

PLS Development Day 5th June 2025

Report compiled by Stephen Teo with input from Shelley Dutton, Jane Cichero, Jane Stanford.

How it began:

The idea of a PLS Development Day was mooted back in late 2022. There has always been awareness that PLS Directors, Instructors and Coordinators who support PLS in their centres around Australia do this often in isolation with minimal support. The first PLS Instructor Day was held in 2017. Since then, APLS Australia has continued to evolve, including the development of online instructor development modules. This has been a great step to support PLS Faculty at a distance, coupled with outreach support from the APLS educators and the office staff for centres running PLS courses. Yet we also believed there was a need to:

- Give back to PLS supporters, in the same spirit as PAC had originally been conceived &
- Put a face to, and support, the PLS community of practice (CoP), which overlaps with but is also clearly separate from, what has been regarded as the APLS Faculty CoP.

First steps:

A subcommittee with both PLS committee members and PLS supporters (champions) was formed.

The possibility of an online or hybrid forum was superseded by consensus for an in-person event. Mindful that many attendees were unlikely to have professional development funding, financial support from the CEO and APLS Board was both a priority and essential.

PLS champions were identified and PLS Directors contacted to recommend one faculty member and one coordinator to attend the day, with a dinner, travel and accommodation costs covered by APLS Australia. Numbers were capped to be able to deliver what the committee hoped would be of the most benefit to the participants.

Optimising the benefit for the participants:

A pre-Development Day survey sent out to PLS Directors, coordinators and instructors:

1. Preferences for sessions on Learning Conversations, Skills teaching and Facilitating small group discussions,
2. What suggestions participants had for topics - these informed the structure of the day

Of note, a concern by the committee was that the program was instructor rather than coordinator – focused. This concern was allayed by experienced committee members pointing out that Coordinators often:

- Have an educational role in the workplace....and
- Get pulled in at the last minute to help out facilitating sessions!



The day:

There were twenty-one attendees who were APLS and/or PLS Directors and Instructors, and PLS Coordinators, from Victoria, NSW, the ACT, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. The faculty enjoyed engaging with the attendees over the course of the day.

The program:

With significant engagement from the attendees who all came prepared, and from the faculty who facilitated the whole group and mini-GIC sessions the day was a success. There was some very positive feedback from the attendees which included:

- Learning conversation practice with real-time practice and feedback (i.e. the learning conversation after the learning conversation)
- Tips and tricks including different program options, working with and within faculty and a broader knowledge of the different ways PLS is organised in different centres
- An introduction to WAIT (Why Am I Talking) and Prepare, Open, Facilitate, Close
- Networking
- Requests for similar days in the future
- Suggestion of a Community of Practice – CoP for PLS Coordinators, instructors and directors – online forum to share challenges and solutions

Reflections and where to next:

The in-person format works, enabling:

- Facilitation of faculty development
- Networking between attendees, and
- Making the PLS Committee and office staff visible, “putting a face to the name” which we hope works both ways

The committee will feedback the themes from the Tips and Tricks session to the participants. The collective brainstorming on the day enabled sharing of ideas thoughts as to how we can support them as they run PLS. In addition, the committee hopes that there will be future Development Days so that APLS Australia can optimise the sustainable, consistent delivery of PLS in centres and make them feel that they are part of both the PLS and APLS communities of practice.

See attachments: Feedback Survey, Tips & Tricks summary, Preparation for participants, Program and PDF of PPT.

Shelley Dutton, Stephen Teo, Jane Stanford and Jane Cichero on behalf of the PLS Committee and PLS Development Day Faculty.