders at national and international institutions, which found that static materials, or a 'resource clearing house' as promised in the original grant would be underutilised in practice and what tertiary teachers would find more useful would be case studies and practical examples of teaching activities and plans. Each partner institution is contributing examples of teaching practice to this resource using a template agreed upon by the Project Team. The Project Leaders are working on a literature review and reflection tool to accompany this resource. The final resource will be attached to the Project website and the final report at the end of the project.

- c. *Planning and implementation of student-led interdisciplinary learning activity.*

Each of the partner institutions is presently planning implementation of an interdisciplinary learning activity for Year 2. The network at UoW has expanded the range of units encompassed by network activities in 2011. Building on the successful 2010 collaboration between law and environmental science students, the network implemented a collaboration between accounting and indigenous studies students in Semester 1, 2011, based on an interdisciplinary climate change poster activity. UoW has also re-administered the survey of student attitudes and perceptions of climate change in four units spanning a wide range of disciplines. This data will be analysed with 2010 data which includes students from U San Diego and will be prepared for publication. UNSW has also begun 2011 by substantially growing their network with the addition of twenty new members. Much of the focus of the UNSW network this year has been on developing a Climate Change Leaders You Tube Channel showcasing short film teaching resources produced by both students and staff. In early 2011, the Murdoch U network has focussed on embedding climate change curriculum and assessment in several interdisciplinary units, in areas such as overseas aid and international development. The network is also planning to build on the success of the 2010 exhibition of creative student work by organising a second exhibition in second semester this year and exploring the feasibility of a campus-wide 'Climate Change Teaching and Research Symposium' in Semester 2.

- d.** *Quarterly progress reports detailing outcomes of completed time log/critical events journals; and case study reporting of planning and implementation of interdisciplinary activity.*

Quarterly progress reports have been submitted on schedule and have been streamlined to allow project teams in each partner institution to begin to develop their case study for the final report. The Project Team have developed and agreed upon a template that will be used for this purpose.

- e.** *Presentation of network outcomes and deliverables to a wide cross-disciplinary audience from across the institution and relevant professions.*

Each of the partner institutions are working towards the dissemination of outcomes from this project through the development of the project curriculum resource and scholarly outputs. Examples of wide dissemination include the online UNSW television channel containing you tube videos about CC knowledge from a variety of disciplines that can now be accessed by students across campus and by other institutions in the sector. At the November 2010 workshop, the Project Team also planned publication outputs from the project and identified cross-institution writing teams. One paper relating to Stage 1 at UTas was submitted to *Teaching in Higher Education* in April. Two further papers relating to implementation of the project at all four institutions are in draft form and will be submitted later this year.

- f.** *Identification of new Network Activators for Stage 3: Network Cascading.*

This deliverable will be addressed in later stages of Year 2 as the networks come closer to the conclusion of this Stage.

Stage 3 (UTas)

- a.** *Establishment of a new (5th) cross-disciplinary network of 6-12 academic teaching staff with assistance from the Network Integrator and the mentoring of the Network Activator.*

A new cross-disciplinary network has been established at UTas in early 2011 encompassing academic staff from three departments (Architecture, Geography & Environmental Studies and Engineering) with local community organisations and local employers and UTas facilities management. The focus of the network is sustainable transportation and combining in-class sustainability education with on-campus sustainability projects.

- b.** *Documentation of the first UTas network's self-maintenance and capacity to seed and support the second network.* The original Network Integrator from the UTAS Climate Change network has moved into a permanent role as an academic developer in the UTas Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching. She is now supporting the new sustainable transport network as a Network Activator and mentor to the new Network Integrator. Another new Network Integrator has been employed to continue to support the UTas Climate Change network. This person is documenting the self-maintenance of the original network as well as links between it and the seeded network.

- c.** *Updates to online climate change resource site, including input from new network.*
See Stage 2, Point b above.

- d.** *Planning and implementation of student-led interdisciplinary learning activity for each network.*

The original UTas Climate change network is planning a combined staff-student unit on climate change that will culminate in an end of year student-led public event. The goal of

this activity is to develop a model for a combined professional learning unit for staff with a problem-based interdisciplinary learning unit for students. This network plans to seek further funding in 2012 from UTAs to develop this shared (co-coded) unit for delivery from 2013.

- e. *Quarterly progress reports detailing outcomes of completed time log/critical events journals; and case study reporting of planning and implementation of interdisciplinary learning activity.*

Network integrators and Activators from both UTAs networks have been working together to develop quarterly progress reports and will begun working together on the case study for the final report.

2. Review of Progress

2.1 Major achievements against schedule/ project brief

Cross-disciplinary networks have been established and maintained at all four institutions over the past 18 months. Each have planned and delivered interdisciplinary student activities, enabling participating junior level academic staff opportunities to develop their capacity for distributed leadership. All interviewed members of the Project Team have indicated substantial shifts to the way in which they approach collaborative teaching, teaching scholarship and the way in which they have sought to take responsibility in leading climate change teaching at their institutions. Other achievements worth noting are the successful cascading of a new network at UTAS and the uptake of the project's distributed leadership model by UTAS' central teaching and learning unit in relation to a new communities of practice initiative.

2.2 Lessons learnt

Central to the design of this project was an awareness of administrative as well as pedagogical barriers to interdisciplinary teaching and learning in Australian higher education. If anything, in the course of this project to date we have learnt that the administrative barriers originally identified to setting up this model (i.e. time constraints and over-committed staff, timetabling, competitive budget structure, multi-campus') are more significant than we originally conceived.

As indicated in the May 2010 Progress Report a major lesson of the project has been the importance of tailoring project activities to specific institutional contexts and more generally of maximising opportunities for flexibility and adaptability within the project model. Evidence that this flexibility is necessary and that it can be delivered within the project model can be seen in the smooth running of the project despite turnover in project membership.

Another significant lesson of the project has been the identification of the sector's present underutilisation of the leadership capacity of more junior academic teaching staff. In this project staff at Levels A and B have been given room, resources and a supportive collaborative environment comprised of junior and senior staff in which to display leadership through teaching innovation and teaching scholarship.

2.3 Challenges met

As indicated above, there have been a number of staff movements in each of the networks and within the project team, including: the loss of the Network Activator from MU and two Project Managers; a change in role for the UTAs Network Integrator and the induction of a new Network Integrator; and the awarding of Study Leave to the UTAs activators (Pharo – Semester1; Davison – Semester 2). These challenges have been

accommodated without substantially affecting the progress of the project largely because the flexible design of the project model and its emphasis on collaboration and distributed forms of leadership that enable all members of the project to demonstrate and to share leadership. Only one change, that of the Network Activator at Murdoch U has required any deviation from the project model. An impact statement relating to this change has been provided by the Murdoch network and is included below.

Loss of 2010 Network Activator at Murdoch University - Impact Statement

In December 2010 the Murdoch University Network Activator (NA) left the university, and the network, to take up a position overseas. Extensive discussions between the NA, network integrator (NI) and critical friend in the Project Leadership Team at UTas considered three options in responding to this change: 1) Recruitment of a new NI with the existing NI moving into the NA position; 2) Recruitment of a new NA; and 3) Combining the roles of NA and NI into one position. Reflections on these options are presented here to provide justification for the decision to adopt Option 3.

Option 1: Questions and concerns about Option 1 related to finding a suitable person for the role of NI in a short timeframe and what impact this would have on the network. The advantage was that there would be opportunity for ongoing discussion and reflection between the NA and NI. However, ultimately this depended on whether a good relationship could be quickly established between the NI and NA.

Option 2: This raised similar questions to Option 1. For example: How quickly could an NA be identified given there were no obvious candidates among the network members? How long would it take for a good working relationship to be established between the NI and NA, and the new NA and the network? What impact would this have on the network?

Option 3: Given that the NA role had always been conceived of as a seeding role, crucially in the establishment (year 1) stage of the network, and that the NI was taking over some of the teaching responsibilities of the previous NA (including the role of unit coordinator) it was feasible to combine the NA/NI roles, at least during the beginning of 2011 to ensure continuity from 2010 and to allow time to evaluate the success of this. However, there were some concerns about the potential for a combined NI/NA to be somewhat isolated and lacking in peer support within the network.

After full consideration of the options, options 1 and 2 were rejected due to difficulties identifying new people to take on these roles and concerns regarding their integration into the network. The NI and NA roles were subsequently combined. To date, the absence of a motivated and enthusiastic network member (the 2010 NA) has been the most notable consequence of this change. Otherwise there have been very few impacts of the changed management of the network. This transition has perhaps been made easier because in 2010 the NA and NI did not make a clear distinction between their roles in their presentation to the network. The new NI/NA continues to work on ways to motivate the network, arrange meetings of the group, keep the group connected and works with individuals in the network on ideas for curriculum development in particular changes to assessments.

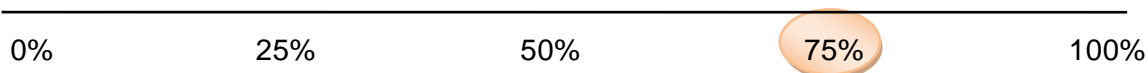
The final challenge to the project has related to the project's proposed curriculum resource and the value of adding to the burgeoning of climate change content available to teachers. Research conducted by members of the Project Leadership Team revealed that the supply of curriculum materials far outweighs the demand for these materials, particularly in relation to climate change teaching. The Project Team decided to meet this challenge of the proliferation of disciplinary information about climate change by focussing the curriculum resource on teaching practice rather than on curriculum content per se with each institution providing narrative accounts of two teaching activities with associated materials. This resource will replace the project's proposed 'Clearing House' of Climate Change Curriculum and will be accessible on the project website at the end of

the project. The Project Team is also intending to prepare a scholarly paper, to be included in the online resource, reviewing literature on curriculum resources and articulating the approach toward 'active' resources adopted in the project. The New Project Manager will assist with coordinating the development of this resource.

2.4 *Indicate if and how these challenges will impact on the outcomes, the timeline or the budget? Please specify.*

It is not anticipated that any of the challenges detailed above will affect the project timeline or budget. As noted above the composition of the curriculum resource will be different from that originally anticipated in ways that the Project team is confident will increase the value of this resource in disseminating project outcomes.

2.5 *In terms of the planned deliverables, what is your estimation of how far the project has progressed?*



3. Formative Evaluation

3.1 *What formative evaluation processes are being used?*

The project engaged Prof Gail Hart as an external evaluator in the application phase of this project. Prof Hart has been an active, supportive and very participative critical friend of the project team. She met face-to-face with the UTas project leadership team in April 2011 and has been involved in all of the project team and reference group meetings. Prof Hart has ready access to the minutes, reports and records from each of these meetings, as well as access to the internal documents of the project team website. Prof Hart attended one day of the November 2010 Project Team Workshop in Hobart.

3.2 *What have you learnt from these processes thus far?*

The process of evaluation has helped to clarify project timelines and ensured on-going review of project goals and processes. Prof Hart has provided sound advice to the project team in regard to the value of reflecting on our original proposal for a curriculum resource, and how our developing insights justify a shift towards the new approach to this deliverable described above. By actively engaging with participant reflections and providing written prompts for further thought, the evaluator has played a key role in on-going learning and continuous improvement in the delivery of the project.

4. 2011 Events

Date	Event title, Location (city only)	Brief description of the purpose of the event	No. Participants	No of uni-versities
Feb – on-going	Network meetings (@ partner institutions)	UNSW network University of Wollongong network (+UTas) Murdoch University network UTas Network	30 12 15 16	1 2 1 1
Feb -	ALTC Leadership Program Workshop (Adelaide)	Project leaders (Warr and Davison) attended the ALTC's Project Leaders workshop to disseminate the progress of the project and to network with other ALTC project Leaders	Unsure of final count of participants and Universities at this event	
Feb – on-going	Evaluation meetings	On-going meetings with evaluator to establish evaluation process, seek advice and to gain feedback.	4	1
Mar – on-going	Publication writing groups (skype)	Members of the Project Team are meeting regularly in publication writing teams to progress publication of project outputs	4-8	4
April	Quarterly Project team meeting (Skype)	To assess project progress, promote cross-institutional dialogue, answer questions and provide feedback/advice.	11	4
Upcoming Events				
July	HERDSA	Project Team Leaders to Host Combined Roundtable Discussion on Interdisciplinary teaching with Colleagues from University of Western Sydney and University of Queensland	Unsure of final count of participants and Universities at this event	
July	Quarterly Project team meeting	To assess project progress, promote cross-institutional dialogue, answer questions and provide feedback/advice.	11	4
July	Reference Group Meeting (phone link-up)	To review project progress.	10	5
Oct	Quarterly Project team meeting	To assess project progress, promote cross-institutional dialogue, answer questions and provide feedback/advice.	11	4
Nov	Reference group meeting (phone link-up)	Review project outcomes, final reporting, evaluation and prospects for future dissemination and self-maintenance of networks at partner institutions.	11	4
Nov	Project team retreat (location Hobart)	Review the outcomes, deliverables and dissemination of the project and progressing collaborative scholarly publications	11	4

5. Certification

Certification by Project Leader

I certify that this is an accurate representation of the progress of the project.

Project Leader: Dr Aidan Davison

Signature:



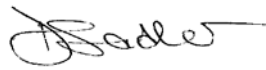
Date: 25 May, 2011

Certification by PVC (Students & Education)

I acknowledge submission of the Progress Report

Full name : Professor David Sadler

Position: *PVC (Students & Education)*



Signature: ...

Date: 28 May, 2011