

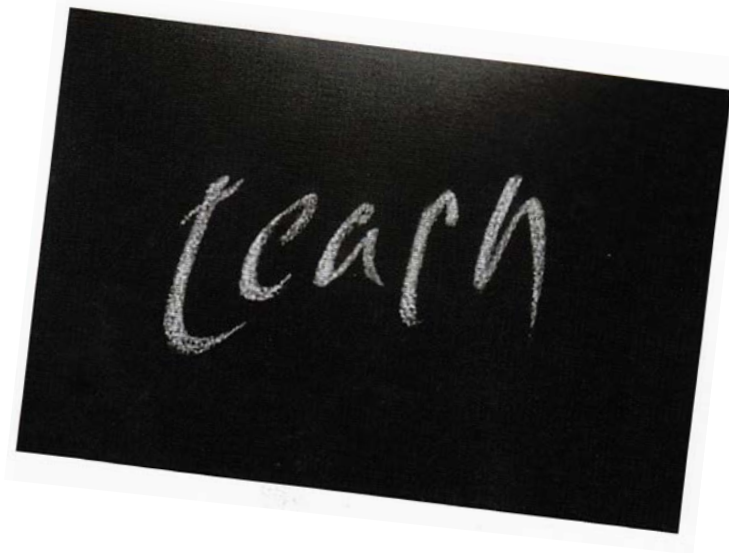
Hi, my name is Gail Crimmins, and I represent myself and Dr Greg Nash as co-coordinator and coordinator of COR109: Communication and Thought; a first year course offered at the University of the Sunshine Coast. COR109 is a large core course that attracts over 2,500 student enrolments per year. A key aspect of our work is the support of almost 30 sessional tutors per year.

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A key principle that frames the work we do to support sessional tutors within COR109, clearly articulated by Pisani and Stott (1998), is that **integrating 'casual' staff into academic departments is a strong predictor of commitment to students.**

Therefore we don't see supporting sessional staff as anything extra to supporting student learning – they are both sides of the same coin.



A second key principle that informs our work is that **it takes a village to support student learning.**



We each stand on the shoulders of giants:
Students stand on the shoulders of committed sessional staff;
sessional staff stand on the shoulders of attentive course coordinators;
course coordinators stand on the shoulders of astute and compassionate researchers, professional developers;
We each stand on the shoulders of strong HoS's, Deans, DVC's and VC's to contribute to a strong pyramid of learning support.

How we support sessional staff to support student learning

Within COR109 we offer:

A tutors' mentoring system;

An on-line tutors' forum within our LMS;

A course specific tutors' guide;

Weekly tutor meetings;

Five COR109-specific PD sessions each semester;

12 hours of 'other activity' pay (on top of payment for marking) to engage in PD



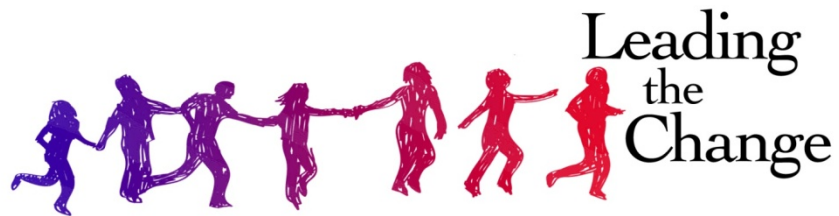
We offer these support structures because we engage in the Literature around Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and sessional staffing.



We seek funding to support sessional tutors by making a clear and *well-informed* case to our HoS and Dean of Faculty that it is in the interest of student learning (and engagement and retention) that we support sessional tutors.

critical success factors include....

Some-one/some-people leading the change



Supported by the literature



Institutional buy-in;

Executive buy-in

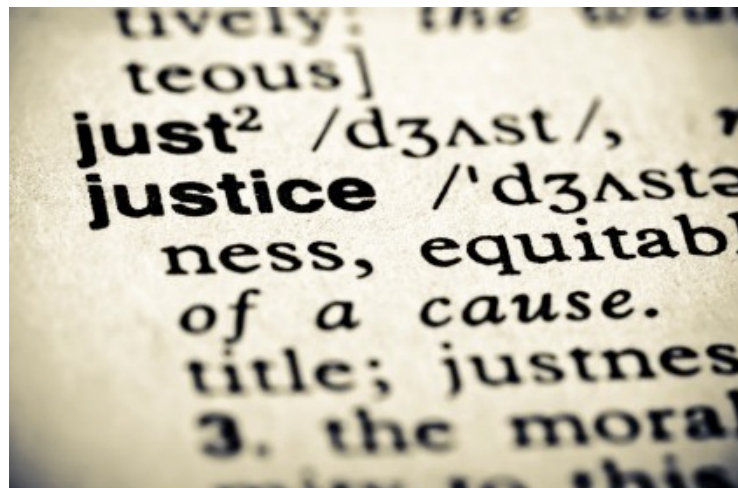


Two positive outcomes



Focus on **Learning**

Support of the ILO principal of 'decent work' that labour should be produced 'in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity...'



resourcing needed

Course coordinators that have time and capacity to:

engage with sessional tutors when developing learning and teaching resources/course materials;
respond to tutor feedback on course design and tutor support systems.

Sessional staff that have (payed) time in order to:

build their capacity as teachers;
engage with course coordinators to support the development of learning and teaching resources/course materials;
offer feedback to course coordinators on course design and tutor support systems;
(Offer input into policy making (re teaching and learning, recruitment policy...))



challenges and areas for improvement

The area for improvement is for university management to recognise that the **sessional staff demographic has changed**



And the challenge is to better utilise the **tremendous resource that sessional staff offer to student learning**

How we know that our inclusive engagement with, and professional development of sessional staff works...

SFT's and SFC's;

Tutor retention;

Tutor feedback/comments;

Development of a strong course that is to be the only core course offered at USC next year;

Happy and productive working relationships based on mutual respect;

We learn with and from each-other.

