Using TEL for TEL: Building confidence of sessional staff to enhance their students' experience

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Sessional staff capacity building, and the role this plays in overcoming internationally recognised challenges for the provision of quality Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), continues to present a priority for the Higher Education (HE) sector. These sessional staff undertake approximately 40% of the teaching in the Griffith Business School and yet their contribution to quality learning and teaching has largely been unmeasured. This paper describes the backgrounds and experience of sessionals, their career aspirations, and their desires for professional learning and support to enhance the quality of their teaching. This is the first step in a five-stage project adopting an evidence-based approach using TEL to improve the TEL capabilities and confidence of sessional staff. The results of the survey described in this paper (N=47) show that many sessional staff are focused on careers in academia and are motivated to participate in professional learning that leads to formal qualifications. They express interest in engaging in this learning through face-to-face and online formal workshops, informal networking events with each other and faculty, and access to online support resources. The premise for this study and the model introduced, represents an adoptable and adaptable opportunity for the wider HE sector to more effectively deliver sessional staff professional development.

Keywords: sessional staff, professional learning, BLASST framework, TEL, professional development

Introduction

Commonly referred to in Australia as sessional staff, peripatetic tertiary teaching staff are predominately employed under the categories of casual or non-fixed term, are not guaranteed employment from one teaching period to the next and as such may teach into multiple discipline areas and across institutions (Baik, Naylor, & Currin, 2018, BLASST, 2015). This study builds on the recommendation for further investigation and evidencing of good practice for professional learning and recognition stemming from Australian Learning and Teaching Council's Recognition, Enhancement and Development (RED) resource (Percy et al., 2008) and the Australian Government Office's Learning and Teaching project Benchmarking with the BLASST Sessional Staff Standards Framework (BLASST, 2015; Luzia et al., 2013). It examines the sessional staff contribution to the delivery of teaching and learning in a large Australian business school which operates across multiple campuses, including fully online mode, and consists of 6 departments. In addition, to support the delivery of quality teaching and learning experiences for students, this study provides a snapshot of the role that institutional-based professional learning opportunities have traditionally played in the development and enhancement of sessional staff teaching skills (Harvey, 2017).

This first stage of a five-stage project aims to build on the recommendations and findings from these two reports to create a better understanding of who are the sessionals utilising technology enhanced learning (TEL) strategies teaching into business courses, and what support they feel they need in order to do their job well. This is important as 40% of teaching in the Griffith Business School (GBS) is conducted by sessional staff, who come from diverse backgrounds with each sessional bringing a unique combination of skills, knowledge, work and life experiences, and reasons for taking on this role (Anderson, 2007). The overall aim of the wider study is to improve the capabilities and confidence levels of sessional staff, and for this to have a positive impact on their students' learning experience, thus improving the quality of teaching and learning across business schools.

This aim will be achieved through:
- Creating a snapshot picture of sessional staff in the GBS through an initial survey, regarding their background, and training land support needs.
- Benchmarking the current state of support and training for sessional staff, using the BLASST framework and developing an action plan to improve in areas identified as failing to address the criteria

- Developing a suite of professional learning opportunities, including online resources and support mechanisms based on responses to the survey and in line with the Griffith Learning and Teaching Capabilities Framework
- Trialling the suite over a period of 12 months; measuring levels of uptake by our sessional staff, and gaining evaluation feedback
- Conducting a further survey to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the different opportunities provided and evaluating the effectiveness of the professional learning plan. This will include analysis of number of attendees at events, no of successful applications for awards and citations, no of staff completing central unit workshops and formal courses and any indicators of flow-on to student experience such as improvements in Student Evaluation of Courses and Student Evaluation of Teaching, engagement levels in tutorials and workshops

Sessional staff, as well as those in continuing roles, need to be aware of the diversity of our students and have the skills and confidence to work with this diversity. Additionally, our students need to engage in the virtual learning environment on a regular basis, and hence our sessional staff need to have the skills and confidence in this area to empower them to provide effective and relevant learning experiences for their students. Our sessional staff are the heart of our university and, in the context of this study, are also our learners, and we are contributing to their lifelong learning. The 2019 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report (Alexander et al., 2019, p.17) commented that "institutions that address the needs of all faculty through flexible strategic planning and multimodal faculty support are better situated to overcome the barriers to adoption that can impede scale". This study adds to the current literature and has relevance to institutions world-wide by detailing one such multimodal approach to the support of sessional staff/adjunct faculty that can be adopted and/or adapted by others.

Literature review

The RED Report noted universities need to promote sustainable initiatives at all levels of the institutions (Percy et al, 2008) and the BLASST project built on this by building a framework to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of sessional staff through a reflection of current practice and consideration of how this can be improved. The BLASST Framework includes the three Key Principles of Quality and Learning; Support for Sessional Staff; and Sustainability (Luzia et al., 2013). Crimmins, Oprescu and Nash (2017) similarly found that the professional development needs of casual academics were focussed around four key themes: specific topics for professional development; ongoing support; resources; and career advancement opportunities. They further noted that integration into academic culture on both a formal and informal basis was an important need.
The significant role of sessional staff has been well documented, as has the risk this reliance places on institutions with main issues identified as the lack of assurance and enhancement of the quality of teaching and consequently student experience (eg Harvey, 2017; Hitch, Mahoney, & MacFarlane, 2017, Ryan, Groen, McNeil, Nadolny, & Bhattacharyya 2011). Ryan et al. (2011) add that this risk lies more with the policies and processes adopted by an institution to manage sessionals, than in the sessionals themselves. There have been widespread calls for more systematic and holistic approaches to professional learning and this paper describes the way in which a Learning and Teaching support team are approaching this. The approach being taken builds on the principles of the BLASST framework and its aim to encourage "professional development about quality learning and teaching, and about supporting and sustaining good practice when working with sessional teachers in higher education" (Harvey & Luzia, 2013, p1.)

A wide range of strategies have been suggested to support sessional staff and enhance the quality of their teaching including online support; delivery of professional learning programmes through partnerships between central learning and teaching units and faculties; a multi-layered approach; peer observation and mentoring; provision of advice on marking assignments; facilitating critical thinking and reflective practice; developing a teaching style; and professional development in online teaching skills (Harvey, 2017, Hitch et al., 2017, Matthews, Duck & Bartle, 2017; Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015). This suggests that offering a range of opportunities, from which sessionals can choose, is an effective approach to meeting the challenges of their diverse needs and goals.

There have also been repeated calls for collection of more and better information about the composition of the sessional staff workforce as this will enable more personalisation of support (eg Andrews et al., Harvey, 2017) and this paper contributes in a small way to that call. This will also contribute to the literature through a holistic approach to professional learning and development of a model to support sessionals and staff in other roles in these endeavours.

Methods

The survey, developed for this study, includes questions drawn from the BLASST framework, particularly their questions at the individual level of responsibility, for the three Principles included in the framework: Quality of Learning and Teaching; Support for Sessional Staff; and Sustainability (BLASST, 2015). Additional questions were developed specifically to meet the aims of this study. The survey was created and administered in Microsoft Forms with invitations to participate being sent via email to all sessional staff in the GBS. The questions were a mix of multiple choice, Likert-type and free response and were designed to produce a profile of sessional staff in including:

- Their current levels of knowledge of, and satisfaction with, professional learning sessions and resources offered by GBS and the central Learning and Teaching unit of our university
- Details of further training and support they would like to receive
- Demographic information related to their work experience

Simple counts are provided for multiple choice and Likert type questions whilst deductive thematic analysis was conducted for the free response. The overarching study has gained Human Ethics approval from the Griffith Human Ethics Committee (GU ref no: 2019/378). Forty seven responses were received from a possible pool of 199, resulting in a response rate of 27%. Responses were received from a cross-section of the sessional staff population with responses from staff in each Department.

Results

Staff were asked what training/professional learning sessions they have attended; and whether they felt they received sufficient professional learning support within GBS to undertake their role effectively. These results are compared in Table 1, indicating that the majority of respondents did feel well trained (68%) although only 30% felt they were also well supported. Of the 13 staff who indicated they had not attended any training or professional learning session, 8 indicated they do feel well trained, suggesting that they are more experienced staff who no longer feel they need training. Analysis of the individual responses further indicates these are a mixed group with eight being aged 35 or over; 5 PhD students and 3 experienced industry professionals looking for a change of career; and their experience as a sessional ranging from 18 months to 23 years.

Table 1: Training and support attended and satisfaction levels

	Yes I feel well trained and supported	I feel well trained but could benefit from additional support	I don't feel well trained or supported at times	Other
Sessions run by GBS	2	1	1	1[b]
Sessions run by GBS and central L&T unit;	1	4	1	1[c]
Sessions run by central L&T unit	1	3	3	0
Sessions run by my Department	1	3	0	0
Sessions run by my Department; GBS, central L&T unit	2	3	2	0
Sessions run by my Department; GBS, central L&T unit, GBS L&T staff & external to uni	1	0	0	0
Sessions run by my Department;GBS, central L&T unit & external to uni	1	0	0	0
Sessions run by GBS, WOW[a]	1	0	0	
Other	0	0	0	1[d]
I haven't attended any training/professional learning sessions	4	4	4	1[e]
Total	14	18	11	4

Notes
[a] WOW Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing
[b] Adequate training is available but I do not attend much
[c] Whilst I feel confident in my role as a sessional, over the many years there has been very limited training opportunities. As such I think by providing multiple options for training with a view to seek opportunity for promotion or at the very least, opportunities to convene courses, would be beneficial

[d]TESOL Cert IV
[e] I have attended a 1-1 session with central LMS support to learn to use video recording for an online course and it was very good No, and I really don't like this survey much. It is not just GBS it is the whole L&T strategy at Griffith - there is no strategy, although Learning Futures unit has been here for a while, but who is responsible for a coordinated effort across the depts.
[f] Supported well

A further question asked about the training they have received within GBS and who has provided that training for them, as shown in Table 2, with respondents being able to choose multiple options. Fifteen respondents mentioned multiple ways they had received training, with just two respondents noting they had received training from all four levels of support. Of the nine respondents who noted they had received training from a peer, only one noted this as their only source of training. The fact that 25% noted they had received no training is a concern.

Table 2: Training received within GBS

Initial training session when I commenced	15
Training and support from my Course Convenor	28
Training and support from my Head tutor	6
Training and support from a peer	9
I haven't received any training	12

Staff were asked what styles of professional learning opportunities they would be interested in receiving and were able to choose all options that applied to them. Respondents generally noted multiple options with 21 noting two or three options, 17 noting eight or nine options and only 4 noting just one option. The most popular options were half day workshops, online resources, formal education qualifications and informal coffee and chat with all of these being selected by at least 50% of respondents.

Staff were also asked about their current levels of knowledge of, and interest in a range of resources, professional learning opportunities, and recognition schemes that are available across the university, as detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: Knowledge of, and interest in, resources and opportunities

Category	Item	A	B	C	D	E	F
Central recognition	Higher Education Academy Fellowships	4	13	17	6	6	1
	Learning and Teaching Grants and Awards	1	13	18	7	6	2
	Learning and Teaching Citations	4	20	11	5	6	1
Central Professional Learning	Graduate Certificate in University Learning and Teaching	2	14	18	6	5	2
	Peer Evaluation of Teaching scheme	1	10	19	5	11	1
	Teaching for Learning workshops	1	10	19	13	2	2
	Teach Online MOOC series	2	30	9	3	2	1
Central resources	Central L&T website	2	11	20	10	3	1
	Learning and Teaching Capabilities framework	2	28	12	3	1	1
	Learning & Teaching Capabilities Reflection Tool	2	29	13	1	1	1
	Explore Learning and Teaching (ExLNT) website and resources	2	32	6	4	2	1
GBS L & T resources	SBSessional Staff Induction booklet	3	18	11	9	4	2
	GBS Sessional Staff Learning and Teaching handbook	3	23	13	6	1	1
	GBS Community site	4	21	12	6	3	1
GBS recognition	Teaching Excellence Recognition Scheme (TERS)	2	14	18	6	5	2

Note: Column headings are
A I haven't heard of this but it is not something I would be interested in anyway   B I haven't heard of this but would like to know more
C I know about this and am interested in participating   D I know about this and have already participated
E I know about this but am not interested   F no response

For all items, the majority of respondents noted that they were interested in knowing more or participating in that opportunity. The centrally run Peer Evaluation of Teaching Scheme is the item respondents were least interested in, whilst Teaching for Learning workshops were the professional learning opportunity most participated in. Knowledge levels vary greatly across the items with the number of staff knowing about an item ranging from just 12 (26%) for the ExLNT website to 33 (72%) for the central L& T website.

A series of questions from the individual level of the BLASST framework (BLASST, 2015) were included in the survey to gauge current perceptions against the three principles. The responses, as shown in Table 5, indicate staff are much more positive about their engagement with the university, than about the provision of support and opportunities. The response regarding maintaining communication (85% agree or strongly agree) compares favourably with a similar survey from UTAS (Brown, Kelder, Freeman, & Carr, 2013) who noted 76% of respondents indicated they had regular contact with staff responsible for units they taught.

Table 5: BLASST questions at the individual level

As a sessional staff member:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I actively engage with ongoing professional development in learning and teaching	4	4	8	15	15
I maintain my professional role as a teacher and a disciplinary expert.	0	1	0	16	29
I maintain communication with departments and other staff members as necessary.	1	3	3	20	19
I am provided with the opportunity to become familiar with policies and procedures that affect my work.	2	7	9	19	9
I am provided with the opportunity to provide feedback to my departments/ unit convenor/ subject coordinator	2	11	6	14	13

The demographics of respondents shows a diverse range with 21% aged 18-34 (n=10), 66% aged 35-54 (n=31) and 13%>54 (n=6). Twenty-one respondents identified as being a current PhD student, with 2 of these also being experienced industry experts; only one of these was over 54 years, with four being 18-34, and 16, 35-54. As noted in Table 6, 62% noted they had between 1-5 years' experience; 24% 6-10 years' experience and a further 9% >10 years' experience, with similar numbers noted for length of time at GBS, indicating most staff have only worked at this institution. Twenty-one respondents (47%) indicated they hope to work as a sessional at GBS for at least 6 years, and this was particularly so with respondents in the 35-54 age bracket with 48% indicating they wished to work in this capacity for >10 years, suggesting a stable and loyal workforce.

Table 6: Experience and aspirations as a sessional staff member

	Completed sessional work any uni (no of years)					Completed sessional work GBS (no of years)					I would hope to work at GBS as a sessional academic for (no of years)				
	<1	1-5	6-10	>10	nr	<1	1-5	6-10	>10	nr	<1	1-5	6-10	>10	nr
18-34	0	7	2	1	0	0	8	1	1	0	1	6	2	1	0
35-54	1	18	7	3	2	4	18	4	2	3	3	11	1	14	2
>54	0	3	2	1	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	3	2	1	0

Further details of career aspirations were also investigated, as described in Table 7, with 64% (n=30) aspiring to a role as a research fellow or lecturer at Griffith university. Some of the responses to this question do contradict those shown in Table 6 as only 5 respondents noted that they considered being a sessional as a long-term role.

Table 7: Career aspirations

	Research fellow or lecturer at GBS	Research fellow in any university or research center	Research fellow or lecturer at another university	Session al/ tutor as a long term role	Currently looking for alternative work	Semi-retired but want to keep engaged in the profession	Other
PhD student	15	1	3	0	0	1	1[a]
Completed PhD and aiming for full time role in academia	9	0	0	1	0	0	1[b]
Exp. industry professional looking for a change of career	5	0	0	1	1	2	1[c]
Exp. industry professional supplementing my income	1	0	0	4	0	0	0

Note:
PhD students include 2 experienced industry professionals, one looking for a change of career and one to supplement income
Completed PhD include 1 experienced industry professionals, looking for a change of career
[a] Not clear yet depending on the opportunities after my graduation from PhD
[b] Your survey Q22 is not set up correctly to tick all that apply. (Other respondents did not seem to have this issue)
[c] I have been a sessional tutor long term within GBS, and would like to continue to grow and build a career within academia, however due to the limited opportunities to convene, and due to the lack of respect from other permanent staff within the business school (this has been moreso within the last 5 years), I am now considering changing my profession.

Four short answer questions were included to gauge perceptions of the specific areas of training and support sessionals felt they needed from GBS and the university. Results from these questions were combined and deductive thematic analysis conducted to align with the three Principles from the BLASST framework. Sample responses are included in Table 8 to indicate the range of topics mentioned. For Quality Learning and Teaching main areas of concern were centred on gaining appropriate skills and knowledge and improving student engagement; for Support for Sessional Staff the issues centred on collegiality and mentoring from permanent staff; and for Sustainability, access to, and encouragement to complete, formal qualifications.

Table 8: Areas of training and support needed

BLASST Principle	Indicative comments
Quality Learning and Teaching	Specific topics noted for training included: Engaging my students, active learning; Various planning and delivery techniques; Design and delivery of online teaching; theory and practice of adult teaching *How to apply all available IT resource to help us improving quality and efficiency of our works*
Support for Sessional Staff	*More involvement in departmental issues - we are often the last to know and are not invited to attend departmental meetings* *More collegial interaction opportunities!* *As sessional tutors we don't often get asked for our opinion regarding what has worked and what hasn't work in the course. The students get to have their opinions heard via the SET/SEC surveys, but us tutors are in the class and we never get asked for our opinion.*

Sustainability	*As a sessional convening only one course, training is not part of my paid position. There is lack of motivations to attend training in unpaid personal time, especially as there is no extrinsic benefit to me such as promotion/ permanent employment etc. If I attend training or not I don't see there will be any change to my sessional employment situation. Sessional staff who are not PhD students, have little or not access to staff other than their immediate Convenor/s and as such it limits career development opportunities. Access to more formal qualifications opportunities, or at the very least, information about what is available and considered valued within the school, for future and ongoing employment.*

When asked about changes within the university, if any, have impacted on your role most during the last few years, 23 valid responses were received. Seven responses were "not applicable" or 'Not sure" with two respondents noting they were new to the university and one noted "None that I'm aware of." Only one positive change was noted "The amount of training that has improved" and two positive comment that "I have been lucky that I have great supervisors and convenors such as ... and .... who have actively encouraged me to research teaching methods on my own to improve how our teaching teams manage these students". ; "Griffith IT support are FANTASTIC!" The remaining 22 comments came under three main themes of students, employment conditions and policy and procedural changes, with five respondents covering multiple themes. Indicative comments for each of these three themes are included in Table 9.

Table 9: Changes impacting role

Students	*Students without the necessary background knowledge or skills (or necessary prerequisites) to achieve well. There is an increasingly high attrition rate and fail rate in one of the online courses, despite the additional support provided.* (2 other similar comments) *Since 2012 have noticed a significant decline in numbers of students that attend workshops and lectures (only about 10-20% show up most weeks). The greater number of international students in our programs, and the lack of training/preparation for this.* (1 other similar comment) *Treating students as customers and too eager to please them.*
Employment	*Due to either Uni policy or GBS policy, sessional staff are not allowed to convene courses. How can a sessional staff member grow and develop as a higher education teacher when opportunities like this are not even available?* (one other similar comment) *the casualisation of the work force; the number of unpaid hours are significant, these include consultation times, moderation sessions, and marking that goes beyond 45 minutes per student. Poor communication between some conveyors and sessional staff*
Policy and procedural change	*It is not a change, but just the general 'last minute' nature of teaching allocations. As sessional staff we are often left with the courses that no one wants to teach and we told only weeks before teaching starts, often leaving insufficient time to develop appropriate resources. Trimesters have reduced the contact hours with students.* (1 other similar comment) *Assessment turnaround is compressed.*
Multiple	*Lack of IT support to convenors,* (1 other similar comment) *casualisation of the workforce where people's incomes and in jeopardy every trimester (people unable to plan their life leading to increased stress) When the Department employs less external sessionals without PhD degree and started to involve more PhD alumni and PhD candidates in teaching. I could get more teaching experience. Another thing is the HEA Fellowship program that is linked to the Graduate Certificate of University Learning and Teaching. I have worked in so many different roles so it is hard to say, but there seems to be a lot less admin support but a lot more admin to do and especially all the technology so everything is done electronically, but they are things that we don't do often so I learn one system and by the time I do it again I have either forgotten or there is a new system. Changes in how academics are hired into continuing positions, changes to the hiring of sessionals (competitive) and changes to the delivery modes of teaching*

Analysis and Discussion

The responses to the survey provide a picture of a diverse cohort of sessionals, the majority of whom as looking for a long-term role at GBS be this as a sessional or in a continuing appointment. It is important to note that these aspirations do mean different professional learning opportunities need to be provided, as noted by one respondent *"Recognise that not all sessionals are PhD students, some have graduated and are making a career as academics who have sessional work as at least a part of their load. This Professional Sessional role is one that is not consistently recognised across the GBS and often not considered when offering training and support."* Further investigation will need to be undertaken to determine how best to support these difference approaches. May, Peetz & Strachan (2011) developed a casual teaching staff typology with seven categories. 1. Post graduate student – academic orientation 2. Post graduate student – industry orientation 3. Industry expert – industry orientation 4. Industry expert – academic orientation 5. Academic aspirant 6. Casual by 'choice' 7. Retiree. Our respondents mainly fall into categories 1, 3, 4, 5 with no retirees. Understanding the needs and aspirations of each of these groups will be a first step in developing personalised learning opportunities for these diverse groups. Further investigation will follow-up to determine whether this means there are no sessional staff in our school who fall into categories 2, 6 or 7, or those people did not respond to the survey.

Whilst generally satisfied with the level of support and training available to them, our sessionals are seeking further opportunities in a range of topics and through a variety of formats ranging from formal workshops to online resources and informal networking sessions that focus on a specific topic. Some of the main areas of interest for future workshops and events are in increasing student engagement and participation, developing skills to plan and facilitate teaching sessions, and a range of assessment and marking topics. Offering a range of events at times and places that suit different groups of sessional will thus be important. Formal qualification is also a priority for the majority of respondents with 13% already having already participated in this program and 68% interested in participating (Table 4). This was reinforced in the question regarding preferred styles of professional learning where 51% noted this as a preference.

The low levels of interest in the peer evaluation of teaching program noted in Table 4, contrasts the recommendations of Matthews et al. (2017), suggesting that the benefits of this program need to be more widely promoted. This is also the case for many other opportunities listed in Table 4, indicating that providing overviews and explanations of how these can be used of these with links all in one central and easily accessible location, will be a key component of support.

We need to be aware that many of our sessionals are looking for a career in academia, and provide support to help them achieve this. Although ultimately this is their responsibility, institutions can provide the resources and encouragement, through formal qualifications, collegial mentoring and opportunities to work with experienced academics on L& T projects. As the majority of respondents indicated that they aspire to a long-term career at our institution, in either a sessional or full-time capacity (Tables 6 and 7), there does appear to be justification in supporting them through paid professional learning and encouraging them to complete formal qualification in learning and teaching, which are currently offered to staff at no cost.

Development of a Professional Learning Suite

The overarching theme through all of the responses is that sessional staff are looking for ways to improve the quality of their teaching and TEL. They want to know if they are doing a good job, how they can maintain and improve this quality to stay employed and progress their career in academia. They are looking for opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities and for continuing support from all areas and levels of the university to enable them to achieve these goals. Comparing these goals to the BLASST principles, we have developed a model through which a holistic approach to professional learning and support will be developed, as shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Model for professional learning and support

	Now	Short term	Long term
Quality Learning and Teaching	How do I know I am doing a good job?	How do I maintain quality in a changing environment?	How can I improve the quality of my teaching and learning?
Support for sessional Staff	How can you support me to undertake my role in an effective and professional manner?	How can you support me maintain quality?	How can you support me improve the quality of my work and progress in my career?
Sustainability	How can I continue in my current role?	How can I progress to more senior sessional roles?	How can I further my career as an academic?

Whilst, in this version the questions are framed for the individual sessional staff to empower them to have responsibility for their professional development, future work will also develop the model to include questions that need to be addressed at different levels of the university. We will extend the levels of the BLASST framework (Department, Faculty and Institutional) to include Learning and Teaching support units at both Faculty and Institutional levels as these are areas who are usually, and certainly in our case, the main providers of professional learning and support for our sessionals.

Expanding on the cell from Table 10 titled "How do I maintain quality in a changing environment?", as an exemplar of how a sessional could choose to use this model, the following are some of the resources and opportunities a sessional staff could tap into:

- Discussion with their supervisor on any new content or approaches that are being incorporated into their course
- Attending workshops and webinars on new educational technologies being integrated by the institution

As a result of this survey analysis, a set of Design principles for the suite of learning opportunities, support and resources have been developed that will link to each of the questions raised in the model described in Table 10.

- Provide a range of opportunities that go beyond workshops
- Include networking and informal events
- Integrate opportunities for collaboration, learning with and from permanent academics
- Include easily accessible resources
- Promote engagement with recognition and reward schemes

The measures of success that will be adopted for the implementation of this suite of professional learning opportunities and resources include:

- Number of attendees at each event
- Number of sessional staff who attended at least one event
- Participant evaluation of events
- Interaction levels with provided resources
- Number of successful applications for Learning and Teaching Awards and Citations
- Any overall improvements in SET results for sessional staff
- Any overall improvements in student attendance and engagement levels in tutorials and workshop

Further Research and Conclusions

In our own context, future research will centre on finalisation, then trialling of a suite of professional learning opportunities that will meet the diverse needs of our sessionals and enable ongoing improvement in the quality of technology enhanced teaching and learning. We will also consider ways in which staff in different roles in our school need to provide on-going support for sessionals and how they can be supported in this. To enable this we will further develop, then implement the model for professional learning and support, proposed in Table 10. A detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of this approach will also be conducted in response to the call from Saroyan

and Trigwell (2015) for more research into measurement of the impact of professional learning on student learning and why some sessionals gain more from engaging in professional learning than others. The implications for the wider sector are to consider adopting and adapting the model in different institutions and contexts.

This study, the first stage in a five-part project has captured a snapshot of the sessional teaching staff cohort in an Australian business school and the professional learning preferences that they purport to find most beneficial to their skill development in the area of learning and teaching. The data collected via the survey in this study offers empirical evidence that whilst sessional staff are keen to improve the quality of their teaching, they are looking for more support and inclusion from GBS. They wish to flexibly access more targeted professional learning opportunities that are recognised by GBS or lead to formal qualifications and that will support them in their goal of further employment and/or career development. We conclude that there is an appetite for the development of a Professional Learning Suite that caters specifically for the diverse needs of business school sessionals and may be accessed flexibly.

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