

Developing Designerly Leadership: Understanding Teaching Quality Through Peer Review of Teaching Design

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Peer review of teaching has become an important mechanism for improving teaching quality in higher education. This conceptual paper argues that academics' experience of teaching quality is important to the design of peer review of teaching programs in higher education. These programs must ultimately be designed to support human experience and constructed through the lived experience of those who engage with them. Designerly leadership is founded on this principle. It provides a framework for considering what we do in terms of the experience it sustains within us. This experience is as important to program design as it is to the product of that design. Engagement in peer review of teaching program design is proposed as a mechanism for designerly leaders to access the lived experience of teaching academics in order to address the ambiguity surrounding teaching quality.

This paper argues for the designerly leadership of peer review of teaching programs to improve the outcomes of teaching academics. As academics are required to demonstrate teaching quality, they may benefit from an approach to help them identify evidenced-based – or scholarly teaching – practices. To develop scholarly teaching practices, expertise in theory is important. But theory alone does not help a leader connect with academics involved in developing scholarly teaching through peer review. Doing that is easier when combining theoretical expertise with a design-based approach. Effective design is about solving predictable problems for specified user groups. We hypothesise that this problem-specific customisation, guided by theory, can increase the likelihood that a peer review of teaching program will be led more effectively for a pre-defined population. Importantly, we propose that bringing a designerly leadership approach to peer review of teaching offers an opportunity to make affinity with our understanding of teaching quality in higher education.