Welcome to the fifth, and final, newsletter for the OLT funded National Senior Teaching Fellowship (NSTF): Developing excellence in learning and teaching through a Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme (PATS).

Peers come together to celebrate OLT Fellowship success

Around 90 participants from 27 institutions across Australia braved a wet December day to celebrate and reflect on peer mentoring at the OLT National Senior Teaching Fellowship Symposium held on 4 December 2013 at Monash University, Caulfield campus. The day was a great success with 80% of delegates rating the program and calibre of speakers as very good or excellent.

The symposium highlighted the different flavours of the PATS as implemented by a range of universities including Griffith University, University of Newcastle and Kaplan Higher Education. This included the University of Tasmania initiative to develop: q-PATS (quality improvement of units); s-PATS (engaging with scholarship), and e-PATS (peer support online).

The day was opened by Professor Adam Shoemaker, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), at Monash who highlighted the connections between indigenous peer support ‘round the campfire’ and the PATS program where colleagues meet regularly over coffee to discuss opportunities and methods to challenge their teaching.

The symposium included a Q&A panel session, facilitated by the fellowship’s external evaluator A/Prof Ian Solomonides from Macquarie University, in which PATS participants spoke about their experiences.

“By hearing about all the different experiences [of PATS] - I realised how big an impact can be made by codifying some relatively simple ideas into a well packaged program” Symposium attendee

Selected elements of presentations and posters from the day are now available on the PATS website: www.monash.edu/pats

Recognition for PATS participants

Congratulations are in order for some of our high performing colleagues...

Dr Bonnie McBain from the University of Newcastle received two awards last year:
- Online Teacher of the Year Award - Newcastle Postgraduate Students’ Association
- Sessional Academic of the Year Award - Faculty of Science and Information Technology

Dr McBain, in conjunction with her PATS partner, Dr Liam Phelan was also awarded an OLT Innovation and Development Grant for Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) Project for Environment and Environmental Sustainability.

Dr Daryl D’Souza and Astrid Bauers, a PATS pair from RMIT University, have had a paper, entitled An experience with PATS - a Peer Assisted Teaching Scheme, accepted for the International Conference on Learning and Teaching in Computing and Engineering (LaTiCE) to be held next month in Malaysia.

Dr Laurence Orlando (pictured below with her PATS partner Peter Wagstaff) from the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Monash University introduced PATS to help her develop the use of Wikis in collaborative student assessments. The resulting output was a student-led produced textbook.
Impact of PATS

PATS on video
There are a range of videos available on our website exploring:

- Embedding PATS—Associate Deans (Education) and PATS Coordinators talk about the opportunities and challenges for embedding PATS at institutional and faculty level
- Building Collaborative Relationships—PATS partners share their stories
- PATS in Action—Individuals discuss their experiences and share insights into the benefits gained from participating in PATS

PATS on paper
Carbone, A. (2013). Opportunities and Challenges Faced in Attempting to Improve Units with Critically Low Student Satisfaction, Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) 33.3.


Program Progress

Although the Fellowship-supported elements of PATS have come to an end, the scheme is still being adopted across Monash university and other higher education institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

2012-13 summary
In total, 13 separate institutions have introduced the scheme since July 2012. This has involved 156 participating academics teaching 105 units/courses. At Monash alone this has impacted on the learning outcomes and experiences of over 2500 students. Participating institutions include:

- Griffith University
- Edith Cowan University
- University of South Australia
- RMIT University
- Macquarie University (City)
- University of Wollongong
- University of the Sunshine Coast
- University of Newcastle
- Think: Education group
- Charles Sturt University
- University of Tasmania
- Monash University
- Kaplan Higher Education

Looking ahead to 2014
Monash University is now looking to operationalise PATS with six of their ten faculties implementing PATS in 2014. The scheme will be run ‘in-house’ by a nominated PATS Coordinator and supported by colleagues in the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching).

The University of Tasmania is leading an exploration of further PATS ‘flavours’ with several other Australian higher education partners. There is also interest from other Australian universities, plus Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, who are looking to embed the scheme within their faculties.

A/Prof Angela Carbone is available to come and speak to faculties or central units about the benefits of the scheme and how best to go about implementing it. If your institution is interested in implementing PATS in 2014, please contact Dr Bella Ross, bella.ross@monash.edu.

Final report
- The OLT Fellowship final report will be available in July 2014. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the report please contact Bella Ross.

Thank you

We would like to thank the Fellowship Program Officer, Joanne Rae, for all her hard work on the program. Joanne will shortly be moving on to another role within Monash but retains an active interest in PATS. Thank you Jo!

Contact

If you wish to provide feedback or comment on the NSTF program, please contact:

Dr Bella Ross bella.ross@monash.edu