

**Title: “Claiming our place at the table” Building a global voice for teaching academics****Abstract**

There have always been academics whose passion has been education rather than research. The contribution and commitment of these faculty, while often valued within their own department, has largely gone unrecognized at an institutional level. However, this is slowly changing. More and more institutions are now appointing teaching academics with the same conditions and status as more ‘traditional’ academics including tenure, access to sabbaticals, and professional development opportunities. This workshop is aimed at building a global community for teaching academics within our field.

**Keywords:** teaching academics; advocacy; career management

**Session format:** Roundtable discussion

**Length:** 60 minutes

**Introduction:**

There is growing awareness of the importance of the educational mission of higher education around the globe. While education has always been integral part of the rhythms of academic life, it has unfortunately too often been seen as secondary to the research mission in many institutions. But this is changing: the changing funding models of higher education, whereby more and more students are having to contribute financially to their education, the increasing public scrutiny on educational outcomes the increasing reliance on student fee income (in particular international student fee income) to address reduced public funding as well as to subsidize the research mission of the institutions, are just some of the reasons for the increasing recognition of the importance of teaching academics in achieving the strategic outcomes of the institution (see for example Macfarlane 2011; Locke 2014; Broadbent, Brown and Goodman 2018).

In higher education sectors across the globe this recognition of the educational mission of the institution has seen the role of disciplinary teaching academics evolve and become more strategically important. These teaching academics are known by a variety of titles, for example in the USA they are often referred to as clinical teachers, professors of practice or teaching professors; in other countries they are known as teaching fellows, education focused academics, or scholarly teaching fellow. Irrespective of the title, these roles carry with them a reduced, if not non-existent requirement to engage in disciplinary research (Broadbent, Brown, Dados, Goodman, Junor, Strachan and Yasukawa 2018; Probert 2013). The focus is rather on teaching and education more broadly including classroom teaching or facilitation (whether face to face or online), scholarship of learning and teaching and/or educational innovation and leadership initiatives.

Where differences arise is in the employment conditions of those in these roles. In many institutions, a person engaged in adjunct or sessional work on short term contracts is effectively a teaching academic, although with little job security or employment benefits. More recently ‘traditional’ universities that have pursued both research and educational missions have started to appoint teaching academics who are employed on either long term contracts with the same employment benefits as ‘standard’ academics (Macfarlane 2011, Gehrke and Kezar 2015, Broadbent et al 2018). In some institutions teaching academics are tenured positions. However, having a ‘non-standard’ role in any organization can be challenging; having one in academia which has a veneer of tradition spanning centuries can make this extremely disconcerting (Geschwind and Brostrom 2015; Tight 2016; Nyamapfene 2018). Our workshop is designed to start the process of building a global community to provide support to teaching academics as well as to advocate and champion the invaluable work performed by these academics. In the next section we provide a more detailed examination of the development of these roles as well as a number of challenges teaching academics face both within their institution as well as within the academy more broadly.

### **Teaching Implications: Supporting the teaching academic**

The stereotype of an academic is of a (slightly eccentric) world expert in a very narrow field. The academic hides away from the world engaging in deeply intellectual pursuits, producing research and publishing papers and books. The academic then imparts this intellectual wisdom to their students in large lecture halls.

While academics receive rigorous training in research, indeed a PhD is effectively an ‘apprenticeship’ in research, often followed by a post-doctoral appointment (yet further training in research), there is often little training given to an academic in the mechanics of

teaching let alone specialized pedagogical training (Norton 2013; Probert 2013; Broadbent et al 2018). For many people in the wider community, tertiary institutions ARE places of education, their research mission and output are largely hidden, particularly for Business Schools. Business School academics are not ‘curing cancer’ or doing ‘real science’ and therefore members of the wider community equate business school academics as teachers. However, we know this is not the case within the Business School. Research rankings and grant income contribute greatly to global league tables, which leads to institution reputation which then is used to attract students (and their revenue streams) (Khurana 2007, Thomas and Peters 2012). This complicated and interconnected relationship between research and teaching requires academics to perform highly in research output AND in teaching practice (usually measured by student satisfaction ratings).

For many years, there has been committed and dedicated educators who have often sacrificed the security of stable employment (for example sessional/ adjunct workforce), or who have chosen to forego the opportunity of promotion and / or tenure to have reduced research responsibilities and invest in the educational mission of the institution (May, Peetz and Strachan 2013; Broadbent et al 2018). However, given the increased demands and issues discussed in the introduction above, tertiary institutions are realizing that to meet their strategic outcomes and provide students with an engaging learning environment, the institution needs to appoint faculty whose sole responsibility is the educational mission of their School, Faculty, and institution.

These education specialists face a number of challenges. Firstly, there is a fear that they will be seen as ‘second class citizens’ in comparison to the ‘traditional’ combined (research and teaching) academic role (Probert 2013; Flecknoe, Choate, Davis, Hodgson and Johannesen 2017). This fear may be well founded. So the question has to be asked: how do we turn around this perception?

Secondly, there has been a lack of promotion pathways for education specialist staff (Locke 2014; Broadbent et al 2018). For too long, many education focused staff sacrificed the security of a tenured position and/or the opportunity of promotion to pursue their passion as specialist educators. However, with the increasing recognition of the public scrutiny of educational outcomes, as well as the efficiencies to be gained within the institution to allow staff to pursue their passion for research (with research intensive roles) or education (education focused roles) or indeed a passion for both research and education, some tertiary education institutions are broadening promotion criteria to accommodate many different pathways to the professoriate (Bennett, Roberts, Ananthram and Broughton 2017).

A related issue is the perception that moving into an education specialist role will not only be a career limiting move in terms of promotion, but also a move that will handcuff or bind the staff member to that single institution, as ‘who else would want’ an education focused academic. Luckily, the growing number of institutions establishing these roles means that there is a growing labor market for teaching academics.

There may be many more challenges. In this workshop we will attempt to identify further issues as well as share strategies and ideas on how to address the issues and build a strong identity around the important contribution teaching academics make to the strategic requirements of the institution itself. In doing so, this workshop will provide a forum in which like-minded individuals can engage in discussion around the issues and start to build a community of education focused academics around the globe (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, Webber 2016). The community will not compete with existing professional bodies or conferences, in that our focus is on the professional development and achievements of members, rather than on the day to day educational practices we engage in, nor on educational research and SoTL. Our community can benchmark best practice employment opportunities, provide support and mentoring for promotion and employment opportunities,

and establish a network of like-minded individuals that will facilitate opportunities for study visits and sabbaticals.

**Workshop Description:**

This round table session is designed to initiate a global community among teaching academics. The session will provide an opportunity for participants to share their successes and the challenges (both along the way to this point, as well as into the future) in being seen as a 'real' academic among more 'traditional minded' colleagues and start building networks of similarly motivated colleagues at other institutions around the globe.

**The workshop agenda:**

| Time       | Activity   | Lead         |
|------------|--|--------------|
| 5 mins     | Welcome and introductions.<br>The workshop facilitators start the event, thanking participants for attending and introduce themselves and their own journey to become teaching academics.  | Facilitators |
| 10 mins    | Uncovering our stories<br>Participants will be invited to share their stories among others at their table, looking for similarities in motivation etc., also challenges and issues they have/ are facing within these roles<br>Aim: introduction and building networks   | Participants |
| 5 minutes  | Facilitators debrief the discussion  | Facilitators |
| 5 minutes  | The changing higher education landscape<br>This is a brief discussion/ brainstorm of the ways in which the educational landscape is changing and how this is driving the push for 'new' definitions of 'academic' and value creation within higher education. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase in fee paying students across the globe;</li> <li>• increasing expectations from employers (of our graduates) regarding the skills expected of graduates – acquisition of 'knowledge' is only one outcome of a tertiary degree;</li> <li>• workplace of the future</li> </ul> | Facilitators |
| 15 minutes | Participants will move among the different themes from the brainstorm above – discussing and documenting how THEY personally respond to the issue, as well as how an education specialist can address the issue  | Participants |
| 5 minutes  | Debrief above activity   | Facilitator  |
| 10 minutes | Table discussion: what does the future hold for 'us' (teaching academics)? What would we like to achieve from a global community? (eg 'mutual support', exchange of ideas and 'best practice', How might a global community operate? What goals or aims would we like to achieve?  | Participants |
| 10 minutes | Summarize outcomes from the workshop, discuss next steps and possible opportunities and farewells  | All          |

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