Are Australia’s Universities Risky?

By Lawrence Cram

This article is the first in a series about policy in higher education by invited writers, who are given the freedom to express their views, which do not necessarily reflect that of HERDSA. I am grateful to Lawrence Cram, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University, for writing the first contribution to the series.

Academics in Australia and the United Kingdom can peek at their working future in two reports that are bound to have enduring influence. One, hereinafter B1, is the Review of Australian Higher Education: Final Report (eponymously Bradley, released in December 2008), and the other, B2, is Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education: an Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (Browne, released in October 2010).

Both reports recommend strengthened command-and-control regulation of universities in Australia and the UK to deal with risk. The analysis of risk discourse is a useful forensic device (Douglas, 1990). If B1 and B2 are correct, and universities are indeed placing people at risk, the scholarly community would embrace their obligations to address the situation. However, very few academics in Australia or the UK would see their university to be responsible for exposing people to new forms of risk (the risk discourse is not about real risks relating to safety, health or the environment). Does the academic community have its heads in the sand, or is the risk discourse about something else? We can find the origins of the new urgencies of risk, regulation and accountability that so excite B1 and B2 by looking at the broader canvas of the two reviews.

Start with their views of history. B1 states that the restructuring of 20 years ago (Dawkins’ reforms) made Australia a leader internationally in the movement from an elite to mass system of higher education. On the other hand, B2 locates elite UK university-going 50 years in the past, and claims that financial reforms have driven change in the system since that time.

B2’s emphasis on the financial, not structural, historical perspective is much closer to the mark. The constructive destruction of a socially elite and exclusive university system has been a long-term Australian project, kicked-off by the 1957 Murray Committee. Dawkins’ Unified National System is but a waypoint on this journey. Two financial reforms – the introduction of a full-fee regime for international students and of HECS – were the Ryan-Dawkins watershed changes of the 1980s. Looking ahead, it is financial, not structural, reforms that must occur to fuel the additional growth advocated by both B1 and B2. The finances of universities in Australian and the UK
From the Editor

I am very pleased to announce that the Policy in Higher Education Column, which appeared regularly a few years back, has now returned. The first contributor to the column is Lawrence Cram, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University, who reflects on the implications of two significant reports in higher education, one in Australia and the other in the UK. These reflections do not give an optimistic view of the future of higher education, which looks set to be highly regulated. His final sentence “are cherished university values to dissipate in neoliberal blandness” is a real challenge to academics.

Fortunately some breathing space has been gained by the recent postponement of legislation that would have established the new quality assurance body in Australia after protests by the Go8 universities. Consultation has been promised.

Roger Atkinson touches on a related topic in his discussion of Tier Review Process recently announced by the Australian Research Council. The process will involve “a public consultation period followed by a review and finalisation phase.” The fact that consultation will take place is encouraging, hopefully the case of education can be persuasively argued as a counter to that of the hard sciences.

In contrast to this heady policy discussion we move to the Fijian countryside to listen to Gayle Mayes describing an exciting cross cultural learning experience for students. It is clear that student lives have been radically changed in very positive ways by the experience which is a very satisfying outcome not only for them but also for the university.

This issue contains several reports of workshops, conferences and symposia which have resulted in significant professional development for the participants. This shows again what is well known, that sharing experiences and knowledge in this way is of great value. What more encouragement do you need to attend the 2011 HERDSA conference?

In his humorous column, “Meanderings”, Bob Cannon draws attention to the language that is often found in academic and administrative writing. Such language is impossible to understand and yet the more convoluted it is, the more revered and acceptable it is to some. Given the strict review processes currently operated by journal editors it is amazing to read what actually appears in some journals. It is time to pull the pin on this attempt at academic writing.

As the academic year in the southern hemisphere draws to a close may I wish all readers a refreshing break and good wishes for a successful new year.

Roger Landbeck

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do entail business risks, and normal forms of financial regulation are both prudent and desirable.

Indeed, B2’s recommendations are directed towards wholesale financial reform of the UK university system and entail enormous risk. The Student Finance Plan (SFP) contains 4 elements: up-front government payment of fees as set by universities with a levy on high fees; government grants and loans for student income support for all students tapered against household income; repayment of loans at an income-dependent rate through the tax system; and philanthropic opportunities for graduates through the repayment system. Government funding will be reduced and targeted to priority subjects, initially designated as clinical, science/technology/healthcare, and important languages. Commentators predict the demise of vulnerable UK universities as the changes bite. B1’s more benign recommendation for uplift to the public base funding by 10% will be considered in the Base Funding Review to report in October 2011. The financial recommendations could give Australian universities a rough ride in the second decade of the millennium. Risky indeed!
Now consider the take on students, who B1 and B2 both frame as demanders. B2 sees universities encouraging demand by convincing students that the charges they put on their courses represent value for money. Not having the unenviable task of justifying large-scale cost transfer from government to students, B1 claims instead that demand-driven student-entitlements will stimulate university responsiveness and incentivise participation.

Interestingly for the forensic use of risk discourse, B2 argues against linking funding to a measure of quality as experienced by students. The existence of such a measure is denied, a claim garnished with the observation that even if it did its use would lead universities to focus on the measure rather than their students. B1, on the other hand, explicitly recommends the linking of measures of success (such as high rating in student satisfaction surveys) to financial rewards. B1 is more convincing on this point.

The report presents international benchmarking of student engagement and satisfaction that reveals Australian pressure points including risks to quality of high student/staff ratios, the implications of ITC on academic work, and the hollowing-out of student life by the voluntary student unionism movement.

Both B1 and B2 argue that universities must provide better information about study opportunities, clearer reports on employment outcomes, and accept responsibility for helping students make the right choice. Such discourse has been thoughtfully analyzed by Kivinen and Ahola (1999) in terms of human risk capital. As they say “there is nothing wrong with the general idea that universities are responsible for their graduates; however, this responsibility might make more sense by seriously concentrating in developing the university’s core function, teaching and research, than in trying to act as an employment agency”.

There is no room for the students’ voices in B1 or B2. While not surprising, the omission is unfair because the bedrock of B1 and B2 is a tacit value-claim about the intergenerational ethics and economics of the partitioning of public and private funding in expanding higher education systems. The life-course of the next generation of university students in Australia and the UK will be shaped by the wisdom and foresight found these reports, and students should have been given voice within the process.

This brings us to the matter of regulation and accountability. Both reports argue for greater regulation and accountability in the following way: (i) the recipe for driving quality improvement and better student outcomes is (B1) demand-driven funding reallocation or (B2) value propositions based on quality/pricing trade-off; (ii) although this dynamic will drive quality, universities will be tempted to deliver education programs on the cheap and with lowering quality; so (iii) protection by regulation and accountability is required. The awkwardness of this argument is clear, and we can anticipate that other risk discourses will have to be constructed.

The proposed regulation regimes in Australia and the UK will address many matters. B1 asserts that more quality assurance (QA) has to be applied in Australia so that students get the best possible education and employers have confidence. This will require a new national regulator (now called the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency – TEQSA) to regularly re-accredit currently self-accrediting universities, develop instruments to measure the value-add of university education over time, prepare formal statements of the academic standards below which universities may not operate, introduce a qualifications framework managed by the regulator and conduct audits of process and outcomes. B2 would safeguard the UK system by lumping a similar list of functions into a new Higher Education Council, with the interesting addition of student-university dispute resolution.

B2 would require the UK regulator to demand of every governing body, every year, that it confirm that its institution is a “going concern.” The regulator would take action where management is ineffective including brokering mergers and takeovers. Since we are told that the Australian regulator, TEQSA, is going to have teeth, a similar enforcement practice will emerge in Australia. This, perhaps, is the only aspect of the entire risk discourse that promises to protect students and the public from the losses that would arise if policy settings drive some public universities to the wall, or approve unscrupulous or non-viable private providers.

For me, the striking feature of B1 and B2 is the invisibility of scholarship and knowledge-work that are the hallmarks of universities. Both reports show how generic, formulaic public policy and microeconomic technologies can be applied to universities just as if they were banks, hospitals, factories or departments of state. The approach seems wrong-headed, but it will prevail. Are cherished university values to dissipate in neoliberal blandness?

References


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Expeditionary Learning: Challenging … But a Recipe for High Impact Institutional Learning

By Gayle Mayes

Take an academic course at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and add the values and teaching/learning methods of Outward Bound Schools around the world, and you have Expeditionary Learning … then add the following set of ingredients: an expedition to a remote area; a class of motivated university students; a real and compelling topic and project; integration of disciplines; the technique of inquiry; a spirit of adventure; in-depth active investigation; safe and productive fieldwork; challenges in various areas (mental, social, physical, academic); striving for … and achieving high quality work and standards of excellence through feedback and perseverance; learning from experts; active research off-campus; community service and engagement; team building; leadership; initiative and problem solving; character development; pro-conservation and sustainable practices; and an expectation that students will accomplish more than they think is possible (Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, 2003) - and you have a powerful, transformative experience with high impact learning/outcomes.

This paper gives highlights of the story of a university lecturer who mixed and embedded these Expeditionary Learning ingredients within the curricula of USC by taking small groups of students to the remote highlands of Fiji, in partnership with a fledgling adventure-based business on the Sunshine Coast. The expeditions not only successfully addressed all seven USC graduate attributes, but also resulted in life changing and transformational experiences for the students – many of whom returned to Fiji on subsequent expeditions. The high impact adventures continued during semester breaks for three years, taking students out of the familiar environs and away from the four walls of the university lecture theatres and chopped the umbilical cords and electrical connections with “high tech” communications systems and appliances such as twitter, facebook, mobile phones, iPods/iPads, computers, TV, video games etc.

The expeditions were an adventure from start to finish with specific adventure-based activities purposefully dispersed amongst the academic program. The formal university learning activities such as investigation and fieldwork, lectures, critique of case studies, analysis of relevant articles and selected textbook readings were consumed and conducted in a traditional Fijian thatched roof long house and with the surrounding mountains as our backdrop. Students developed the research questions then decided on their approaches and data gathering methods once we had more of an idea of what would be possible and achievable in the time available. For several days, students set out gathering data for on their part of the project, working in smaller research teams with nominated leaders. At night, groups reflected on their day, debriefed and reported back to each other on their progress.

The daily research activities differed from expedition to expedition, depending on the overall projects that groups were working on, and deliberately interspersed with informal cultural engagement activities such as Fijian language lessons, singing, dancing, playing cards and games with our hosts and communicating directly with each. Often, a sporting event was scheduled for the time that we were visiting remote villages and the students were able to attend – sometimes competing in volleyball or netball. The highland rugby games were obviously not a good idea when we saw how hard and rough the field was and the injuries that the Fijian players were carrying from the contact sport! Other essential parts of the programs were community service in the form of projects or activities that drew on students’ personal and professional interests, backgrounds, knowledge and areas of expertise. Students learned the powerful confidence building lessons that a little knowledge can go a long way and that they can make a real difference by working with communities in developing countries. Students returned to Australia valuing their experience and formal education more highly, believing more in their capacity and capabilities as change agents and motivated to institute more sustainable practices in their own lives, homes and communities.

These carefully constructed, high intensity adventures and communal travel experiences, give students the opportunity to gain greater self-awareness and enhance interpersonal communications with other cultures and especially other students from around the world. Students also develop deeper, stronger and richer relationships with themselves and each other as they share unique life changing experiences, search for purpose and meaning in their studies and develop a clearer vision for what they want to do when they finish their degree and step into life after university. The learned skills can be transferred to life “back home” for all students – no matter what part of the globe they call “home” - and future work environments, where they can develop and/or participate in more corporate social responsibility tours in their work and/or holidays, or in the case of many participating students: pursue a career that offers humanitarian-based work and adventure, and takes them along a similar satisfying pathway.

Stepping out from behind the lecturers, abandoning the proverbial power points and leaving the security and structure of the university system with a group of students are not within every lecturer’s comfort zone. However, experiences branded under the names of corporate social responsibility, educational travel, adventure travel, and volunteer tourism are the new wave of more meaningful and purposeful wave of travel/tourism appealing to an increasing number of students and staff at tertiary level (see Broomhill, Pitman and McEwan, 2009).

Expeditionary Learning (EL) belongs to this new wave of more meaningful educational approaches and travel experiences. EL is built on the beliefs, philosophies and practices of John Dewey and Kurt Hahn. Dewey, often referred to as the father of modern experiential education, promoted embedding experiential education teaching and learning methods within the formal education context. His suggestion that “education should be real, that is, it should
be about life itself and not mere preparation for life” (Dewey, 1938, p. 25), strongly promoted experiential education, believing that “students should be involved in real-life tasks and challenges” Neil, J. (2009), while Hahn promoted holistic education that inspires: “self respect; care for others; responsibility for the community and sensitivity to the world environment” (Zelinski, 1991, p. 15). Outward Bound as an ideology and set of practices suggests that “people can grow through challenge, Neil (2007) and continues in Outward Bound schools in 35 countries (http://www.outwardbound.net/locations/) around the world today.

The combination of essential EL ingredients in the very first paragraph, offers university staff an adventurous, exciting and magnetic opportunity to engage students in learning while engaging with each other, individuals and communities, experts, and the pursuit of excellence through research. EL differs from other forms of educational travel by incorporating the spirit of adventure and challenging elements of Outward Bound (team building; leadership; initiative and problem solving; character development) with research and enquiry and more especially; pro-conservation and triple-bottom-line (environmental, socio-cultural and economic) sustainable practices. Kolb’s (1984) and Joplin’s (1981) models of adventure learning and theories, serve as the foundations for the day-to-day activities which then combine and contribute to the experiential education tour as a whole. The tours and experiences are based on Joplin’s (1981) action-reflection stages and the Adventure Wave Model (School, Prouty & Radcliffe, 1988) to include intense “peaks” that engage the affective domain followed by valleys – or down time. Students use reflection on those peaks and the learning that took place to integrate new with existing knowledge and experiences which engage the cognitive domain through “processing” experiences.

Strategically allowing high intensity experiences to speak for themselves, combined with lesser peaks of intensity plus educational content at the teachable moment are the key ingredients to success and achieving the expedition objectives. “By strategically integrating the affective and cognitive domains with multisensory, high intensity experiences, nothing we do on a university campus can equal or even come close to achieving the impacts and/or success of experiential education and immersing students in such rich learning environments” (Mayes in Broomhill, Pitman and McEwan, 2010, p. 55).

As with all adventure-based learning, debriefing at the end of the expedition is essential for giving students the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences by identifying, articulating and especially transferring learning to their “home” environment. The reflection, articulation and sharing of the peaks and adventures of the expedition continues as students return to campus. The return stage can be difficult for some participants because their beliefs and values have shifted significantly as a direct result of living a very basic life without the trapping of the western, materialistic, high consumption world, where money is not used and they sleep on a mattress on the floor of a thatched roof traditional bure; shower under cold water only; swim in clean, fresh mountain streams; consume unprocessed Fijian home cooked food; wear traditional sulu (wrap-around) and ceremoniously greet village chiefs; keep the same clothes on for several days; engage with Fijian children and adults living traditionally; exist in the total absence of all things electronic (TV, radio, music, computers and watches); and breathe clean mountain air far from any form of human habitation.

Students become acutely aware of the shifts in their attitudes, beliefs and values when they return from the EL experience which has higher impact and more powerful when they discuss the expedition with their peers, friends and family back home or in Australia. Reflection is a vital part of the experiential learning and transfer process and “story-telling” time reinforces student learning, allows them to revisit the peak experiences and gain greater awareness from the peak times and “meaningful moments”. By reflection, recounting and reliving the peaks and valleys, the transformational process continues and students experience paradigm shifts – gaining increased awareness of the gap between their own values, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours “here” and “there”. Students develop greater empathy, tolerance and acceptance of other cultures.

The most rewarding outcome for me as a lecturer and leader in these expeditions which require considerable time and preparation is to see the evidence of the high impact experiences through formal evaluation and direct feedback. Students’ responses are very rewarding when asked for a quantitative value of the EL experiences and impact on their overall university degree. Students score the EL trips as between nine and ten out of a possible score of ten for the level of importance of the expedition to their overall university experience. Students give the same very high scores when asked and again for the level of contribution that the EL experience makes to their entire bachelor degree.

What more could you ask for? More similar opportunities for more students to participate in!

Acknowledgements:
The author recognises the valuable contribution of, and early partnership with, the staff of Fiji Dreaming (now Destination Dreaming) in introducing opportunities for USC students to be involved in through EL experiences. Based on this introduction, USC is developing a new model of EL which engages tertiary students in academically-based, high quality, well managed expeditions in a number of international locations.

References

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References


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**Signposts: The Story Behind a Professional Development Resource for New Tertiary Teachers**

By Judith Honeyfield¹, Cath Fraser¹, Linda Shaw¹, Helen van Toor², Liz Fitchett², Pat Reid³, Adam McMillan⁴, Victor Fester⁴, Debra Robertson-Welsh⁵

**Introduction**

Members of the Signposts development team were pleased to attend the 2010 HERDSA conference and promote the recently completed second edition of this professional development teacher training resource – first launched at HERDSA in 2008. Our poster appeared to provoke some interest from a fairly widespread range of attendees, and we are grateful to Roger Landbeck for this opportunity to provide a brief background to the project.

Signposts comprises 10 one-page “primers” designed to support novice teachers in their first few months in front of a class. Topics are therefore kept deliberately practical and “hands-on”, with tips and techniques described in unambiguous language, and guidelines rendered as concisely as possible. Although some links to additional resources are provided, these are supportive rather than exhaustive. Signposts is intended to be just one tool, supplemented with articles and organisation-specific processes and information, and introduced as part of a professional dialogue with a manager, mentor/coach or buddy. The intention of the resource is to offer newcomers to tertiary teaching roles a tested and effective framework with which to begin a teaching and learning career. Contents include:

- Delivering the goods;
- The language of assessment;
- Reflecting on teaching;
- Knowing about and responding to difference;
- Being professional; and
- Literacy integration

Signposts is freely available through Ako Aotearoa’s website under a Creative Commons licence: http://akoaoetearoa.ac.nz/signposts.

**The Issue**

Newly recruited teachers who walk into the classroom for the first time with no tertiary teaching experience are a growing phenomenon in New Zealand’s educational landscape. Although primary and secondary teachers are required to successfully complete programmes in educational theory and practice, tertiary teachers have no such legal requirement, the only constraints being an organisation’s policies and procedures. New tertiary teachers frequently enter the profession with a wealth of subject-matter expertise, but little or no background in lesson planning, classroom management, or other pedagogical knowledge. Tertiary institutes typically address these needs through a series of tools: inductions; workshops; and certificate/degree programmes. While such provision is unarguably useful, schedules, logistics and access often conspire to delay availability.

**A Multi-Institutional Response**

Our organisations have belonged for a number of years to the Tertiary Education Alliance (TEA). In 2007, a collaborative discussion began between eight team members from three institutions, who, despite different geographic locations, programmes and student demographics, identified a common need in how best to support novice teachers. Over the next three years this collegial partnership expanded naturally as others expressed an interest in participating. As a consequence, the project team expanded to include staff development representatives of five institutions: Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, NorthTec, Wintec, Manukau Institute of Technology and Waiairiki. The project team was supported by two funding grants from Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand’s National Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning Excellence.

**The Action Research Framework**

The Signposts project team deliberately selected an action research enquiry framework, since we wanted to be able to monitor, scrutinise and adjust our collaboration as the project was underway. **Phase one** was the planning – including a literature review of studies related to new tutor professional development, and an analysis of the teacher training offerings of more than 40 organisational websites. The team concluded that a gap in provision existed, and that a new tool was needed for beginning tertiary teachers. Key topics

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were identified, and the format of one page, conversation-style resources was agreed.

**Phase two** allocated topics to team members to write, and involved extensive consultation and peer-review, both through online discussion forums and face-to-face meetings. The *Signposts* resource and accompanying report were submitted to Ako Aotearoa, launched on their website, and presented at HERDSA 2008. The team also conducted a parallel enquiry into the nature of our collaboration, and at this point completed the Wilders Collaboration Factors Inventory (Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001).

**Phase three** in an action research cycle is observing. In the year after *Signposts* launch, feedback from Ako Aotearoa website's administrator indicated that it had become the most downloaded document of any on the site. Informal feedback suggested that the resource was filling the need for immediate teaching and learning tools, and comments posted to the Ako Aotearoa website included suggestions for further enhancements and alternative deliveries. In response, the team conceived the follow-up project of a national evaluation of *Signposts*, to evaluate its usefulness and current applications, and identify strategies for expansion and improvement. Since no rigorous evaluation of any resources developed under the auspices of Ako Aotearoa had so far occurred, the new project would also offer a template for critique and review. An anonymous and confidential e-questionnaire using Survey Monkey software generated 40 responses from polytechnics, institutes of technology, private training providers, universities, and industry training organisations.

**Phase four**, reflecting, included data collation, analysis and coding. Key findings around respondents' roles, access, application and delivery affirmed that *Signposts* was being used and found to be useful. Feedback about content prompted changes to widen applicability and ensure currency. Additional links, definitions and a users' guide were added, and the second edition was formally accepted and launched.

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**Table 1**

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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>The content is useful for my role</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Table 2**

Currently *Signposts* is a print-based resource. Below are some other format options. Please comment on their potential usefulness

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<td>Text based exemplars</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outputs and outcomes**

The development, evaluation and subsequent refinement of a new edition of the *Signposts* resource was the primary objective of the project team, and the final documents are available through the Ako Aotearoa website – we hope they will be useful to other staff developers as well as to our target group of new tertiary teachers. Papers are currently being prepared to document both the process and the collaborative experience alluded to in this article. Above all, we hope that our project has highlighted the need for systematic, scheduled evaluations and review of all tools like *Signposts* to ensure they remain useful and current. The efficacy of resources or recommended practice needs to be tested in the field, and adjusted to reflect feedback wherever practicable and appropriate. We hope that this story of resource development will offer one way forward to other project groups who wish to examine the usefulness and usability of their own outputs.

**Reference**


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Talking about Teaching and Learning (TATAL): The Sequel

By Coralie McCormack and Robert Kennelly

Introduction

In our first newsletter article (McCormack & Kennelly, 2009) we described a collaborative initiative in which the University of Canberra’s ALTC Promoting Excellence Initiative and HERDSA combined to provide facilitation and support for a community of academics interested in “talking about teaching and learning”. The article described how and why the program started, the agenda of the first eight sessions and early results. We are now in a position to report the activities and outcomes of nearly two years and three TATAL programs. In doing so, we will update information about the 2008 TATAL group and introduce the 2009 and 2010 groups. We also present a generic program which takes a TATAL group from the start to half way through the development of a teaching portfolio.

Participants

The program began in September 2008 with sixteen colleagues from three local universities meeting for one and a half hours. In 2009 and 2010 this first program has continued with six participants and the two facilitators (now members of the self-facilitating group) meeting monthly for two hours. The 2009 program began with twelve participants and continued into 2010 with eight regular attendees and the two facilitators. The 2010 program began in March with 12 participants.

Each group is multi-disciplinary. For example, participants teach accounting, aerospace engineering, geography, history, business, school education, law, nursing, librarianship, TESOL, tourism, peace studies and educational design. In all groups, most participants are staff from the University of Canberra. Participants are also employed at The Australian National University, UNSW (ADFA campus) and the Australian International Hotel School. The teaching experience of participants is diverse. Membership includes experienced full-time continuing staff, sessional staff and early career academics.

Activities

The following table describes the activities undertaken at each meeting. This table is by necessity "generic". Each TATAL group modified this presentation slightly to meet their needs.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>TATAL 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the program (aim/objectives &amp; key program elements), the process of collaborative reflective practice underpinning this group’s work, and the content (What is a teaching philosophy? A teaching portfolio?). Begin to write your teaching philosophy statement: Why is being a teacher important to me? What personal experiences inform/motivate my teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 2</td>
<td>Review first meeting and ground rules. Reflective conversations: Share writing activity from TATAL 1: Why is being a teacher important to me? Continue to write your teaching philosophy statement: What do I believe about teaching? What do I believe about learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 3</td>
<td>Reflective conversations: Share writing activity from TATAL 2: What do I believe about teaching? What do I believe about learning? Why do I hold these beliefs? Further discussion: What is a teaching philosophy statement? Examples of teaching philosophy statements. Continue to write your teaching philosophy statement: How are your beliefs about learning and teaching played out in your teaching context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 4</td>
<td>Reflective conversations: Share writing activity from TATAL 3: How are your beliefs about learning and teaching played out in your teaching context? Collaborative feedback on philosophy statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 5</td>
<td>Collaborative feedback on philosophy statements. Assessing your philosophy statement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes

Professional, personal and process outcomes emerged through the evaluation process. These outcomes coalesced into four themes.

1. In a safe environment trust can grow and sharing the previously “un-shareable” becomes possible because no one has to go it alone.

   ... it can be hard to innovate or even discuss teaching matters ... If you say you have any issues, there is an assumption that you are a bad teacher. It is great to have the supportive environment of TATAL where we can air issues and problems and get ideas from each other. One of its strengths is the mix of disciplines in the group because we each come from a different perspective. I think it helps to have different levels of teaching experience in the group too. For instance, some of [name of participant] comments have really made me think about things I have been doing without much thought for years.

2. Collaborative reflective process helped us develop as teachers. The majority of participants in both the 2008 and 2009 programs agreed that they had: increased their confidence and their skills in talking about teaching with colleagues and in writing about their teaching and had increased their personal reflection skills. (2008 and 2009 Mid-program and End-of-year 1 surveys)

3. Increased understanding of the components of a teaching philosophy statement and the process of constructing such a personal document. From this process emerged an increased understanding of the beliefs about student learning and about teaching that underpinned their academic practice (2008 & 2009 Mid-program and End-of-year surveys).

   TATAL strengthened my reflective practice in a way that has directly influenced and enhanced my learning and teaching... TATAL ... has provided me with new knowledge about the role of the teaching philosophy statement, teaching portfolio and the application process for formal recognition of learning and teaching practice.

4. A network making for creative conversations supported participants to gain recognition and reward for their teaching within and beyond their institution (faculty, institutional and ALTC teaching awards; scholarly publications; cross-institutional and intra-institutional teaching research projects).

Discussion

TATAL processes have been effective in establishing an ongoing safe and supportive, diverse and dynamic collegial environment, in which participants are nourished through collaborative reflective processes that facilitate the emergence of a sustainable learning and teaching community. Within these communities the real power of the portfolio process ... becomes evident ... in the acts of constructing, presenting and reflecting on the ... evidence of a portfolio (Lyons, 1998, pp. 4&5). This is further enriched in the TATAL community where participants receive feedback from colleagues of other disciplines and institutions.

The emerging themes suggest the program, with its grounding in social models of reflection and narrative critical inquiry is different from most common approaches to writing a teaching philosophy [which] offer [only] descriptive lists of questions regarding one’s beliefs about students, the role of the teaching, and the outcomes of higher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 6</td>
<td>Reflection: Review ground rules and expectations of participants and facilitators. Discussion: action research, reflective practice and critical incident analysis; what is a teaching portfolio and why have one? Reflective conversation: Presentation of a case study story from facilitator’s teaching practice, group feedback to facilitator. Participants reflect on critical incident for discussion in their first story. Preparation for TATAL 7: Write first story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 8</td>
<td>Reflective conversation: sharing second story. Collaborative feedback on second story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 9</td>
<td>Reflective conversation: sharing third story. Collaborative feedback on third story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TATAL 10</td>
<td>Reflective conversations Review teaching philosophy statement in the light of inquiry through storying. Review teaching portfolio. Where to for the group? How to go there?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A list of questions was only one aspect of the TATAL process. More importantly, TATAL’s processes offered a “luxury” and a “refuge” for participants. That is, as suggested by Bolden, Petrov & Gosling (2008, p. 52) an “opportunity for personal reflection away from the busy work environment” to have “thought-provoking and stimulating discussions”. The TATAL process definitely involved a great deal of talking about teaching which as Gibbs, et al. (2007, p. 2) suggest, can develop “excellent teaching” and maintain “that excellence”.

Writing a teaching philosophy statement and compiling a teaching portfolio involves an individual in intense scrutiny and compiling a teaching portfolio provokes a range of emotions. In their investigation of the emotional dimension of compiling a teaching portfolio FitzPatrick and Spiller (2010, p. 175) note the occurrence of a range of different emotions of various intensities experienced over the duration of the compilation process.

The teaching philosophy statement, as Beatty et al., (2009, p. 112) note also provokes intense emotions because one’s teaching philosophy is such a core element of one’s identity as a teacher, direct criticism of one’s teaching philosophy is akin to a direct assault on the self.

Some lessons learnt so far include:

1. Within the iterative nature of the journey of discovery participants progress their teaching and learning inquiry at different times and at different speeds.
2. Maintaining viable groups is a challenge. Some participants did withdraw. For most participants experiencing competing priorities withdrawal was the only option. Sometimes the competing commitments related to work and further study or to research publications. The importance of establishing commitment needs to be obtained as early as possible.
3. It is important to have the institutional settings that foster a believable focus on the improvement of teaching and learning to motivate academic colleagues to be involved and to retain their involvement. For example, having peer reviewed philosophy statements and teaching portfolios as part of the promotion process demonstrates a commitment to teaching quality (Kennelly, 2005; Southwell & Morgan, 2009).

**Future Directions**

During 2010 TATAL will extend its processes and practices to collaboratively develop, with participants from Finding the leader within program and UC and ALTC award winners, a TATAL–like program to be trialed in two faculties to support academics to develop a teaching philosophy and a teaching portfolio in preparation for their professional development review and for teaching award applications. In addition, a conference workshop proposal is under development for the 2011 HERDSA conference. The proposal would embed TATAL throughout the conference, beginning with a pre-conference workshop and continuing with a 60–90 minute session each day of the conference. Please watch this space, as with the editor’s agreement, we will continue to keep you posted on our progress.

**References**


**Acknowledgements:** The authors acknowledge the contributions of all TATAL 2008, 2009 and 2010 participants. Support for these programs has been provided by the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, the University of Canberra Promoting Excellence Initiative Making Room to Lead, and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The views expressed in these seminars and discussions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

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All Along the Watchtower: A Report on ICED 2010 in Barcelona (June 28–30, 2010)

By Barbara Grant with (in order of appearance) Helen Sword, Tai Peseta, Kathryn Sutherland, Brad Wuetherick, Simon Barrie, Catherine Manathunga, Peter Kandlbinder and Trevor Holmes of the CAD Collective

The very best of ICED happened outside the airless conference rooms: at the lunch and tea breaks, at the music-and-cava receptions and over sangria and paella late at night on the waterfront. (Helen)

The buzz of ICED for me this time was not really in the formal programme of papers and workshops. It was in the Barcelona sunshine! It was in those spaces talking with people and catching up on their news, changes to their jobs, their teaching, research and their institutional projects. (Tai)

I particularly enjoyed watching people overcome the rigidity of the spaces they’d been assigned, and the heat of the Barcelona summer, to create engaging and lively seminars and workshops. (Kath)

Barcelona, sensual city of summer heat, magical steeples and long sultry nights. City of ICED 2010. The conference theme was mystifying: Enhancing strategies for global quality learning in higher education. It seemed to stretch forever in any direction. But the opening keynote brought it right down to our troubled earth: higher education, said Dr Frederico Mayor Zaragoza, is about producing global citizens for a world struggling to find peace and prosperity for all. Global citizens who should not only be able to direct their own lives, but also actively participate in political events rather than merely witness them. In his address, Mayor Zaragoza drew on a lifetime’s experience in higher education and as a European citizen to offer a vision that went well beyond current utilitarian preoccupations. Higher education, he said, must be a watchtower: close to governments, influencing them but never submitting to them. It was an uplifting start: we were floating up there in among the crazily beautiful, foreverunfinished steeples of the Sagrada Familia!

But then it was back down to the noisy marketplace of symposia, workshops and seminars on educational/academic development: three keynote speakers and a choice of 242 events presented by colleagues from Downunder, many parts of Asia, North and South America, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe and Scandinavia. In this report, we offer assorted first-hand impressions and sensations from the three-day programme.

The opening keynote struck a tone that resonated in Simon’s mind for the rest of the conference: “I was particularly taken with the challenge thrown out to higher education about the role of the university as one of “anticipation” and as a “watchtower” to advise society. Such a role brings with it the need to offer an education that moves graduates beyond contributing to our current knowledge-based economy, to contributing instead to a creativity or hope-based economy. It was with this purpose in mind that he encouraged us to think about education as “coming to know reality in depth in order to transform it” and discover something new. I wondered what this might mean for our work as academic developers for the remainder of the conference. Certainly I found myself listening to presentations asking if they helped me to “know” academic development in depth? And wondering how the insights offered might help me to transform my practice into something new.”

Catherine’s highlights were sessions by Joelle Fanghanel and Glynis Cousin (from the UK) and Mike Cantrell, Zehawi Zerihun and Aster Minweyet (from Ethiopia): New bearings for global citizenship: “Greying” understandings of difference challenged us to explore our notions of global citizenship drawing on their work with Palestinian and Israeli students in an English university. Joelle and Glynis demonstrated how they were able to destabilise notions of otherness between these two groups of students and work towards a troubling pedagogy that enabled more complex understandings of difference. In Birth pains of academic development in Ethiopian public universities, we were challenged to re-think the emergence of academic development in different cultural and national contexts. Mike outlined the recent rapid expansion of Ethiopian universities and the work of establishing academic development centres in them while Zehawi discussed a refreshing approach to evaluating teaching quality that incorporated student self-assessment as well as reactions to their teachers. Last, Aster demonstrated the impact of a professional development programme for academics that involved an initial intensive session on effective teaching and learning, followed by weekly lunch-time meetings to explore and reflect on teaching practice. All the volunteers were women, so the programme became a powerful space for supporting female academic staff and fostering initiatives to encourage more girls to participate in higher education.”

Pete describes the second keynote: “Language and cultural imperialism are the elephants in the room at any ICED Conference. I found much to admire, therefore, in the
decision to ask prominent Catalan media scholar, Professor Immaculada Tubela, to present a keynote in what was most likely her third language. Those who persevered through the 50-minute “read” presentation that exhausted speaker and audience alike received a solid rather than stellar performance. Casadevall suggested universities have a lot to learn from observing the current generation of students who creatively using digital technologies through their everyday interactions with each other. Yet, there was something gratifying about a technology scholar who ignores the research on beneficial uses of technologies and fails to recognize that using PowerPoint would have assisted the majority of her audience who were not native English speakers either. Even so, it was better that our Spanish hosts took the risk of bringing an authentic Catalan voice into the conference rather than submitting to the Anglo-American hegemony.”

A moment that stood out for Tai: “A postgraduate colleague from the University of Sydney told me excitedly of meeting and talking with all the people she’d been reading on the page. I sometimes find that a dangerous sort of prospect (meeting the people one reads) but her smile was so wide and so vivid that it reminded me of the sort of community that academic development is: convivial and un-precious. I like that about ICED.”

ICED is a place where Trevor recharges his intellectual batteries: “Barcelona 2010 did not disappoint. I value the deep connections between people and between theory and practice. One moving highlight for me was the demonstration (from Rawinia Higgins, Meegan Hall and Tè Ripowai Higgins) of the integration of a Māori house into the real and metaphorical landscape of learning at Victoria University of Wellington. Another was about a senior seminar jointly offered between two very different universities in South Africa. Both of these gave me new food for thought in my own Cultural Studies teaching and in my academic development work with curricula more generally. Research I’d like to contribute to, having seen it in action, includes the genealogical work on academic development in Australia and New Zealand, and the graduate supervision studies being carried out in Switzerland.”

Brad’s fourth ICED was also about connecting and reconnecting: “The interactions with colleagues I know who think similarly about academic development, plus stimulating conversations with colleagues just met, make ICED my favourite conference. The opportunity to work with Trevor, Catherine, and Bev on our component of the symposium called Political Geographies of Academic Development was a tremendous highlight, as was working with Gail, Nancy, David, and Deandra on bringing the whole symposium together. One great strength of ICED is the diversity of topics and sessions – it illuminates the breadth of academic development. Kathryn (Sutherland’s) session on encouraging relational agency and scholarly habits among early-career academics, Gerda (Visser’s) on chance patterns in academics’ beliefs about the research-teaching nexus, and our impromptu (because the presenter didn’t show up) workshop on the research-teaching nexus (which turned out to be among the most interesting conversations of the conference) are the ones that stick in my memory. They will continue to inspire my work as I settle back in at my university in Canada.”

And then, at the 11th hour, there was our very own CAD Carnaval, where we invited all who came to take a walk on the wild side of academic development. It was nerve-wracking and noisy: conga dancing, streamers, masks, music and tooters shooed away the usual decorum. A pastiche of recollections: “Being in Barcelona meant throwing off the usual conference sensibilities and just having a bit of a go at being together in a way that generated laughter and stupidity. In CAD, we often plan things we’ve no idea how we’re going to pull off and ICED 2010 was no exception. What I remember most of that event was the six of us – Simon, Barbara, Helen, Kath, Catherine and me – trying so hard to generate an environment where folks could relax and laugh without fear. The performances we got from the people who came along and took a chance on us were just magical. My vote goes to Jonathan Wyatt’s very convincing ‘man-with-cuffs.’” (Tai) “A photo of the Carnaval instigators in their black clothes and garish masks kind of says it all. We got to become someone else for a short while, to explore the shadow side of our professional existence, and yet to do so in a way that was celebratory rather than whiny (the usual academic epidemic – which perhaps explains why I wasn’t so keen on the ‘complaints choir’ idea: we all do enough of that already).” (Helen)

After the sweaty wilderness of our Carnaval came the ritual of the closing keynote – not everyone liked it but I did (back to Barbara). John Elliott’s address ranged, sometimes a little loosely perhaps, over an eclectic mix of thinkers (Ulrich Beck, Susan Robertson, Zygmunt Bauman, Richard Sennett, Martha Nussbaum, Richard Rorty, Hannah Arendt) and empirical educational evidence to argue that we need better enquiries into the meaning of learning in higher education. What has stuck in my mind is Elliott’s assertion, based on large-scale studies of school students, that students with strong learning agendas can learn from bad teachers. I had one of those ah-hah moments that comes when something one has been vaguely bothered about comes into focus: in this case my worry about the relentless emphasis on the responsibility of the teacher to make education successful. And the related argument that goes like this: the best measure of successful educational development comes from the success of students. As if we (through our workshops and postgraduate certificates) simply need to lean hard enough on university teachers so that they in turn lean firmly on their students who will then morph into the “good student”. All my earlier life as an academic advisor to students, not to mention my other earlier life as a student managing a complicated set of obligations, screams no to this dystopic fantasy of cause and effect. (Barbara)

We close by thanking Joan Rué not only for the excellent academic connections that brought such unexpected keynote speakers to ICED but also for his grace and good humour in handling the inevitable strains that arise when the numbers attending a conference far exceed those envisioned. (Didn’t he know the stirring place Barcelona occupies in the imaginations of New Worlders and Scandinavians? But then he lives there, so maybe not.)

See you all in Bangkok in 2012 – in the meantime, stay wide awake on the watchtower!

Endnotes

1. To visit or join the Challenging Academic Development (CAD) Collective, go to http://mailman.ucc.usyd.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/itl-cad

Barbara Grant, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Academic Development, The University of Auckland.

Helen Sword, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Academic Development, The University of Auckland.
The inaugural QUT Faculty of Science & Technology (FaST) “Science Educators’ Symposium” was held on Friday, 1st October 2010 at QUT in Brisbane. The event was a great success, with an excellent line-up of speakers, including a keynote presentation by HERDSA President, Professor Geoffrey Crisp, on his ALTC Fellowship “Transforming Assessment” (http://www.transformingassessment.com/), as well as Associate Professor Gregor Kennedy from Health Informatics and Virtual Environments, Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences at the University of Melbourne, who spoke about “Satificing Searching and Expediency-based Practice: Medical students’ information seeking under the microscope”.

We also heard from our own Associate Professor Lisa Chopin, lecturer in Physiology in the discipline of Medical Sciences at QUT, Dr Victor Galea from the School of Land, Crop and Food Sciences at the University of Queensland, Dr Noel Whitaker, Senior Lecturer in the School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences at UNSW, and a regular visitor to QUT, Dr Danny Bedgood from Charles Sturt University, who talked about his Active Learning in University Science (ALIUS) project (http://www.alius.edu.au/).

To coincide with this event, we also launched “BUNSE”, the Brisbane Universities Network of Science Educators, based on the SNUSE group at UNSW, with a new web page at http://www.scitech.qut.edu.au/industry-community/bunse.jsp, and would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Will Rifkin at UNSW for this great suggestion! We also published the first in what we hope will be a series of “Science Education special issues of the Journal of Learning Design”, available online at http://www.jld.qut.edu.au/publications.

Because of the success of the 2010 FaST Symposium and the very positive feedback received, we are planning a repeat event in July 2011. Further information will soon be available at http://www.scitech.qut.edu.au/industry-community/events/conferences/symposium/ so watch this space! In the meantime, the PowerPoint slides from our 2010 speakers are available on the “Program” page.

Some of the comments received from attendees on the day, who included colleagues from UQ, USQ, ACU and University of Western Sydney, included:

I really enjoyed the whole day. I was actually surprised! I spent more time discussing ideas/ experiences on pedagogy today than I had done over the last 2 years.

 Speakers were diverse and interesting. Geoffrey Crisp an excellent keynote speaker whose ideas could be applied to so much of our work.

Re-visiting STEM education concepts is worthwhile exercise. Joint and collaborative case studies are timely and important.

The topics were of a great interest, great variety was covered, and practical examples are great for reflection, a good venue for developing collaboration and exchange of ideas.

The educational concepts/issues have been well known for a very long time in education research. It was interesting to see higher education in STEM engaging with these issues.

Fantastic event - very useful, relevant. Thank you very much :) We are really looking forward to running this event again next year, and hope to welcome many HERDSA members along. You might be the lucky winner of an iPad!!! For further information on the FaST Symposium, BUNSE or Journal of Learning Design, please contact s.beames@qut.edu.au.

Stephanie Beames is a Learning & Teaching Developer in the Faculty of Science & Technology (FaST) Queensland University of Technology.
The University of Queensland is celebrating its Centenary in 2010, with many events having been held throughout the year to mark this achievement. On 11 November it was the turn of TEDI – the Teaching and Educational Development Institute – to recognise the contribution of present and past staff to building the University's longstanding reputation for teaching excellence. TEDI’s Centenary celebration was a cocktail function where the special guest was Emeritus Professor Ingrid Moses, Chancellor of the University of Canberra and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England, who began her career in higher education as a Graduate Assistant in TEDI in 1978.

TEDI’s current Director, Professor Merrilyn Goos, explained that the invitation list was compiled from a master spreadsheet built up over the years that listed everyone who had ever worked in TEDI – and the spreadsheet contained over 400 names! She noted that many of TEDI’s former staff now held senior leadership positions in teaching and learning, citing as examples Dr Carol Nicoll, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, Professor Yoni Ryan, Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre at Australian Catholic University, and Professor Peter Lee, Vice-Chancellor of Southern Cross University. TEDI was one of the first academic development units to be established in Australian universities. In December 1969 the UQ Senate agreed to establish what was then to be called the Tertiary Education Centre. In March 1970 the Professorial Board met to discuss staffing and roles of the Centre. But it wasn’t until January 1973 that Professor Ernest Roe was appointed founding Director of the Tertiary Education Institute – or TEDI for short. Although he was unable to attend the Centenary function, (now Emeritus) Professor Roe sent a message that recounted some of his memories of the establishment of TEDI. He wrote: “I had been interviewed by a huge panel including most members of the University Senate at that time and chaired by the then Vice-Chancellor (later Sir) Zelman Cowen. This was an indication of the importance UQ then attached to this new venture … It pleases me greatly that such splendid progress has been made over the years, and its seems, from the outside at least, that TEDI-type activities have now a widely-accepted and significant role in most if not all tertiary institutions. I can presume to claim that, limited as our achievements were in those early years, my colleagues and I were pioneers, and that what we did was an essential prerequisite to the much more sophisticated role of TEDIs today.”

Professor Goos reminded TEDI’s present and former staff that, despite significant changes in the higher education sector in recent years, TEDI’s prime function remained as Ernest Roe outlined in TEDI’s first newsletter, published in 1974 – “to improve by research and practical means the quality of teaching and learning in the University”.

Professor Ingrid Moses described her early experiences in TEDI and then went on to reflect on how teaching and learning had developed over the past 30 years in Australia. This she illustrated from her experiences in a variety of posts in higher education. She found her experiences in TEDI, particularly the role model of Ernest Roe, were valuable in her position as Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England. It was fascinating to hear this personal history of events since the early days of TEDI.

After the speeches, past and present members of TEDI continued to enjoy interacting with one another over wine and cheese.

**Merrilyn Goos is the current Director of TEDI**

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The University of the Sunshine Coast’s Inaugural Learning and Teaching Week

By Joanne Scott

The University of the Sunshine Coast’s inaugural Learning and Teaching Week was exciting, inspiring, challenging, enriching and, for at least some of its organisers, exhausting. Held from 16 to 20 August 2010, the Week’s activities were grouped around the theme of “Diversity and Engagement”.

Vice Chancellor Designate Professor Greg Hill encouraged the USC community to join him “in a week of opportunity and celebration”. We were delighted to welcome approximately 160 USC staff and visitors, including from Sunshine Coast TAFE, to the jam-packed week which included 28 presentations, workshops and master classes; lots of conversations; and some delicious meals. There were 830 individual registrations to sessions. Those sessions were led by USC staff – academic, professional and sessional – and by colleagues from other Universities and from the ALTC, a deliberate recognition of the expertise that exists within and beyond our institution.

Students contributed to a panel discussion at the one-day Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching Colloquium, held on the Wednesday, and about seventy students attended a Diversity and Engagement Breakfast.

Among the Week’s numerous highlights – and it is invidious to select just a handful - was the Interactive Expo on Technology Enhanced Learning at which more than a dozen USC staff enthusiastically demonstrated their learning innovations to colleagues. ALTC National Teaching Fellow and Griffith University Professor Keithia Wilson explored diversity and engagement in the first year experience. Professor Sally Brown from Leeds Metropolitan University was a treasure; she offered an insightful keynote address and a great workshop on “assessing for learning” as well as inspiring some of USC’s learning and teaching leaders at a breakfast meeting. A day-long masterclass, “Making Teaching Work”, by Professor Phil Race, also from Leeds Metropolitan University, was over-subscribed; the engagement of the participants was obvious to anyone who walked past the class.

The week provided a basis for developing and enhancing relationships between the University and some of our keynote and workshop presenters, notably Professors Sally Brown, Phil Race and Keithia Wilson. Feedback from staff during and after the event, indicated a high degree of satisfaction; some colleagues have made changes to their teaching practices as a result of the workshops they attended.

Beyond the quality and generosity of the presenters – obviously critical factors, there were other important elements that contributed to the week’s success. The University’s senior executive actively supported the event; they were visible at various sessions and provided the necessary funding. That funding included honoraria for sessional staff who participated in the week, as part of the University’s commitment to valuing our sessional colleagues and encouraging them to undertake professional development. There was substantial promotion of the event – from serviettes advertising the event in our on-campus café to advocacy at university forums such as Academic Board – almost everyone knew about Learning and Teaching Week. Much of the week’s success also reflected the extraordinary dedication and high quality work of our project manager, Julianne Bernhagen.

The group of academic, professional and administrative staff who organised the event are enthusiastic about Learning and Teaching Week becoming an annual fixture in USC’s calendar. Planning has commenced for next year’s event, expected to be held during the teaching break in September.

Professor Joanne Scott is Chair, Learning and Teaching Management Committee, University of the Sunshine Coast

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University World News
The global window on higher education
For details go to
The inaugural HERDSA Researching Higher Education Symposium was a resounding success. Held at The University of Auckland, the event attracted 49 new and experienced higher education researchers (including 10 presenters). When we three organisers, Barbara Grant, Neil Haigh and Ian Brailsford, got together in May to plan the event we took the attitude that if we organise it, HERDSA members in New Zealand will come; however, never in our wildest dreams did we expect to welcome Australian HERDSA members too!

Over the two weekend days the participants enjoyed HERDSA hospitality and a mixed programme that included several plenary presentations and a choice of two workshops from five offered. On day two, the 30 who came back for more (on a Sunday morning no less!) participated in some quiet thinking time followed by pair and small-group discussions that offered structured opportunities to think and talk about their own research ideas and get feedback from others. It was enjoyably collegial and immensely stimulating. A more detailed account of the programme follows interspersed by end-of-the-day feedback from participants about what had been a high point for them.

High point: “First session – enthusiasm of presenters, teachers thinking about their teaching. Hard to choose one when all I attended [were] very worthwhile. Loved the last as well.”

High point: “Paradigm discussion and presentation, WOW! So wonderful to have a clear explanation by two obviously enthusiastic and passionate scholars.”

The first plenary, Becoming a Higher Education researcher, featured three University of Auckland academics from different disciplines – Daniel Exeter from Population Health, Jennifer Frost from History and Paul Denny from Computer Science – who inspired the audience with accounts of how they were actively researching their classroom teaching. The second, by Lynne Giddings (AUT University) and Barbara Grant (The University of Auckland) explored a way of thinking about higher education research through a model of diverse research paradigms. Day one closed with the third, by Neil Haigh (AUT University) and Ian Brailsford (The University of Auckland), in which they looked back at the record of higher education research in NZ and asked, in two quite different ways, what we can learn from it.

High point: “The programme looked predictable but sessions were innovative, informative and delivered with flair. Congratulations and thanks to all.”

High point: “Many. Everything on the programme was of interest and relevance – didn’t want there to be concurrent sessions to have to make a choice.”

The plenaries were broken up by two sets of workshops options. The morning set comprised: A framework for conceptualising a new research project, by Neil Haigh; Interviewing: Process, techniques and analysis, by Kathryn Sutherland (Victoria University of Wellington), and Tertiary education research and the Human Ethics Committee, by Erik Broght (University of Canterbury). The afternoon set: Qualitative data analysis, again by Neil Haigh and Publishing in Higher Education journals, by Barbara Grant and our farthest travelling presenter, Tai Peseta (La Trobe University and member of the HERDSA Exec).

High point: “Made me think more about new areas of where I would like to focus my HE [research] on.”

High point: “Hard to isolate one point, but I came feeling very ambivalent about what I had let myself in for and leave wanting to write, write, write ... The sense of good humoured collegiality really helped.”

As a result of the symposium, we have set up a Higher Education Researchers listserv so that participants can communicate with each other over matters of mutual interest. If you’d like to join, contact Barbara Grant on bm.grant@auburn.ac.nz. We also plan to set up a page inside the HERDSA(NZ) website and post some of the symposium materials there.

We would like to close this brief report with special thanks to Tessa Sillifant who assisted with the organisation of the symposium in the weeks leading up to it and on the day. We’d also like to thank colleagues Jennie Billot and Alison Kirkness (both of AUT University), and Jo Walton and Tony Hooper (both of Victoria University of Wellington), plus Erik and Tai again, who helped out with the small-group dynamics on the second day.

We look forward to the next one, in Aotearoa or across the ditch! Watch this space…

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Should a Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Learning and Teaching be Mandatory for Academics?

By Geoffrey Crisp

David Gosling recently published an article in SEDAs (Staff and Educational Development Association) magazine Educational Developments (1) on the extent to which Post Graduate Certificates in Higher Education learning and teaching (PgCerts) had become mandatory requirements for many new university academics in the UK. The UK has been particularly proactive in having policies requiring completion of a PgCert as a condition of continuing academic employment. In Australia, most higher education institutions (HEIs) would have a mandatory professional development requirement for new academics and would provide access to a formal qualification equivalent to the UK PgCert, although only a small number of institutions have made completion of the PgCert a requirement for continuing employment. Many Australian HEIs provide free or subsidised access to PgCerts to a limited number of their own academics. David pointed out that a number of countries have embraced the idea of mandatory professional development for new academics, including the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Japan and Sri Lanka; whereas other countries, such as the USA, have been reluctant to move down this path. In the USA, more significant emphasis is placed on the professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) rather than newly appointed Faculty, as GTAs are seen as the pool from which future academics will be drawn. David posited that the move towards embedding a mandatory component of professional development for the teaching component of an academic’s practice probably has more to do with government regulatory requirements on HEIs, rather than a recognition of the inherent merits of PgCert programs.

The nature of PgCert programs can vary between countries and indeed between institutions; in the UK SEDA plays a key role in maintaining standards around these programs through a formal recognition process; the Professional Development Framework provides recognition for the professional development programs of UK higher education institutions and the individuals who complete those programs. In Australia, there is currently no formal national recognition process for academic’s professional development, although informal benchmarking frequently takes places through the activities of the Foundations Colloquium (2) and CADAD (Council Australian Directors of Academic Development) (3).

The move to mandating professional training in educational practice through PgCerts is a recognition that completing a PhD in a core discipline and undertaking discipline-based research is not necessarily the most appropriate training for teaching; especially when that teaching might involve large classes with students from diverse cultures or social backgrounds. The issue of standards and the quality of teaching in HEIs is sometimes a controversial topic, especially when the discussion includes stakeholders outside of the specific discipline being investigated. How is teaching quality measured in HEIs and what would an acceptable standard of educational practice look like in each discipline? In Australia, the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) (4) has commissioned a major program of consultations with the higher education sector in order define academic standards in the disciplines in preparation for the work of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. These standards will include higher education learning and teaching. The ALTC has already sponsored a major project on Teaching Quality Indicators and the project proposed a set of indicators for recognising and rewarding quality teaching (5).

We have become accustomed to the almost universal use of student feedback as a proxy measure of teaching quality, and at the same time, we have witnessed research questioning the ability of this feedback to validly and reliably quantify teaching quality. Some institutions have reworded their documentation around the use of student feedback to make a clear distinction between students’ perceptions or experiences of the teacher and the teaching environment, and the evaluation of the teacher or the teaching environment, which is usually undertaken by peers. Peer evaluation has become more popular, but mostly for formative or developmental purposes and more reluctantly for the summative purposes of promotion and annual reviews. The main issues still preventing a more widespread adoption of summative peer review include the need to offer acceptable professional training for peer reviewers to ensure validity, reliability and fidelity to evaluations and the workload issues for both reviewer and reviewed.

Despite all this activity in “professionalising” higher education teaching, a question still posed by senior administrators is whether there is a direct, causal correlation between academics completing a PgCert and the quality of their teaching? I am sure all universities that offer PgCerts can provide
evidence that there is a positive correlation for their programs; the bigger question is how do we explain the high quality teaching delivered by a large number of academics who have never completed a PgCert? Completing a PgCert is no guarantee that high quality teaching will result, yet the majority of academics who do complete a PgCert will likely apply their new or affirmed learnings to their educational practices. Even academics who have not completed a PgCert can be positively influenced by their own readings of the educational literature and the activities of their colleagues who are engaged in the scholarship of learning and teaching. Should we expect all academics to complete a PgCert or should we require all academics to provide evidence of professional development that has enhanced the quality of their educational practice? Ignoring professional development associated with one’s practice is not an acceptable path for academics, so the issue may be more about finding appropriate mechanisms to offer a range of development or enhancement activities that cover the breadth of academics’ needs, rather than mandating one type of activity that will not necessarily cover all the aspects of an academic’s work?

References
3. CADAD; http://www.cadad.edu.au/

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The HERDSA Office

HERDSA is pleased to announce that Support U has accepted a 5 year contract to provide professional services to the HERDSA Secretariat. HERDSA members will be familiar with Jennifer Ungaro, from Support U, and the excellent support Jennifer has provided to HERDSA members. The HERDSA Executive undertook a review of the HERDSA Office and the services that were needed to support our organisation as we move forward with new initiatives and continue to position ourselves as the peak group representing higher education research and development in Australasia. After an open call for expressions of interest in providing an extensive range of services to the HERDSA Secretariat, Support U was selected as the most appropriate group. The Executive looks forward to continuing its relationship with Support U and is confident that members will be supported well from the Secretariat.

Geoff Crisp, President HERDSA

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For phone and fax contact numbers see page 2 of this issue.
The Journey of a Fellow; Fellowship, Committee and Learnings

As my fifth year on the executive draws to a close it feels timely that the editor has invited me to reflect on the influence my HERDSA Fellowship has had on my teaching and also to share some thoughts from serving on the Fellowships committee.

Fellowship

I am a pioneer Fellow, receiving my Fellowship with ten colleagues at the HERDSA conference in Christchurch in 2003. At the time I reflected in an article for HERDSA News that the Fellowship represents "... a point in the cycle of teacher development where the struggle to always provide a better learning environment for one's students is recognised by one's peers" (Kennelly, 2003, p.5). Interestingly five years later Peter Jones, writing also in HERDSA News, said "... that applying for a Fellowship was just one step in a longer journey ... and that it might be worthwhile setting this particular step into the context of the overall journey." (Jones, 2008, p.1)

In hindsight my reflection on teaching was also a strategic step for me as it led to a number of developments which were not planned prior to my application for a Fellowship. I simply wanted some supported rigorous examination of my teaching practice: how could I better assist my students to learn? Since 2003 the following developments flowed in whole or in part from this step.

• A 12 month sabbatical as the Academic Developer at Trinity College in Dublin.
• The introduction of a unit support program for Introduction to Management students at The University of Canberra.
• Membership of the Fellowships committee of the HERDSA Executive.
• Restarting the HERDSA branch of the ACT region.
• The introduction of Talking About Teaching And Learning (TATAL) programs within the ACT HERDSA branch and its proposed inclusion at the HERDSA Conference in 2011.
• Greater focus on the writing and sharing of my reflections and research into my teaching.

Prior to gaining the Fellowship and the "sabbatical year" in Ireland, I convened two first year management units at the University of Canberra College (UCC). UCC offered pathway programs for "English as an additional language" (EAL) students and others to gain entry into university. In particular, the programs for EAL students sort to develop their English language proficiency (ELP) and progression through university study. Together with a colleague, Anna Maldoni, an English language teacher, and I started a reading program for EAL Masters students in the Discipline of Management. Prior to going to Ireland we received a grant to continue the program and establish what benefits derived from the program in terms of the development of ELP for preparatory EAL Masters students.

The 12 month sabbatical in Ireland provided a very enjoyable experience for my wife and I during 2004/05. At Trinity, for the first time, I focussed on the development of teachers as a full time job. This included delivering a program of collaborative reflective practice to introduce Teaching Portfolios, a subject I have canvassed in previous HERDSA News articles (Kennelly, 2004; 2005). I became more aware of the importance of teachers taking some responsibility for the development of the academic skills of their students and the significance of their being socialised into the discipline. The success and failures I experienced at Trinity College in Dublin gave me the confidence to try new things on my return home.

Back in Australia I taught management units in the mainstream university as opposed to the UCC. I tutored a number of units and convened units offshore. From my previous work at UCC I continued to be drawn to the plight of international students who were offered places at the University without necessarily having the ELP or the support to be successful. My colleague, Anna, and I completed a paper discussing our work at the College after which we received another grant to run a similar program for undergraduate EAL students enrolled in the unit Introduction to Management (ITM), a first year unit in a Business degree at the University of Canberra. This program has now run for the last nine semesters and has assisted more than 500 first year students.

My experience in Ireland, of being supported by a small informal network of academic developers was one of great appreciation. So once elected to the HERDSA executive formally in 2006, a colleague (HERDSA Fellow, Jackie Walkington) and I reinstituted the HERDSA Branch of the ACT region forming a small informal group of academics, which cover the four main universities in the ACT.

Fellowship Committee

In March 2006 I was invited to join the Executive as a coopted member of the Fellowship committee. The important experiences I bring to the committee (my colleagues may have different views) are my training and teaching background and rigorous focus on reflective practice. A key ingredient of the Fellowship submission is the presence of reflection on one's educational practice (1). I have found that many registrants benefit from collaborative reflective practice, that is discussing their teaching and learning with a trusted
colleague. HERDSA gives all registrants access to a mentor who is also a Fellow. Mentors support the registrant through their portfolio development stage. The HERDSA fellowship scheme website has a specific handout on mentoring and on reflective practice (http://www.herdsl.org.au/?page_id=5 and click on “mentoring” and or “reflective practice”). Another point is that the role of HERDSA mentor is quite different to the role of the HERDSA Assessor. This later role is like that of the reviewer in the article reviewing process. The assessor, although they are also HERDSA Fellows have not been on the journey with the registrant. The assessors are making judgements against established criteria based on the portfolio submission. Fellows work collaboratively under the guidance of the Fellowship committee to continually review and improve the fellowship processes. Each year at the conference the Committee runs a workshop on “Applying for a Fellowship” It will be run again at the conference on the Gold Coast in July 2011. I encourage all prospective Fellows to come along and find out more from those who are on the Fellowship journey.

Flowing jointly from my Irish experience, membership of the Fellowships Committee and the restarting of the HERDSA branch of the ACT region is the TATAL initiative. TATAL is a joint initiative with a University of Canberra colleague, Coralie McCormack and myself representing HERDSA. We have three small TATALs operating, the first started in September 2008 (McCormack and Kennelly 2009 and in this edition, 2010), potentially attracting academics from across the Branch’s tertiary sector. Participants meet monthly to share and reflect on their contemporary teaching and learning stories.

Almost 5 years on, the benefits of this committee membership have been numerous. Most recently the Fellowship committee has commenced Assessors workshops to improve the feedback to registrants through greater transparency and increase mentors awareness of the assessor’s role. The challenge, in a sometimes less than sympathetic environment, where academics are often asked to do more teaching and research with less resources, is for the Committee and the Fellows to clearly demonstrate the intrinsic rewards of the scheme by comparison to obvious extrinsic (financial) rewards of other Fellowships. To this end the HERDSA branch of the ACT region has proposed that the Conference Organisers incorporate a HERDSA TATAL into the 2011 program at the Gold Coast. Delegates would have the opportunity to participate in a pre conference TATAL workshop and continuing TATAL meetings on each day of the conference, allowing participants to build a serious reflective network through which to discuss their teaching and learning at the conference.

**Learnings**

The development cycle of the HERDSA Fellow requires an on going and planned approach to one’s development as an educational practitioner (1). My pioneer colleagues and I have been through this renewal process twice. The following specific learnings were captured in my latest renewal.

I realise through my teaching portfolio groups in Ireland and Australia that I am as much the learner as the teacher/ facilitator. The learning comes from the group as individuals share experiences of their teaching and colleagues comment and ask questions. This is a different experience to discussions with young under graduate students. The point in relation to recognising the different needs of any students, is the confirmation of not only differences in learning style, but also difference in learning speeds. In the work with TATALs, both here and in Ireland, some colleagues took only a couple of sessions to get working on the investigation and reflection of their teaching, while others took most of the academic year to get started.

The Unit Support Program (USP) experiences have highlighted yet again the importance of not assuming one knows about one’s students needs; the strategic consequences of developing a trusting relationship (Cullity 2008) with EAL students and others; the joy of team teaching and the rigor and learnings that flow from peer review.

From this post initial Fellowship journey I have a greater appreciation of the richness of differing perceptions and personalities of academics across disciplines.

**Note 1.** The term “educational practice” encompasses “teaching” and other related activities.

**References**


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I am feeling lucky to have survived a local flight in Indonesia. The personal entertainment system in front of my seat on a recent Garuda flight between Medan and Jakarta in Indonesia displayed the following interesting flight data:

- Time to destination: 49 minutes
- Distance to destination: 0 km
- Speed: 464 km per hour.

This interesting information with its illogical arithmetic made me think about reliable and valid data – a big issue here in working with government. But, more to the point, it forced a silent prayer that the same data was not guiding the navigation systems of that particular flight! The fact that I am now writing this article is evidence that it wasn’t. Anyhow, I arrived safely and was able to finish this essay for HERDSA News! I was also pleased to see recently that Garuda has now so improved its services that it has been rated the best service airline in Southeast Asia – a testimony to organisational development, hard work, and strong leadership! I wonder how many universities could improve their international ranking in just a few years?

Having reliable and valid data is central in any research and evaluation program and in all good systems of student assessment. These issues came to mind when I found some old workshop materials I used in assessment workshops. One resource was a paper published in the Journal of Educational Psychology, 4, 1976, by Garwood that examined the possibility that students with “desirable” first names might score higher on tests than those with names rated as “undesirable”. Sure enough, students with desirable names differed significantly from others on standardised achievement scores as well as on a number of other measures such as personality integration and aspirations about achievement behaviour. The names? Sorry, not here – I do not want to create any arguments by listing these and, anyway, how valid can this study’s findings be in New Zealand and Australia of today compared with the USA of the mid-1970’s when this research was conducted?

Considering data also caused me to reflect on a recently documented “disease of development”, related to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I plan to add this disease to my catalogue of diseases listed in HERDSA News, 31, 1, April 2009, 6. This new disease is Obsessive Measurement Disorder (OMD), a disease described as “an intellectual dysfunction rooted in the notion that counting everything in government programs, private industry and some foundations, will produce better policy and improved management” (Natsios, 2010).

Although I have no clinical evidence, I am almost certain this is the same disease that infected Australian universities a little more than a decade ago when the new breed of enlightened university managers determined that teaching evaluation data had to be gathered more routinely and used systematically by managers to “drive” the quality of teaching “agenda”. More recently, of course, we have seen the most widespread impact of OMD in the form of the My School web site (www.myschool.edu.au/).

So, I suggest, the definition be adjusted to specifically include educational institutions. May I also suggest to the editors of academic journals in higher education a “special issue” which sets out plainly, and for the edification of all, the evidence of “better policy and improved management” as promised by the sufferers of OMD?

The “counter bureaucracy”, in Natsios’ analysis is responsible for the “disruptive tensions” between the professional and technical work of organisations on the one hand and the compliance and accountability side on the other. Built on growing layers of laws and regulations, in USAID the counter bureaucracy has “created a force of auditors, accountants, lawyers and procurement and contracts officers” that seriously threatens program integrity by skewing good professional development work towards accountability”. Could this be true of our institutions here too? Is there an antidote for OMD?

Challenged by a reader of this column to be a little more forthcoming with academic support for using humour in teaching, I plunged into the bibliographical bowels of the Adelaide University Library some months ago to gather some ideas from the recent literature. Two things astonished me as I carried out this investigation. First, just how much published material now exists on learning and teaching. I suppose the contrast was particularly stark, as much of my research in recent years has depended on very inadequate libraries in developing countries or web-based searches that prohibit access to good university libraries and journal articles. (It puzzles me that journal articles, prepared for publication by leading experts in their respective fields for free, then reviewed by other experts for free are locked away unless a ransom of around $30 per paper is paid to their keepers!) Anyhow, in the early years of my career in educational development it is no exaggeration to say that you could just about carry around most references to serious research on university teaching in your head! No, that was not in 1914 – I refer to more recent times, the 1970’s!

The second thing that astonished me about the recent literature I was searching was how much serious attention has been given to the place of humour in education. Some of this work is very funny, some of it not so funny, and other works carefully blend humorous material to support serious academic arguments. “Humour in cognitive and social development” by Paul Jewel, published in the International Education Journal, 6,2, 2005 is an excellent example of the latter. It is also noted here for its utility to teachers for, as Jewel notes, it helps to understand how “… the construction and appreciation of comedy is an intellectual, creative and ethical endeavour” in education that should be valued and nurtured. This attention goes well beyond the usual idea of spicing-up teaching with humour, something that is treated very well by Jeni
Mawter in “Thinking skills, humorous texts and literacy”, *Access*, September, 2006, for example. The literature also explores the role of humour in the development and maintenance of class cohesion, a topic discussed by Rose Senior, in *Prospect*, 16, 2, 2001.

So, what does Jewel offer? Among some very helpful insights for teaching, he quotes this joke, which, he suggests, may be relevant to those interested in education of the gifted, and, may I also suggest, be relevant to current events? For teachers, material such as in this example can be easily edited and adjusted to suit particular needs and circumstances.

A bloke in the bar turns to the guy next to him and says, “Can I buy you a beer?” and the other bloke replies, “Look, I’ll be perfectly frank with you so we won’t waste any of our precious time. See, I’m a genius. And if you buy me a beer you’ll want to talk, and what could you say that would interest me, a dead-set genius with an IQ of 196” And the bloke says, “An IQ of 196? This is incredible. I’m a genius too, with an IQ of 195 - we can talk! Bartender, two beers.” And so they settle down to discussing quantum physics and the great theories of the cosmos.

Down the bar a bit, a bloke nudges his neighbour and says, “How about these two? I’m not stupid, in fact, I have an above average IQ of 127 but I wouldn’t have a clue what these geniuses are talking about. Quantum what? Theories of where? It’s way over my head.” And his neighbour says, “You have an IQ of 127? I’m above average, too. My IQ is 126 - we can talk! Bartender, two beers.” And so they settle down to discussing quantum physics and the great theories of the cosmos.

Further down the bar, a bloke nudges his neighbour and says, “Check this out, would you? Whatever those geniuses are talking about, it’s complete gobbledygook to me, and I’m not ashamed to admit that all this stuff is way over my head. I’ve got an IQ of 80. You wanna make something of it?” And his neighbour says, “This is great! I’m really dull, too. My IQ is 78 – we can talk! Bartender, two beers. So, the elections went pretty well. I hear you got returned to Parliament with an increased majority.”

One of the more “serious” papers published in the recent past is Wanzer, Frymier and Irwin, “An explanation of the relationship between instructor humour and student learning” in *Communication Education*, 59, 1, 2010. Among its profound conclusions is this gem: “If humour attempts are recognised and resolved by receivers and elicit positive affective responses, the result is often laughter and smiling” (p. 12). Seriously? I didn’t know that; I guess it is important though!

It seems there are many others out there ferreting away at the “quality of discourse” issue I have raised in earlier *Meanderings*, among them being Don Watson in his entertaining book, *Bendable Learnings* (Knopf, 2009). I discussed this book in the April 2010 HERDSA News.

Among the materials I turned up in my search for humour were two very strange “papers”, one by M. Heyward, “Towards an integrated meta-theory and multidimensional development stage-model for inter-subjective blather with implications for practice and suggestions for further research” in the *International Journal for the Advancement of Humanity*, 99, 1997, and another as yet unpublished response by T.G. Mephisto titled “On the trickiness of life”. As readers may experience difficulties in locating these papers in their university libraries, I will be delighted to provide electronic copies of them if such readers wish to contact me. Both of these papers cast a wholly new light on my concerns with the quality of academic and bureaucratic writing.

In a long, well written, and copiously referenced article, Heyward asserts that “Research into blather has proceeded over the last thirty years in a conceptually and theoretically-fragmented manner, and whilst progress has been made, the writer considers it appropriate at this point to introduce a theoretical model which, it is intended, will enable the integration of earlier stage-theories and typologies of blatherers, and offer a solid basis for future research. Among the models considered is Nesbitt’s classic interpretation of Murphy’s Law that provides an underlying paradigmatic orientation, and an inter-subjectivist, post-modern deconstructionism is proposed as a theoretic smoke screen mechanism providing some useless very-big-words consistent with the ‘webs of insignificance principle’.”

Mephisto’s, belated response to Heyward’s call for further blather research and theoretical development, seeks to “reframe the discourse” and introduces original sources and insights into the theoretical debate. The writer draws on diverse sources including religious texts, empirical research, idle conversation and football commentary to re-conceptualise life, not as inherently problematic, but as essentially and ultimately “tricky”. The Mephisto article briefly surveys the field and describes historical and contemporary attempts to conceptualise and address the trickiness of life. The meaning assumed when the term is affixed to “life” as in “life can be tricky” is ambiguous and, Mephisto argues, it is the very fact of its ambiguity that makes “tricky” such a useful concept.

I should point out here that two very experienced proof-readers were completely misled by this discussion about the writings of Heyward and Mephisto. Perhaps their misinterpretation reflects the fact that too many of us have become so conditioned by “blather” in academic and bureaucratic writing as to miss the real thing – “blather” – when it is put in front of us!

Back in the April edition of HERDSA News I commenced a “meandering” through my library, inspired by Susan Hill’s book, *Howard’s End is on the Landing* (Profile, 2009), where she voyages through her personal library. I was surprised by the response I got from that, several people emailed me to say how they too found this-or-that book I had mentioned to be valuable to them too. Looking through my professional library, here in Jakarta, I have to admit to very “slim pickings” but the fact I added the following two titles to my baggage, pushing already overburdened luggage limits, is testament to their enduring value to me.

The first of these two rather old books is Stephen Isaac and William Michael, *Handbook in Research and Evaluation* (Edits, San Diego, 1976). There are two outstanding attractions to me in this book, which I believe is now available in later editions.

These attractions are first, the breadth and quality of the technical content and, second, the succinct presentation of complex ideas. On the subject of experimental control, that is a big issue to me now as I undertake studies of development impact on schools, in just one page, the concept is clearly described, the key issues are enumerated, and references provided in footnotes. This book is an excellent model of presentation and an invaluable reference handbook at the
same time. We could all do far worse than consider it as a model for other reference works we may be developing ourselves.

The second book I carry around with me is Roger Fisher and William Ury with Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes; Negotiating an Agreement Without Giving In*. Second Edition, Random House, 1992. The fact that the first edition appeared in 1981, nearly 30 years ago, and this second edition has left the original text unchanged (except from corrections) and simply added new material is surely strong evidence of the durability and value of the original writing. What I especially like about this book is its foundation on principles and deciding issues on their merits. How I wish many other facets of academic and professional work could also similarly claim to be clearly and explicitly based on strong principles of practice!

Missed last issue’s quiz? Don’t worry, here are the answers! *HERDSA News* had an excellent response and we thank all of you who entered and engaged with the intellectual challenges presented. The winner of a free pass to the next HERDSA Conference was Wal Kerville from Adelaide. The correct answers are as follows:

1. False. There has not been “an education revolution” in Australia. [Please, check your dictionary! Revolution: *noun*, “an overthrow or repudiation and the thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed.”]
2. True. The transcript of the former Prime Minister’s speech shows no inconsistency at all on the implementation of university research policy: “Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, good to be with you. Can I just say this? Australian working families. Can I just say this? Australian working families. Can I just say this? Australian working families.”
4. True. The quality of learning has improved since the discovery of deep learning.
5. False. Building the Education Revolution. *[Alice in Wonderland]* is based, in part, on fact and has a mathematical foundation.]

This month’s puzzle! Translate the following “bureaucratese” into English:

“Development Partner Responsibilities. AusAID and EU will have responsibility for:

(a) participating as a member in the government-led GOG Joint Sector Performance Review process, including reviewing the progress on achieving specific ESSP Joint Results Framework targets;

(b) participating as a member in the four government-led TOGs for ESSP program progress and performance review process to ensure that program outputs contribute to ESSP Joint Results Framework targets for access, quality and good governance;

(c) providing technical support (in-house advisers and contracted specialists) to the GOG and the relevant TOGs; and

(d) facilitating communications, consultations and policy dialogues, and disseminating reports for GOG and relevant TOGs review and approval.”

This mysterious prose comes from documents for the forthcoming $500 million Australian education development aid program for Indonesia: *AusAID Request for Tender, Capability Statement, 17 November 2010: Australia’s Education Partnership with Indonesia – AusAID Performance Oversight and Monitoring (POM)*, Canberra, p.16.

Not satisfied with GOGs and TOGs, the document also contains the most unfortunate abbreviation, “WoG”, which means “Government of Australia / Whole of Government approach”. How can anyone be so unfamiliar with the racist connotations of this abbreviation? So much for Australian sensitivity and diplomacy!

References

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Check out the National centres for learning and teaching

**AUSTRALIA**

Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC)
Promoting excellence in higher education
[www.altc.edu.au](http://www.altc.edu.au)

**NEW ZEALAND**

[www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz](http://www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz)
A brief analysis of the ALT-J case [6] has helped me to develop some forecasts about the storm likely to gather around the ARC's Tier Review Process.

To begin with, ALT's RFP concerning ALT-J: Research in Learning Technology is quite intriguing, for several reasons. Firstly, the RFP [2] publishes data that is normally not available for public viewing: numbers of “regular” subscribers, numbers of “bundled deals” subscribers, numbers of ALT member subscribers, print run numbers, etc. Real “due diligence” data, to borrow a phrase from the corporate world. Not surprisingly, the numbers of regular subscribers is small (56), evenly divided between “print + online” and “online only” and including a negligible number of personal subscribers (2). The large numbers are in ALT members (900) and the relatively new and recently developed category of “bundled deals”. This category reflects recent strategies by the major multinational publishers, to move away from being very dependent upon the sale of conventional subscriptions, towards repositioning themselves as providers of “online library seats” or a “virtual library”, that is selling online only subscriptions to a large aggregation or “bundle” of journals, with various additional services such as hypertext links from an article to other articles that cite it, and search facilities encompassing the whole “bundle”.

Secondly, ALT did not give an explicit indication of its intentions in the business model spectrum, although it may be inclined towards an increased degree of open access. The options include an ascilite/AJET model [7] (expenses $0, income $0; full open access), or some other model, such as the HERDSA's [8] and ODLAA's [9] journal model (expenses $0, or $X as apportioned to the editorial workers; net income $Y, as negotiated with the publisher - Taylor & Francis [10] in these cases). Put in another way, is there scope for ALT to obtain increased funding from T&F (or perhaps Wiley-Blackwell, Elsevier, Sage, etc [11]), whilst also being “nearly” open access with ALT-J? There is a good number of multinational publishers seeking to sign up academic and professional society journals [11], but society executives are (or should be) very aware that the “fund raising from our journal” niche in the journal ecosystem is fully occupied, or even quite over-populated.

Thirdly, ALT’s RFP advanced a well-designed set of “Headline requirements”, which constitutes a very good action list or check list for an editorial and publishing team, although it does not explore the full range of options. For example, the RFP [2] is ambiguous about the continuation of print, which is strange because everyone connected with scholarly journal publishing knows that printing and postage costs are budget killer items, and therefore substantial expansion of the numbers of issues per year is impossible if a printed version is continued. As the number of “full fee” subscribers for ALT-J is relatively small (56) compared with the number of “big discount” subscribers (the 900 ALT members), it may not be feasible to sustain a cross-subsidisation. Another option that is not explored is the use of third party services for “10. Provide a well-implemented online submission system ...”. Software and services are available from open source (e.g. Open Journal Systems) and commercial providers (e.g. Aries) [12]. The RFP does not canvass ideas about authors being given an option to purchase open access (see [13] for illustrative examples), or charging authors or their institutions (e.g. require at least one year's membership of ALT for the contact author or the authors' institution). Given the high rates charged by commercial publishers [13], there is an opportunity to undercut the market.

Most of the ALT RFP's “Headline requirements” [2] will require coordinated
action by both the journal editorial team and the publisher, for example:

2. Maintain the high quality of the journal, and serve to increase the esteem in which the journal is held, the influence that it has, and its impact, including, potentially, by increasing from the current three issues per year to four;

3. Improve the overall visibility of the journal through relevant abstracting services, ISI listings, and on Google Scholar; [2]

RFP Items 2. and 7. may require resolution of a very difficult question. To what extent does ALT-J’s association with a major international publisher, Taylor & Francis, help to sustain “the esteem in which the journal is held”? That question is of some interest to AJET, because it may relate to the demotion of AJET from Tier A to Tier B in 2010, whilst ALT-J retained its Tier A status [14]. Did the name Taylor & Francis tip the unknown rater’s assessment towards ALT-J instead of AJET? The same question may be pertinent for HERDSA [8], ODLAA [9] and many other societies as they consider how to best advance or maintain their own journal’s ranking during the ARC’s forthcoming Tier Review Process.

The crux of the matter is that the ARC has tied itself into an incredibly normative ranking exercise, namely 5% Tier A*, 15% Tier A, 30% Tier B, and you can forget the rest [15]. Therefore, to advance the ranking for one’s own journal, it will be necessary that someone else’s journal in the same ANZSRC “Field of Research” [16] be demoted. That can impose a “divide and conquer” regime, as societies and other interested parties may seek to both promote “their” journal, and belittle some of the higher ranked journals that “their” journal could displace. There may be several hundred or more societies and editors exploring their own case studies, not unlike the AJET and ALT-J case.

My own example of “promote” (with a restrained amount of “belittling”) appears in a recent AJET Editorial [17], which illustrates one response that may be quite common, namely comparing ERA journal rankings with other rankings such as the Thomson Reuters Impact Factor. Naturally enough, my comparison, “Table 2: Comparing Impact Factor and Tiers rankings for some journals” is favourable for AJET and unfavourable to three of its major, higher tiered competitors [17]. Actually, it is quite easy to do this kind of critical commentary, because the ARC seems to steadfastly refuse to reveal in detail the methodology it followed in deriving its Tiers ranked list [18]. Or, it cannot reveal any detail because it left the matter mostly to its “peak bodies and other academic groups” (characterised in Editorial 26(6) as “clique bodies” [18]). Perhaps the ARC failed to realise that it was not sufficient to undertake a consultation process, it had to undertake also a research process.

Some examples of contemporary academic criticism of Tiers are cited in AJET Editorial 26(6) [18]. Examples of recent press criticism of Tiers and other aspects of the ERA have appeared regularly in The Australian, including “Journal rankings rankle academics” [19], “Matching input and output assessments” [20] and others [21, 22, 23, 24]. The ARC’s announcement of a Tier Review Process [3] is likely to stimulate further criticism; indeed it could become a torrent of critical commentary about Tiers and other aspects of the ERA. Faced with this prospect, the ARC may develop a “bunker” response, that is “batten down and weather the storm”. After all, it can rely on the support of most of the senior managers from most of the universities. Quite understandably, they may be reluctant to “bite the hand that feeds them”. Also, the ARC’s reference to “public consultation in early 2011” [3] may indicate a desire to get it over and done with during the traditional holiday month for Australian academics.

Of course it would be unfortunate if the ARC were to go into “bunker mode”. After all, it should be an influential leader in reviewing the question of why do research. Is why do research to be focused narrowly upon attaining “international excellence” above all else, or is the why to be blended with other big purposes, like serving the community who fund the research, and the professional growth of researchers? To what extent is “international excellence” aligned with our community’s needs and the professional growth of researchers? To what extent is this question of the ARC’s Tier Review Process test this hypothesis?

References

1. Email circulated by Seb Schmoller, Association for Learning Technology, 14 Oct 2010. I thank Associate Professor Rob Phillips for drawing my attention to the RFP.


6. An earlier version of the text relating to ALT and ALT-J appeared on 26 October 2010 as part of AJET Editorial 26(6), http://www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet26/editorial26-6.html, but it was "unpublished" on 5 November 2010 in response to a request from the President of ascilite, who expressed certain concerns that need not be detailed here.


8. HERD (Higher Education Research and Development). http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/07294360.asp

9. Distance Education. http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/01587919.asp


Roger Atkinson retired from Murdoch University’s Teaching and Learning Centre in June 2001. His current activities include publishing AJET and honorary work on the TL Forum and ascilite Conference series, and other academic conference support and publishing activities. Website (including this article in html format): http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/

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The HERDSA Executive

Several members of the Executive will be completing their terms of office in mid 2011 including the President. There will be a call for nominations around April 2011. Please start considering the names of suitable candidates for nomination so that the vacancies can be filled and the work of your society may continue. Current members of the Executive would happy to tell you more about what is involved. See the list on page 2 of this issue.
As 2010 wanes, I hope you can cherish some leisure and savor sunshine, holidays and loved ones. I hope you enjoy the following quotations, pithy philosophy.

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.

Alvin Toffler

Never try to discourage thinking, for you are sure to succeed.

Bertrand Russell

We do more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself.

Lloyd Alexander

The trouble with people is not that they don't know but that they know so much that ain't so.

Josh Billings

How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live.

Henry David Thoreau

All kids are scientists. They’re born scientists. They ask all these terrible questions that nobody can answer because they’re scientists. So, what do you do? You beat that curiosity out of them and they stop asking questions. It’s very hard to survive that.

Leon Lederman

Try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms…Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into an answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Letters to a Young Poet

Avoid trivia.

George C. Marshall

(IIf no one has been annoyed for some time by what he sees to be your irresponsibility, you should consider whether you are holding your imagination too much in check.

Edmund Phelps

(Nobel Laureate Economics)

Half the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important. They don’t mean to do harm – but the harm does not interest them. Or they do not see it, or they justify it because they are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.

T.S. Eliot

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire is the wisdom of humility; humility is endless.

T.S. Eliot

Is it worse to be scared than to be bored, that is the question.

Gertrude Stein

I distrust scientists who complain about others stealing their ideas — I have always had to force new ideas down people’s throats.

Max Perutz

(Nobel Laureate Chemistry)

Learning is a lifetime process, but there is a time when we must stop adding and start updating.

Robert Braut

Why do you stay in prison when the door is so wide open? Walk out like somebody suddenly born into colour. Do it now. Ask a difficult question and a marvelous answer appears.

Sufi

I read Shakespeare and the Bible, and I can shoot dice. That’s what I call a liberal education.

Tallulah Bankhead

You have to learn to stay out of corridors because corridors generally lead to committee rooms.

Thomas Morgan

(Nobel Laureate Medicine)

There’s a saying among scientists, that you don’t know you’ve got a really good idea until at least three Nobel laureates have told you it’s wrong.

Paul Lauterbur

(Nobel Laureate Medicine)

Do not be too moral. Be not simply good; be good for something.

Henry David Thoreau

We’re fools whether we dance or not. So we might as well dance.

Japanese Proverb

You’ll be old and you never lived, and you kind of feel silly to lie down and die and to never have lived, to have been a job chaser and never have lived.

Gertrude Stein

To change one’s life: Start immediately. Do it flamboyantly.

William James

Ann Kerwin was the HERDSA Visiting Scholar in 1994. Ann migrated from the U.S.A. to be Philosopher-in-Residence at Auckland University of Technology. New Zealanders may know her as Resident Philosopher on Radio New Zealand National, Nights with Bryan Crump, where she speaks on philosophy and philosophers.

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Relax Before a Presentation

With expanding class sizes, lecturers can expect to be standing in front of several hundred students some time throughout their career. Not many of us are natural presenters and it is common to feel stress whenever we need to stand up in front of a large group of people and make a presentation. A small amount of anxiety is a normal response to any unknown situation. Once we feel anxious the body copes by releasing adrenaline which in turn increases blood pressure and puts the body into a state of heightened awareness and increased sensitivity. When the body triggers these physiological responses a person essentially begins to feel “nervous”.

An intense feeling of anxiety can be so powerful that you believe you are losing control. In its milder form appearing nervous can be distracting for an audience as well as making us less effective presenters because we find it hard to concentrate and we are less inclined to take the risks that make performance interesting. Most approaches for lessening nervousness aim to change patterns of thinking. This begins with finding the underlying cause of the anxiety so the presenter can learn to deal with problems more effectively. Then replace negative thoughts that feed nervousness with positive ones that visualise a successful presentation. Finally, deal with the physical responses of anxiety by learning muscle relaxation and controlled breathing techniques.

Feeling Prepared

The more prepared you feel before a presentation the more confident you’ll become and the stronger impact you’ll have on the audience. As well as planning what you will say you should plan your responses to tough questions you expect to get asked after your present. Familiarise yourself with the room and make sure your notes are easy to read and keep in order. Most new lecturers are over-prepared so decide what to leave out if you run out of time. If you lose your place during your presentation think of something you can adlib while you skip over what you were planning to say and go to the next point in your notes so that your audience is blissfully unaware that you ever had a problem.

Visualise Success

Imagine in your mind how a successful presentation will go. Run through the presentation as if you are watching a movie but beginning with the conclusion where you explain the benefits of listening to your presentation. Then imagine how you are going to grab the interest of your audience at the start by telling them what your presentation is all about. See yourself making eye contact with the audience, how you’ll be standing at the front of the room and the kinds of gestures you will use to focus on the main points as you present. Replay this several times in your mind as a positive affirmation that the presentation will go well.

Learn to Breath

Make sure you arrive at your presentation relaxed by avoiding alcohol, caffeine and tobacco which all can make nervousness worse. Schedule regular exercise and pleasant outings before you present and listen to calming music on the way to your presentation. My yoga teacher suggests spending a few minutes in a quite spot breathing deeply to relax your body and clear your mind. Breathe in slowly and completely until your lungs are fully expanded. Hold it for the count of 5 and slowly exhale. Pause before repeating another 5–10 times. Also unhunch your shoulders, which is where many people store their nervous energy. Practice muscle relaxation by progressively tensing and relaxing the muscles in your body, working from your face down the body to your toes. Hold each muscle tensed for 10 seconds before relaxing. With practice this can be performed almost anywhere including during your presentation.

Further Reading


You can comment on this article at http://herdsanews.wordpress.com/

BY HOW TO… is a series that looks at the contemporary challenges in academic practice facing university teachers. Each issue presents a new dilemma in higher education and explores the prevailing attitudes of HERDSA members looking for solutions to these new problems. You can suggest a modern dilemma of academic practice for this series by emailing Peter. Kandlbinder@uts.edu.au and outlining an incident or situation you have come across.
Higher Education in the Headlines. November 2010

By Peter Kandlbinder

A summary of the main stories on higher education from the last 3 months of the Australian Higher Education, Times Higher Education and the Chronicle of Higher Education found that UK cuts to university funding dominated the higher education press. Other themes included the results of the Australian election, changes being brought by TESQA, university rankings, US fundraising for university reconstruction and nation building through higher education.

UK Government Slashes University Funding
In August the UK anticipated an unprecedented period of funding cutting but the VC’s expected not everyone would suffer to the same extent in the predicted funding cuts which were rumoured to be as high as 35%. Struggling colleges were forced to look for partnerships to stay afloat as the UK began to lose its allure to international students but the attempt to tax graduates was ruled out as “unworkable”. In October the Times Higher Education was reporting that universities will need to find a niche or go extinct with VCs racing to be at the top of the fees ladder while saying that low-cost arts and humanities subjects would survive the loss of grants. The Hefce chief acknowledged that the UK higher education was heading into uncharted territory.

Australian Election Delivers for Regional Development
During the August election the Australian Higher Education predicted that the sector will face a “precarious future” as it waits to see the shape of the government and the Coalition would not guarantee a cap on HECS but acknowledged that fees may rise if it formed government. In September the Australian Higher Education was talking up a regional revolution as the influential Independents won support for universities in the regions and higher education was giving a full portfolio in the minority Labor government. In October the Australian Higher Education reported that it would be 12 months before funding advice would be available for Australian universities.

TESQA Takes Over Quality Assurance
In September the Australian Higher Education reported that the new tertiary regulator intended to go it alone on the question of higher education standards but predicted that conflict over university quality was unlikely. In October the Australian Higher Education reported that Go8 universities continued to fight the Australian Qualifications Framework looking for greater flexibility in the naming and levels of postgraduate degrees.

US University Reconstruction
In August the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that the Gates Foundation was trying to stop students dropping out of university and in September US universities were finding renewal in rebuilding although iconic buildings were raising preservation issues. In October the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that two Ivy League universities were using peer pressure to recruit financial donors from its seniors while other universities tried to ban bottled water and a professor created controversy by asking us to think about the benefits of copying.

University Rankings
In August the latest rounds of university rankings were released and the Australian Higher Education reported that University of Melbourne recorded the biggest increase. In September the Times Higher Education found that changes to its ranking system threw up a few surprises while the Chronicle of Higher Education explained changes to how doctoral qualifications would count in US rankings.

Economic Benefits of Higher Education
In August the Times Higher Education reported that science courses did not necessarily lead to economic growth but this did not stop Portugal’s government from attempting to modernise using scientific research from US universities reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Monash VC Retires
In October the Australian Higher Education reported on the retirement of Murdoch University’s Vice-Chancellor.

Links to individual stories are available at higheredheadlines.wordpress.com

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HERDSA Branch News

NEW ZEALAND BRANCH
Convenor: Prof Tony Harland
Contact Tony Harland:
tony.harland@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
Check the HERDSANZ website: http://www.herdsa.org.nz/
The New Zealand branch goes on from strength to strength. The inaugural HERDSA Researching Higher Education Symposium held on September 11th and 12th was a resounding success. Held at The University of Auckland, the event attracted 49 new and experienced higher education researchers, including 10 presenters, from all over Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia. All agreed this was a truly enjoyable, collegial and immensely stimulating symposium. A Higher Education Researchers listserv has now been set up so that participants can communicate with each other over matters of mutual interest. If you’d like to join, contact Barbara Grant on bm.grant@auckland.ac.nz. For a full report on the conference, see article in this edition of HERDSA News.

ACT BRANCH
Chair: Robert Kennelly
Contact Robert Kennelly:
Robert.Kennelly@canberra.edu.au
The HERDSA Branch of the ACT region has 3 small active TATAL (Talking about Teaching and learning) groups in operation. The 2008 TATAL group has just submitted a proposal for a HERDSA guide on using stories to encourage reflection and learning. The Branch has also submitted a proposal for a 3 day HERDSA 2011 TATAL conference. If approved a three hour pre-conference workshop will introduce the program and its processes and establish a group sense of community. Ninety minute workshops will guide participants through the process of developing a teaching philosophy statement.
The Branch conducted its annual celebratory Christmas seminar at the ANU on Wednesday 1st December with ALTC and National Teaching Award holders speaking briefly about their passion for teaching and learning.

HONG KONG BRANCH
Chair: Dr Anna Siu Fong KWAN
Contact Anna Kwan:
akwan@ouhk.edu.hk
Check the HERDSA HK website: http://herdsahk.edublogs.org/
Colleagues from all Hong Kong universities are warmly welcomed to HERDSA Hong Kong activities.
Since 2010, the HERDSA Hong Kong Branch Executive Committee has increased to eight members, with a wider coverage of higher institutions in Hong Kong and more colleagues to help out in organising events. The Executive Committee has met for four times in this year including a dinner meeting with Dr Amanda LeCouteur, University of Adelaide.

Three activities have been conducted in this year. A HERDSA Dinner Dialogue on University General Education with Professor Dayle Smith, Fulbright Scholar, Hong Kong Baptist University and Professor King Chow (HKUST). A Sharing Best Practice session took place on academic staff orientation with Dr Tak Ha (HKUST), Professor Keith Thomas (CUHK) and Dr Paul Lam (CUHK). A further session on Lecture capture-problems and solutions took place with Thomas Ng, Anthony Ho,
Edman Chan & Dr Paul Lam (CUHK), Dr Crusher Wong (CityUHK).

Future activities include a warm invitation to HERDSA members in Hong Kong to join the first seminar organised by the University of Hong Kong with the aim of developing a higher education research community project.

**South Australia Branch**

Chair: Dale Wache

Contact Dale Wache:
Dale.Wache@unisa.edu.au

An ALTC Dissemination Project workshop headed by Deanne Gannaway was held on the 5th November.

For future events contact Dale.

**Victoria Branch**

Chair: Dianne (Di) Waddell

Contact Di Waddell:
Dianne.waddell@deakin.edu.au.

The rejuvenated HERDSA Vic branch now has a small but dedicated team who have organised several successful and well attended functions this year.

The launch of Dr Robyn Benson and Dr Charlotte Brack’s new book *Online Learning and Assessment in Higher Education – a planning guide* was supported by HERDSA Vic branch and held at Monash University as part of the Education Matters program. The book provides a pedagogical framework as well as practical advice to educators about the incorporation of technology into higher education teaching and assessment and incorporates vignettes from a young academic’s experience regarding the challenges and rewards of teaching in the online environment.

**West Australian Branch**

Chair: Rashmi Watson

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Check the WA branch website at http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/asd/herdsa.html

A very successful HERDSA Rekindled session was held at Curtin University in early September with WA presenters from the national conference sharing their work with local members. While most presenters were from Curtin, teams from ECU and UWA were also represented. Topics included: Standards; Sessional teacher support; Fostering active learning; Collaboration scientists and teacher educators; Scholarship in Teaching and Learning; Assessment moderation in transnational education; Peer review of teaching; and Work experience. The appreciative audience included a number of first time attendees who we hope will continue to support future events. The refreshments certainly provided an extra incentive – all very ably organised by Curtin committee members.

A presentation at Notre Dame in October as part of the Scholarship Profiled series addressed the topic *Promoting scholarship: three research studies in tertiary science education settings*. This was presented by Vaille Dawson, Christine Howitt & Shelley Appleton. Plans for subsequent sessions are underway and include a members-only workshop to be held in conjunction with the Teaching and Learning Forum at the end of January 2011.

**Queensland and NSW**

HERDSA colleagues interested in the possibility of developing branch activities in these states will be strongly supported by HERDSA Executive. Contact Iris Vardi: i.vardi@curtin.edu.au or Robert Kennelly: Robert.Kennelly@canberra.edu.au.
Have you visited the HERDSA website recently?

Check out

- The HERDSA Fellowship Scheme as described by Robert Kennelly in this issue
- Latest Publications such as “Designing and using e-assessments.”
- Order Publications online
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