RIGHTS & REWARDS

In Blended
Institutional Repositories

Rewarding teachers: a review of current practice

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1.0 Introduction

An integral part of the Rights and Rewards in Blended Institutional Repositories Project is the design of a reward and support scheme that provides suitable recognition for the contribution of items to a repository of teaching and learning materials. A repository is a managed environment having the benefits of: providing a central store for the sharing of resources, enhancing access to items, and helping to preserve the outputs of a university for the long-term.

The project will pilot a reward and award scheme as part of the demonstrator repository service at Loughborough University. This repository will hold some examples of good quality teaching materials produced at this institution, resources for use in teaching, and case studies of innovative practice. The repository service will include provision for support channels to encourage and assist content creators and depositors.

Rewarding staff for their efforts in creating good quality teaching and learning resources is seen as a way of recognising their work and encouraging innovation. A number of National and Local initiatives for rewarding staff are already in place. This report introduces some of these schemes and outlines the context within which such reward schemes operate. The project's reward and support scheme will be designed to meet the needs of contributors to a repository of materials to support teaching and learning. The need for suitable awards, support and recognition were identified by a national survey (Bates *et al.*, 2005), and in interviews with teachers and support staff at Loughborough University carried out by the project team.

2.0 The teaching and learning environment

Teaching and learning is a lifelong process and developments in both areas require teachers and learners to play an active part. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are accountable to a number of external organisations such as Government, Quality Control Bodies, Funding Bodies, Grant Awarding Bodies, Industry, parents and last, but by no means least, potential fee paying students. Activities within Institutions are, to a greater or lesser extent, governed by these factors; for teaching staff there are also local policies and trends to follow.

The UK Government is keen to improve teaching quality in HEIs. One of their White Paper's key points and proposals for delivering teaching and learning excellence states that:

> Additional money for pay will be conditional on higher education institutions having human resource strategies that explicitly value teaching and reward and promote good teachers (The future of higher education 2003).

Providing money is not the only way of rewarding excellence in teaching but as Brown points out it is crucial (2003, p6).

Teaching unions have their own views on the best way to support and reward teaching staff. Supporting and rewarding teaching NATFHE guidance (2003) includes a number of recommendations including: ensuring that rewards are offered in an equitable way; increasing the esteem of teaching should be effectively managed to ensure links between research and teaching activities are maintained; levels of bureaucracy should be minimised; links with other procedures should be encouraged; team activities should also be rewarded as should good as well as

excellent practice. NATFHE do not want to see a peer-assessment approach to improving teaching that mirrors the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The AUT policy on recruitment and retention outlines their preference for "decent salaries and working conditions for all" (AUT: Policies: recruitment and retention N.D.). They are also opposed to performance related pay, preferring nationally negotiated scales and current promotional procedures (AUT: Policies: performance relate pay N.D.).

One of the biggest growth areas in teaching and learning is the electronic medium. Some practitioners at Loughborough have expressed a reluctance to use technology in their teaching. In contrast, others have stated that they are keen to incorporate more Information Technology (IT) based materials into their teaching. A digital repository of quality resources for use in teaching, and materials to support teaching activities can provide examples of the benefits of using IT in learning and teaching.

An additional factor of importance to university employees is that of promotion routes. Mechanism within institutions for rewarding and encouraging staff in their efforts are necessary as they provide financial recognition and ways of increasing an individuals esteem. These mechanisms need to be equitable and fair so that they provide equal opportunities for all staff.

When designing a reward and support scheme for university staff involved in the contribution of resources to a teaching and learning repository four main categories of individuals (actors) have been considered. These actors all play an important role in a repository service, either directly as creators of resources, or indirectly in a supporting role, or as users of deposited resources. The range of skills and abilities that these actors bring to the teaching and learning environment are outlined below.

2.1 Actors and skills
Teachers - are expected to be aware of, and have the relevant skills in:

- Assessment / exams - paper based and online
- Course planning - structure and development
- eLearning / distance learning
- Interactive courseware building
- IT
- Learning styles
- Lesson planning
- Motivating students
- Multimedia
- Online assessment / exams - designing and marking
- Pedagogy
- Providing effective feedback on students work
- Setting Group work

Students - are expected to be arrive at university with some of the following skills, where they are lacking skills they can take advantage of training sessions and materials provided by the university:

- Essay / report writing
- Feedback on course content and delivery
- Group work
- IT

- Learning
- Location, analysis and evaluation of resources
- Negotiating
- Presentation

Support staff - provide vital services to backup and extend teaching activities and to support students' ability to maximise the opportunities afforded to them at university. Their skills base includes:

- Administrative duties and support
- Disabilities and additional needs services
- Innovation centres
- Library services – developing information literacy skills
- Professional Development services
- Provisions and support of technical systems, for both teachers and learners
- Research / teaching support
- Specialist teaching activities – Maths, English
- Subject specific support services – Higher Education Academy (HEA) and Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)
- Study skills

University senior management –have a duty to recognise and reward staff in the execution of their duties. This may be achieved by encouraging staff in the development of new initiatives, collaborative activities, and in the provision of useful shared resources. The following services and activities could be of benefit here:

- Publicise and promote the repository service
- Recognise and promote excellence in staff
- Provide / secure sustainable funding for a repository service
- Provide / secure sustainable funding for rewarding contribution to a repository service

2.2 Sharing

The sharing of resources is important for both teachers and learners. The ability to share experience, skills, to offer advice, mentor and give feedback are all valuable and valued attributes in teaching staff. The Rights and Rewards Survey (Bates *et al.*, 2005) attracted a number of comments on the sharing of resources for use in teaching and learning. One remark that epitomises the positive aspects of this activity was:

> To stop us re-inventing the wheel and start focusing on better meeting the learning needs of our students.

Students are also expected to play their part by participating in lecture sessions, peer feedback, and group projects. In interviews with lecturers at Loughborough it was interesting to note that some expressed the desire to have brainstorming sessions with other academics, others wanted to see greater communication across departments.

2.3 IT skills

Interactive courseware may be increasingly expected by students. University staff will need to acquire the necessary skills to support this activity. The move towards

eLearning and the needs of part-time and distance learners also demand a greater ability to interact with IT/ web based systems and methods of course delivery. At Loughborough Professional Development and the Online Learning Development Officers (OLDOs) play a part in encouraging the integration of IT into courseware. The OLDOs are contracted for a 2 year period, due to end in 2007. If their services are not retained support for this activity will fall back on support, provided centrally or in departments.

2.4 Reacting to change

The growth in eLearning, institutional teaching and learning initiatives, government policies, international trends and activities means there are many more areas to keep an eye on. With all these changes vying for attention it would be useful to be able to predict future trends, and to react to the changes that are most likely to have a medium to long-term impact. However, due to the broad scope of these changes, this is no easy task. Providing teachers with efficient, useful and meaningful methods of sharing, communicating and supporting each other could minimise the impact of change and the associated additional workload. Heery and Powell (2006, p11) point out that institutional change is a slow process and that individuals require motivations in order for change to happen. Institution's reward structures can provide a framework for individual and ultimately community gain. Institutions need to be aware of the importance of managing these resources and of encouraging academics to make their materials available under the principles of open access (Heery and Powell 2006, p11, p15).

2.5 Teachers' concerns

Interviews with academic teaching and support staff at Loughborough highlighted several key concerns in relation to student learning. Four main areas attracted comments:

- Information literacy,
- Perceived value of teaching at Loughborough,
- Maths ability,
- Motivating students.

Students are arriving at University with poor mathematics skills and they do not demonstrate a willingness to learn. The overwhelming response to the inclusion of mathematical content in a course is that it is 'too difficult'. This is a worrying trend.

The second point, it has been suggested, is linked to the highly structured nature of teaching in schools. Pupils are not encouraged to think for themselves and they bring this attitude with them to their university education. The ability to formulate ideas, search for and evaluate information are vital attributes that separate an average student from a good one. Levels of information literacy are also an area of concern for library staff and it is an area where suitably qualified library staff can offer advice and practical support to academics and students.

Motivating students to attend lectures and to read around a subject was a common concern. Several methods of encouraging students had been attempted including: placing lecture slides on the university's VLE (Learn) after a lecture, putting them up before a lecture, sending out emails to alert students to the fact that they are falling behind their peers, making it clear in lecturers and tutorials that attending lectures and reading around subjects gets better grades. Sharing this kind of information and

suggesting techniques for increasing student motivation would benefit both staff and students.

Time and again, comments were made by academics about the focus of this institution being on 'research' at the expense of 'teaching'. This is backed up by the following excerpt from the University's Human Resource Strategy (Human Resources Strategy [Round 2] 2004/06: Rewarding and Developing Staff 2004):

> The overarching strategic aim of the University continues to be to strengthen its position as a research intensive institution. Our existing HR Strategy supports this aim through policies to recruit, develop, motivate and retain research active academic staff.

The view that teaching is not as highly regarded as research has been translated into: negative comments from colleagues at attempts to make interactive teaching materials for students; a feeling that an interest in teaching was not something that should be expressed; and that promotion via the teaching route was more difficult to achieve than via the research route. This institution is attempting to redress the balance by encouraging and rewarding good teaching.

2.6 Enhancing teaching and learning

Some lecturers reported that they would like to include more IT materials in their courses. This could be online materials, interactive materials, or online assessment / exams. New lecturers may be more computer literate than practitioners who have been lecturing for a number of years. This may be especially the case for multimedia elements created with digital cameras, imaging software, scanners and multimedia software. They may also be more familiar with community software on the Web, such as shared photo sites (Flickr), bookmark sharing (delicious), weblogs (online diary sites), and wikis (collaborative websites). Their experience in this area could be capitalised upon and channels for sharing resources and expertise created.

3.0 Current awards and rewards schemes

3.1 The National picture

Higher Education Academy
The HEA has a mission to provide authoritative support for institutions in their efforts to enhance the student learning experience. As part of this objective they offer a number of award schemes designed to recognise excellence in teaching. In 2002 they partnered with the Times Higher Education Supplement to launch the e-Tutor of the Year competition. This competition recognises the embedding of new learning technologies in higher education to make more effective use of information and communications technologies (ICT) in student learning (e-Tutor of the year competition 2006). They also run a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) that rewards individuals who have had an impact on raising the profile of teaching and learning and enhancing the student learning experience. From 2006 a project award is also available, one of the team must be a National Teaching Fellow (National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) 2006)

The Dearing report led to the setting up of a Generic Centre, 24 Subject Centres and the Institute of learning and teaching in HE. The pressure to elevate the status of Learning and Teaching has been reinforced by funding councils like the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) who address the issues of recognition and reward for teaching.

The Academy has recently devised the Professional Standards Framework for universities to map their professional development programmes to. This framework provides universities with an opportunity to demonstrate the areas in which they meet professional standards for teaching and learning (Professional standards 2006).

HEFCE
HEFCE distribute public money to universities and higher education colleges in England. They have a remit to ensure the quality of teaching and to provide guidance on good practice. One of their strategic aims is to enhance excellence in learning and teaching (Higher Education Funding Council for England 2006). In addition to their general support for learning and teaching there are specific HEFCE initiatives to promote and reward excellence in learning and teaching. for example Rewarding and Developing Staff 1 and 2 (RDS1 and RDS2).

Additional sources of funding
From time to time funds are available from the European Union, the Department of Education and Skills, and the Learning Skills Council.

UK Universities sample survey
A snapshot sample was taken of schemes in place in UK Higher Education (HE) institutions for rewarding staff with a record of excellence in the performance of their duties, and in their efforts to advance teaching and learning. The sample was drawn from a List of UK University Heads (2006) and selection was on a one in ten basis. A variety of methods were employed to locate details of methods employed for rewarding staff. Human Resources or Staff Development sections of the website were looked at. Terms and conditions of employment scrutinised and learning and teaching strategy documents. General keyword searches were also used (rewarding staff, rewarding teachers). This publicly available information may not reflect the full picture of award and reward schemes at each institution. The survey results demonstrated that as universities have comparable resources to hand for rewarding staff similar schemes for achieving this were in evidence. HEFCE's Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) has been utilised by universities to promote teaching innovation, transfer good practice and in some cases to reward staff for excellence in teaching. This is in the main, but not exclusively, awarded to teaching academics. One notable scheme for rewarding staff is Bournemouth University's Learning and Teaching Fellowships award (http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/centre-for-academic-practice/learning_teaching.html). Their aims are to: recognise excellence in the support of student learning, improve the learning experience by disseminating best practice, promote a culture of scholarship and increase the number of published items relating to pedagogic activity and research. This scheme was introduced in 2002 and Fellowships have been bestowed on individuals from schools, institutes and offices across the university. Additional schemes for rewarding teaching staff and other roles included pay increments, one off payments, promotions routes, long service awards and by highlighting achievements in Annual Reports.

3.2 Loughborough's reward schemes
An interview with the Director of Professional Development, Andy Wilson, provided an overview of the current situation at Loughborough University. A teaching prize and two types of awards are offered at Loughborough. These awards / rewards are administered by Professional Development with funding provided from RDS2; some funding is also provided by the engCETL. Central to the decision to offer these prizes and awards has been the availability of funding from RDS2.

There have been 4 main drivers for the development of a reward scheme at Loughborough:

1. Internally - recognition and reward for good teaching.
2. Nationally - HEFCE attempt to address the balance between teaching and research, the results of this will be manifest at audit.
3. The creation of CETLs – these are only permitted in institutions with good procedures and rewards in place for recognising teaching quality.
4. The realisation that there is good practice out there but this might not be accessible. The offer of even small amounts of money can motivate the release of these outputs to others; JISC and the Higher Education Subject Centres have proved this. This goes some way to recognising that getting departments involved in teaching and learning may otherwise be difficult.

The reward scheme started in 2005 and a range of awards and rewards are included:
A Teaching Prize – this is a reward for an individual who is doing something good in encouraging and promoting teaching at Loughborough.
A Mini Project Award - is money given to undertake a specific project.
An Academic Practice Award – combines evidence of teaching excellence with a scholarly research-based activity.

Applicants are given support through the application process. All of the recipients of either the prizes or awards are expected to capture and disseminate the examples of good practice that they have been recognised for. All academics, overseas research students and learning support staff are eligible to apply either as an individuals or in groups. The Mini Project Award does not require the candidate to have a strong track record in teaching and learning. Comments from the applicants Head Of Department or Head of Section has to supply a comment on the application. The issue of the sustainability of the funding of these awards is a consideration that is being addressed.

Promotions at Loughborough are made by reference to the university's own criteria. This includes the promotional pathway to Senior Lecturer; this can be achieved via a research route or a teaching route. The route via teaching and learning requires that an individual have a proven good record in both teaching and research. Those seeking promotion via the 'T' route are required to present a detailed teaching portfolio that includes:

- Administration – planning, preparation, and management of teaching.
- Discussions – records of discussions, effects on teaching activities, and reflections.
- Examples of student's work – illustrations of course content, assessment issues and candidate's development.
- Feedback – from students, peers, advisors and external examiners with examples, evaluations and impact on teaching, and reflection.
- Future developments – future development of teaching
- Innovation – examples of innovations, improvements over more conventional teaching methods, improvements to the learning experience, and external impact.
- Research – teaching-related and other, list of publications, overlap between teaching and research, evidence of the impact and influence of their publications, works in progress or planned, and supervision of research students and research assistants.

- Training – courses and conferences attended, evaluations of these events, and reflections on the relationship between teaching and research.

Under these categories candidates are asked to present examples, evaluations of these factors and their impact and effects on their teaching methods and style, reflections and consideration of their own development as a teacher, and future development in this area. In addition observations of the candidate's teaching are carried out. The observations take into account the overall quality of the session and in particular: learning outcomes, planning and organisation, learning and teaching methods, presentation, content, student participation, use of accommodation and learning resources.

A range of rewards for other groups of staff have also been identified. One of these is the 'Review Reward Application' that offers a number of merit awards:

- An additional increment,
- A discretionary point, or
- Lump sum payment.

The variety of these awards illustrate that managers at Loughborough have a range of options available to them for recognising and rewarding the efforts of their staff.

4.0 Linking teaching and research

Teaching and research should operate at a high level and they should serve to strengthen and sustain each other (Brown 2005, p393). The benefits in strengthening links between teaching and research for both teachers and students have been investigated by the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) Generic Centre project Linking Research and Teaching. The project ran from 2002-03 and focused on linking student learning with research in their discipline. The project set out to achieve this through working with staff, they did not set out to support pedagogic research undertaken by staff. (Linking Research and Teaching Project plan N.D.). The HEA-ICS (Information and Computer Sciences) is currently seeking to develop resources that illustrate good practice in linking teaching and research.

The University of Sydney's project into research-led-teaching raises some interesting questions about the activity of teaching, how academics prepare for teaching, how teaching is carried out, how academics reflect on their teaching and the departmental and institutional context of teaching (Research-led teaching and the scholarship of teaching: Domains of research-led teaching N.D.). The project is designed to fulfil the University's Strategic Plan and they have developed a database of teaching and learning innovations within the university. This includes examples of: learning communities, problem based learning, researching own teaching and theoretical frameworks for teaching and learning (Research-led teaching and the scholarship of teaching: Examples database N.D.). Part of the University's recognition for good teaching includes the Vice-Chancellor's Outstanding Teaching Award which has been running since 1995.

The Rights and Rewards survey (Bates *et al.*, 2005) recorded views on the links between teaching and research and the increased likelihood of contributing teaching materials to a repository when these links were important. At the time of the survey 31.0% of respondents with prior experience of contribution to a repository had done so because it related to their research. The combined response rate for those '*much more likely*' and '*likely*' to contribute to a repository in the future if it was connected to

research as well as teaching was 67.7%. A 'blended' repository containing both sets of materials will facilitate closer links between the two activities.

5.0 A repository service

A repository service has the potential to satisfy the needs expressed by the HE via the Rights and Rewards survey (Bates *et al.*, 2005) and that staff at Loughborough have voiced during interviews. The service can reward users depositing items by removing barriers to contribution in the following areas, by being well-designed, easy to use and with staff in place to support a range of activities associated with creating and depositing material. Providing simple web based systems would encourage greater use in an environment where the ethos is for access to all resources from a single source. The case for this can be illustrated by one respondents view of current repositories that they are "Too complex – prefer the one stop shop – good old Google". The survey also identified a need for shared spaces for collaboration and feedback; the feasibility of including this provision in a repository service will be explored. Materials that are likely to be most useful to the HE community are case studies, reports and informal documents with advice on current trends, best practice, student motivation, teaching exemplars, information literacy guides. Submissions to the repository of these types of materials will be sought. The repository service might also provide resources to help practitioners to draw upon the collective expertise of peers. The 'users' of the service (depositors and resource users) could be probationary teachers, experienced lecturers seeking information about the use of online learning, technical tutors wanting to share Java Applets, Librarians looking for ways to disseminate information literacy guides, or students looking to extend their research skills.

A repository to house and showcase examples of good quality teaching materials and resources produced at Loughborough University that had the backing of Senior Managers, Deans for Teaching and Heads of Departments might be a good way of demonstrating that teaching activities are indeed held in high regard. Furthermore, a 'blended' repository, containing both teaching and research outputs, would illustrate the fact that both are of equal value and linking the two together could initiate useful cross-fertilisation. Two of the most influential factors for contributors to repositories were to improve teaching and to increase student motivation (Bates *et al.*, 2005). These are important drivers for sharing resources amongst a community dedicated to advancing knowledge and enhancing student learning.

5.1 Repository benefits

Some of the benefits the university and individuals can gain by providing and making use of a repository of teaching and learning materials are:

- *Showcase* – the university is proud of its teaching.
- *Resource* – the repository can provide the university with a pool of resources. These could be used as exemplars for training new teachers.
- *Preserve* – materials in the repository would be managed and the long-term preservation of selected file formats achieved.

- *Share* – utilise the functionality of the repository to give staff the opportunity to share resources and expertise. For example lecturing staff could record their experience of teaching and their research into teaching. This could translate into examples of which methods for motivating students have worked and why, methods could be outlined and student feedback included.

- *Share* – experienced lecturers might find useful information on how to motivate students or to bring new ideas into their own teaching.

- *Reward* – for the inclusion of their materials contributors and support staff will be suitable credited and rewarded.
- *Reward* – the time required to prepare materials for contribution to the repository could be built into departments Workload Model.
- *Reward* – having material in the repository could be used as evidence in the promotion via teaching route. It would highlight good practice and dissemination.

For the repository service to be successful, barriers to sharing must also be removed. From survey and interviews these have been identified as:

- Copyright / Intellectual Property (IP) concerns,
- Lack of awareness of repositories,
- Lack of awareness of the potential for re-use of materials,
- Lack of confidence in ICT skills,
- Lack of confidence in their own materials,
- Motivation,
- Time restrictions.

5.2 Support infrastructure

Interviews with academics at Loughborough have highlighted the fact that the support provided for them in their teaching activities is adequate. The proposed introduction of a new service, a teaching and learning materials repository, if accepted by the university for implementation will require a degree of support. The project has identified the needs of academics for support and possible sources for this support. The university has an existing Institutional Repository (IR) for research pre prints, the Rights and Rewards project is looking at the feasibility of blending teaching and research outputs. It is also attempting to blend support mechanisms for both types of content. The university's IR currently operates a mediated deposit policy, with deposit by the repository manager. We would suggest that this service should be extended to include the deposit of materials to support teaching activities. However, it could be that pedagogy specialists may be required for adding metadata to certain items.

Technical support at this institution is currently provided by the OLDOs, Professional Development staff, Computing Services and IT staff in departments'. These services cover a wide range of skills and teachers are already aware of the help available. As they represent the most logical first point of call for teachers in the process of creating materials it would be sensible for the project to try to utilise these existing support mechanisms.

Procedures for reviewing the quality of items submitted to a repository of teaching and learning materials needs to be considered. Interviews with teachers at Loughborough have shown that review of some materials is already current practice. This is undertaken as part of a new lecturers probationary period, by heads of teaching and learning, by students and peers in the department. Review by Head of Department (HoD) may be an appropriate way to guarantee quality, it has also been suggested to the project that as Professional Development currently review material for their Awards and Rewards scheme their approval would add authority. Additional

reviews could be undertake by subject specialist or learning and teaching specialist. An appropriate review board should be assembled.

6.0 Conclusion

There appears to be a push towards redressing the balance between teaching and research at many UK HEIs. Initiatives to achieve this include universities individual efforts to promote and reward teachers and by the provision of funding for projects to further teaching excellence. These schemes operate within the wider context of government policy and with funding from HEFCE. Case studies and examples of good practice in this area are becoming increasingly available from a range of sources.

The development of an IR that includes examples of good teaching, primary source materials for inclusion in teaching materials, case studies and reports can provide a central resource for teachers to refer to. It could also act as a high profile central store where teachers place materials that they would like to share within the teaching community and with a wider audience. Rewarding individuals and teams for including their resources in the repository as well as those supporting the creation and deposit of these items represents a natural extension of initiatives for promoting good teaching and rewarding teachers.

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