Reflective Account of Practice

6.2 Written Reflective Account of Practice - Structured

Introduction

This SFHEA claim is structured into four sections which map against the evidence required for Descriptor 3 of the UKPSF under:

IV Teaching Practices

V Research and/or Scholarship

VI Continuing Professional Development

VII Coordination, Support, Supervision, Management and/or Mentoring of Others (Leadership)

Through these four sections I will weave in evidence for: I Areas of Activity; II Core Knowledge; and III Professional Values.

Teaching Practices

My current teaching practice includes module leadership of two large core Undergraduate modules in xxxxx, plus dissertation supervision and academic tutoring. My teaching practice draws upon three key sources of knowledge: practical experience gained as a lecturer in xxxxx; scholarship on teaching practice, and my own evaluative inquiry into teaching practice.

My approach to teaching design and practice is strongly driven by Biggs and Tang's (2011) notion of Constructive Alignment, which argues that student engagement in learning is driven by assessment design. Well-designed assessment engages students in high quality learning activities, both in class and in their independent learning. In class, I am persuaded by the research evidence that high quality learning is produced by 'active learning' (eg Hake, 1998; Cox, 2009). Outside of class, I follow Graham Gibbs' (2010) argument about the importance of 'time on task' to learning, as well as the importance of formative assessment and rich dialogue (Nicol and MacFarlane-Dick 2006) about assessment expectations and criteria.

I have recently redesigned a core L4 xxxx module exemplifying constructive alignment, high-quality active learning, time-on-task and rich feedback. Evaluative evidence from the existing module suggested that the assessment model was a key factor in low levels of

student engagement with taught sessions and independent learning. There was a significant difference between areas of the module assessed by coursework as opposed to exam, with Resource Lists Online showing significantly less reading for exams, and student attendance records showing low levels for sessions related to assessment by exam.

The module redesign therefore started with coursework-based assessment. Students produced three formative essays, encouraging them to spend 'time on task' (see Fazey and Marton's 2002 excellent research on 'practice with variation' as an important strategy for high quality learning). A reduction in summative assessment (to one essay) provided staff with time to read and feedback at each formative submission point, with a seminar giving rich interactive dialogue with staff, as well as peer- and self-assessment. Students had an opportunity to learn the expectations of degree level work, academic practice and standards, and use this learning to rewrite their essay for the final summative submission.

My evaluative reflection on this change was based on both Angelo and Cross's (1993) 'Classroom Assessment Techniques' to gain in-module feedback, and formal MEQs. Critically, in module feedback suggested that some students felt unrewarded for the three formative essays, and did not appreciate more generic forms of seminar feedback. More positively, student reading (as measured by RLO) increased significantly, as did student attendance. End-of-module feedback suggested increased confidence in essay writing for some, but pointed towards the need to engage students in the purpose of formative feedback. Further changes to the module next year suggest giving formative essays a 'low-stakes' mark (Gibbbs 2010), and personalizing feedback more effectively.

A1-A5, K1, K2, K3, K5, V1, V2, V3

Research and Scholarship

My interest in educational scholarship was first sparked when I joined a fieldwork team in which a Xxxx colleague was developing a collaborative project with an Educational Developer to evaluate the impact of changes to the fieldwork programme on student learning (Grattan, Brown and Horgan 1998). This led me to undertake my own educational research within XXXXX. With a Welsh-speaking colleague I undertook a qualitative study of the different learning experiences of students on Welsh and English language Xxxxx degrees at Xxxxx. This gave an excellent insight into what I would later recognise as Bigg's notion of 'Presage': the importance of situational factors in the learning environment and student's personal characteristics, demonstrated by the differing characteristics, motivations and outcomes of students learning through different languages (Desforges and Jones 2000, 2001, 2004).

My insight into educational scholarship really took off when I became an Educational Developer. My teaching on the PG Cert led to me to read a great deal of educational literature, which became influential in my practice. At Xxxxx University I led the redesign of the existing PG Cert for accreditation with the HEA. The course design was influenced by the work of John Fazey on experiential learning, which looked at the journey taken by new lecturing staff in their deep understanding of learning processes and teaching. The accreditation panel from the HEA was very complimentary about the quality of the course.

I further developed my scholarship by working on educational evaluation at the University of Xxxxx. The central Learning and Teaching team had developed an innovative approach to evaluation, known as Theories of Change (Hart, Diercks-O'Brien and Powell, 2009). This was

a conceptual and empirical approach to educational change which influenced my understanding of change and evaluation based on a combination of the literature (from organisational management and systems theory), a rich dialogue about educational evaluation with colleagues, the practical implementation of evaluation with academic practitioners, and engagement nationally with fellow practitioners at conferences, where I presented papers on the approach. The outcome of this experience was a resource on educational evaluation written for the University of Xxxxx (https://www.XXXx.ac.uk/lets/strategy/resources/evaluate).

In my current leadership role, I continue my engagement with scholarship in learning and teaching. For example, we recently organised a Faculty seminar by the Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment project (TESTA). We have taken the TESTA methodology of reviewing courses and worked with course teams in the Faculty to 'map out' the assessment and feedback schedule. This involves using TESTA methods to list the modes and timing of assessment, the feedback generated, and the pathways for feedback to be used by students in subsequent assessments. A recent workshop I ran for the Xxxxx course team generated insights into the fragmented nature of assessment and feedback, the multiple modes of assessment which students needed to learn, and the long periods of time between students receiving feedback and its subsequent.

A1, A5, K1, K2, K3, K5, K6, V1, V3, V4

Continuing Professional Development

In this section I trace the influences and effects of my continuing professional development. It is important to stress that my professional development has been as much experiential as formal. Informally my experience as a Xxxxx lecturer, in which I engage with students and evaluate their learning, has provided a space for experimentation in my teaching techniques, such as the development of active teaching using "Responseware", or the introduction of the new models of assessment described above. At the same time, more formally I have been influenced by my position as an educational developer and leader through a mode of professional development which might be labelled 'learning alongside'. I have commissioned CPD sessions to meet the needs of teaching staff, for example our annual Faculty LTA Forum which enables me to build an understanding of the ideas presented by external facilitators. In 2016 I invited Professor Carol Evans to deliver a keynote at the 2016 Faculty Forum, based on her research review on student engagement (Evans, Muijs and Tomlinson 2015). The event gave an opportunity to discuss engagement with Professor Evans and Faculty colleagues, both formally and informally. This has particularly influenced my interest in assessment as a driver for engagement, and the "Enagaged Assessment Tool" presented by Evans as a basis for course teams to identify improvements to assessment across the course. I have continued with this thread, and will be attending a conference in September 2016 to further my knowledge of this area, with a view to using the tool with course teams in XXX.

I have also benefitted from leadership development. At the University of XXXX I became a line manager and team leader for the first time, I attended formal development sessions on themes such as team dynamics, appraisal and feedback, all of which were useful in leading a team of Educational Developers teaching together. Most influential was a period of individual coaching in leadership. The coach introduced me to action based inquiry for professional development (Fisher, Rooke and Torbert 2003) which was influential in my

thinking about how to 'frame' and communicate ideas. Although the coaching was primarily useful from a team leadership point of view, there are of course parallels between leading as a line manager and leading as an educator. I used my professional development sessions to discuss my own use of communication in leading in both contexts. The sessions helped me to focus on context and the actions needed from specific situations, which I find useful in opening lectures so that students understand the direction of travel, and also in leading on changes to teaching.

A1, A2, A4, A5, K1, K2, K3, K4, V1, V3, V4

Leadership

My leadership roles provide evidence of the successful co-ordination, support, supervision, management and mentoring of others in relation to teaching and learning. I have led the development of a significant number of professional development schemes. At the Universities of XXXX and XXXX I was Course Leader for the PG Cert in Learning and Teaching, which involved leading on curriculum design and delivery, as well as undertaking teaching observations and feeding back, and working with colleagues to develop their teaching practice. At the University of XXXX, I led my team in establishing the XXXX Teaching Assistant programme (see https://www.xxxxx.ac.uk/lets/cpd/sta), which is an introduction to teaching for Postgraduates and Postdocs who teach. The programme targeted the key skills needed by these groups in their practice, particularly large group and small group teaching, and assessment and feedback. We were up to operate a large scale programme, with approximately 80 participants per session in the year in which I launched the scheme, by running interactive large group lectures, in which participants undertook activities reflecting on theory and practice. The evaluation of the scheme was excellent, in terms of high attendance, satisfaction and impact, with a large majority reporting that the scheme influenced their practice positively. The XXXX Teaching Assistant Programme was adopted by the University as compulsory for casual teaching colleagues during their first year of teaching. I have also supported a CPD programme at XXXXX University College, in Tanzania, running a version of the Pg Cert programme, with 80 staff members attended a three day programme in February 2013, in which I facilitated such sessions as Large and Small Group Teaching, Assessment, and Evaluation. The 'presage' factors influencing staff engagement with the programme were interesting: engagement in the session was extremely positive, and a striking feature was the commitment of teaching staff to the role of Higher Education in a 'nationalistic' goal of improving the country's socio-economic wellbeing.

My leadership of CPD continues in my current role, through a Faculty induction programme for new teaching staff, provision for Associate Lecturers, and the organisation of an annual Faculty Learning and Teaching Forum. Over four years I have organised a focus for the Faculty Forum based in Faculty strategic priorities (eg student engagement, course design). I have coordinated external speakers as well as internal contributions. The Forum has increased from 80 participants in 2013 to 130 in 2016. The evaluation of the Faculty Forum in 2016 evidences the positive experience for teaching staff, with all sessions scoring an average rating higher than 4 out of 5. Qualitative feedback on the keynote included: 'Really interesting and thought provoking', 'Fantastic session - made me think about what we do at Hallam'. Contributions from XXXX presenters led to valuable discussions of L&T: 'A very open discussion where participants felt able to discuss and ask questions', 'Good to hear

about the application of pedagogic theory in a practical application'. The Faculty Dean fed back positively on the culture of L&T scholarship which the Forum contributes towards.

A4, A5, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, V1, V2, V3, V4
Word count: 1984