**Engaging staff and students: Profiles**

**Task:** Working in threes or fours, look at the following profiles and prepare strategies to respond to staff and students to ensure they are really engaged in implementing the approaches proposed within ‘A marked improvement’.

**Dianne**: has been working at the university for many years, is very happy with the way she has been assessing to date (largely essays and time-constrained exams) although she finds the marking very time consuming. Gets good student feedback. Doesn’t like using electronic submission and return for her assignments as she says sitting over a computer gives her back ache.

**Tony**: Uses technology extensively to support his marking. Likes using rubrics where he can click on text that is sent directly to students and a system that allows mark to be added to the grade book automatically. Gets good evaluations but sometimes students say they feel his marking is a bit depersonalised.

**Dave:** came to the uni only last year from a much smaller institution. Well known there as an excellent teacher, he finds that he just can’t manage the assessment and feedback he wants to give, now that his classes are much larger. Is burning himself out marking, and his teaching is becoming last-minute.

**Simmie**: Is very unhappy that nowadays there isn’t time to really give students detailed feedback. Hates the university ‘diktat’ that says he has to get work back within 3 weeks as he says he needs more time to give really considered responses to his student work. Is very keen to help students improve.

**Glynis:** her Department’s star researcher, brings in funding. She has relatively little teaching, but does one short bit of a module with a big class (who are pleased to have such a renowned expert teaching them). There’s only one coursework assignment on her bit of the module, and two questions on the end-of-module exam. But she never sees the students after her bit, and can’t give them any feedforward on the coursework. Students comment on ‘lack of feedback’ in evaluations, and her exam questions cause student failures.

**Greg**: New to teaching and feels he’s struggling to get a handle on the standards required for student work. Tends to be very harsh marker and students comment on this. Second markers tend to disagree with both his top marks and his overall grade profile.

**Tel:** Hates marking course work and thinks that the only safe way to avoid plagiarism is to give students plenty of invigilated phase tests and exams. Is convinced the quality of students has dropped over the years but wants to do his best to help students succeed.

**Pete:** is very well liked by students, and gets great evaluations. However, he’s haphazard regarding coursework, doesn’t meet course board deadlines and doesn’t link assignments at all well to evidence of achievement of learning outcomes. Students don’t complain, but (jealous) colleagues notice odd variations in class ranking from his assignments.

**Mervyn:** got inspired by the PGCAP and takes assessment really seriously. Is very good at getting students self- and peer-assessing, so they pick up the assessment culture, and generally do very well at his bit of the curriculum. However, other colleagues whose students do less well say Mervyn is ‘teaching to the test’ and ‘making the assessment too easy’ and ‘spoon-feeding the students’.

**Fergus:** really cares for students, and ignores the policy on deadlines for coursework when students have problems. Others in the Department feel that he is a ‘soft touch’ and is too ready to pander to students with sob stories, but furthermore get annoyed when Fergus’s exam questions are most popular in ‘choice’ exam papers – AND get rewarded with higher-than-average marks.

**Janine:** Says she is too busy to pick up her feedback and anyway it just makes her gloomy as she reads all the negative comments and it makes her feel she shouldn’t be studying at university anyway. So long as she passes the assignment (which she usually does) she’s not that worried.

**Ali**: Finds getting the course work in on time a real problem as he has responsibilities to his family, particularly the family business. Tends to ask for extensions on almost every assignment but does really well in end of year exams.

**Rong-Jen**: Is very unhappy with the amount of feedback she gets. She feels her assessors could do a lot more to help her get better marks. She feels short-changed by the UK assessment approaches.

**Fila:** Has dyslexia and can’t see the relevance of all the written work that her course requires. Excels at practical work and group activities. Is a course rep and is voluble in her criticism of the number and frequency of assignments. Would prefer to just get on with studying the subject she loves.

**Ellie**: went to a school where they gave students lots of pre-submission advice to students on assignments and thinks her tutors are being mean and unhelpful when they won’t similarly look at her drafts prior to handing in.

**Art:** hates group work and can’t see why his mark should be dragged down by the loafers and slackers on his course who aren’t as hardworking as he is. He asks for exceptional arrangements to be made so he can be assessed, as he sees it, fairly.

**Luke:** very fast at finding relevant material for coursework tasks on the web, and skilfully cutting, pasting, smoothing and editing, regularly getting top grades for coursework. Doesn’t do nearly so well in exams, without access to the web.

**Kim:** came from US when her family moved to UK. Was a high flier there, and always got A grades or better. Now gets very frustrated when she gets a ‘73’ yet gets told ‘that’s really good, Kim, don’t worry’.