

Title: **Our five steps to build fuzzy relationships that change communities for the better**

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Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Recognise the key questions around developing sustainable collaborative communities of practice
- Interrogate the research into the catalysts – institutional, student-led, departmental – of positive change
- Identify the factors involved in building relationships to develop teaching in a research-focused institution

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

- How to engage and enthuse academics in research-focused institutions with teaching and teaching enhancement
- What tools and techniques, employed by whom, effectively build academic interest, expertise and innovation in teaching
- What research shows develops lasting change and communities across Schools and Departments
- The roles of social media in developing and sustaining communities of practice

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

The introduction connects the session in a fun and visual way to the fuzzy logic and often fuzzy reality surrounding the building of communities with differing random variables. The session will open with an animation of a personal case study illustrated with children's 'fuzzy felt' (5 mins max) to set the scene of academic/academic developer relationships within higher education in a humorous way.

The presenters will then create a conversation between themselves and the audience focused on two key questions (listed below) which they will invite the audience to consider (30 mins). Presenters and the audience will be challenged to explore how often tenuous connections can be encouraged to create change which sticks (Herberstein and Kemp, 2012; Hirota, 1981).

Informed by research (Beard, 1974; Giddens, 1984; Skelton, 2012; Swain, 2014) and evidence from Loughborough University as to the long and short-term impact on change in teaching of different programmes (credit and non-credit bearing), CPD recognition, social media and various types of awards, the audience will be considering with the presenters the key questions of:

1. What are the main areas which need consideration when seeking to establish a teaching-focused community of practice in a research-focused institution for academics and for academic developers?
2. What techniques and tools work to develop communities of practice and how do they operate in any type of institution?

The session will conclude with a 15-minute visual summary for the audience and presenters of the thinking developed in the session, identifying the key drivers for creating effective, lasting change within teaching practice through the academic/academic developer relationship.

References

Beard, Ruth (1974) Promoting Innovation in University Teaching. In Innovation in Higher Education ed. K. G. Collier (1974) NFER Publishing Company Ltd., Windsor, Berks.

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