Fellow Profile

Sally Kift
National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Curtin University

Professor Sally Kift PFHEA FAAL GAICD is President, ALTF. Until 2017, she was DVC (Academic) at James Cook University. Sally is a National HE Career Achievement Awardee, National Teaching Awardee, Senior Teaching Fellow, and Discipline Scholar, Law.

Fellowship title: Articulating a Transition Pedagogy to scaffold and enhance the first-year learning experience in Australian higher education.

Year completed: 2009

Expertise key words: Transition Pedagogy, First Year Experience, Curriculum Design

What did you achieve?: This Fellowship took a fresh look at First Year Experience (FYE) research and practice with the aim of lifting attainment and success for all first year students, and particularly for those from underrepresented equity groups. Its conceptualisation of a “Transition Pedagogy” (TP), and the six first year curriculum principles that underpin its implementation, drew HE in from the periphery of the curriculum where both students and professional staff interventions had been languishing for decades in the absence of contextualised transition mediation.

TP’s breakthrough innovation was to focus on what students have in common—their learning experiences moderated through curriculum—rather than problematising their diversity and difference. It harnesses curriculum as the engagement glue, and academic and social “organising device”, driving skills acquisition, identity formation, self-efficacy and a sense of belonging through discipline learning.

The distinctive features of TP’s integrative framework are thus threefold: first, an intentional and foundational curriculum focus to mediate the coherence and quality of the student experience cumulatively over the student lifecycle; secondly, a whole-of-institution and whole-of-student emphasis that delivers coordinated engagement and proactively intervenes to assure just-in-time, just-for-me support and sense of belonging; and, thirdly, the enabling capability of academic and professional staff working together in cross-institutional partnerships.

In the 15 years since Transition Pedagogy entered the FYE lexicon, it has been well received, adopted and adapted, impacting national and international policy, practice and processes, across many disciplines, institutions and aspects of the student lifecycle.

http://transitionpedagogy.com

What does the sector need now?: Despite great gains of recent years, we cannot rest easy nor ever leave student success to chance. Under-represented cohorts will always demand our full and collective focus and iterative expertise.