

# Enhancing threshold capability development with intensive and other modes of teaching

## Intended audience

This workshop is for people working to improve student experiences of teaching and learning at university within a threshold capability framework, especially in units with intensive mode. Unit coordinators, curriculum designers, associate deans teaching and learning, academic developers, and researchers of higher education will find this workshop valuable.

## Learning outcomes

Participants will learn

- to improve student capability development by investigating students' learning experiences within a threshold capability framework;
- about different modes of intensive mode teaching and why people use them;
- how to use new evidence-based guidelines on enhancing students' experiences of threshold capability development in units with intensive mode teaching.

The first learning outcome will be developed throughout the workshop, using intensive mode teaching as the specific example.

## Workshop description

This is the final opportunity to contribute to and concurrently learn from the National Strategic Priority Project *Student Experiences of Threshold Capability Development with Intensive Mode Teaching*, supported by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT).

**Intensive mode teaching** (IMT) involves students engaging in facilitated learning activities or classes intensively over longer than a few hours in a day, and over fewer days than in a traditional course.

**Threshold capability theory** is a higher education theory that is valuable for enhancing students' experiences of learning and builds on threshold concept theory. *Threshold concepts* are transformative for students because they open new ways of thinking and knowing (Meyer & Land, 2003). They are usually troublesome for students. With *threshold capabilities* students can apply understanding of threshold concepts to previously unseen problems (Baillie, Bowden, & Meyer, 2013). Threshold capabilities are necessary for future learning or practice in a discipline and must be central to curriculum design.

First, participants will learn how and why intensive mode is used, based on a sector-wide survey. In groups, participants will identify the models used in their disciplines and compare these with their experiences.

Second, participants will learn about investigating students' experiences of threshold capability development by participating in mock focus groups based on their learning in the previous activity.

Third, participants will engage with the new guide on enhancing student experiences of threshold capability development with intensive mode teaching, which is based on studies in units. Working in groups, each including at least one participant with experience of intensive mode, participants will identify strengths and opportunities to improve their units, and review the relevance of the guide.

Baillie, C., Bowden, J. A., & Meyer, J. H. F. (2013). Threshold Capabilities: threshold concepts and knowledge capability linked through variation theory. *Higher Education*, 65(2), 227-246.

Meyer, J. H. F., & Land, R. (2003). Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses Occasional Report 4. Retrieved 31 May 2010, from <http://www.etl.tla.ed.ac.uk/docs/ETLreport4.pdf>

## **Facilitator biographies**

Facilitators are team members of the project *Student Experiences of Threshold Capability development with Intensive Mode Teaching*, from The University of Western Australia (UWA), Perth, and University of Tasmania (UTAS), Hobart.

### **Sally Male**

The University of Western Australia, Perth, sally.male@uwa.edu.au

Sally leads the Project.

### **Caroline Baillie**

The University of Western Australia, Perth, caroline.baillie@uwa.edu.au

Caroline is Chair of Engineering Education and coordinator of an undergraduate engineering unit studied in the Project.

### **Stuart Crispin**

University of Tasmania, Hobart, stuart.crispin@utas.edu.au

Stuart is Associate Dean Teaching and Learning in the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics coordinator of a postgraduate management unit studied in the Project.

### **Phil Hancock**

The University of Western Australia, Perth, phil.hancock@uwa.edu.au

Phil is Associate Dean Teaching and Learning in the UWA Business School and coordinator of a postgraduate accounting unit studied in the Project.

### **Jeremy Leggoe**

The University of Western Australia, Perth, jeremy.leggoe@uwa.edu.au

Jeremy is Director of the CEED Program and coordinator of a postgraduate engineering unit studied in the project.

### **Cara MacNish**

The University of Western Australia, Perth, cara.macnish@uwa.edu.au

Cara is Chair of UWA Academic Board and Council.