



Writing Exemplar for Area of Activity A1

A1 Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study

Reporting

I am acutely aware that many Early Career Academics (ECAs) exhibit anxiety and overload due to the challenges of a new institutional environment (Clarke & Reid 2012) (**K1**). In 2008 I took over the coordination of academic orientation sessions at UQ. The ECA cohort was diverse – including Research Only (RO) academics, Teaching and Research (T&R) academics, and Teaching Focussed (TF) Academics, in an approximate ratio of 10:9:1. I quickly realised that the current pedagogical approach was dry, overloaded with detail and provided no guidance on prioritising the vast number of demands on a new academic (Pitt and Mewburn, 2016).

- Opening paragraph sets the scene (the teaching and learning context). It **reports** on the learning environment and the challenges.
- There is specific use of personal pronouns (“I”) and a reflective voice (“I quickly realised”).
- Note the inclusion of literature to demonstrate incorporating research and depth of engagement.

Relating

I decided to create an authentic learning environment in which ECAs felt supported, valued, and empowered to succeed (**K2, K3**).

- The next paragraphs **relate** the context to personal experience and knowledge and articulate the changes made.
- The changes are listed in detail – again using personal pronouns. There is no doubt over what was done and by whom.

Reasoning

Making changes involved articulating my aims to the University Executive and influencing their contributions to the workshops. I met with the DVC Academic, DVC Research and Heads of Divisions to discuss the need for their presentations to be consistent with my objectives. I produced simple resources (such as a list of acronyms!), introduced additional discussion space and time for sharing experiences, and invited an ECA to speak about their recent (and authentic) experiences. The evaluation results improved, and the University Executive were pleased, but the RO academics remained unimpressed; they reported no relevance to the focus on university teaching. I therefore designed an orientation specifically for RO academics. Evaluation scores for these redesigned sessions rose to greater than 4 out of 5 (**K5**), indicating that the *relevance* of the program had increased, a key element of my teaching.

- The teaching and learning activities are explained. The **reasons** are given for the changes. The use of evaluation is shown (**K5**) – plus the response to poor evaluations and the resulting improvements.
- A reference to “key element of my teaching” implies a teaching philosophy – but this could be more explicit.

Reconstructing

In working with ECAs in this context I believe I showed respect for my students and their career contexts. This depth of understanding led me to change the design of the course, improve learning outcomes and engagement, as reflected in the evaluation scores (**V1**). I continue to look carefully from my students’ perspective at the learning environments I create, and the learning activities I design. It’s really important that I understand students’ challenges, and that the learning and the learning activities have a practical focus and practical outcomes.

- This last paragraph **reconstructs** the activity with a sense of the future and how this has impacted practice.
- Note cross-referencing to Values.
- Use of reflective voice with “I believe I showed” and “I continue to look carefully”.