

# **Teaching you, teaching me: Onshore and offshore international students' collaboration and support of Australian transnational academics**

1. Dr. Kath Lynch RMIT University, GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC, 3001, Australia, kath.lynch@rmit.edu.au

## **Abstract**

Transnational education is complex, dynamic and an important part of Australia's wider internationalisation strategy. A key variable to ensuring high quality delivery of transnational teaching is the careful selection of staff, their preparation and ongoing support. A national qualitative study investigating how Australian universities prepare and support fly-in fly-out academics revealed not only the lack of dedicated recruitment and selection of staff to work overseas but also how few universities provide readiness programs prior to departure or support for staff when they are offshore and after returning home. Despite the absence of such formal support academics have created alternative, informal strategies to prepare and extend their learning for teaching abroad. One new strategy identified from this research is the collaboration and engagement of academics with onshore and offshore international students. Prior to departure academic participants spoke of different ways of seeking information from onshore international students, learning from offshore student formal evaluations and informal feedback, and reflecting on the many incidental learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. Document review, observations and interviews were used to gather data, with the results for this paper drawing primarily on interviews with fly-in fly-out academics representing a diverse number of disciplines and universities. In essence, the collaboration between academics and their international onshore and offshore students played a valuable role for many teachers in forging greater understanding of the way they engaged and taught their students in Australia and abroad. Pyvis and Chapman (2004, p. 40) note how 'the student voice is conspicuously missing' from transnational education literature and these findings hope to go some way to addressing this silence.

**Key words:** transnational, fly-in fly-out, international students, onshore, offshore, collaboration