WHAT IS THE PEER EXCHANGE NETWORK?

The Peer Exchange Network is one of the ways we are strengthening our learning community. It works in two ways: by providing opportunities for colleagues who teach to see how others approach the design or delivery of classes; and by providing informal opportunities to ask peers for feedback as you reflect on your teaching practice.

How does it work?

It is an informal development conversation. There is no requirement to keep any records of the discussions but the exchange or ideas that result from it might be something you would want to talk through with your colleagues, Director of Education, Head of Department or Deputy Dean Education in the same way that you would for other forms of development.

The Peer Exchange Network is interdisciplinary and provides a chance for you to work with your peers in other departments and disciplines as well as your own. It is another way to keep up to date with the ideas and practices of your peers.

What do I do first?

The first step is to choose a focus: what would you like to see working in practice? What is it you would like feedback on? You choose the focus. For example:

- I would like to introduce guest speakers in my sessions but I'm not sure how to manage this or how to integrate it with my existing material.
- I am teaching large classes and I find it can be difficult to sustain engagement throughout the session. What have other colleagues tried?
- I would like to use more features in Moodle because I think it has potential to do much more than I currently use it for. Has anyone used the discussion board function to create community with their students?
- I am interested in using Padlet to prompt group discussion with students. Has anyone else used this?
- I am introducing group assessment for the first time. I would like to talk with someone who has managed the challenges.
- I would like to use learning spaces differently so that I move away from the front style of delivery.
- I would like to try different ways to gather feedback from students.
- I would just like to get some feedback on my teaching from colleagues in other subject areas and to get some ideas for other things I might try.

Once you have decided the focus you need to find a match with expertise in the community. Go to the Peer Exchange Network on Moodle and search the profiles of colleagues willing to give feedback or for you to see their teaching in practice. You will find contact details for colleagues and a summary of how they might be able to help you. Make contact with them and arrange a time to visit their sessions.

Finally consider joining the Peer Exchange Network yourself. What aspects of your practice are working well and might help others? Contact develop@essex.ac.uk to join on the network.