

Developing Teamwork that Works! Embedding intercultural capacities in ICT and engineering using a transdisciplinary approach

Elena Sitnikova, Patricia Kelly and Diana Collett.
University of South Australia
Corresponding Author Email: Elena.Sitnikova@unisa.edu.au

OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

This workshop is designed to share the theory and practice of a scaffolded, incremental approach to embedding inclusive teamwork in a systems development context. It will build on participants' understanding of team skill development by presenting the elements of an inclusive approach being developed at UniSA. We will use core teambuilding activities to model how they support and develop students' professional communication and collaboration skills.

ACTIVITIES

The proposed workshop will engage audience members in structured and shared learning experiences, using the following strategies:

Brainstorm: What strategies do you already use for teambuilding? Share collective wisdom. What works? What barriers exist for you? What else is needed?

Explain a scaffolded approach to team development: Creating the language and understanding that is essential for a new approach in the classroom. Key terms such as 'scaffolded,' 'incremental', 'inclusive', 'responsive', 'Rank', 'embedded', 'threshold concepts' are explained and explored.

Practise: The workshop will support learning by 'changing hats' from participant-learner to peer-discussant, with time for discussion and reflection. We will introduce and model exemplar small group experiences, moving beyond: 1) Getting to Know You to; 2) An in depth group activity (handed out for discussion); 3) Negative brain storm (practise this) 3) leading into introducing 'Rank' and how it influences communication in groups.

Reflect: The workshop includes time to reflect as part of the learning process and consider possible applications in other contexts. 1) as a participant: How did you feel? and 2) as a teacher: How would you use/adapt this in your context?

Engaging Evaluation: as part of the process (reciprocal, transparent, collated and returned to participants). We will use sample student evaluations to explain how this gives students timely and relevant feedback and models the process and benefits of reflection, as their comments continue to guide our curriculum improvements. We model the evaluation process so that participants feel confident to use or adapt it in their contexts. Participants will reflect on the process and its potential usefulness.

Resources: Participants will receive a guide to the activities practised and the rationale behind them. This will be made available online to other conference attendees/public access. This could include a response section for participants to comment on how they have used or adapted the information.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This workshop is designed for educators who want to build a more inclusive approach to learning or who want to extend their current practice.

No particular knowledge is needed, but a willingness to participate in and contribute to activities is assumed.

OUTCOMES

Participants will:

- expand and share their understanding of the challenges involved in developing effective teamwork in diverse cohorts;
- build their knowledge; and
- feel confident to explore suggested ideas and activities in their own contexts.

REFERENCES

Sitnikova E., Kelly P., Collett D., (2011), Building Successful Teams: a pilot intervention embedding inclusive team skills in an undergraduate system analysis, design and project management course (SADPM), Proceedings of the 2011 AAEE Conference, Perth.

Kelly, P. (2010). Engineering: a civilising influence? *Futures*, 42(10), 1110-1118.

KEYWORDS

Teambuilding, inclusive communication, professional collaboration.

PRESENTERS BACKGROUNDS

Dr Elena Sitnikova, PhD, BE(Hons), CSSLP

Currently Program Director for the Masters of Science (Cyber Security and Forensic Computing) program in the School of Computer and Information Science (CIS), University of South Australia (UniSA) Elena brings experience in IT industry, research in communication control systems security; and software and systems engineering. Along with the discipline specific research, she has always continued her research interest in engineering education. She successfully conducts the Cyber Security and Forensic Computing program that was developed for teaching engineering and ICT industry recommended competencies in information assurance, electronic evidence, forensic computing and critical infrastructure. Elena heads an interdisciplinary team introducing team building skills to second year computing science students and enjoys supporting the work of others, including early career academics. Elena is one of the four Fellows for 2012-2013 appointed by The Australian Learning and Teaching Academy (ALTA) to develop existing ICT learning and teaching networks. As an ALTA fellow her main objective is to help develop industry required technical discipline-specific skills and personal capabilities in ICT and engineering graduates to address national and disciplinary priorities to enhance learning and teaching in higher education. She welcomes opportunities to hear your visions and ideas for improving ICT education.

Dr Patricia Kelly, SFSEDA, (Senior Fellow Staff Education and Development Association, UK) BA, DipEd, BEd, GradDipMedia, MA, PhD, GradCert Int.Health.

Patricia is an academic advisor with the Learning and Teaching Unit of UniSA, working in interdisciplinary teams to embed inclusive teamwork in several first and second year engineering courses. She has worked at several Australian universities, teaching in Graduate Certificates in Education (Higher Education) and supporting internationalising the curriculum, transnational education and sessional staff development. Her PhD was based on research into transformative education with large diverse first year engineering cohorts. Recent projects include a two year sessional staff development project at the University of Canberra, a masters curriculum renewal project with RMIT university in Melbourne and currently, a collaborative Hubs and Spokes project in engineering education and course development with the Faculty of Science, Health and Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Like Elena, she enjoys collaborative work and has successfully mentored many applicants for Australian national teaching wards and other awards.

Ms Diana Collett, M Soc Sci (Counselling), B.A., R.N

Diana Collett is a Counsellor at UniSA who over many years has listened to the accounts of both local and international students about their experiences of working together. Her current doctoral studies on the relationship between rank and intercultural communication now form the basis of a suite of strategies designed to assist students in creating connections through valuing each other's differences. She has extensive training and experience as both a university counsellor and a psychotherapist in private practice, employing the principles of Process Oriented Psychology. This approach brings to the team a deep understanding of the way that power differences influence personal choices in group behaviour. It brings people together by giving options for overcoming the communication dynamics that create separation. Over the past seven years Diana has been working with teaching teams across divisions at University of South Australia to embed new perspectives and techniques for promoting intercultural understanding and effective team work into the curriculum. She also trains mentors and buddies in intercultural communication as well as international students experiencing workplace culture during their practicums.