

HEaTED Regional Network Event Report

Region: East Midlands

Date: 11/06/14

Venue: Nottingham Trent University

Agenda:

09:00 Arrival and coffee and registration

09:30 Introductory Activity - Steve Taylor, HEaTED East Midlands Regional Network Coordinator & University of Derby

10:30 HEaTED Update and new CATTS Resource - Dr Rachel Crossley, HEaTED Head of Programme. All the latest Regional and National updates from HEaTED, including how HEaTED connects with Professional Registration.

11:00 TECHNICIAN, TEACHER or BOTH? - Steve Taylor

What is "teaching" for you?

What is "demonstrating" for you?

Does your institution define teaching?

What can HEaTED do to help?

12:15 Lunch and networking

12:45 Feedback and notice of future meetings

13:00 Tours of NTU City Centre Arts Facilities

15:30 End and departure

Key discussion points from each agenda item:

09:00 Arrival and coffee and registration

Many thanks to Karen Lichfield of NTU Staff Development for organising the venue and catering. All went very well.

09:30 Introductory Activity.

We had a good bit of fun with this one taken from the list on the Co-ordinator's forum.

LINE UP: Two teams with each team lining up down the room in order of, Shoe size, height, age!, length of time at current institution (One technician has been at NTU for 44 years!) name and even arm length!

This caused a great deal of mirth as well as enforced mixing and questioning of others.

Well done all for being such good sports and putting up with the embarrassment in the name of networking.

HEaTED Update and new CATTS Resource - Dr Rachel Crossley, HEaTED Head of Programme. All the latest Regional and National updates from HEaTED, including how HEaTED connects with Professional Registration and how our new resource can help you with competency assessment in your technical teams.

TECHNICIAN, TEACHER or BOTH?

NTU June 2014 Techie or Teacher?

There seems to be a tension in higher education institutions with regard to technical staff involvement in teaching activities. Some technicians seem to yearn to be academics and may be perceived to be over keen to stand in front of a class and impart their knowledge to the hungry minds before them rather than operating "the machine that goes ping". Others are far more reluctant to cast their pearls and are quite content to do their techie thing in some out of the way prep room far away from those inconvenient people known as students! Whilst this may be a very polarised view, I suspect that somewhere in-between these two extremes is a situation that has caused grief for most technicians and their managers alike at some time.

So is there a safe path through this minefield? It is clear that many technicians have a wealth of specialist knowledge, skill and experience that may not be available from the academic community. It is of paramount importance that some of this precious resource is imparted to undergraduate students as well as to academic and research colleagues. How can this be accomplished in a fair and equitable manner that will preserve academic quality and bring advantage to institution, student, academic and technician alike?

Some questions to fuel the debate: With feedback in Red

Are definitions clear? **NO!** It is clear that a good deal of the problem is that the definitions of teaching, demonstrating, supervision and facilitating are not clear for individuals, within departments, across institutions nor nationally.

Is teaching/demonstrating in technician Job Descriptions? There were inconsistencies both in individual institutions and across different institutions. Some have clear reference to teaching/demonstrating in job descriptions but it is not always clear what the terms mean. For example some areas considered the difference between teaching and demonstrating to be linked to assessment but, particularly in the arts areas a technician will prepare, deliver and assess all as part of technician duties.

Is teaching/demonstrating part of a specialist technician role? Most people felt yes, but with reservations such as "It should not take responsibility away from academic staff (ie should not make their life too easy!!) and Technicians should be adequately trained to deliver teaching. The view was also expressed that technicians should not teach at all in front of a class. If not part of the current role it should be rewarded. In all cases it was felt that there should be proper recognition of teaching carried out by technicians (within the limits of the definitions) Short courses should be paid at a teaching rate. Universities should design our roles to include teaching.

Should technicians be encouraged to take on more teaching? No, unless recognised and Yes if recognised.
Recognition was a big factor in most of the feedback

What's working well in your institution? Using PhD students as demonstrators. Role of Technical tutor or facilitator

How can we add to the student experience of the future? Role of Technical tutor or facilitator. "Without the passing on of Technicians' knowledge it is highly unlikely that a student will progress or achieve learning outcomes. Technicians in pastoral role?

How do we equip ourselves for the future? What training/development do we need to do for our CPD? Suggestions that HEaTED should have a lot more members with a better publicised point of contact within institutions.
Registration/payment of fees

Thanks to Phil Young and his team for some fascinating insights into the world of Arts and Civil Engineering on the tours that followed the event. It is good to know that the long history of amazing feats of technical brilliance carried out in University basements is still ongoing today!

Next event Nov 5th at De Montford University