

Title: **New terms of engagement: thinking differently about engagement in a new era of HE**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Identify key challenges and possibilities in relation to their own as well as student engagement in today's HE environment
- Articulate new terms of engagement in relation to their own practice/roles – to think differently about engagement.
- Utilise a range of tools and resources to help develop engaging teaching and learning.

Session Outline

Student engagement has emerged as a core consideration for HEI's linked to debates around student experience and quality enhancement (Bryson and Hand, 2007). The fast changing landscape of contemporary HE, coupled with the shifting patterns of student engagement is necessitating change in approaches to and conceptualisations of teaching and learning that are engaging for students. It falls to academic staff to facilitate such change. It is the premise of this project, therefore, that if we are to effectually engage students, we must first engage staff.

The aim of this session is to explore and understand the nature of effective student engagement for learning within what is becoming an increasingly complex higher education environment and to identify the inherent challenges and possibilities for staff in their own practice – *to think differently about engaging students*. The session draws upon practice-based research to promote and explore the idea of 'academic engagement' – student and staff engagement at the level of the learning encounter – to emphasise the importance of developing an understanding of the subtle complexities of engagement in both teaching and learning within a shifting HE environment.

The workshop, like the research, case studies, and practice it presents, is purposely positioned within the wider context of contemporary issues which are at the centre of educational developers' and teaching staffs' work and practice, more specifically the workshop will explore issues around: the changing nature of student engagement in learning; the need for pedagogic disturbances in the way learning opportunities are designed to engage students; the challenges of engaging staff to engage students; academic engagement in student and staff development.

The session will be of interest to those responsible for curriculum design and facilitating learning opportunities at all levels of HE. It offers significant scope for small group discussions and interaction, wherein participants will be encouraged to learn from one another, reflect on, and share their experiences and their practice. It is anticipated that the workshop will generate significant insights and practical ideas around the nature and range of challenges and possibilities facing educators and academic developers in their practice.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- Establishing terms of engagement. explores with staff the different meanings of the term 'engagement' as typically used in their own practice domains before moving to place them within the context of the wider engagement agenda in HE [15 minutes]
- Engagement in Context: a interactive and collaborative exercise designed to explore the challenges and possibilities of engagement in a changing HE context [15 minutes]
- Thinking differently about engagement: cases in Sport. The session will then draw upon practice-based research in order to further interrogate the challenges and possibilities discussed [30 minutes]
- Discussing the issues: engaging who and to what end? The notion of staff engagement is typically neglected in the student engagement agenda. The session explores the notion of "Academic Engagement" - student and staff engagement at the level of the learning encounter – to establish the key issues when designing 'engaging' teaching and learning [15 minutes]
- New terms of engagement: moving from here to where? Draws on previous discussion the session then guides staff in establishing and implementing new terms of engagement in relation to their practice. The intention here is to identify and discuss how staff understanding of engagement has shifted or changed as a consequence of the programme and, if so, how these new conceptions might be integrated into their practice [15 minutes]

References

Bryson, C. and Hand, L. (2007). The role of engagement in inspiring teaching and learning. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 346-362.