

ENGAGING CASUALLY EMPLOYED TEACHERS IN COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

**CHANGE THROUGH AN ACTION RESEARCH ENQUIRY IN
A HIGHER EDUCATION 'PATHWAYS' INSTITUTION**

By

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Certificate of Authorship and Originality

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Production Note:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CDF	Curriculum Development Framework (Acronym for project at PCA to develop new curriculum for the Diploma of Communication)
CoP	Community of Practice
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEP	Higher Education Provider
<i>HERD</i>	Higher Education Research & Development Journal
HESA	Higher Education Support Act 2003
IDP	IDP Education Pty Ltd
<i>IJAD</i>	International Journal for Academic Development
IP	Intellectual Property
NSW	New South Wales
PCA	The Pathways College of Australia
QA	Quality Assurance
<i>SHE</i>	Studies in Higher Education Journal
<i>THE</i>	Teaching in Higher Education Journal
UK	United Kingdom
UNS	Unified National System
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
VET	Vocational Education and Training
Data Citations	The abbreviations for the citations of all data sources can be found in Appendix 4

Related Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations

- Jackson, C., Salmona, M. and Kaczynski, D. (14 April, 2009) *Qualitative Methods Instruction: Promoting disciplined Inquiry through a critique of Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS)*. Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA
- Kaczynski, D. and Salmona, M. (22 February 2009) *Action Research Evaluation Methods Using NVivo*. Annual meeting of the Southeast Evaluation Association, Tallahassee, FL, USA
- Kaczynski, D. and Salmona, M. (7 November 2008) *Using NVivo to Improve Rigor in Evaluation*. Annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association, Denver, CO
- Kaczynski, D. and Salmona, M. (28 February 2008) *Evaluation Design Decisions: NVivo software in action research, emergent inquiry and outcome structured inquiry*. Annual meeting of the Southeast Evaluation Association, Tallahassee, FL, USA
- Kaczynski, D. and Salmona, M. (9 November 2007) *Evaluation Data Analysis: The Importance of Methodology when using Qualitative Data Analysis Software*. Annual meeting of the American Evaluation Association, Baltimore, MD
- Salmona, M. (15 May 2007) *Professional development of teachers of university pathway programs: an action research study of a curriculum development framework*. Annual Teaching Qualitative Methods Conference Doctoral Research Forum, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
- Salmona, M. (9 April 2007) *Constructing and Evaluating a Model for Curriculum Development: Instilling an Organizational Culture of Educational Quality*. Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL
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Abstract

This thesis is an account of a curriculum reform initiative that took place in 2005 at the Pathways College of Australia (PCA) [a pseudonym]. It is an investigation of an innovative collaborative educational development project in an Australian higher education pathway institution. The research highlights the neglect of the professional development of casually employed teachers and makes contributions to the literatures of educational development, curriculum and collaboration. It suggests ways to improve quality in the current higher education context through a process of action research enquiry and organisational change

In recent times the higher education landscape in Australia has transformed with growing numbers of casual and part-time teachers, many more international students and an increasing focus on quality assurance. This changing context has led to the emergence of a number of private institutions providing an alternative entry pathway to tertiary study for students who do not meet standard university entrance requirements. The story of PCA and its growth during this time comes out of an increasing focus on quality and accountability underpinning the funding changes to, and the internationalisation of, higher education.

This study presents a curriculum development framework which engages casually employed teachers and supports curriculum reform. It addresses a need to ensure quality in the teaching and learning at PCA by developing an integrated curriculum. The framework allows for the professional development of casualised teaching staff in a pathways higher education institution and encourages a critical reflection on the process through action research. An exploration of the usefulness of communities of practice theory for examining the workings of this group-based educational development process frames the data analysis.

The research contributes to the literature by analysing how the participants engaged in the project cycles and illuminates the different ways in which they were working. Insights into curriculum reform are given through building collaboration under adverse conditions. The discussion adds a new dimension to communities of practice theory as it does not account for the important set of tensions found in the data. It furthers our understanding of its application in an environment with mostly casually employed teachers. The story about this research reveals the complexities in the relationships between the researcher, the participants and PCA and shows a successful collaboration can be achieved under challenging employment conditions.