



## Resource Review

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| <b>Name of reviewed item:</b>                            | Learning, Teaching and Assessing in Higher Education. Developing Reflective Practice                                       |
| <b>Author(s) / Editor(s):</b>                            | Anne Campbell and Lin Norton   |
| <b>Publisher / distributor details (see note below):</b> | Learning Matters<br><a href="http://www.learningmatters.co.uk">www.learningmatters.co.uk</a><br>info@learningmatters.co.uk |
| <b>Publication / release date:</b>                       | 2007   |
| <b>ISBN number (if applicable):</b>                      | ISBN-13: 978 1 84445 116 6   |
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### Review:

#### Introduction

This book deals with a range of approaches in Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LT&A) in Higher Education and the development of reflective practice. So what makes it different from others in the same genre? - the fact that it includes a focus on addressing the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) which has not been available in other texts of this nature to date. It highlights the growth of Postgraduate Certificates in L&T for staff in Higher Education and the development of criteria to enable the evidencing of those standards as part of gaining a PG Certificate accredited by the Higher Education Academy. There is a clear message that this is not a definitive textbook but an exploration of theory and practice towards practitioner development in L&T. There are similarities with other books in the way it is laid out (for example, Brockbank and McGill, 2007) but uniquely each chapter outlines how the content can support evidencing the standards and support the development of a reflective approach. Each chapter has an introduction, followed by reference to the UKPSF and then an individualised approach to content including, for example, case studies, questions, suggested strategies and a conclusion followed by a full set of references. Although not based in the art, design and media disciplines there are examples of practitioner-based approaches making this a useful core textbook for PG programmes.

#### Content

The book makes a positive statement around learning, teaching, assessment and reflective practice. In the outline it states that:

*the book encourages university teachers to actively question existing practice, develop a solid understanding of the pedagogy of their subject and how students learn, and become thoughtful, reflective teaching practitioners in higher education.*

When the book first arrived through the post, my immediate thought was that the size was useful, not too thick – however I had been seduced by this and was surprised to see the font size which meant that the content was probably similar to a book at least half as thick again. Whilst ignoring the fact that I may be reaching the age of needing reading glasses I returned to the purpose of the book.

The fact that it is explicit in supporting staff new to teaching on programmes of study that have been accredited by the Higher Education Academy, and subsequently linked to the UKPSF, makes it an attractive option. We talk, sometimes glibly, about evidencing the standards to gain associate or full fellowship of the HEA but this has not been articulated formally through a reference tool such as this.

The individual chapters deal with a range of topics from learning to learn, problem-based learning, student perceptions of themselves as learners, e-learning, assessment, employability, disability. Chapter content is based on practical experience and work undertaken through projects. I was pleased to see a chapter focussing on action learning and research inquiry methods. Postgraduate programmes often have a small action research project built into modules and the chapter will be useful for these staff who are researching into L&T rather than into their specialist subject. Any help to direct and support their work in this area can be viewed as positive as subject specialists come to terms with a new subject area and its accompanying literature and research methods.

Each chapter has a summary of the rationale and, in some cases, highlights the underpinning research linked to the topic, outlining how the content can be used to evidence the standards. Individual chapters highlight possible discussion points, share case studies and suggest what staff may need to do to sell those ideas to students.

Chapters deal with the reality of the learner experience, questioning what is important about aspects of learning through exploring changes in higher education and the challenges that this poses for the learner (students and staff). Discussion points are highlighted for use in groups or action learning sets and potential strategies outlined. Some individual chapters use programmes of learning or projects as examples of how the chapter focus relates to the strategies outlined. Where the content of chapters is about less explicit learning, for example, reflection, the sharing of experiences is suggested as a developmental approach.

Most chapters offer a summary and conclusion based on personal experience but each is placed in the context of appropriate pedagogic theory and accompanied by a reference list including weblinks.

## **Conclusion**

This book is a collection of contributions written by staff who are, or were, working at Liverpool Hope University and skilfully edited by Campbell and Norton. It is not based in subject specific experiences, but nevertheless offers an overview of issues, approaches and examples in support of staff undertaking PG Certificates and the evidencing of the UKPSF.

**Summary**

This is a textbook that will support both new and experienced staff who either choose or are directed to look at reflective learning. The excellent reference base and bibliography in each section and individual chapters leads the reader to further research and reading, thus supporting deeper understanding of pedagogy and future reflective development. It challenges the reader to think about their approaches from curriculum development to delivery and assessment and how that process can support reflective learning.