

Title: **Is teaching excellence just about being creative?**

Presenters: **Pam Parker, Julie Attenborough, Maggie Cunningham,
Wayne Holland and James Perkins**
City University London

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Explore what teaching excellence is in their institution
- Discuss and evaluate our definition and criteria for teaching excellence
- Examine if the definition and criteria we propose would suit their institution or if something is missing

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

At City University London there has been a learning and teaching award scheme to recognise “excellent Lecturers” for more than 10 years. Those given awards have been cited as actively engaging students in their learning, being passionate about their discipline and using innovative approaches to teaching. However we have no overall definition or criteria across the institution for teaching excellence despite the literature over the last decade providing a range of criteria (Gibbs 2008, Gibbs & Habeshaw 2002, Little et al 2007 and Skelton 2004, 2005 & 2009).

There was also a need with an increased focus on research over the last few years to raise the profile of teaching so it is seen as equal to research. Coincidentally the Higher Education Academy were advertising a change academy focused on recognising teaching excellence and so we applied and gained a place. This provided us with a senior management supported opportunity to explore this across our institution and engage staff and students in this discussion and collect a range of data. We have looked at how we can recognise and assess teaching excellence using criteria that will be seen as robust as those used for research excellence.

The workshop will provide an opportunity to share the findings we have as well as engage the participants in recognising or challenging our views.

We believe this workshop will be compatible with the theme of creativity because of an assumed link to teaching excellence however we found through our project that students do not necessarily look for a creative and innovative lecturer but one who inspires and is passionate. We have used some creative approaches to collecting the data such as the pictures and we have developed criteria around teaching excellence that we believe will be

robust but also account for the creative and traditional aspects of teaching. These will be used for professional development and to enhance teaching at City University London.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

5 minute introduction to the change academy project we undertook.

5 minute activity with all participants providing an individual view of teaching excellence in their discipline (This can be provided using creative approaches so text can be used but pictures or reference to a film may be used and we will collect these up and provide a handout to send to all participants)

10 minute outline of our project activities and data.

15 minutes with groups looking at our definition and criteria and identifying if these would fit with their own institution or if they think we have omitted something significant.

5 minutes sharing views of the groups

5 minutes conclusion and any future activity.

References

Gibbs, G. and Habeshaw, T. (2002) *Recognising and Rewarding Excellent Teaching*. Milton Keynes: TQEF National Co-ordination Team. Available from: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/documents/GPGuide_RRET.pdf (accessed 1/12/12)

Gibbs, G. (2008). *Conceptions of teaching excellence underlying teaching award schemes*. York : Higher Education Academy.

Lincoln Y S & Guba E G (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry* London Sage Publications

Little B, Locke W, Parker J and Richardson J (2007). *Excellence in teaching and learning: A review of the literature for the Higher Education Academy*. Higher Education Academy, UK.

Skelton A (2004) Understanding 'teaching excellence' in higher education: a critical evaluation of the National Teaching Fellowship *Studies in Higher Education* Vol.29. No.4. p 451 - 468

Skelton A (2005) *Understanding teaching excellence in higher education: Towards a critical approach*. Abingdon, UK Routledge.

Skelton, A.M. (2009). A 'teaching excellence' for the times we live in? *Teaching in Higher Education*, 14(1), 107-112.