Inside
A thousand tiny universities, TERNZ conference report, Helen Sword’s Wordcraft, Policy perspectives with Marcia Devlin, Investigating Impact in Higher Education, Student partnerships, First-in-family and professional identity, HERDSA conference
Reading over President Allan Goody’s farewell column I was reminded of the word ‘service’. My memories of Allan’s work for HERDSA as President and in other capacities go back a long way. As President Allan has served HERDSA tirelessly, and has been a great support to HERDSA CONNECT. HERDSA is indeed fortunate in the quality of its past and future leadership. At the Auckland Conference we will welcome in a new President, Denise Chalmers, who also has a long and honourable history of service to higher education. You will find Denise in our Who’s Who column.

The TERNZ conference is organised by HERDSA New Zealand branch and is known for stimulating discussion and creativity as shown in the photo highlights and conference report. To further support our New Zealand members we have a new column by Ako Aotearoa, the New Zealand government-funded organisation supporting tertiary sector teachers, trainers and educators. Our vibrant community is well represented by outstanding members such as Geoff Treloar, who writes about the enriching process of becoming a HERDSA Fellow through the TATAL process. Our Special Interest Group (SIG) column turns the spotlight on assessment quality. For those interested in any and all aspects of assessment this is the group to join.

Our FEATURE writer Barbara Grant reprises a theme from her 2018 conference keynote – A thousand tiny universities. Those who were present will enjoy this brief reminder of Barbara’s thoughtful reflections on “the university of her imagination” while those who were not at the conference will find her piece a poignant reminder to reflect on purpose. In her regular Policy Perspective column Marcia Devlin proposes a new model for funding support for low SES students, while the value of “slow writing” is an unusual viewpoint from Helen Sword on academic writing.

Teaching academics are always on the lookout for useful resources and Jan Orrell reviews a useful addition to the collection of HERDSA Guides, Investigating Impact in Higher Education by Ashad Ahmad et al. Useful ideas are found in our SHOWCASE from Nina Samarawickrema and Reneē Smit on collaboration in peer assessment and supporting first-in-family students.

I am looking forward to ‘crossing the ditch’ to another HERDSA conference in Auckland, New Zealand. Come and say hello.
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EARLY BIRD registration ends 30th May
The 2019 HERDSA Conference
2-5 July, Auckland, New Zealand
Six years! They say time goes by quickly. Not so sure I agree. This will be my last From the President column, which has morphed from an update on HERDSA activities to a column where I share my thoughts on issues – reflecting on ideas, trends, speakers I have heard, papers I have read, work in which I have engaged.

Sometimes these thoughts have been labelled rants as higher education evolves, advances, retreats and advances a little more. Now it’s time to reflect on some achievements of the past six years and some ongoing challenges for HERDSA.

As president, I wanted HERDSA to engage in outreach beyond our traditional membership. The Roger Landbeck Professional Development Fund was established to honour our wonderful colleague and to support early career academics from disadvantaged backgrounds, or emerging higher education or academic development communities in professional development. We have supported two early career academics from the Universities of South Pacific and Papua New Guinea in activities that have progressed their careers and had a positive influence in their home communities.

We are trialling Affiliate Membership of HERDSA, offering free memberships to academics in our region whose location or circumstances may make applying for membership difficult.

Publications continue to be the face of HERDSA with our journal HERD enjoying an international reputation. New HERDSA Guides offer practical resources on teaching and learning topics. We are working with Kortext, a UK based digital learning platform, to make the Guides available digitally. Other publications will be added. This will build our publications market and offer greater exposure for the good practice of our members. And you will have noticed the transformation of this publication, HERDSA Connect, into a modern magazine style featuring scholarly and informative articles showcasing our diverse membership and activities.

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning modules are freely available to members and have been licenced to several universities. The HERDSA Fellowship Scheme continues to serve members despite the challenge of the AdvanceHE scheme saturating the higher education landscape.

While HERDSA provides a community for academics, professionals and students, we face many challenges. These include political upheaval and a somewhat fractured and uncertain policy environment, the sometimes-questionable claims of institutions as valuing teaching and the student experience, the rapidly changing technology enhanced educational environment, academic identities and roles, and diversity in both the academy and the community.

I have observed the disengagement in HERDSA of senior leaders. This is evident in the make-up of the HERDSA Executive. Without questioning the contributions of the Executive and Officers, many sit in positions that lack authority to commit more fully to HERDSA. This presents a challenge in our ability to effect change. That these members manage to fit their HERDSA roles into their increasing and changing work loads is testament to their enthusiasm for the work of HERDSA.

We rely heavily on the Branches and Special Interest Groups to engage members. Annual conference is our main outreach and highly successful. Our 2020 conference may be a more centralised model.

Recently I have written about hope and optimism. As I end my term, I struggle to find the resilience that has sustained me over the years to maintain a level of optimism for higher education and HERDSA. But as my colleague and friend Lynn Taylor reminded me “maintaining optimism is hard work – but its strategic success of maintaining our own optimism and communicating positive expectations even in challenging conversations makes it worth it”. I know our members and HERDSA will embrace these words despite uncertainty and change. The Society is financially sound and able to invest more in the membership with initiatives in progress. And I will continue my association with HERDSA not least through my position as President of ICED and as Series Editor of the HERDSA Guides.

The role of President is not an easy one and is extremely time consuming. Thank you to the past three Executive committees, Branch Chairs, Officers of HERDSA and Jennifer in the HERDSA Office for your support. I wish Denise Chalmers and the incoming Executive all the best.

From the President
Allan Goody
What does the university ask us to be and what might we do to create the university we believe is worth inhabiting? In this article, two contrasting university photographs of me, taken about 10 years apart and in very different circumstances, provide the spine for my discussion. My assumption—and experience—is that much about our universities is dismaying, even distressing. That, as Bill Readings notes in his book The university in ruins (1996), they are in some important respects “ruined”.

The first photograph was taken for my institution’s webpages. It shows me in my office looking squarely into the camera’s eye. Across time and place, I look at this woman: She is wearing one dangling bright earring that echoes her red lipstick and a lustrous pearly-grey pendant rests against the tanned skin of her chest. Like the paperweight just visible on her desk, it’s a gift. Her arms are bare and a black bra-strap is showing. She’s not bothered. Her smile suggests confidence, poise, maturity.

I was taking pleasure in the moment, joking with the photographer. Yet much was going on in my work-life, and that of my colleagues, that was difficult: more restructuring and uncertainty, new lines of accountability, consequent staff conflicts.

I see this photograph as emblematic of what we are asked to be in the university-of-now: its glossy public face seals over a much more troubled lived experience of academic life, about which it is often difficult to speak.

We academics know we are privileged compared to many other workers, especially those of us who have ‘permanent’ positions. (I have to put the permanent in scare-quotes because, in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, those positions are not really permanent.)

The second photograph was taken quite recently by a student during a meeting of our School’s doctoral writing group. The woman is sitting at the far edge of a large boardroom-style table and not looking at the camera at all. Dog on her lap, there’s a noticeable absence of lipstick or smiling. Sharp pencil in hand, she’s engrossed in a writing task. She is in a classroom, collaborating with others over learning how to do their craft: here, how to think and write well. It’s not easy work for her, it always takes so much longer than planned and sometimes occasions painful self-doubts. But it’s also always a practice of hope: that’s why she writes, and that’s what she looks for when she reads. And she wants the doctoral students, who also experience struggles and hopes in academic writing, to understand these difficulties are not because they are failing but because this is the unfinished condition of being an academic.

Unlike in the first photograph, this woman doesn’t look particularly poised or radiant but she does look like an academic woman in her right place. And I know she is quite happy.

Indeed, this candid shot captures the tiny university of my imagining: a place where we are committed to the collective, sometimes arduous, work of thinking differently about the world, including the conditions of higher education. A place where we endeavour to be generous and kind to others. I know these values are sometimes difficult to adhere to but they are worth fighting for in the here and now. What is the tiny university of your imagining – the one you think is worth fighting for?

This feature is adapted from Barbara’s keynote speech at the HERDSA 2018 conference. Thanks to Sharron King and her committee for the opportunity to write and deliver the keynote. An expanded version will be published shortly as ‘The future is now: A thousand tiny universities for living hopefully’ in Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education’s special issue on imagining the future university.

Dr Barbara Grant is an Associate Professor in the School of Critical Studies in Education at the University of Auckland.

bm.grant@auckland.ac.nz
TERNZ Conference 2018
Manaaki, Whai Mātauranga and Ako

For HERDSA New Zealand members the annual Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand (TERNZ) conference is a key opportunity for scholarly discussion, ideas development and networking. The TERNZ conference is organised by HERDSA New Zealand Branch members and sponsored by the branch. It is held in one of New Zealand’s main centres each year, except when the annual HERDSA conference is held in New Zealand as in 2019. TERNZ 2018 was hosted by Victoria University of Wellington’s Centre for Academic Development.

TERNZ provides an opportunity to reflect upon and explore the direction of tertiary education, and how practitioners might influence that direction. A distinctive feature of the conference is its emphasis on spaces for discussion and reflection. TERNZ aims to promote dialogue which transcends disciplinary boundaries, and to further explore research-based approaches to teaching and learning. TERNZ is highly regarded as a forum for learning and teaching enquiry.

Sixty-five delegates from across NZ and Australia participated and most attended one of the three pre-conference workshops: appreciating Māori and Pacific values in educational research; embedding employability in the curriculum; and tertiary teaching fellowships in NZ. Delegates were welcomed with a mihi whakatau from Paul Meredith, from the University’s office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Māori). The welcome was followed by a speech from the University’s Provost, Professor Wendy Larner, who reinforced the message that conducting research on our teaching and on student learning can transform our institutions as well as enhancing the way we think about and do our academic work.

TERNZ has come a long way since it first ran in 2002 though the concept remains the same. Parallel sessions are longer than at many traditional conferences and are interspersed with host group discussions. Host groups provide an opportunity for participants to meet throughout the conference, to hear about sessions that they missed and discuss important topics and parallels they have drawn. The conference culminates with a plenary session where host groups present their impressions and takeaway ideas. The names of the host groups reflected values taken from Victoria University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy: Rangatiratanga (Rangatira - leader); Manaakitanga (manaaki - show respect, generosity and care for others); Kaitiakitanga (tiaki - to look after, protect); Whai Matauranga (whai – pursue, search for, matauranga – knowledge); Whanaungatanga (whanau – family) and Akoranga (ako – to teach AND to learn). These provided an unofficial structure for the final plenary as delegates employed the values to illustrate their learning and the influence of these values on their thinking about research in the tertiary sector.

TERNZ does not have specific themes as we wish to encourage researchers to bring and discuss any work that they have in progress. Sessions this year ranged through practical, theoretical and reflective, for example: Researching micro-credentials in higher education, Peer mentoring support for tutors, and The age of Manaaki: the journey of an academic developer as a mischief healer.

With manaaki in mind, food was offered at every opportunity. The conference dinner, held at the Harbourside Function Venue on Wellington’s waterfront, included a scavenger hunt quiz and Wellington laid on a gorgeous evening for watching the world go by from the balcony of Mac’s brewery.

TERNZ will take a break in 2019 as New Zealand will be hosting the HERDSA Conference in July but please look out for calls for contributions for the next TERNZ conference in 2020. We hope to see you there.

TERNZ 2018 organising committee was Amanda Gilbert, Sandi McCutcheon, Jonny Flutey, Bernadette Knewstubb and Linda Bowden.

Thanks to our sponsors Ako Aotearoa, NZ’s National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence and Victoria University of Wellington.

Photos: TERNZ conference delegates engaging in discussion and networking, photos Sarah Stein and Amanda Gilbert.
Our branches in Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong offer added value to HERDSA members.

**ACT**
ACT Branch is stepping up its activities again. A round table in April looked at the use of technology to support online learners and improve participation rates for low SES, rural and remote, and Indigenous students. Ten years after the Bradley Review how well are we doing?

In June members who will be presenting at the annual conference in New Zealand, will trial their papers and get feedback at our annual *Come and trial your conference paper* workshop. In July, we will host Dieter Schönwetter as part of his Australian tour. More information on these events will be in members’ inboxes soon.

**Hong Kong**
Hong Kong Branch hosted forty-two colleagues from local universities at the workshop, Getting published with data from your class, by Dr. Wendy Green, Executive Editor of the HERD journal. Participants found the workshop helped them understand more about research quality. At our AGM Dr Chong King from Lingnan University, was elected as a new member of the Executive.

The Redesigning Student Learning Experience in Higher Education 2019 project has begun. Nine student teams are working on projects and share their views at the Symposium in August.

HERDSA members working and visiting Hong Kong are most welcome to our activities.

Contact Anna or visit the website: [http://herdsahk.edublogs.org/](http://herdsahk.edublogs.org/)

**Queensland**
HERDSA Queensland has a new executive with Chair Sara Hammer, Treasurer Christy Collis along with Kerry Russo, Ross Guest, and Amanda McCubbin. Christy Collis has joined the HERDSA National Executive. This ensures continued Queensland representation at the national level. Christy, Kerry and Amanda have also joined the state HERDSA Conference committee for Brisbane 2020.

Plans for the year include new communication strategies, the development of state-based partnerships and collaborations with key organisations such as Queensland Promoting Excellence Network (OPEN), and mini-conference HERDSA Queensland on Show in November. Other planned activities include a re-vamped newsletter and Drop-in Tweet chats.

**South Australia**
Our Branch focus this year is on collaborations, networking and continuing to provide an excellent program of topical workshops for members. Chad Habel’s workshop Envisioning the Next Generation of Higher Education, through LEGO ‘serious play’ was a useful exercise as ‘shifting identities’ is a strong theme in South Australia as institutions undergo change. We are planning to host a Right Way, Wrong Way and Better Way approach to embedding Aboriginal content into undergraduate STEM resources.

Fond farewells to Branch Co-Chair Joy McEntee, Chair Sharron King, Secretary Ann Luzecky, and Treasurer David Birbeck after many years of service and a highly successful HERDSA Conference.

Heartfelt thanks to all contributors to the Branch and conference.

**Tasmania**
HERDSA Tasmania members attended and presented at the Teaching Matters conference which included an overview of the HERDSA 2018 conference. Members Tracy Douglas and Jo Kelder facilitated Writing a Teaching Philosophy workshops, useful to new academics and those writing promotion or teaching award applications. Jo Kelder also facilitated a Getting Ready for HERDSA 2019 – Writers Boot Camp to assist in preparation of abstracts for the 2019 HERDSA conference. Participants peer reviewed and discussed scholarly writing and worked on submissions for HERDSA and other conferences and journals.

A number of Tasmania members are involved in the facilitation of monthly SoTL Coffee Catch-ups. So far we have discussed the TEQSA Scholarship notes and explored the benefits of HERDSA membership.

**Victoria**
The Branch held an Academic Identity event with presentations and a lively panel discussion on redefining academic identity and increasing recognition of teaching in a research-focused institution. We started a Small Provider Network (SPN) last year led by Fiona Wahr and Andrea Tan. Their work included a survey on retention and attrition and a benchmarking event with eight institutions. Since our AGM our new office bearers are Theda Thomas (chair), Tim Beaumont (deputy chair), Julia Choate (secretary), Debra McCormack (communications) and Jasmina Lazendic-Galloway (events).
Our next event will look at new teaching spaces and how to use them, Monash University, June 5th.

**Western Australia**

Our Branch supported the WA Teaching and Learning Forum at the beginning of the year. Staff from the five WA universities and other higher education providers shared practice. Our AGM included updates from (then) Chair Melissa Davis and HERDSA President Allan Goody. Our new Chair is Katrina Strampel from Edith Cowan. The Committee includes representation from Curtin, Notre Dame and Edith Cowan Universities and is looking to include representation from all five WA universities.

We have an exciting year of activities for branch members. A HERDSA WA LinkedIn group has been formed to promote communication. This will soon be opened up to the LinkedIn community. We are exploring collaborations with the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and with the West Australian Network for Dissemination (WAND).

**HERDSA New Zealand**

Rob Wass, Deputy Chair

Although we are a close-knit group, one of the challenges facing the New Zealand branch is that our committee members are spread throughout the country, so our meetings must be online. However, for the last two years we have met face to face in Auckland to have one all-day meeting at the start of the year. This is an opportunity to articulate what we want to achieve for our HERDSA NZ members and a chance to reconnect with colleagues in a way that is difficult online. Here is a glimpse ‘behind the curtain’ of this year’s Auckland meeting as an opportunity to see the workings of the NZ branch.

A very important aim for our meeting is to plan the year’s events. We all know how quickly the year gets soaked up with our day to day administration, teaching and research responsibilities, so setting aside dates and times for activities for HERDSA (NZ) members is a priority. For 2019 we have planned several events: HERDSA 2019 Conference (Auckland); visiting scholar Dieter Schonwetter will visit three tertiary institutions; an Academic Development symposium in Wellington; HERDSA revisited at different locations throughout the country; and the TERNZ medal, which recognises an academic who has made an outstanding contribution to research and/or the research environment.

The day is an opportunity to plan for transitions in office-bearing positions and to recognise the individual strengths of our committee members. For instance, we have people with webpage/communication expertise on our committee and we have been able to develop our webpage presence and communication strategies because of this. It is also important that everybody has a chance to contribute to our activities and to recognise the responsibilities of committee membership.

The planning day gives us time to explore a variety of issues such as the diversity and representation of our committee and the effective and efficient functioning of HERDSA NZ. We also make sure to have great food and enjoy having time to relax and share with others.

rob.wass@otago.ac.nz

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<tr>
<th>HERDSA Branch contacts</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Chair: Karin Oerlemans <a href="mailto:herdsa.act@gmail.com">herdsa.act@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>HK Chair: Anna Siu Fong Kwan <a href="mailto:anna.kwan@outlook.com">anna.kwan@outlook.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD Chair: Sara Hammer <a href="mailto:sara.hammer@usq.edu.au">sara.hammer@usq.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA Chair: Andrea Duff <a href="mailto:andrea.duff@unisa.edu.au">andrea.duff@unisa.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS Chair: Tracy Douglas <a href="mailto:t.douglas@utas.edu.au">t.douglas@utas.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC Chair: Theda Thomas <a href="mailto:Theda.Thomas@acu.edu.au">Theda.Thomas@acu.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Chair: Katrina Strampel <a href="mailto:k.strampel@ecu.edu.au">k.strampel@ecu.edu.au</a></td>
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Many hours are spent by researchers and others in Australian universities collecting, collating, verifying, curating and then assessing submissions for the Excellence in Research for Australia evaluation of the quality of research in Australia. After the latest report congratulations to the Engineering fields of research were circulated to staff in my Department from Heads of Department and from our Associate Dean Research. I was pleased for our Engineering researchers I was again reminded of how awkwardly researchers in STEM fields fit within university structures.

I believe that my Executive Dean values my research, aligned as it is with Education rather than Engineering. Yet research contributions in STEM are invisible within my faculty. Researchers, and our research fields, are marginalised among STEM academics, prospective and current students, STEM research development officers and business development partners.

STEM researchers in higher education occasionally suggest that we need a field of research code within our STEM code but I expect this would be unhelpful. Different fields are evaluated differently within the ERA processes. It is appropriate that research in higher education in STEM is evaluated using mechanisms similar to those used in Education, namely peer review of publications rather than citation counts. I am more likely to use qualitative methods and to write book chapters with small numbers of authors than are researchers squarely within STEM disciplines.

Rather than changing codes for fields of research, appointed leaders such as Heads of Department and Heads of Schools should visibly value interdisciplinary research. One step would be to acknowledge the interdisciplinary contributions of staff members in their circulated announcements.

Natasha Abrahams, CAPA President (above left) talks with Sandra Leathwick.

I was fortunate to be a part of the student panel at the 2018 HERDSA conference, alongside several accomplished students who shared their insights on their educational experiences and the obstacles they had overcome. What stood out was the level of understanding of the diverse needs of students. I was struck by the sophisticated tone of the HERDSA conference presentations – there was a desire to critically examine how university teaching is conducted, and how best to involve students in shaping their own learning.

An important aspect to changing teaching and learning is evaluating the impact of any programs or interventions. This approach came through clearly in the presentations of higher education researchers and practitioners at HERDSA 2018. A highlight from the conference was Dr Gavin Mount’s presentation on designing an online-only subject to facilitate student engagement. It was refreshing to see an approach to online learning which developed tools and techniques specifically for the online format, rather than adapting a traditionally taught course to be delivered online for minimal cost. Dr Mount actively sought feedback from his cohort, as well as tracking their levels of activity over the semester, and used this to optimise course delivery.

Universities have faced increased funding uncertainty and growth in enrolments over the past decade, with shifting student expectations as a result. It is more important than ever for higher education researchers to examine new and better ways to facilitate their students’ learning.

Natasha is the 2018 and 2019 president of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), and a final year PhD student in sociology at Monash University.
My academic work, as I have officially ‘retired’ from university paid work, is whatever I want it to be, or whatever I am invited or choose to be involved in. As a consequence, there are very few meetings to attend, and the ones that I do attend typically include a coffee and a chat as well as discussion on the scheduled topic. I continue working as a consultant with colleagues on interesting projects, serve on advisory and review boards in Australia and internationally and support colleagues when I can. My work has provided me with the most amazing opportunities to travel, meet and work with people in the most unexpected and wonderful ways. The majority of my academic work has been on promoting and developing teaching capability in universities, which in turn led to my work on developing indicators of excellence in teaching and learning and the need for recognising and rewarding teaching excellence at all levels from individuals, teams, institutions and sector responses. This continues to be not only my work but my passion.

I have been a member of HERDSA for a very long time and have regularly attended and contributed to the conferences as a participant, presenter and occasionally a conference organising committee member and was a member of the Queensland Branch committee. This year as President-Elect I have been learning the scope of my future role as President. Allan Goody has set a very high bar.

I’m looking forward to working with the HERDSA executive and members in the coming years to identify and highlight the benefits and value of membership for members, but also to look to the future of organisations such as HERDSA and plan for ways that HERDSA might contribute to the needs and interests of future higher education academics and professionals.

Reading is a lifetime pleasure and indulgence - good quality fiction, printed please! When traveling I look for books written by authors in the country or region in which I am visiting. As I have just returned from Pakistan I have read Mohammed Hanif’s novel, A Case of Exploding Mangoes based on the true events of the 1988 plane crash that killed the former president of Pakistan, General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. The next book lined up is by Indian author Chetan Bhagat, The Girl in Room 105. I bought this in the Karachi airport so it may turn out to be a bit of a pot boiler.

Reviewing journal articles and reading the work of colleagues sends me off in lots of interesting directions as I follow up on references or explore ideas. HERD is a great journal, as is IJAD and both are very relevant to my interests and work. They have a very well-deserved international reputation for the quality of the articles and their widely representative international authorship.

To life in general I’m trying to develop a Zen-like response to traffic jams, poor driving (of others), shoppers and their trolleys, insects and rodents in unexpected places (particularly my home), unsupervised, out-of-control small and large children, the wifi or NBN not working – but overall, nothing much annoys me.

You cannot have too many good friends or family. If things can be dropped to support and accommodate them, then I think you are investing in the richness of your life — other than toxic people, no-one needs those in their life. I love walking with my dog Annie each morning, and loving how she follows me around the house, keeps me company as I work, read, watch TV and sleep. Loving how she looks sad when I leave home and that she is excited to see me when I walk back in the door. My children, when they visit, on the other hand fail to give me such loving looks, but I love them anyway.

My achievements in my professional life have all been as a result of working with wonderful people - colleagues, friends, staff at the centres in which I have had a management role and colleagues and staff at every level of the institutions I have been fortunate to work have all made it possible for me to do my job and facilitate my work. I have been very fortunate to have some very supportive supervisors who have provided me encouragement and space to explore opportunities and ideas. I’ve also had a few who were not, which makes you really appreciate the good ones who do.

Who’s who in HERDSA
Denise Chalmers

Denise Chalmers (left with Allan Goody and Denise Stockley) at the launch of her co-authored HERDSA Guide, Investigating Impact in Higher Education.

Denise Chalmers (left with Allan Goody and Denise Stockley) at the launch of her co-authored HERDSA Guide, Investigating Impact in Higher Education.
HERDSA Special Interest Groups

HERDSA Special Interest Groups (SIG) offer members and non-members a network for shared research interests and potential collaborative research. In this issue we highlight the Assessment Quality SIG.

Assessment Quality SIG

The special interest group was formed by Simon Bedford and Jo-Anne Kelder. The primary driver for this was the reforms to the Higher Education Threshold Standards that were to come into effect in January 2017. The group’s activities focused on sharing ways of meeting these requirements as many were from institutions soon to undertake reaccreditation under the new standards via TEQSA.

The key reference point has been the requirements with respect to Assessment Quality as laid down in the revised Higher Education Standards Framework, upcoming changes in the AQF reforms, and the assessment issues and standards of microcredentials. The group has been expanding in numbers from its inception and now boasts some 39 members across Australia and New Zealand.

The SIG seeks to better understand what constitutes meaningful assessment with a particular focus on how to apply effective quality improvement of assessment. We aim to build a diverse network provide opportunities for debate and discussion and to develop research collaborations.

We are proposing a special issue journal in assessment quality with papers on theory and practice, reflective essays and book reviews. Hot Topics for possible future exploration include: external peer review; the Institutional Assessment Quality Cycle; calibration; design; curriculum management systems.

Join us at the HERDSA NZ conference where we will develop an EOI for the special issue.

facebook.com/groups/339105516444526/

SIG information and contacts

Assessment Quality
s.bedford@westernsydney.edu.au

STEM Education
susan.blackley@curtin.edu.au

Academic Development
Erik.brogt@canterbury.ac.nz

SIG information
billot@aut.ac.nz

Recognising the diverse needs of learners in higher education in Australasia is vital for learner success, particularly when considering the growing populations of Māori and Pacific learners and the need to better support their success. Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand’s National Centre for Tertiary Excellence, has developed two free online cultural resources.

Staying connected to one’s indigenous heritage is paramount for Pacific Peoples so Pale Sauni and Kolose Lagavale have developed Pasifika Cultural Centredness Pathway. This online pathway comprises seven modules offering insights to educators into cultural concepts. These include Respect, Spirituality and Reciprocity, Family and Community Responsiveness, and Leadership and Service; as experienced in the Pacific Island nations of Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu.

The Māori Cultural Capability Pathway has been developed by Joe Te Rito, Mei Winitana and Benita Tahuri. This pathway encourages educators to engage in deliberate acts of consideration, application, and reflection on their support for Māori learners. Four interactive modules aim to increase cultural awareness of Māori knowledge and values: Ako (Learning/Teaching), Manaakitanga (Caring for each Other), Rangatiratanga (Empowering Students), and Whanaungatanga (Relationships).

Links
Modules are available at: www.pathwaysawarua.com
When I attend the annual HERDSA conference, colleagues from universities often express surprise that such an institution is represented. In fact, the ACT is one of the oldest higher education institutions in Australia, having operated continuously since 1891. In 2003 it became a HEPP (Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program) and in 2010, self-accrediting. The ACT offers awards from diplomas to doctorates through a consortium of seventeen theological colleges in Australia and New Zealand. My experience as a member and a Fellow illustrates what HERDSA has to offer non-university HEPPs.

When I was appointed as the ACT’s first Director of Teaching and Learning in 2012 I immediately joined HERDSA. At the time I wanted to be part of a peak group through which I could keep up with developments in higher education and new research in teaching and learning. HERDSA has served me well in these respects. I make good use of the journal, *HERD*, and in most years I attend the annual conference where I never fail to learn new things and meet new colleagues with shared aspirations for teaching and learning.

Easily the most beneficial aspect of my involvement in HERDSA has been participation in the *Talking About Teaching and Learning* (TATAL) community of practice. At my first HERDSA conference I signed up for the TATAL workshop. My aim was to find a professional development activity for ACT colleagues keen to improve their teaching. I soon discovered that, even after some thirty years of teaching I had never formalised my attitudes to teaching and learning. So I was glad to devise a teaching philosophy statement and to begin to think systematically about its implications for classroom practice.

I was also glad to become a member of the ‘Hobart 2012’ group working towards the HERDSA Fellowship. Actually I meandered through this process without any sense of urgency. The fact was that I enjoyed the monthly meetings which kept me in touch with my mentors and like-minded colleagues working in very different fields of study from my own. In the end it was a great pleasure to be awarded a Fellowship at the 2018 HERDSA Conference in the presence of my HERDSA/TATAL friends and colleagues.

Although the personal advantages have been considerable, I did not forget the ACT colleagues for whose benefit I had originally joined HERDSA. It was clear that TATAL offered a readily accessible means of improving the teaching of subject specialists, most of whom do not have a background in Education. Having become a TATAL facilitator and a contributor to the TATAL Workbook, it was a small step to include the TATAL workshop in the inaugural ACT professional development conference in 2015. Eighteen colleagues participated and responded enthusiastically. The workshop has been run on three subsequent occasions and each time participants have requested a follow-up program. The result was TATAL II which focuses on improving teaching practice on the basis of student and peer feedback – developed in consultation with Kathryn Harden-Thew and Bonnie Dean, HERDSA colleagues at the University of Wollongong. TATAL III is now under active consideration.

My current research in teaching and learning is concerned with graduate attributes in theological education. While this research arises from impulses within this segment of the higher education sector, it has been greatly stimulated by my HERDSA involvement. At the 2018 conference five papers dealt with the subject. These papers provided context and examples which were readily transferrable to the theological sector. I have also been able to discuss the research with my ‘Hobart 2012’ group which, now that all the members are Fellows, continues as a reference group for our professional lives and work.

I unhesitatingly commend HERDSA membership and becoming a Fellow to anybody interested in teaching and learning in the higher education sector – in itself an enriching educational experience and a means of building professional capacity.

Information about the HERDSA Fellowship is available at the website: www.herdsa.org.au

The HERDSA Fellowship

Five new HERDSA Fellows were granted their Fellowships at the HERDSA conference. We welcome Kathie Ardzejewska, Stuart Schonnell, Raj Shekhawat, Kate Thomson, and Geoff Treloar to the Fellowship community. Our new Fellows have completed an in-depth reflection on philosophy and practice over an extended period leading to the development of a significant teaching portfolio. Dr Geoff Treloar (above left with Allan Goody), Director of Teaching and Learning at the Australian College of Theology (ACT) reflects on the journey.
Writing expert Professor Helen Sword answers readers’ questions on academic writing, productivity and wordcraft.

I have been reading Sir Harold Evans’ book Do I Make Myself Clear? Why Writing Well Matters and was struck by his comment that we are seeing a trend towards more speed and less clarity in writing. I think back to how I used to write by hand, reflecting and editing as I went along, stopping and chewing on the biro and gazing out the window. In an era of ‘publish or perish,’ can we still afford to make time for reflection and craftsmanship in our writing?

The answer, of course, is that we can’t afford not to. In The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy, Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber argue that the current academic ‘culture of speed’ compromises the quality not only of our writing but also of our thinking, our wellbeing and our health. Here are some concrete strategies for nourishing your writing practice – and saving your sanity – by engaging in ‘slow writing’.

Write by hand. Multiple studies have affirmed the cognitive and conceptual benefits of writing by hand, especially if you generally prefer the speed and convenience of a keyboard. For example, you might occasionally pick up a notebook and pen to jot down some reading notes, mindmap the structure of an article, or draft a difficult paragraph. Writing by hand shifts your brain out of ‘transcription mode’ and helps you think more visually and concretely.

Set ‘slow’ goals. Academic writers who track their productivity often find that they spend two or three times longer than initially estimated bringing a research project to publication. By planning more realistically – which may mean doubling or tripling the time you budget for writing-related tasks such as drafting, editing and revising – you can short-circuit the feelings of guilt and shame that typically arise when we fail to meet our goals.

Take frequent breaks. In Rest: Why You Get More Done When You Work Less, Alex Soojung-Kim Pang marshals abundant scientific and anecdotal evidence to support his claim that non-work activities such as walking, exercising, and napping can refresh your body, clear your mind and lead to higher productivity in the long run. Paradoxically, the most effective way to speed up your academic career may be to slow it down.

Professor Helen Sword (www.helensword.com) is a scholar, poet and prize-winning teacher who has published widely on academic writing and writers. Her recent books include Stylish Academic Writing and Air & Light & Time & Space: How Successful Academics Write.

Do you have a burning question about academic writing that you would like to see answered in this column? Send it to Helen Sword (h.sword@auckland.ac.nz) with the subject line ‘Wordcraft’.

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Wordcraft Helen Sword

Writing (and Teaching Writing) with Pleasure

HERDSA Pre-conference workshop 2nd July 9:30 – 12:30

- Diagnose your students’ writing-related frustrations
- Identify learning activities that nurture pleasure in writing
- Plan targeted changes to practice based on evidence-based principles
- Adapt strategies for writing, teaching and professional development activities at your institution

Seasoned academic writers understand that the joys of writing are inextricably bound up with the hard labour of craftsmanship. That message is not always so clear to our students. Books, blogs and websites aimed at undergraduate writers tend to focus mainly on analytical thinking skills, productive writing habits and stylistic conventions rather than on fostering intellectual nourishment and delight. As a result, all too many of our students regard formal writing as an irritating chore.

This workshop is for those who seek to bring pleasure back into their students’ writing – and their own.
A national election looms and while no-one is under any illusion about the likelihood of higher education being a lightning rod issue for the Australian public – that is, we all know that it won’t be – those in the sector are hopeful that, at the very least, higher education policy common sense will prevail. Depending on your particular higher education interests, the focus of such policy common sense will differ. For me, at least partly, the focus will be on equity policy.

I recently led to completion a national study that looked in part at the costs of supporting students from low SES backgrounds in Australian universities. The complexity of university finances, the opaque nature of equity funding and the generally low level of understanding of the precise costs of supporting low SES students in the sector provided challenges to meeting the project brief. We used data from 37 universities over ten years and a sophisticated quantitative methodology and detailed consultation with senior executives at four universities on the quantitative findings to test their validity. The results were, as one Vice-Chancellor described them, “stunning”.

We found that the average costs of supporting low SES undergraduate students are around six times higher than the costs of supporting medium and high SES students. This was for a university with an average number of low SES undergraduate enrolments. At postgraduate level, average support costs for low SES students are around four times higher than for medium and high SES students for a university with an average number of low SES postgraduate students. These are, indeed, stunning findings.

Because low SES students are not a homogeneous group, additional support costs are not the same for all low SES students. Low SES students may experience different levels of disadvantage and/or multiple disadvantage. In the four universities consulted, there were different costs in, and different approaches to, supporting low SES students. This was partly because of the differences in the universities’ missions, the number and geographic locations of campuses, whether the student was undergraduate or postgraduate and the characteristics of the particular low SES students for whom support was being provided.

There are a number of policy implications that an incoming Australian government might like to consider. These include: moving from activity-based to mission-directed costing; and applying the principles of ‘cost compensation’ in university funding for low SES numbers. This would mean that each low SES student would attract four times (postgraduate level) to six times (undergraduate level) more funding than otherwise similar students.

The distribution of funding to support low SES students according to the investment/cost need of a university, campus or area, rather than according to the number of students at each university meeting the technical definition of ‘low SES’ would help reduce perverse incentives to seek the least costly low SES candidates.

I’m not overly-optimistic about these findings being immediately embraced and celebrated by either side of politics. I am hopeful, however, that a government genuinely interested in equity will recognise that properly funding universities to enact their missions might be purposefully conceived as an investment that lowers social disadvantage and ultimately improves economic outcomes for graduates and communities. In other words, I’m hoping policy common sense prevails.

Professor Marcia Devlin is a long-term HERDSA member and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-President at Victoria University in Melbourne. The study referred to above was funded by the Australian government through the National Priorities Pool.
In these uncertain times, my heart goes out to my friends, colleagues and their fellow countrymen in New Zealand in the wake of the tragedy that shattered their land of peace and hope. The filial bond between Australians and New Zealanders is strong, particularly through organisations like HERDSA and the heritage of the ANZAC alliance. The ability to stand together as colleagues and countrymen is of great value.

When we moved to the UK it was united with Europe through the European Union. In 2016, as a result of a narrowly won referendum the UK voted to leave the EU on 29 March 2019. In a recent statement in The Guardian Professor Dame Janet Beer, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Liverpool and President of Universities UK stated “the prospect of the UK leaving the EU without a deal is one of the biggest threats our universities have ever faced”. 50,000 EU staff who work, 130,000 EU students who study in UK universities and 15,000 UK students who study in the EU face uncertainty about their future.

Professor Dame Janet Beer highlighted further implications including “procurement, data protection, mutual recognition of qualifications and intellectual property … and vital research links which benefit wider society from new cancer treatments to technologies combating climate change.” Universities in the UK risk losing £1.2 billion in research funding over the next two years if the UK leaves the EU without assurances. In this climate there are significant implications for the recruitment, retention, productivity and prosperity of staff and students. While there is division and discord in government and communities as the Brexit negotiations unfold, colleagues continue to support education, research and civic service within the University and beyond with as much of a business as usual approach as possible.

In such tumultuous times, I have been influenced by the works of artists who have used their skills to inspire communities to pursue peace. In January 2019 I was privileged to see the sculpture of the Knife Angel when it was exhibited on the grounds of the Liverpool Cathedral. The British Ironwork Centre created the sculpture to raise community awareness of the serious impact of knife crime on the lives of those involved. The sculpture was created using knives collected during amnesties in 2015/16.

In March I was privileged to attend the final performance of the Karl Jenkins’ 75th Birthday Celebration at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester. The performance featured The Armed Man (A Mass for Peace) composed and conducted by Jenkins. In the performance the Islamic Call to Prayers was juxtaposed with excerpts from the Bible. As I listened I reflected on my visit to the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul where, although now a museum, I saw evidence of its Christian and Islamic heritage exemplifying tensions between conflict and peace.

As April approaches, I reflect on Easter and I am reminded of the death and resurrection of Christ and the Christian message of sacrifice and reconciliation. Similarly, I reflect on ANZAC Day on 25th April and remember those from so many sides, in so many wars, over so much time who sacrificed their lives in so many ways that we may live in peace.
Is too much research being published? Yes, according to Philip Altbach and Hans de Wit. Writing in *University World News* last September, their concerns are clear: “There is a crisis in academic publishing – too much pressure on top journals, too many books of marginal quality, the rise of predatory journals and publishers that publish low or marginal quality research and tremendous pressure on academics in developing countries to publish.”

From developing countries, it is not uncommon to find material with writing similar to the quality of this opening sentence in a paper in *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*: “Education is the most effective efforts to improve the quality of human resources and the quality of it, determine its ability to compete” (sic).

Is this writing a reflection of the consequences of globalisation? Probably, according to Ted Sun in *University World News*, March 15, 2019. Sun provides a potential answer to his question: “The problem with applying Western theories that don’t fit”. Incentives to produce more rather than better publications are the culprit, according to Jerry Muller in *The Tyranny of Metrics*. Muller’s book is not an attack on metrics. It is a carefully documented caution about the misuse of metrics, their unintended consequences, and the growing tendency to replace informed professional judgement with the assumed objectivity of quantitative data. Hiding behind the guise of supporting performance, accountability and transparency, the unintended impacts of metrics on individual and organisational behaviour is alarming.

Muller’s chapters on metrics in education, as worrying as they are, pale when compared to the shocking impact of metrics on policing and medicine. The example of New York surgeons not operating on very ill, high-risk patients for fear of the negative impact on their post-operative mortality metrics, is a story not to think about on your way to hospital. Do not read this book if you are seriously ill or worried about crime in your neighbourhood.

In a thoughtful discussion, Muller points out that accountability metrics are less likely to be effective when imposed from the top. More meaningful measures are those developed bottom-up with input from those being ‘measured’. This was a lesson learned by educational developers when systems of teaching evaluation and staff review were being developed. Implemented with considerable success initially, the fundamental academic goals of these approaches have been subverted by administrative dictates. Those lessons seem to have been forgotten by university leaders. Macquarie academic Frank Carrigan in *The Australian*, April 11, 2017, writes of the “phenomenon of growing numbers of academics being sucked into the administrative imbroglio”.

An entertaining discussion of measurement issues, “It’s not so easy to gain the true measure of things”, has been written by Chris Brack in *The Conversation*, December 14, 2018. Do not miss the humorous comments following his article.

That which gets measured gets gamed, observes Muller. He describes how ranking systems have perverse effects, one of which is heavy spending on glossy brochures touting university ‘excellence’. One such brochure arrived recently. More suited to the promotion of new car sales than a university, this grand plan is jam-packed with vacuous platitudes such as capturing talent, leverage, disruptive vectors of change, world-class infrastructure, and so on.

Grand plans are built on the quicksand of academics’ job (dis)satisfaction. As discussed in detail in Peter Bentley’s 2015 co-edited book, *Job Satisfaction around the Academic World*, studies present a depressing image of academic work in Australia. The research warns against continuing current employment practices. The question that arises is this: Is the persistence of academics’ employment problems, revealed in scholarly texts such as this, an indictment of our research-oriented universities that have not put research-based evidence into the management of their own people, while publicly advocating the importance of evidence-based decision making? Readers with long memories may recall the same question being asked about university teaching.

Robert Cannon is a Visiting Fellow at the Development Policy Centre at the Australian National University and Education and Research Adviser to an Australian education program in Indonesia. Robert was formerly Director of the Advisory Centre for University Education at the University of Adelaide. cannonra@icloud.com
We have recently come from two significant meetings: the annual meeting of HERD’s editorial team and a Scholarly Summit held by the journal’s publishers, Taylor and Francis. Both meetings prompted deep reflection about the rapidly changing, highly disruptive world of academic publishing. Authors, readers, reviewers, editors, are witnessing a period of deep transformation. Rising pressure to produce more research with less funding, growing expectations that academics in non-Anglophone countries publish in English, increasing government influence on research priorities - all in the context of increasing teaching workloads and administrative tasks – now shape our lives in academe.

In addition to these well-rehearsed challenges, the possibilities of ‘open access’ have opened up a new debate. A group of European funders have proposed a highly contentious plan - ‘Plan S’ - to make “full and immediate Open Access to research publications a reality” by 2020. Private, for-profit companies like Wellcome have signed up to Plan S, with support coming from a number of funding bodies in a range of countries, including China. In summary, the plan covers all research, which has been supported by grants from several EU and some UK public and private funding bodies. Authors whose research is funded by Plan S-related grants will only be able to publish in journals compliant with the Plan. This has prompted debate among researchers concerned that Plan S will restrict academics’ freedom to decide where to publish. Other concerns include financial implications. Making journals fully Open Access will mean libraries have no incentive to purchase subscriptions. The cost of publishing an article is likely to be high.

What does this mean for HERD? Because humanities and social sciences HASS disciplines are generally excluded from Plan S related funding, it is uncertain how higher education research will be affected. Plan S should have little immediate impact because HERD rarely attracts submissions supported by funding that falls within Plan S’s scope. And as demands for Open Access gather momentum, we are seeking ways to widen access to the journal. The journal’s ‘hybrid model’ makes one article per issue freely available for a restricted period. We encourage all HERD authors to take full advantage of Taylor and Francis’ current ‘green access’ policy to effectively and freely disseminate their work.

c.whitsed@murdoch.edu.au
w.j.green@utas.edu.au

ESSENTIAL READING

Amani Bell, co-Editor of the HERD journal, has chosen: Access to languages other than English in Australian universities: an educational pipeline of privilege by Tebeje Molla, Andrew Harvey and Sam Sellar from HERD (2019) 38:2.

Some parts of Australia can feel strongly monolingual. The authors argue that multilingualism is important, not just so that graduates are more competitive in the global job market, but because learning additional languages fosters connections and communication within multicultural communities.

Participation in learning a language other than English, commonly referred to as LOTE, at tertiary level has been in decline in many Anglophone countries, and little is known about the trends of inequality in access to language studies. To address this knowledge gap, the authors explore factors related to inequalities in access to LOTE courses in Australian universities.

Using a wide range of data sources, including participation in LOTE courses, staff surveys, student enrolment and demographic data, and a review of university strategic plans; the authors identify four factors of inequality in LOTE opportunities in Australian universities. These factors are: unequal access to LOTE learning at a school level; low Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) results and unequal access to leading LOTE providers; differential prior international learning experience; and limited LOTE course options in regional university campuses. Students from regional and low SES backgrounds learning LOTE at university are “dramatically under-represented”. Molla, Harvey and Sellar conclude with a call to acknowledge and address this educational pipeline of privilege.

Links
Taylor & Francis green access: https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/tag/green-open-access
This Guide begins with the question “Are we making a difference?” an important question in contemporary higher education where common goals and rhetoric espouse educational excellence and innovation. Since the 1990s, university systems and tools for routine student evaluation of teaching and learning at both course and institutional level abound and, to a large extent, they have become ritualized practices, driven by an expectation of increased accountability for quality assurance and quality improvement. The problem of institutional evaluation systems is that they often fail to address important questions about the quality and impact of the program. Deliberately constructed and focused evaluations are needed, addressed and shaped by the extant theoretical constructs available in the research literature on evaluation. This Guide presents key theoretical frameworks and questions to assist those responsible for educational policy development and administration, educational developers and academic teachers; and provides case studies to illustrate the frameworks in practice.

Chapter One of the guide makes the case for a more deliberate rather than ritualized approach to educational evaluation. Chapter Two problematises and expands on the purposes and need for deliberateness and the exercise of judgement in the processes of gathering evidence and working with stakeholders. It also outlines underlying principles and step-by-step considerations in designing evaluation processes and foci. An important contribution of this chapter is the elaborated description of Chen’s 1994 Theory of Change process. The evaluation constructs that have been selected and combined in the Guide are not unique, but are reputable and useful exemplars, presented as synthesised frameworks that are highly accessible to the uninitiated. They are also useful aids for newly formed teams working on evaluation projects or programs because they support the development of shared understanding and guide decision making processes for designing a comprehensive, focused evaluation.

Chapter Three guides readers though creating an impact evaluation plan, maintaining its established approach of providing focus questions. It also provides cautionary advice that there may be situational factors as well as stakeholder needs and viewpoints that ought to be considered and that may require adjustments to plans and processes. This chapter provides practical wisdom to address one of the challenges in evaluation. That is, it is often easy to elaborate the problem being addressed, but sometimes difficult to articulate what the evaluation should achieve and the kinds of information that will provide evidence that change has occurred.

Chapter Four focuses on distinguishing and developing qualitative and quantitative, input and output indicators of change, discussing what might count as evidence. Chapter Five provides two practise-based case studies – the Teaching Fellowship Scheme in Canada and a Students as Partners Program in Australia. The brief final chapters alert readers to common pitfalls in designing evaluation plans and call readers to help build a more evidence-informed approach to evaluation and decision making.

I have personally gained from reading this Guide, despite having been involved for many years in both program and institutional evaluation and despite familiarity with the theoretical literature selected in this text. The prudent selection of theoretical frameworks and their synthesis into guiding frameworks is practical and comprehensive. The guide emphasises that wise evaluation practice seeks clarity of purpose before designing evaluation processes. It also emphasises that respect for the context and stakeholders is paramount.

This guide would be an aide to gaining a shared understanding of their purposes, foci and goals. I have since shared the guide as a resource for post graduate students in education undertaking course work projects and educational research. Its potential application and utility is broad, and its potential impact is considerable.

I commend this Guide for its explicit focus on evaluation to improve our practices rather than to merely prove our quality, a distinction well made by Judyth Sachs in 1994 in the Australian Universities Review. Her cautionary argument has stood the test of time as we have moved into this era of high accountability. This Guide supports evidence informed evaluation for novices, those experienced in its practice, and leaders of university education quality committees.

References

The reviewer
Janice Orell is Professor Emeritus College of Education, Psychology and Social Work at Flinders University, a HERDSA Life Member and was Foundation Director of the Carrick Institute.
Australian universities appear to be in the thrall of learning futures. Those that have embraced this future-obsessed view of higher education each describe a slightly different motivation for their plan. For some it is stimulating innovation beyond business as usual (Griffith); for others it is offering life-enriching educational opportunities for students (Western Sydney); or building graduate employability through graduate learning outcomes, personalised learning experiences and authentic assessment (Deakin). Still others see it as an opportunity for partnering with other future-focused organisations (Curtin) or embracing the uncertainty that comes with cutting-edge innovation (Macquarie). Mostly it is a response to the new possibilities of digital learning and emerging trends for technology-enabled teaching that have come to dominate the sector (La Trobe).

Owen Hicks (2018) argues that to make sense of this decade long investment in whole-of-institution curriculum change we need to have a systemic view of curriculum. Hicks believes that we can learn something useful by trying to understand how the term ‘curriculum’ is being used in higher education. The first step, however, is to decipher the language around curriculum when higher education is more likely to talk about teaching and learning than the curriculum. The key for Hicks is to focus on the concepts of curriculum even if the word itself is not.

The focus on teaching and learning has had the benefit of creating concepts of curriculum that are specific to higher education instead of being borrowed from the school sector. However, a larger conceptual base brings with it greater complexity which Hicks tries to navigate by providing an overview of the broad spectrum of aspects that contribute to our understanding of the curriculum in higher education. Hicks argues that it is essential to bring order to the diversity he finds in the literature if we are to have any hope of identifying emerging themes.

By his own admission Hicks prefers a definition of curriculum that is purely pragmatic. When discussing the curriculum he chooses to simply describe the what, why, how, when and where of learning. Added to this is the understanding that the curriculum, is “a race being run” (Hicks, 2018 p. 8). In other words, it is the student experiences that define the curriculum, regardless of what was intended or enacted.

Hicks argues that a clear definition of curriculum is important because the curriculum has the potential to impact on all levels of teaching and learning within higher education. His review of the literature finds opportunities for further investigation, especially for systematic analysis of curriculum at the program level, and evaluation of the effectiveness of curriculum initiatives at the whole-of-institution level. To date it has been more likely that institutions will invest in market research than whole-of-course or whole-of-institution evaluation. The danger is that once the thrall of learning futures wears off we will be no wiser on whether higher education intuitions were able to find a happy median between curriculum as describing outcomes intended to be achieved and an experience of higher education that positively impacts on student learning. Only with a shift from teaching and learning to curriculum will we have the tools needed to answer the questions about future learning experiences that universities are now asking themselves.


About the author
Owen Hicks held the position of the Director of the Organisational and Staff Development Services at the University of Western Australia, was HERDSA President and is a HERDSA life member. He has a long-standing interest in curriculum models and planning in higher education in Australia and has worked as a Senior Consultant with the ALTC and Office for Learning and Teaching. More recently Owen has completed volunteer assignments with Australian Volunteers International program in universities in Timor Leste, Vietnam, and China.

The reviewer
Peter Kandlbinder is Executive Editor, HERDSA Review of Higher Education.
My response to this global trend of mass participation in Higher Education and consequently increasing size and diversity in my classes was influenced by Mick Healey’s partnership model published as *Engagement through partnership* by the Higher Education Academy (2014). My curriculum adaptation engages students as partners in their learning, through an activity that emulates the peer review process that occurs when publishing in journals. Targeted for final year Bachelor of Medical Science students, it was structured as a multi-part summative assessment incorporating elements of self, peer and tutor assessments.

The learning design involved students working as partners in their learning process. It required them to peer-assess and provide feedback on the work of other groups, self-assess own work and also be assessed by the tutor. As in peer-reviewed journals, anonymity was maintained through the review and feedback process via Workshop in Moodle. Here are the process steps.

In week 1 of the module, mini-student teams of 4-5 students were allocated a disease topic to prepare a review as a team. As a class they discuss and identify the key elements needed to assess their review.

In the following two weeks they prepared a 2500 word review in which they addressed specified key criteria including assessment criteria.

Prior to attending class in week 3 students submitted their completed reviews via the Workshop module in Moodle for peer review.

Each mini team was anonymously allocated up to three reviews of different topics. This allocation was done by Workshop.

In week 3, each mini-team collaboratively reviewed the three reviews of different topics, based on set assessment criteria and constructed feedback based on the assessment criteria drawn up in WEEK 1.

Feedback on reviews were returned via Workshop to author teams for implementation to improve their submission or rebuttal before week 4.

In week 4 student teams in class responded to feedback and submitted their revised review to their tutors also via Workshop for TA assessment.

At the end of the activity, students self- and peer-assessed their role in the exercise. Rubrics were provided for both.

Student teams were assessed at several stages of the module. Assessment included peer assessment of reviews; quality of peer assessment provided; author team’s response and implementation of peer feedback; tutor assessment; and peer assessment of peer contribution within a mini-team. Detailed assessment criteria were provided at the start of the module.

Students and their TAs appreciated the opportunity to self and peer-assess which was consistent with the literature. Here are a few indicative comments.

“An opportunity to learn from others, be critically evaluative, being exposed to others’ work.”

“It is challenging trying to evaluate others’ work but a good skill to learn.”

“A great skill to develop especially relevant to the workforce.”

“It made the students evaluate critically, it gave a sense of real critical review process as in a journal article submission.”

The comments confirm the pedagogical potential of collaboration in peer-assessment.

This activity was motivated by my desire to implement innovative and efficient assessment approaches that provide constructive and timely formative student feedback, and feedback to me that is consistent across the large student cohort through a team of teaching associates. I want to equip my students with 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, self-direction and the ability to make evaluative judgements. I suggest that this activity has value in curriculum and assessment designs and in other contexts.

Dr Nirma Samarawickrema is a Senior Lecturer in the department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Monash University. nirma.samarawickrema@monash.edu
If you are the first in your family to go to university, what does it take to move from incoming high school student with excellent marks, to graduating with a degree?

A recent survey of first-year electrical engineering students at a research-intensive university in South Africa is relevant to many first-in-family students across the disciplines. In our survey more than one third of the class identified as first-in-family students. Although a growing body of research explores the challenges faced by first-generation university students, scant attention has been paid to the identity development of first-in-family engineering students. The development of an engineering professional identity is not well-understood in engineering education. Our longitudinal study follows first-in-family students through their academic careers into early post-university years as graduate engineers in industry, exploring the development of a professional identity and the changing nature of their relationship to the discipline.

A growing body of literature indicates that various forms of social capital serve as resources for the articulation of possible or future selves. It has been shown that the ability to imagine a possible self is important in educational success: a future time perspective contributes to resilience and persistence. Possible selves include ideas about what an individual might like to become, and even what they fear they might become. These selves derive from beliefs about past selves, refer to future selves, and provide an interpretive framework for the current self.

In the first phase, our study’s focus was the challenges faced by first-in-family students in the engineering education context, early identity formation, and the social resources students mobilise in their transition into engineering studies. The findings so far indicate that students mobilise powerful images of possible selves, for example: “I just wanted to… challenge myself and do better than my peers…in all our community, I’m…the only one that finished high school.”

In spite of the absence of familial engineering role models, many first-in-family students displayed a nuanced understanding of the work of an engineer as modifying the human environment in response to perceived needs: “Being an engineer is not fixing bulbs… It’s about problem solving… I think it’s about you coming up with the solution.” Compared to their second-generation student peers, first-in-family students often formulate these future disciplinary selves in terms of making a difference in their families and communities, for example: “I see myself… innovating the things that the local government in my community hasn’t done. … my rural place doesn’t even have electricity”.

Students often cast their views of current selves in terms of past competence: “I did well in physics most of my life. I was really good in maths as well, so I knew I would go into engineering”. However, early academic experiences called for a re-assessment: “my first physics test was terrible. I failed… and the thing that kept on ringing in my head was: ‘It’s too hard. No, this is not going to work.’

The future selves imagined by students were often not personal, and the disciplinary identity was heavily influenced by individual academic experience. However, there was also evidence of remarkable resilience in the face of struggle, and the emergence of a situated self-esteem grounded in a strong identification with engineering: “… sometimes, you feel so demotivated… sometimes I’m crying, but I know I’m happy with what I’m doing…. I’m happy in my misery. That’s what engineering does to me”.

The study will continue over the next 5-7 years. The theoretical constructs employed in the data analysis include notions of student agency, social capital and community cultural wealth. We hope to provide rich qualitative data on the development of a professional engineering identity and professional identity more broadly.

Dr Reneé Smit is a senior lecturer in the department of Electrical Engineering at the University of Cape Town. Her current research interests center on the intersection between the philosophy of engineering and technology, professional knowledge and education for the professions. She is an active member of the Centre of Research in Engineering Education.

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• Publishing in higher education: A ‘hands on’ workshop (no cost to conference attendees)
• Slam, flash, rap: Creative approaches to reflecting on teaching and learning
• Microbits, robots and AR: Making digital skills explicit with the digital skill development (DSD) framework

Challenges of the next generation TATAL workshop

Turn the lens on yourself and join Professor Dieter Schönwetter from the University of Manitoba (Canada) and colleagues from New Zealand, Australia and further abroad in a collaborative reflective investigation into your teaching and your students’ learning as we Talk About Teaching And Learning (TATAL).

Following the conference continue the TATAL experience face-to-face and/or through Skype as you develop a teaching portfolio.

18th June
Begin online and asynchronous TATAL activities

2nd July
Pre-conference TATAL Workshop in Auckland

4th July
TATAL Breakfast during the conference

Register your interest
giriraj.shekhaway@aut.ac.nz

Online registration
Opens 17th June:
www.herdsa2019.auckland.ac.nz/program/pre-conference-workshops

“What I really liked about these groups was listening to other people and hearing their experiences and hearing that other people were interested in similar things and felt similar things to me.”
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