

Review of J.Hughes & E.Tan (Eds) (2012).The Dynamic Curriculum: Shared experiences of ongoing curricular change in Higher Education. Dublin: DCU. Available: [http://www.drhea.ie/userfiles/The%20Dynamic%20Curriculum%20\(Single%20pages\).pdf](http://www.drhea.ie/userfiles/The%20Dynamic%20Curriculum%20(Single%20pages).pdf).

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This book provides a series of seven short chapters which do exactly what it says in the title – provide insights into curriculum change! In the light of the current focus on Higher Education and on its use and value to the community, the publication is timely. Each chapter is authored by someone from a different institution within the Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance, providing insights into thinking and developments in each one. Thus the publication highlights the diversity of work going on in the different institutions in response to the present, challenging times.

The scale of the studies ranges from whole institutional review to ensure alignment with the Bologna protocols to use of e-learning and the importance of ensuring engagement of students with the curriculum and the process of education. Many of the chapters focus on wider issues of curriculum change, such as the alignment between an institution's strategic plan and the curriculum which is developed. In contrast others focus on particular aspects of curriculum development, such as one on use of e-learning within programmes and the other on inclusive learning. A major point which emerges from all of the studies is the need for full engagement of all of the staff, or otherwise the change may well not be fully successful. For example one author noted that without this involvement a 'tick box' approach can emerge to meeting institutional requirements, while another highlighted the different understandings of broadening the curriculum, with some staff considering that this meant more modules being provided. On a more positive note it was also observed that one unlooked for benefit of engagement with curriculum change was that staff now appeared to be more aware of the overall curriculum and to be speaking about and reflecting on it more than they had done previously.

All of the studies provide considerable food for thought, particularly for those involved in curriculum change in other institutions. They outline the process undertaken, the outcomes and, at times of even greater value, the issues which arose during the experience. It would have been helpful if there had been more input in some way from those who were actually teaching as, at times, the apparent lack of focus on content seemed to be sending the

impression that the employability, skills and learning to learn were almost divorced from any consideration of the subjects the students were actually learning.

While there may be longer and more detailed studies on curriculum change available, this publication is readable and helpful for those who are interested and involved in higher education. It certainly provides many basic insights and would be a good basis for further exploration of the issues.