

Hidden spaces in faraway places: The ‘lonely work’ of partner institution transnational tutors

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This paper is based on data obtained from an Australian Learning and Teaching Council priority project which focused on the high stakes activity of assessment in transnational education; specifically moderation of assessment. It reports on the teaching-related experiences of part-time tutors employed by an offshore partner institution to assist in the delivery of an Australian university’s degree programmes at a location in North Asia. Whilst the tutors generally have good relations with the Australian lecturers and feel supported in elements of their work, they are also very constrained with respect to the activities they are sanctioned to undertake in their teaching. They are quarantined from any role in implementing assessment and marking work and they are kept out of the loop when it comes to knowing how individual students and whole cohorts performed in continuous and summative assessment. It is only through unsolicited contact from students that they hear how they have fared in their courses. Further, the interview data bring to light a raft of frustrations in general which do not appear to be communicated between the tutors and the Australian lecturers. Overall, the nature of the tutors’ role suggests it is a strictly delimited contribution to the idea of a ‘transnational teaching team’ and which may be precipitated by the complexities inherent in transnational education as an educational model.