

The circle of fire: Facilitating cross-faculty teaching circles (both inside and outside of departments)

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How do you facilitate connections and communication of good practice that has an impact but not necessarily one that is directed by a form or deadline? The teachingcommons (www.shef.ac.uk/teachingcommons) started off as a case studies archive at the University of Sheffield but quickly developed into something much more interesting and complex to facilitate as an educational developer. The project now has an emphasis on informal interactions that help staff and students communicate and create connections through online and face-to-face spaces. One of the spaces that has – almost organically - developed out of this are a series of teaching circles that are facilitated by myself (the educational developer who runs this institution-wide project) in a series of very targeted areas. One of them was the area of teaching-led research.

This workshop will give participants the opportunity to both focus on/re-dramatise the development/process of the teachingcommons teaching circle approach and the idea of teaching-led research.

This developed as a new way of thinking/sharing collectively about research and teaching based on some quite simple assumptions yet, that together, change the outcomes of how people interact in a teaching circle:

- 1) that students can be researchers
- 2) that staff/teachers are also researchers
- 3) that teaching and research do not have to be separate
- 4) that staff and student time should not be divided between learning/teaching and research but that both can be done at once
- 5) that there is not just a one-way transfer of knowledge about research to students from teachers but that during the learning/teaching process research can also be created by both staff and students together
- 6) that the blurring of boundaries between learning/teaching and research and who creates this is useful for both staff and students

Presenter

Nadine Wills is a CILASS Academic Fellow and Teaching Enhancement Adviser which both focus on facilitating the way people share what they value about their learning and teaching experiences. She does this in a variety of ways both face-to-face and online (www.shef.ac.uk/teachingcommons).