

Title: **Tribes and Networks: discipline specific associate tutor teaching training in anthropology and informatics**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

Consider ways in which this type of training may, or may not, be a useful addition to their institution's activity around Supporting Professional Standards.

Engage with the debate around subject-specific teaching issues and the extent to which these can help or hinder the support of professional standards in part-time teachers.

Session Outline

It is a frequent criticism of generic teaching training for Associate Tutors that it is not sufficiently subject-specific. The Teaching and Learning Development Unit at Sussex University is attempting to address this perceived lack by working with two departments (Anthropology and Informatics) to explore the discipline specifics of learning and teaching in their fields and deliver workshops for new Associate Tutors which will prepare them for teaching within their 'tribe' or 'network'.

The paper will draw on the work of Wenger (1998), Becher & Trowler (2001) and Lave & Wenger (1999) as well as responses from faculty and Associate Tutors from the two departments.

The contexts of the two departments and the content of the workshops delivered will be described and the training sessions will be evaluated as part of a critical reflection on the overall project. Lessons learnt and possible applications beyond the departments concerned and Sussex will be discussed, including how Subject Centres might be drawn into the process.

The audience will be encouraged to consider issues around 'tribes and networks' in our Universities, and the extent to which these can help or hinder the support of professional standards in part-time teachers.

Session Activities

A combination of small group discussions and whole group brainstorms and discussion on the following topics / questions will stimulate and focus discussion of the ideas in the paper.

In small groups: Which tribes or networks do you work with best? Why? And not so well? report back to flipchart.

Whole group: Communities of Practice and cultures of teaching are not things that just happen 'out there' on campus – we are part of it too – what are our subject-specific modes of teaching (brainstorm on flipchart/OHP)

Why? Can we justify them? Can we make them less strange to departmental colleagues? (whole group discussion)

In small groups: What sort of community of practice do ATs need to develop their professional standards? Report back to flipchart / OHP

Whole group discussion: what can Educational Developers do to support/encourage such communities of practice?

References

Wenger, E., *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998

Becher, T. & Trowler, P. R., *Academic tribes and territories. Intellectual enquiry and the culture of disciplines* (2nd Edn.) The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press, Buckingham & Philadelphia, 2001

Lave, J. & Wenger, E., 'Learning and pedagogy in communities of practice' in J. Leach and B. Moon (Eds.), *Learners and pedagogy*. Paul Chapman Publishing in association with OUP, London, 1999