Resources to support quality learning and teaching of Psychology in Australia

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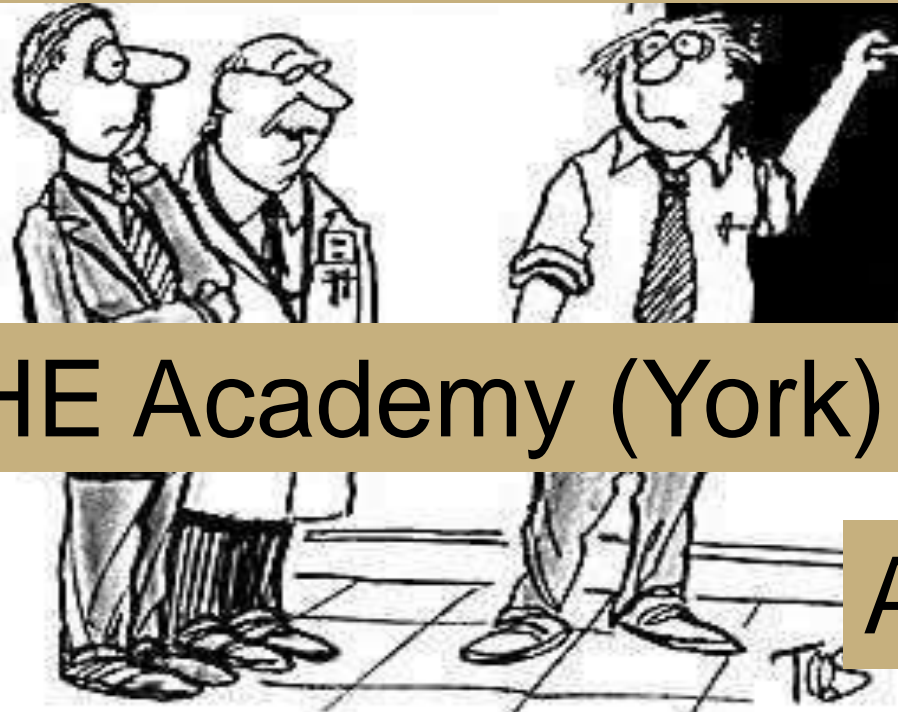# What does psychology teaching in Australia involve?

The context for teaching in Australia

- Assessment processes driven by institutions
- Only 2 private providers
- Strong, national, professional regulation
  - Content areas mandated
  - Laboratory based learning mandated

Sources of resources

Recycling/ word of mouth

Text books

HE Academy (York)

APA Guides

Conferences: NITOP, ICOPE

Quality assurance mechanisms for Australian Psychology Curricula

- National: Australian Universities Quality Assurance
  - Five year cycle
  - Across all programs
  - To be replaced by TEQSA…

TEQSA recently met with Australian Vice-Chancellors, but implementation has been delayed somewhat

Quality assurance mechanisms for Australian Psychology Curricula

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- Institutional: Course Review processes
- Institutional, Faculty and School/Department: Teaching and Learning Committees
- Professional: Australian Psychology Accreditation Council
- School/Department: Consultative Committees

Learning outcomes and Curriculum Development in Psychology (Lipp et al., 2007)

- Surveyed curriculum leaders across Australia
- Asked what were the most important factors for curriculum development in psychology

WRT content:

APS accreditation process
Collective academic value of staff
Individual staff interests and skills
Personal academic values of individual staff
School Teaching and Learning Committee
Availability of appropriately qualified staff
Feedback from students
Head of School/Department
Teaching budget and other resources
Staff members representing views of APS
Staff members active in a professional context
Undergraduate Program Director
Staff representing views of State Registration board
Program Board
Feedback from professionals
Pressure from undergraduate students
Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee
University Teaching and Learning Committee

WRT delivery:

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Feedback from professionals

Take home message…

- We still operate largely in a "cottage industry"

- There are probably more resources out there than we know about, and the probability of reinventing wheels is high

- If we embrace this:
  - Challenge 1 = dissemination/networking
  - Challenge 2 = evaluation

Curriculum pressures

- Applied practical content in the first three years of psychology degrees
- Deliverable in remote and regional centres
  - Need for development of low-cost, scalable, safe, ethical and effective methods and resources
  - Increasing potential for simulation, role playing and other interactive experiences in a technology-rich environment

For example: Second Life

Multi user virtual environment

Uses avatars (animated self representations) to interact with environment and others

Possible to 'program' other intelligent avatars to respond in ways typically seen in people with psychological problems

The "First Life" Vicki

How could Second Life be used in psychology?

- Teaching and learning through simulation

- Problem based learning scenarios in
  - Clinical
  - Social
  - Abnormal

- Virtual Laboratories
- Safe (and recordable) role playing
- Group work over distances

Examples of emerging use of Second Life in education:

- Stanford University Virtual Human Interaction Lab (Jeremy Bailenson)

- University of Derby, University of Aston and the Higher Education Academy Psychology Network (Simon Bignell, AKA Milton Broome)

Barriers to resource creation and dissemination

Time

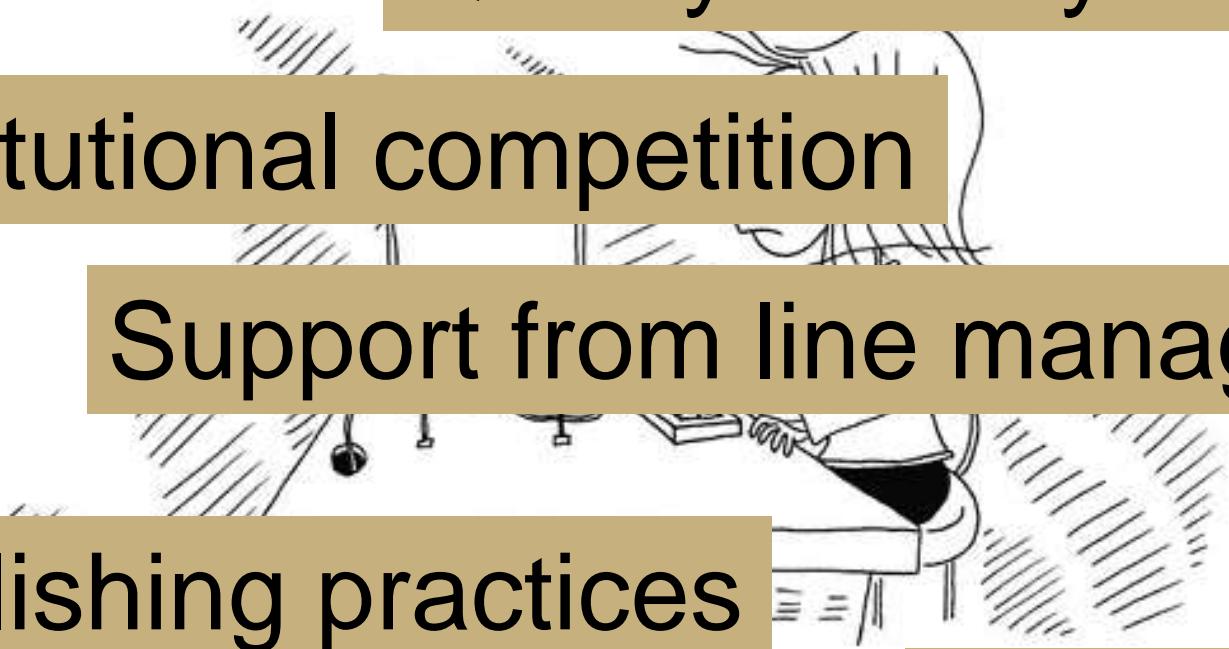Quality of IT systems

Institutional competition

Support from line managers

Publishing practices

Incentivation

IP issues

messages!"

Core issues:

- How do we evaluate the effectiveness of these tools (cost-benefit)?
- How do we disseminate information about these tools?
- How do we support individuals wishing to develop and implement changes in their teaching practices?

Past initiatives:

- Disciplinary project (Lipp et al.)
  - Supported Network Group Meetings
  - Initiated APEN
- DBI and fellowships (Cranney et al.)
  - Provided vision statement
  - Developed and established graduate attributes
  - Provided review of international curriculum
  - Established TLaPIG

TLaPIG Activities

- Taken role that DRAT used to serve in development of teaching related activities in forums and symposia at national and local conferences
  - Newsletters
  - Supporting sharing of resources
  - Organising conferences (ICOPE)
  - Organising planned state-based information sessions and workshops (high school teachers)

Future goals?

- Strengthening of TLaPIG activities
- ALTC exchange?
  - What it is
  - What it does
  - Will it last?
- APEN resource centre reinvigoration (Steve's holiday in Tassie)
- ALTC initiative on threshold concepts and learning outcomes, with potential for further networking
- Collaborative funding initiatives
- International linkages and development

Thanks for listening…

on with the discussion.