

Title: **Recognising Excellence in Teaching (RET): an evaluation of a pilot mentoring project**

Presenter: **Janis McIntyre Davidson**
University of Glasgow

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Describe small-scale research that aimed to evaluate a mentoring project that forms part of an institutional CPD framework;
- Explore the outcomes of the research, in particular the extent to which mentoring supported successful applications to the framework and the potential role of mentoring in supporting the professional development of academic staff;
- Identify and discuss the potential benefits and challenges of implementing a mentoring project in their own professional context.

Session Outline

The session will present an evaluation of a mentoring project that was implemented with the aim of increasing the number of successful applications for professional recognition through RET, the University of Glasgow's CPD framework. A qualitative approach was taken in the evaluation, using thematic analysis of focus group data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lichtman, 2013), and narrative analysis of interviews (Polkinghorne, 1998) to explore the perspectives of academic staff and learn from their experiences of being a mentor or mentee. Specifically the evaluation sought to investigate:

1. Whether and how mentoring supports successful RET applications
2. What was the impact of the role of mentor, if any, on academic staff?

In the session, data collection and analysis processes will be explained, and the findings will be presented. There will be an opportunity to discuss the implications of the research for the professional development of academic staff as well as any key issues, challenges or benefits for implementation of similar projects in other institutions.

Key issues to be addressed are:

- The challenges of encouraging and supporting academic staff to make successful applications for professional recognition, in the context of "significant movement towards recognising and rewarding teaching excellence" (Pickford, 2018, p. 98), as well as increasing scrutiny of learning and teaching in higher education.
- The potential role of mentoring in supporting an increase in the number of successful applications to an institutional CPD framework

- The experiences of being a mentor, and specifically the impact of the role of mentor on the professional development of academic staff. Initial analysis suggests that the experience of mentoring is valued by the mentors, but is not always recognised by senior colleagues.
- The potential benefits and challenges of implementing a new mentoring project in higher education institutions, including the provision of appropriate development and support opportunities for mentors (Brockbank & McGill, 2006).

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The session will be divided into three parts:

20 minutes: presentation of the evaluation. The presentation will make use of PowerPoint to illustrate the main points and will explain the background to the research, the approach taken to data collection and analysis and the project findings.

15 minutes: small group discussion. Participants will be asked to move into small groups (3 or 4 people) to discuss:

- their initial responses to the presentation of the research
- whether, and in what contexts they utilise mentoring in their current practice
- the support and development needs of potential mentors within the context of institutional CPD frameworks
- the potential benefits and/or challenges in the implementation of mentoring in the HE context. There will be an opportunity for those that have already implemented mentoring to share their experiences with colleagues that might consider this in future.

10 minutes: full group discussion.

- feedback from small group discussion: each small group will be asked to identify two key points from their discussion to feed back to the whole group.
- ideas for supporting professional development through mentoring within an institutional CPD framework
- lessons learned from the evaluation and the session discussion. Next steps for RET at Glasgow.

References

- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in Psychology*, 3: 77-101.
- Brockbank, A. & McGill I. (2006). Facilitating reflective learning through mentoring and coaching. London: Kogan page
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education. A user's guide* (3rd ed). London: Sage
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8 (1), 5-23.
- Pickford, R. (2018). A blueprint for teaching excellence. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 6 (1) pp. 98-102