

Institution: JCU

Program: Teaching the JCU Way Teaching at JCU: Sessionals

<p>Context <i>Overview of institutional context</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only uni in region – small pool of available sessional staff to draw from</li> <li>• Student profile represents challenges for teaching – very diverse, eg wide range of TEscores; high % poverty; 50% rural and remote; well over 60% first generation uni.</li> <li>• 636 paid sessionals and 174 honorary sessionals in semester 1, 2007; FTE of about 60</li> <li>• Major roles are tutoring, lecturing, marking and demonstrating</li> <li>• Special groups include Indigenous Tertiary Access tutors; mentors; school-based teacher educators (over 1000)</li> <li>• Chequered history of institutional t&amp;l development</li> <li>• Silo structure re disciplines and divisions</li> <li>• Multi-campus</li> <li>• Geographical isolation</li> </ul>
<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>We offer two programs: a two-hour focus on policy and student profile for experienced sessional staff <i>Teaching the JCU Way</i>; and a four-hour workshop for new teaching sessionals <i>Teaching at JCU: Sessionals</i>. These workshops are offered as multiple sessions in Townsville and Cairns at the beginning of each semester, including on a Saturday.</p> <p>Curriculum is underpinned by the intersection of Principles-Policies –Practices, and organized around the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's special about sessionals at JCU?</li> <li>• What's special about teaching at JCU?</li> <li>• Professional knowledge base to inform university teaching</li> <li>• Planning effective learning sessions</li> <li>• Making small group learning activities and presentations more effective</li> <li>• Making the most of flexible learning</li> <li>• Giving and receiving feedback</li> </ul>
<p>Stated outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• felt welcomed to teaching at JCU</li> <li>• become aware of policies relating to teaching and learning at JCU</li> <li>• analysed the JCU student population and its implications for teaching</li> <li>• engaged with the concept of flexible learning and the role of <i>LearnJCU</i></li> <li>• been introduced to the professional knowledge base for university teaching and learning</li> <li>• established beginning repertoires of teaching skills (including planning and giving feedback) appropriate to their teaching contexts</li> <li>• expanded their skills in facilitating student learning in small groups</li> <li>• developed strategies to gather and use information about their own teaching</li> <li>• reflected on their beliefs, values and experiences of learning and teaching</li> <li>• established informal networks of support and exchange about teaching</li> </ul>

Resources	Folder with materials organized according to curriculum questions above – policy documents, materials from other unis, extracts from literature, practical guides, planning proformas. Online community through Blackboard system.
Pedagogies	At least two facilitators are involved for the four-hour workshops, as well as a panel of student and staff support personnel from across the uni. We share responsibility for maximizing variety and modeling the sorts of pedagogies we advocate – student-centred, constructivist activities, with flexible planning and tightly organized team teaching. Some ‘transmission’ with ppt, some guided checking through materials and resources, individual reflections, paired work, small group responses to scenarios, whole group discussions.
Institutional Embedding	The central teaching induction program is seen as part of a suite, with local School induction and subject/course induction dealing with specific admin & facility matters etc. Attendance at teaching induction is formally a condition of ongoing appointment and sessionals are paid at administrative duties rate for their attendance.
Evaluation	Written evaluations are framed in terms of achieving program outcomes; satisfaction with volume of information, materials, presenters’ approaches, timing and venue; and intentions to change practice as a result of attending the session.
Underpinning Philosophy	Sessionals are viewed as having contributions to make to the JCU learning community – either as students themselves who understand student issues, or as professionals with field-based experiences, or as advocates into the community for JCU. Sessional staff are seen as often the personalized face of the university for many students, especially first year students. Given the JCU profile, the role of sessionals in welcoming, orienting and supporting students is seen as critical. Sessionals are also valuable conduits from students for ongoing feedback to subject coordinators to help improve curriculum and pedagogy. Consistency of student experience is also seen as fundamental, so sessional induction is also seen as important in making sessional staff aware of the policy contexts.