The criteria of effective teaching in a changing higher education context

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The criteria of effective teaching in higher education are understood to comprise particular skills and practices applied within particular contexts. Drawing on the literature and using Australia's understanding of effective teaching, this paper examines the notion of effective teaching. The paper specifically compares dimensions derived from robust research and psychometric processes with the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's criteria for effective teaching and observes the criteria of effective teaching in higher education to have evolved. While the paper suggests some areas in which future considerations of the notion of effective teaching might usefully focus, it also argues that context is critical and that it is subject to continuous and multiple changes imposed by forces from within and outside universities. The paper maintains that our collective understanding of competent, professional and effective teaching must continually evolve in order that it accurately reflects and continually responds to the contexts in which learning and teaching is undertaken. The paper also calls for an ongoing agenda that continuously investigates and articulates the meaning of effective teaching in a changed, and changing, context.

Keywords: effective teaching; teaching quality; university contexts

1. Introduction

Increasing attention is being given to the quality of teaching and learning at university level across the world (Devlin, 2007a) and there is increasing pressure both to ensure effective teaching in universities and to be able to demonstrate that effectiveness. University teaching is a scholarly activity that draws on extensive professional skills and practices and high levels of disciplinary and other contextual expertise. Having a shared understanding of what it means to be an effective university teacher forms the basis of ensuring quality. Such an understanding is critical for individual teachers, teaching support staff, academic staff developers, academic leaders and institutions and, indeed, for the entire higher education sector, both nationally and internationally.

This paper examines the notion of effective teaching, drawing on relevant higher education literature and recent contextual developments. Using the Australian context as an example, the paper examines a national understanding of effective teaching as articulated in the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) award system. The relationships between this national understanding are analysed against other

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understandings of effective teaching in the literature, especially the understanding underpinning the Student Evaluation of Educational Quality (SEEQ) developed by Marsh (1994), the changing higher education context and emerging national policy. The paper argues that collective understandings of effective teaching need to be peri-odically reviewed and renewed to absorb the transformations that are occurring within universities and beyond them and that it may be time for Australia to conduct such a review.

2.   Defining effective teaching

Effective higher education teaching is a 'contested concept' (Skelton, 2004. p. 452) with varying definitions. Numerous attempts have been made to identify these char-acteristics, using a variety of theoretical perspectives, from qualitative and quantita-tive approaches, from various disciplinary standpoints (McMillan, 2007) and from the student point of view (Vulcano, 2007), but there is no universally accepted definition of effective university teaching (Johnson & Ryan, 2000; Paulsen, 2002; Trigwell, 2001).

Effective teaching has been broadly understood as teaching that is oriented to and focused on students and their learning. Beyond that fundamental assumption are two broadly accepted components of effective university teaching: that it requires a set of particular skills and practices as identified by research (Penny, 2003) and that it meets the requirements of the context in which it occurs (Devlin, 2007a). Each of these components is explored in turn in this paper.

2.1   *Appropriate teaching skills and practices*

There is much diversity in the literature about the number of dimensions or compo-nents of effective higher education teaching skills and practices (Devlin, 2007b).

Hativa, Barak and Simhi (2001) propose four dimensions of teaching effective-ness: interest; clarity; organisation; and a positive classroom climate. However, the complexity of the skills and practices required to teach at university level is not fully captured with just these four dimensions. Further, the difference between clarity and organisation is not plainly obvious and there appears to be overlap between the 'posi-tive classroom climate' and some of the other dimensions these authors propose (Devlin, 2007b).

Kreber (2002) suggests that teaching excellence '… requires sound knowledge of one's discipline …' and adds that excellent teachers are those who '… know how to motivate their students, how to convey concepts and how to help students overcome difficulties in their learning' (p. 9). While reasonable, Kreber's (2002) suggestions also do not appear to fully represent the range of skills and practices necessary to teach effectively at university (Devlin, 2007b). Kreber (2002) does, however, include the critical element of disciplinary knowledge, which, while not a skill or practice, warrants acknowledgement at the very least, as the basis for effective skills and practice.

Saroyan, Amundsen, McAlpine, Weston, Winer and Gandell (2004) suggest that teaching in higher education settings requires a good grasp of the subject matter and knowing how to present it to students, thus emphasising *knowledge* and *presentation.* Although they provide no details of *how* to present that knowledge for effective learn-ing, Saroyan et al. (2004) suggest that behaviours that would provide evidence of good

knowledge and presentation include teacher's preparation, organisation, clarity and ability to demonstrate knowledge of the content and stimulate student interest.

Young and Shaw (1999) propose six major dimensions of effective teaching: value of the subject; motivating students; a comfortable learning atmosphere; organisation of the subject; effective communication; and concern for student learning. In summing up a number of reviews of the literature on effective teaching at the college level, Hativa et al. (2001) suggest that there are around a dozen characteristics highlighted, some of which appear to overlap:

> … exemplary university teachers are well prepared and organized, present the material clearly, stimulate students' interest, engagement, and motivation in studying the material through their enthusiasm/expressiveness, have positive rapport with students, show high expectations of them, encourage them, and generally maintain a positive classroom environment. (pp. 701–702)

The lists proposed by Young and Shaw (1999) and summarised by Hativa et al. (2001) identify the complexity of university teaching and include both the student learning perspective and the teaching skills and practice areas. The literature provides a number of such lists of the characteristics of effective teaching, which are essentially checklists of skills, practices and qualities, with little or no agreement.

Recognising this, Kember, Ma and McNaught (2006) selected some of this literature (based on specific criteria) and summarised the characteristics, then examined the results for patterns. They determined that some characteristics focus on teacher performance while others focus on student learning needs and outcomes and concluded that '… there is certainly no clear and consistent view of what constitutes quality in teaching and learning' (p. 4) at university level. Devlin (2007a) notes that '[T]he shortcomings of these lists are that they have been derived without a clear articulation of a methodology, thus impeding the estimation of their validity and reliability as well as their applicability to contexts other than the ones in which they were derived …' (p. 4).

More recently, Kember and McNaught (2007) proposed ten principles of effective teaching and provided a clear description of the methodology used to determine them. Forty-four Australian teachers who had been nominated by their university as being exemplary and eighteen Hong Kong teachers who were recipients of the Vice-Chancellor's award for exemplary teaching were interviewed. The teachers were asked to describe their teaching practices and their responses were recorded. The Australian and Hong Kong datasets were then combined and analysed for a set of common constructs. The researchers argued that context-independent conclusions about teaching from a large, diverse and multicultural sample could be made from this data. Their conclusions are encapsulated in the ten principles derived from this process. They are:

(1) Teaching and curriculum design need to be focused on meeting students' future needs, implying the development in students of generic capabilities such as critical thinking, teamwork and communication skills, amongst others.
(2) Students must have a thorough understanding of fundamental concepts even if that means less content is covered.
(3) The relevance of what is taught must be established by using real-life, current and/or local examples and by relating theory to practice.
(4) Student beliefs must be challenged to deal with misconceptions.

(5) A variety of learning tasks that engage students, including student discussion, need to occur in order that meaningful learning takes place.

(6) Genuine, empathetic relationships with individual students should be established so that interaction can take place.

(7) Teachers should motivate students through displaying their own enthusiasm, encouraging students and providing interesting, enjoyable and active classes.

(8) Curriculum design should ensure that aims, concepts, learning activities and assessment are consistent with achieving learning outcomes related to future student needs.

(9) Each lesson must be thoroughly planned but flexible so that necessary adaptations may be made based on feedback during the class.

(10) Assessment must be consistent with the desired learning outcomes and should, therefore, be authentic tasks for the discipline or profession.

While many skills and practices required for effective teaching are confirmed by Kember and McNaught's (2007) qualitative study, they highlight an additional key criterion, which is that teaching designs should meet future needs of students with regard to curriculum as well as learning outcomes. The changing Australian higher education context necessitates this evolutionary step of being future oriented, as well as meeting current needs of students.

However, a major limitation of the Kember and McNaught (2007) principles is that they are perspectives of university teachers only. Marsh (1994), on the other hand, used input from university teachers and students as well as educational experts in developing a questionnaire to evaluate university teaching from which he synthesised an understanding of effective teaching. More recently, Martens, Lueckenhausen and McCormack (2004) confirm the value of the input from multiple sources, including students.

Marsh (1994) commenced the process of determining effective university teaching with a review of the literature in the area. Existing student evaluations of teaching forms in use were reviewed and teachers and students in universities interviewed to generate a large initial item pool to be used to develop a student evaluation of teaching questionnaire. He then asked students and teachers to rate the importance of the items that had been generated from the process to date and student open-ended comments on completed questionnaires were examined to determine whether any important aspects of effective teaching had been excluded. Teachers were then asked to judge the potential usefulness of the existing items in terms of providing feedback on their teaching. These criteria, along with psychometric properties including reliability and validity, were used to select the items for the questionnaire to create the SEEQ. However, the SEEQ-generated 'dimensions' are ideas that suggest a broader range and capacities and a wider boundary of the concept in contrast to 'criteria' that are more specific in scope and extent. The robustness of Marsh's nine dimensions has been demonstrated across multiple, cultural, disciplinary and other contexts.

The nine SEEQ dimensions of effective teaching (Marsh & Roche, 1994) that emerged from this rigorous process were:

(1) Learning/academic value;

(2) Lecturer enthusiasm;

(3) Organisation and clarity;

(4) Group interaction;

(5) Individual rapport;
(6) Breadth of coverage;
(7) Examinations/grading;
(8) Assignment/reading; and
(9) Workload/difficulty.

Details about each of these dimensions appear in Table 1.

Given the rigour of the process used to generate them, the dimensions of effective teaching proposed by Marsh and Roche (1994) appear to be one of the most defensible available in the peer-reviewed literature. These are therefore used in the current paper as a benchmark, against which to examine more recent articulations of effective teaching.

2.1.1   *Australia's definition of effective teaching*

Like many countries, Australia does not have an articulated definition of effective higher education teaching. However, excellent teaching has been promoted over many years through Australian government sanctioned initiatives such as the Australian Universities Teaching Committee and its predecessor bodies, the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development and the Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching. In August 2004, the ALTC (formerly named the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education) was established as a national focus for the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education (ALTC, 2009). The criteria for excellence in university teaching employed by this federally funded body for the purposes of national recognition and reward are now widely employed across the sector. A growing number of Australian universities apply these criteria to judge the effectiveness of the teaching of their staff in institutional teaching awards and to assess the teaching component of promotion applications. In effect, the ALTC criteria have become accepted as the proxy list of skills and practices of effective university teaching in Australian higher education.

The ALTC was established '… to provide a national focus for the enhancement of learning and teaching in Australian higher education institutions' (ALTC, 2008), to foster excellence in higher education teaching and promote and support strategic change toward the enhancement of teaching. The ALTC does this through a suite of incentives, in the form of funded initiatives, to encourage the identification, sharing and implementation of excellent practice in teaching and learning. Its five key guiding criteria for determining excellence in university teaching for the purposes of recognition and reward are:

(1) Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn;
(2) Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field;
(3) Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning;
(4) Respect and support for the development of students as individuals; and
(5) Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching (ALTC, 2008).

Details of each of these criteria appear in Table 1.

These ALTC criteria are compared against the SEEQ dimensions (Marsh & Roche, 1994) of effective teaching to determine the degree of alignment between the

Table 1. Comparison of ALTC criteria and SEEQ dimensions of effective teaching.

Australian Learning and Teaching Council criteria (2008)	SEEQ dimensions (Marsh & Roche, 1994)
Criterion 1 – Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn. • Fostering student development by stimulating curiosity and independence in learning; • Contributing to students' critical thinking skills, analytical skills and scholarly values; • Encouraging student engagement through enthusiasm shown for learning and teaching; • Inspiring and motivating students through high-level communication, presentation and interpersonal skills.	SEEQ Dimension 1 – Learning/academic value: How well students believe they have understood subject matter; how valuable and worthwhile they consider their learning experience in the subject to have been. SEEQ Dimension 2 – Lecturer enthusiasm: Lecturer enthusiasm increases student interest and attention and may extend to the subject. SEEQ Dimension 4 – Group interaction: Verbal interaction in classrooms, questions and answers that facilitates the expression and sharing of ideas and knowledge from and between students. Social interaction to motivate, practice and test ideas and receive helpful feedback. SEEQ Dimension 9 – Workload/difficulty: Subject difficulty and workload, compared to other subjects, the pace, the actual number of hours per week required outside class time, feelings of motivation and being appropriately challenged.
Criterion 2 – Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field. • Developing and presenting coherent and imaginative resources for student learning; • Implementing research-led approaches to learning and teaching; • Demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the field of study in the design of the curriculum and the creation of resources for learning; • Communicating clear objectives and expectations for student learning.	SEEQ Dimension 1 – Learning/academic value: How well students believe they have understood subject matter; how valuable and worthwhile they consider their learning experience in a subject to have been. SEEQ Dimension 3 – Organisation/clarity: Structure and clarity, clear objectives and alignment between intended objectives and what is actually taught; clear explanations and thoroughly prepared subject materials, leading to the formation of linkages between new material and material previously learned. SEEQ Dimension 6 – Breadth of coverage: The extent to which the lecturer provides the background for ideas and concepts, presents different points of view and discusses current developments in the field adding to student knowledge and understanding. SEEQ Dimension 8 – Assignments/reading: Consideration that the prescribed readings are valuable and meaningful.

Table 1. (*Continued*).

Australian Learning and Teaching Council criteria (2008)	SEEQ dimensions (Marsh & Roche, 1994)
Criterion 3 – Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning. • Integrating assessment strategies with the specific aims and objectives for student learning; • Providing timely, worthwhile feedback to students on their learning; • Using a variety of assessment and feedback strategies; • Implementing both formative and summative assessment; • Adapting assessment methods to different contexts and diverse student needs.	SEEQ Dimension 7 – Examinations/grading: Feedback and perceptions of fairness and relevance of assessment tasks. SEEQ Dimension 8 – Assignments/reading: Consideration that the prescribed readings are valuable and meaningful.
Criterion 4 – Respect and support for the development of students as individuals. • Participating in the effective and empathetic guidance and advising of students; • Assisting students from equity and other demographic subgroups to participate and achieve success in their courses; • Influencing the overall academic, social and cultural experience of higher education.	SEEQ Dimension 4 – Group Interaction: Verbal interaction in classrooms, questions and answers that facilitate the expression and sharing of ideas and knowledge from and between students; social interaction to motivate, practice and test ideas and receive helpful feedback. SEEQ Dimension 5 – Individual Rapport: Perceived lecturer friendliness, approachability, accessibility and helpfulness.
Criterion 5 – Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching. • Showing advanced skills in evaluation and reflective practice; • Participating in and contributing to professional activities related to learning and teaching; • Coordination, management and leadership of courses and student learning; • Conducting and publishing research related to teaching; • Demonstrating leadership through activities that have broad influence on the profession.	

two. As Table 1 shows, ALTC criterion 1, 'Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn', articulates elements of four SEEQ dimensions. These are SEEQ dimensions 1, 2, 4 and 9: learning and academic value; lecturer enthusiasm, group interaction and workload/difficulty.

ALTC criterion 2, 'Developing of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field', takes in elements of a different four SEEQ dimensions, 1, 3, 6 and 8: learning and academic value; organization/clarity; breadth of coverage; and assignments/reading.

ALTC criterion 3, 'Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning', incorporates the two SEEQ dimensions, 7 and 8: Examinations/grading and Assignments/reading.

The fourth ALTC criterion, 'Respect and support for the development of students as individuals', maps with SEEQ dimensions 4 (group interaction) and 5 (individual rapport).

The final ALTC criterion, 'Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching', has no corresponding SEEQ dimension. However, in more recent work Marsh (2007) suggests that the characteristic of scholarship would add to the soundness and validity of the notion of effective teaching. In articulating this dimension, he describes teachers who are active researchers as being at the cutting edge of their discipline, having an awareness of the international perspectives in their field and being able to convey this excitement of their research and how it fits into the big picture to their students. This corroborates with the ALTC criteria of scholarly activities and, as importantly, it indicates the ongoing renewal of what was once accepted as a definition of effective teaching. Though the process through which the ALTC criteria were developed has not been made public, overall the relationship between the ALTC criteria and the validated dimensions of effective teaching from the peer-reviewed literature appears strong.

2.2   Meeting the requirements of the context

In addition to requiring a particular set of skills and practices, a second, central aspect of effective teaching assumed in this paper is that it meets the particular requirements of the context in which it takes place. This aspect, according to Quinlan (1999, p. 448) has been 'largely overlooked' in the research. However, Young and Shaw (1999) point out that consensus in the definition of effective teaching may not be possible because teaching effectiveness depends on characteristics such as type of subject, class size, student ability and assessment practices, among other contextual factors. All university teaching takes place in a context, including a disciplinary context and, clearly, such disciplinary and other contexts vary enormously between departments, faculties and institutions, with consequential influence on what might be understood as effective teaching.

While the individual department, faculty and institution has its specific contextual impact on teachers, teaching, students and learning, so too do wider and more complex societal, political, economic, technological and demographic change forces. These forces are intertwined, adding to the complexity of the context. Change forces specifically connected to higher education come from a number of sources. As Scott, Coates and Anderson (2008) note, India and China, who view investments in higher education as a key element to their strategic development, have begun to have an impact on the thinking of other nations in relation to higher education. The information

communication revolution, with its exponential increase in computer power and ever-increasing Internet speeds has a strong and ongoing influence. There are also broader contextual influences that affect what might be understood as effective teaching, such as changes to funding arrangements for higher education; a decrease in government subsidies and the trend towards user-pays; pressures on universities to generate new sources of income; a rapid growth in the higher education export market; and changing student expectations, among others (Scott et al., 2008).

Further, the massification and the internationalisation of Australian higher education have meant that student diversity has increased and therefore effective teaching must be able to manage and address such diversity. In order to engage all students, teachers must have an appropriate pedagogical response that accommodates a wider range of both learning styles and preferences and a wider range of language, cultural and educational backgrounds than has previously been the case (Devlin, 2007c; Higgins, Hartley & Skelton, 2002; Skelton, 2002). These expectations of Australian teachers are set to intensify following the recent federal government announcement about aspirations and ambitions to increase and widen participation in higher education in Australia. In particular, the government has announced an expectation that by the year 2020, 20% of undergraduate enrolments should consist of people from low socio-economic backgrounds (Gillard, 2009). As the Australian higher education population further diversifies as a result of such policy changes, the collective understanding of effective teaching will need to evolve to incorporate such shifts.

Another relevant dimension of the context is students' increased participation in paid work in order to manage the cost burden of higher education. According to a recent Australia-wide study, the necessity for paid work has led to a decrease in student class attendance and in the time given by students to other study related activities (James, Bexley, Devlin, & Marginson, 2007). There has also been a concurrent increase in institutions offering flexibility in course delivery, assessment tasks, including the integration of paid work into formal learning experiences. Providing for flexible, 'anytime-anywhere' education is increasingly an expectation of the effective university teacher.

There are also factors related to the expectations of employers and accreditation and professional bodies that impact on teaching and learning at the university level in Australia, as is the case elsewhere. Demands for particular skills and attributes of graduates from employers are common and accreditation requirements sometimes provide significant curriculum and teaching challenges that are continuously changing.

Effective teaching in higher education is also linked to technological changes. Advances in this area have had significant impact on teaching and learning in recent years (Hannan & Silver, 2000), which in turn have both assisted teachers to reach larger numbers of students as well as manage diversity and added to the complexity of the tertiary teaching and learning environment (Devlin, 2007a). Staff must continually learn new skills and familiarise themselves with new ways of interacting and communicating with students and be capable of teaching on-campus, off-campus and in blended environments employing technologies and pedagogies suited to the context and student cohort (Benson & Samarawickrema, 2009). Carnell (2007) suggests conceptions of effective teaching in higher education extend to the social context where the learning community, meta learning and dialogue for learning are important – further extending skills requirements of teachers, particularly in the use of communication and collaborative technologies.

Leadership in teaching and learning is increasingly recognised as a central part of meeting the requirements of the context. Teachers often have formal and informal leadership positions within teaching and learning in universities and are required to contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning by engaging with existing knowledge in the area, self-reflecting on their practice and sharing ideas (Martin, Benjamin, Prosser, & Trigwell, 1999) through mechanisms such as peer-sharing and mentoring.

Successfully managing all of these contextual factors and the associated expectations is essential for effective university teaching. Meeting the requirements of the context in which teaching and learning takes place is significantly complex and challenging. The elements of this context are continuously changing and combine to create an environment in which any understanding of effective teaching must be continuously reviewed and renewed.

3.   The changing context and changing understanding of effective teaching

The notion of effective teaching has undergone shifts and renewal over time, with subtle but clearly evident change. In recent years, the ALTC criteria have proved a useful set of guidelines that have provided the Australian higher education sector with a set of principles with which to work and to which institutions, teams and individual teachers might aspire. Their widespread adoption at institutional level indicates that the ALTC criteria have had a significant and extensive positive impact in improving teaching and learning across Australia. Given the rate, pace and extent of change in the area of higher education that has been highlighted in this paper, Australia's proxy of teaching effectiveness, the ALTC criteria, might now need renewal and refocusing based on the discussion about the skills and practices of effective teaching and the elements of context discussed in this paper. The suggestions are not intended to replace those that would result from a comprehensive review of the criteria. Instead, the suggestions comprise a possible starting point and some of the areas in which a future review might initially focus.

Criterion 1, 'Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn', might be usefully extended to include a broader notion of student engagement. The recent national review of higher education commissioned by the Australian federal government has highlighted, among other things, the importance of providing students with a stimulating and rewarding higher education experience. This includes aspects such as their courses, the learning environment and the teaching, as well as the level of engagement they experience through, for example, staff-student and student-student interactions and opportunities for work integrated learning experiences.

In Australia, the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) (2009), which measures precisely these sorts of interactions and experiences, has recently been introduced into the higher education sector. The review has recommended that every university be required to report on AUSSE findings annually. If this recommendation is supported by the federal government, one likely consequence of increased reporting will be an increased interest in how individual teachers and teams of teachers teach to engage students. The current ALTC criteria do not explicitly address this. It would be worth exploring the addition of sub-criteria around approaches to teaching that engage students through: providing appropriate academic challenge; enabling students to be active learners, encouraging students to take control of and be responsible for their own

learning; facilitating appropriate staff-student and student-student interactions; and improving work integrated learning opportunities.

In terms of ALTC criterion 2, 'Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field', the explicit inclusion of the notion of curricula focused on students' current *and* future needs is important. Anticipating future needs would be difficult but skills in critical evaluation, adaptability, flexibility, research, collaborative work would certainly be useful preparation for the future. Curricula that prepare students for employment might also be worth considering. More specifically, infusing professional and/or industrial experience into curricula and resources for students; preparing students for employment by providing the theoretical knowledge and practical experiences for readiness to begin work; and, more broadly, ensuring graduates are better prepared to join the workforce, could be included.

For criterion 3, 'Approaches to assessment and feedback that foster independent learning', consideration might be given to addressing this need at a more far-reaching level, such as by developing students as individuals and their capacities to evaluate themselves. At a more practical level, the use of e-tools and other web- and electronically-enabled initiatives that encourage students to monitor and evaluate their own learning could be a consideration.

In relation to criterion 4, 'Respect and support for the development of students as individuals', an explicit articulation of the need to respect diversity and value difference is particularly important considering the multicultural and multiethnic student groups in our universities and the need for all students to gain from that diversity and exposure. Contributing further to this complexity, several Australian universities now have campuses overseas (e.g. South Africa, Malaysia, Vietnam) requiring them to extend their teaching across time zones and across geographical, cultural and political boundaries. Challenges and opportunities also arise as the Australian federal government promotes wider participation from low socio-economic, aboriginal and other minority groups. It is essential that the potential to address all of these concerns is explicitly accommodated in this criterion.

For criterion 5, 'Scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching', it may be appropriate to take on board some of Brew's (2006) ideas about the coordination, management and leadership of courses, of teams of sessional and other staff and of student learning; building capacities through various activities in new and less experienced teaching staff through techniques, such as peer-reviewing of teaching and mentoring schemes; and contributing to quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning endeavours.

In addition, other new criteria could be considered. For example, criteria that recognise the particular and challenging demands on teachers of applying enduring pedagogies by understanding and capitalising on emerging technologies; moving with technological innovations to suit needs of new learner generations; and adapting to changing conceptions of flexibility might be considered. Sub-criteria such as bringing new and emerging technologies and the principles of excellent teaching together effectively to meet new learner needs and teaching globally could be considered here. New criteria that would allow teachers to demonstrate expertise in meeting the expectations of institutional and faculty strategic and teaching and learning plans and priorities; incorporating government, employer and other stakeholder expectations into curricula and approaches to teaching; effectively managing the effects of funding and other decisions on the quality of learning and teaching; incorporating student market demands into planning and delivery of units and programs of study; and other

contextual forces might also prove useful starting points for consideration. These additional criteria are currently required for an increasing number of university teachers but are 'hidden' from recognition and reward, partly because they are not articulated. The addition of new criteria that allows these aspects of effective teaching to be documented would be worth exploring.

4.   Conclusion

This paper has argued that shared understanding of effective teaching is important to ensure the quality of university teaching and learning. This understanding must incorporate the skills and practices of effective teachers and the ways in which teaching should be practiced within multiple, overlapping contexts. This paper maintains that the criteria adopted by the ALTC have been a useful proxy of effective teaching and have been successfully used to recognise and reward effective teaching and to guide enhancement efforts. The paper also argues that, owing to massive and ongoing change in higher education, it is time for a renewal of these criteria and, through them, the national collective understanding of effective teaching in Australia.

Any revision to the existing ALTC criteria of effective teaching would need to be rigorous, have a sound methodological and evidence base and be carried out by an independent entity that will make public the process through which the criteria are derived. Without such thoroughness, the results of the renewal exercise might have questionable validity and, perhaps, limited acceptance. Any new criteria would need to be articulated in precise language and provide sub-categories so that they are explicit and clearly understood, as is the case for the current criteria.

It is envisaged that such a renewal would form part of an ongoing endeavour to ensure that future developments, trends, understandings, government directions, stakeholder expectations and student needs are continually considered and incorporated into the collective understanding of effective teaching. The notion of effective teaching in higher education can then continue to have resonance and meaning within a changed and changing context.

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