

South Australian / Northern Territory Promoting Excellence Network (SANTPEN)

Final Report 2013

Flinders University

Institutions: Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, Charles Darwin University, Tabor Adelaide, University of Adelaide, University of South Australia

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<www.santpen.weebly.com>



Acronyms

ACEN	Australian Collaborative Education Network
ACIKE	Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education
ALTC	Australian Learning and Teaching Council
CDU	Charles Darwin University
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching
SANTPEN	South Australian/Northern Territory Promoting Excellence Network
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
HERGA	Higher Education Research Group of Adelaide
UniSA	University of South Australia

Network summary

The South Australian/Northern Territory Promoting Excellence Network (SANTPEN) commenced in late 2011. With a focus on Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) awards, grants and fellowship schemes SANTPEN has the following aims:

1. To develop a collegial network which values the diversity and knowledge of the contributing South Australian and Northern Territorian higher education institutions.
2. To support the advancement of learning and teaching priorities of each member institution whilst acknowledging the diversity that exists and the opportunities collaboration provides.
3. To provide and maximise on opportunities to share resources; disseminate good practice; and develop innovative solutions for the sustainable, long-term enhancements of learning and teaching.

SANTPEN's stated outcomes and deliverables included:

1. Discussions on learning and teaching priorities led by each SANTPEN institution, at their institution.
2. A SANTPEN open web-space was to be established and updated with details of the meetings and resources after each meeting of SANTPEN.

These outcomes and deliverables have been met as follows:

Deliverable: SANTPEN events and priorities

27 April 2012	University of Adelaide	Teaching Awards and Citations
7 September 2012	Charles Darwin University	Scholarship of Teaching
4 December 2012	Tabor Adelaide	Assessment Moderation and Grants
6 March 2013	University of South Australia	Grants
7 March 2013	Flinders University	Supporting Grant Applicants
6 June 2013	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Indigenous Perspectives on Education
20 November 2013	Flinders University	Researching Teaching and Learning

Deliverable: SANTPEN open web-space

A SANTPEN open web-space was established in 2012 and is updated after each meeting. The website is located at <www.santpen.weebly.com>. Outcomes of SANTPEN events can be found on the website and in interim and end of year reports to the OLT.

Throughout the reporting period SANTPEN established and maintained communication channels with a number of state-based networks. Correspondence advising networks of the SANTPEN website and upcoming opportunities to attend online information sessions was

distributed by SANTPEN member institutions. An online form to join the SANTPEN mailing list was incorporated into the SANTPEN home page. A growing number of people joined the mailing list, with spikes noticed at the time SANTPEN events were advertised.

Contribution to learning and teaching

SANTPEN has contributed to learning and teaching through:

- the promotion of the Australian Government's Office for Learning and Teaching award, fellowship and grant schemes within South Australia and Northern Territory at events (identified above)
- the development and maintenance of a public website
- enabling staff from six higher education institutions to collaborate on the development, delivery and review of SANTPEN's stated aims and outcomes
- developing SANTPEN project team members' understanding of the contexts and priorities of other SANTPEN institutions
- comparing institutional practices and support services provided by SANTPEN institutions to staff applying for OLT schemes
- sharing successful OLT Citation statements and Grant proposals between SANTPEN institutions. Enabling these examples to be provided to staff at SANTPEN events and within SANTPEN institutions
- providing networking opportunities for staff to discuss learning and teaching priorities and research with colleagues across SANTPEN institutions
- developing and delivering learning and teaching events appropriate to the host institutions contexts and priorities.

The following paragraphs outline how each of the events listed in the previous section have contributed to learning and teaching at the institution hosting the event. An overview of the feedback received from event participants is also provided.

Contributions to Teaching and Learning resulting from SANTPEN events

Teaching Awards and Citations by University of Adelaide

This one day event consisted of a number of practical workshops, discussion and networking sessions. It included:

- a presentation by Ms Marguerite de Sousa (Director, Awards and Networks) on the role of the OLT in advancing the goals of higher education
- a mock teaching awards assessment session in which participants were given the opportunity to read and 'assess' a number of previously successful ALTC Citation applications
- a panel session 'Life After Teaching Awards', in which a Prime Minister's Award for Australian University Teacher of the Year recipient, an ALTC Teaching Excellence recipient, and an ALTC Citation recipient (Associate Professor Diana Glenn, Flinders University), offered reflections and advice to the aspiring award applicants in the

room.

The event was in keeping with the University of Adelaide's aims to support the development of teaching excellence, and to encourage sharing of best practice.

There were approximately 35 attendees across the day's sessions, with the University of Adelaide, UniSA, and Flinders University all well represented. SANTPEN members from Flinders University, UniSA, Charles Darwin University, Batchelor Institute and Tabor College were also in attendance during the day and assisted in running the various sessions.

Although no formal participant feedback was sought for SANTPEN's first event, anecdotal feedback was strongly positive, with a number of attendees commenting on the value of both the practical workshop sessions, as well as the networking opportunities that were available.

Scholarship of teaching by Charles Darwin University

The full day event hosted at Charles Darwin University focused on developing the scholarship of learning and teaching with a particular focus on preparing for citations and awards. The day was part of the broader 'Learning and Teaching Week' which is run at the University annually to place an explicit focus on improvement, engagement and showcasing learning and teaching across the institution.

This event started with a presentation by Ms Siobhan Lenihan from OLT outlining the work of the OLT and the citation, awards and grants schemes. This was followed by a presentation by Professor Keith Trigwell (University of Sydney) outlining a framework to think about the development of an evidence base for learning and teaching improvement throughout one's academic career. A series of 5 minute video clips were prepared in advance showcasing projects that academics from the SANTPEN member institutions had undertaken. The intention of these clips was to demonstrate the range and scope of projects and how these fit with the development of a learning and teaching evidence portfolio. These clips were shown at the workshop and were later made available on the SANTPEN website as a resource.

Following a framework development session, participants were asked to share their ideas in small groups in order to gain feedback and come up with ideas on how they could move things forward. The day finished with a discussion on the support available at the university to assist in citation, award and grant applications.

The event was attended by 36 people predominantly from CDU and Batchelor Institute but presentation sessions were video linked to Flinders University where 10 participants attended. SANTPEN team members attended from all institutions and assisted on the day – particularly in the interactive/small group facilitation. The presentation sessions were also captured on video and made available via the SANTPEN website.

The session was very well received by all participants as indicated on a basic evaluation form. Further evidence of the usefulness of the session was demonstrated by the active engagement of many participants in follow up sessions and advice sought in relation to internal teaching awards, OLT citations and grants. Additionally, in consultation with the faculties around planning for the Learning and Teaching Week in 2013, a similar session was

requested and in particular the return of Professor Trigwell and workshops on grants and citations. As a result Professor Trigwell ran a two day session at CDU in September 2013 which was supported by the central Office of Learning and Teaching with follow up sessions.

Assessment moderation and grants hosted by Tabor Adelaide

Up to date information on the directions of learning and teaching from Australia and overseas was provided by Professor Kirkpatrick, which was useful for all institutions participating, including Tabor Adelaide in the preparation of its institutional accreditation submission to TEQSA. Recent research information on developing graduate attributes was provided by Professor Crisp and on assessment moderation by Dr Tuovinen. Both of these presentations dealt with issues of particular importance to Tabor Adelaide in the context of improvement and accreditation of its academic quality. In the workshop sessions the development of rationales for OLT application and the development of budgets for OLT supported projects were discussed, based on existing examples and the experience of successful applicants.

Participant feedback: From the 18 people who attended throughout the day, 8 participant feedback forms were returned. As this section of the report is public, only feedback relating to the event as a whole is being presented here.

The activity	Strongly Agree	Agree
The event provided a forum for expertise to be shared between participants.	5	3
There was adequate time for discussion and exchange.	4	4
I intend to share information from this meeting with other colleagues.	6	2

Grants by University of South Australia

The University of South Australia has been a regular contributor to ALTC/OLT's learning and teaching grant scheme and offers workshops for UniSA staff each year. Academic development support for interested staff to learn how to develop grant applications is also offered. It was opportune to make the first professional development activity for grant development in 2013 into a broader event that included staff from other SANTPEN institutions. The event focused on developing grant proposals and understanding the importance of engaged dissemination of project progress in terms of deliverables and outcomes. The session also included a presentation from the OLT General Manager, Ms Suzi Hewlett, which introduced workshop participants to the range of OLT programs.

Participant feedback: From the 33 people who attended throughout the day, 17 participant feedback forms were returned. As this section of the report is public, only feedback relating to the event as a whole is being presented here.

The activity	Agree or Strongly Agree
Overall, the day-long event provided important information for	17

planning projects and writing OLT teaching grant proposals.	
There was adequate time for discussion and exchange.	16
I plan to share information from the session with colleagues.	17

Supporting grant applicants hosted by SANTPEN at Flinders University Victoria Square

Flinders University has engaged the assistance of a number of Faculty and School Research Officers to support staff in the development of OLT grants. This workshop provided by Tilly Hinton enabled staff to consider their role within the University, the support structures currently in place and additional structural and system requirements, e.g. post award support.

Indigenous Perspectives on Education by Batchelor Institute of Indigenous and Tertiary Education

Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education organised a one day event at the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education (ACIKE) in Darwin. ACIKE is a joint venture between Batchelor Institute and CDU to promote and enhance a commitment to Indigenous student outcomes, as well as empower and inspire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to realise their potential and contribution within Australian society through education. To this end the focus of the event was to promote a better understanding and appreciation of Indigenous perspectives of OLT grant applications.

Professor Steve Larkin (Director of ACIKE) provided the participants with an in-depth account of ACIKE's vision and mission and what they mean for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and academic population.

Dr Sandy O'Sullivan, a current Australian Research Council Fellow and an OLT Fellow ran a workshop to explore issues and solutions around the inclusion and engagement of Indigenous academics in the academy. Sandy also informed the participants on the outcomes and recommendations of the *2012 Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island People*.

The afternoon session was taken up by an interactive workshop and presentation of the 'both-ways' philosophy. Robyn Ober, a Mamu/Djirribal woman and Noressa Bulsey, a Torres Strait Island person provided the participants with an understanding and interpretation of the both-ways philosophy by telling their personal stories. At the end participants were encouraged to provide their own understanding of both-ways through the design of a personal metaphor.

The presentation sessions were also captured on video and made available via the SANTPEN website.

Participant feedback: From the 44 people who attended throughout the day, 19 participant feedback forms were returned. As this section of the report is public only feedback relating to the event as a whole is being presented here.

The activity	Strongly Agree	Agree
The sessions provided important information on Indigenous higher education considerations.	11	8
Throughout the day there was adequate time for discussion and exchange.	6	9
I intend to share information from this meeting with other colleagues.	6	11

‘Network your Networks’ at Flinders University

This event promoted and continued a theme within Flinders University to break down ‘academic silos’—silos created through discipline, profession and faculty identities. ‘Network your Networks’ provided an opportunity for three national sponsored higher education networks (SANTPEN, ACEN SA/NT and HERDSA SA) to collaborate and deliver a full-day professional development opportunity. The day’s activities were specifically structured to provide participants with an understanding of the current gaps in learning and teaching, research and time to consider and plan how to meet the needs of students and society, whether this is through teaching or research. Collaboration by these networks enabled an expert panel of speakers and facilitators to be convened and importantly provided an opportunity for members of each network from across South Australia to come together and share their experiences and knowledge. The opening panel and closing keynote were streamed live and promoted to members of HERDSA, ACEN, NATA, other PENS and regional and remote campuses of the South Australian and Northern Territory institutions.

Participant feedback: From the 51 people who attended throughout the day, 20 participant feedback forms were returned. As this section of the report is public only feedback relating to the event as a whole is being presented here.

The activity	Strongly Agree	Agree
Provided useful information about current literature, directions for future research and implications for practice	11	9
Provided the opportunity to engage with and discuss key issues and trends in tertiary education	9	11
Supported the development of my professional relationships and networks	7	11

As a result of this activity I intend	Strongly Agree	Agree
To attend future events*	7	11
Adapt or adopt an idea from the ideas that were discussed in my own work and/or institution*	6	12

* Two respondents did not respond to this statement.

Factors contributing to productive networking

The project team considers the team spirit and the networking that has been developed to be one of the project's most significant achievements. A variety of networking methods have been used throughout the project, and the team has regularly reviewed and discussed the effectiveness of these methods to the network's success.

We have been fortunate that the project team has remained consistent for the duration of the project. While there have been infrequent occasions where a colleague has stood in for a team member at an event or meeting (due to leave or illness), the core project team remains unchanged. This consistency has allowed the team to come to know each other well, and to develop a trusting and effective group dynamic.

The group dynamic has primarily been developed during face-to-face meetings. Although travel from Darwin to Adelaide is expensive, the importance of bringing the entire project team together on a regular basis cannot be underestimated. Especially in the early stages of the project, both formal and informal social interactions in a face-to-face environment were crucial to the development of an effective working relationship. Initially, SANTPEN events in Adelaide and Darwin were primarily open sessions, run for the benefit of colleagues; however, we soon began to build closed project team meetings into the event plans to take advantage of all team members being in the same physical location. Although infrequent, these team meetings are extremely valuable and always highly productive.

We supplement the face-to-face meetings with emails, our primary form of communication, and teleconferencing, which is typically used in the lead-up to the next event to go over plans and arrangements. We are currently exploring online collaborative writing programs, to facilitate production of project documents. Variety and flexibility have been important factors in ensuring effective team communication.

In addition to developing an effective internal network within the project team, we have made similar efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the wider networks. This includes networks between the SANTPEN institutions, other networking groups (e.g. HERGA, HERDSA, other state-based PENS), and with the OLT itself. Openness and inclusiveness have been key factors in our approach, and we have made an effort to understand and respect the varying views and priorities of all of our stakeholders. For example, each SANTPEN institution has hosted at least one SANTPEN event: This has not only allowed for an event to be tailored towards each institutions' particular aims, but it has helped foster a better understanding of the differences and similarities between each institution. While these 'networks of networks' are slower and more difficult to develop than the internal group network, we feel that we have made and continue to make significant progress in fostering these relationships.

Barriers to productive networking

Despite a range of challenges, the networking aspect of this project has been viewed by the team as one of its biggest strengths. Networking across institutions and particularly those at a distance is always likely to present challenges and these two themes (distance and difference) featured prominently in our network.

First, different institutions will generally have different priorities. While the strength of the network lies in these differences, they can at times create difficulties in arriving at shared priorities and approaches. The student cohorts at the six institutions are very different and this contributes to the varying strategic priorities, engagement on topics and approaches to improving learning and teaching. At times, this has meant that the focus of activities has been somewhat broader than ideal in order to make it relevant to the most number of people across institutions. This has been balanced, however, by the mutual understanding that the institution that hosts the event must have priority in setting the broad agenda to gain support and traction from both staff and management. Since the hosting of events has been shared across all six institutions this has provided a pathway through this issue.

Simply organising meetings and finding ways of working has at times been challenging. Scheduling of meetings and events is impacted on by distance. Flights are somewhat limited and expensive between Darwin and Adelaide which means for those travelling extra time is often taken away from the home institution. For example a minimum trip would be three days which still only provides one working day due to flight schedules. This is further compounded by the cost of flights, meaning that only a limited number of participants can attend events held in the other state. As such, networks between participants have been developed more effectively across institutions based in either the NT or SA than between the states. While time and travel remain an issue the team members have built effective relationships as we all attend every event.

The project team has tried to make the most of technology to facilitate both regular meetings and inclusion of participants from all institutions. While project management issues have largely been overcome through the use of teleconferences and co-scheduling of team meetings with events, inclusion of participants in events has been more challenging. Video links have been established for all events where possible. The idea of more interactive collaboration of participants is, however, more difficult to manage via teleconference. While other methods are available, differences in technological infrastructure and learning management systems has impeded this. Attempts have been made to video link all plenary sessions/key note addresses but have at times been undermined by technological problems (e.g. connection issues around speed and drop out). Additionally, only a limited number of participants have taken advantage of the video links which is likely due to such arrangements being seen as a second best option. One solution to this issue has been the recording of sessions so that they can be viewed at a later and often more convenient time. While this has addressed the access issue it has not facilitated further networking.

While the value of networking with other groups has been recognised, this has presented some challenges. In particular we have been working toward clearly identifying our role and function in relation to other state based networks while also trying to find a negotiated space and build a collaborative approach. This has included work with the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) SA branch and the Higher Education Research Group of Adelaide (HERGA) and more recently ACEN. This has been challenging in relation to the first two in particular who are focused only on South Australia while SANTPEN is much more clearly a partnership which crosses state lines. Over time, it has become apparent that the focus of each is different although related and agreement has been reached about consideration being given to shared events where appropriate and dissemination of information about events being a regular occurrence across the networks.

We have been very fortunate in this project to have had consistency of team members for the past two years. While some members have had variations to their role and function this has not been substantial enough to require withdrawal from the project. Such consistency has had enormous benefit in building very good working relationships and the change of roles has been overcome because of this.

What the network offers

Through its various activities in 2012 and 2013, SANTPEN has been able to offer participants and stakeholders a range of beneficial professional development events as well as occasions for networking. Examples are listed below, where SANTPEN has:

- provided information about OLT's range of programs
- constructed and shared knowledge and resources in relation to the development of teaching awards and citations, the scholarship of learning and teaching, assessment moderation, learning and teaching grants, Indigenous perspectives on education, and researching learning and teaching (e.g. available on the SANTPEN website <<http://santpen.weebly.com/>>)
- facilitated the building of connections across institutions in the Northern Territory and South Australia
- worked with other 'like' organisations, e.g. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) South Australian branch; Higher Education Research Group of Adelaide (HERGA); Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN)
- used its profile to attract high profile speakers from OLT, e.g. Ms Suzi Hewlett, OLT General Manager, and other organisations, e.g. Dr Allan Goody, HERDSA President, plus notable individual educators, e.g. Professor Keith Trigwell, Professor of Higher Education in the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL), University of Sydney
- provided a platform for SANTPEN's smaller institutions, Batchelor Institute and Tabor Adelaide, to have their voices heard and collaborate with the larger SANTPEN institutions

- facilitated externally-endorsed bridge building between institutions
- been valued by the senior management at each of the participating SANTPEN institutions
- provided opportunities for SANTPEN project team members to work productively with each other over an extended period
- exposed the work of individual SANTPEN project team members to staff at their respective institutions which has reinforced the nature of assistance available for award and grant application development and scholarly approaches to learning and teaching
- enabled dissemination of good practice for award and grant application development and scholarly approaches to learning and teaching.