



HERDSA 2013 Conference – The Place of Learning and Teaching

By Stanley Frielick

The 36th annual HERDSA conference was held in Auckland at the new Sir Paul Reeves building on the AUT University city campus from 1 – 4 July 2014. This was the first HERDSA conference at AUT, and the award-winning building provided an ideal setting for the theme of “the place of learning and teaching”. The conference was organised by staff from the AUT Centre for Learning and Teaching and AUT Hospitality Services, with significant contributions from the University Postgraduate Centre, ICT Services, Estates and Facilities, and strong support from the AUT Executive Management team and the wider HERDSA NZ branch committee.

There was a great response to the call for proposals, with 269 submissions

by the closing date – including 84 full papers for the peer review process. 47 full papers were accepted, along with 144 showcase presentations and 30 posters. This made for a very full programme, with 228 presentations in total, in 9 parallel streams of 8 sessions. Our primary conference partner Ako Aotearoa (the NZ National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) was allocated 13 sessions for dissemination of project outcomes. Several projects funded by the Australian Office for Learning and Teaching were also reported on at the conference.

The conference started on Monday 1 July with 6 pre-conference workshops that were well attended, plus an invited workshop for the HERDSA Fellows. At the opening reception that evening delegates were greeted with a warm mihiwhakatau (Māori

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From the Editors

Roger Landbeck is something of a legend in HERDSA for his longstanding commitment to editing *HERDSA News*. It is a pleasure for us to take on this edition while Roger takes some well-deserved time off.

The annual HERDSA conference is the major event in the Society's calendar. We have used this issue of *HERDSA News* to showcase the many outstanding conference events arranged by Stanley Frielick and his New Zealand conference committee. The conference web site (<http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2013>) has recordings of the keynote speakers as well as abstracts and slides of presentations. We invite you to visit the website if you were unable to attend the event or would like to hear the presentations again.

If you would prefer a flavour of the event we have included an example of Alison Phipps's poetry that so fittingly began the conference. We also include a piece by Ella Henry summarising her keynote on the importance of Māori architecture that closed the conference. In addition to our keynotes we have also asked some new members to provide impressions of the conference along with a brief outline of the contribution made by some of our longest serving HERDSA life members. We acknowledge the scholarship of HERDSA members who were winners of prizes and awards.

The conference is not only an opportunity to discuss the latest higher education research and socialise with colleagues. It also provides one of the major occasions where the members of the HERDSA Executive meet and discuss the priorities over the next 12 months. These are outlined in the Presidents column by Allan Goody. There is also a chance to meet the new Executive members. Outgoing president Shelda Debowski's conference address explores some implications of sector reforms.

As well as the conference round up and news from the Executive we have the usual columns from HERDSA Fellows, New Scholars, Roger Atkinson's IT perspectives which discusses MOOCS and the ironic Meanderings from Bob Cannon. News from the Branches keeps you up to date with more local happenings. We also have a reflection on the art of peer-reviewing journal manuscripts by Frances Kelly, a report on the Assessment in Music symposium from Melissa Cain and Sue Rowland mounts a spirited defence of acronyms.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *HERDSA News* and welcome your comments. Roger will be back on the next edition.

**Maureen Bell &
Peter Kandlbinder**

Recordings of Keynotes and Plenaries

Professor Alison Phipps - University of Glasgow - "When Learning is placed under Siege: Conflict, Creativity and Compassion in Higher Education" - <http://bit.ly/18HZb2x>

Professor Ann Pendleton-Jullian - Georgetown University "Upside Down and Inside Out: The Future of the University as a Design Problem" - <http://bit.ly/1afC5Rj>

Dr Geoff Mitchell – QUT - "Evolving Learning Space Designs: QUT's journey through space and time" <http://bit.ly/15qdiZ8>

Dr Ella Henry - AUT University - "Te Whare Ako: architecture speaks to the mind, heart and spirit" <http://bit.ly/1aRIAtM>

Dr Peter Coolbear (Ako Aotearoa) and Tilly Hinton (OLT) - "Evaluating the impact of tertiary education research projects" <http://bit.ly/16snuPv>

Professor Shelda Debowski (HERDSA President – outgoing address) - <http://bit.ly/141RVjT>

HERDSA 2013 Conference – The Place of Learning and Teaching

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welcome) from Kitea Tipuna of AUT, after which Professor Rob Allen (AUT Deputy Vice Chancellor) and Desna Jury (Dean of Design and Creative Technologies) provided perspectives on the academic intentions and architecture of the new building. The design of the conference resonated with ideas and issues around “the place of learning and teaching”, and delegates were provided with a range of opportunities to engage with the innovative formal and informal learning spaces.

Derek McCormack (AUT Vice Chancellor) officially opened the conference on Tuesday morning, invoking John Henry Newman’s ideas on the place of the university, and noting some of the challenges facing higher education in the age of digitisation, MOOCS, and various economic and political pressures.

Professor Alison Phipps (University of Glasgow) was the first of a strong line-up of international speakers, and provided a deeply moving and thought-provoking keynote on “When Learning is placed under Siege: Conflict, Creativity and Compassion in Higher Education”. Several delegates were literally reduced to tears by Alison’s blend of poetry, storytelling and philosophy that embodied the role of the university as the critic and conscience of society.

Professor Ann Pendleton-Jullian (Georgetown University, Washington DC) followed on the next day with an insightful keynote on “Upside Down and Inside Out: The Future of the University as a Design Problem”—highlighting some student perspectives on the design of a futuristic institution.

Dr Geoff Mitchell of the Queensland University of Technology continued the architectural theme in his keynote on “Evolving Learning Space Designs: QUT’s journey through space and time”

which addressed the challenges of designing new learning spaces, while providing examples of good practice that delegates could use in their own institutions.

A joint plenary session was given by Dr Peter Coolbear (Director of Ako Aotearoa) and Tilly Hinton (OLT) on evaluating the impact of tertiary education research projects. Professor Shelda Debowski provided an engaging plenary in her outgoing address as HERDSA President, that led into the AGM at which Dr Allan Goody was confirmed as the new President of our society.

The first two keynote speakers provided pivotal moments into the “dialogical space”—an innovation drawing on the format of the TERNZ conferences in NZ and also using social media to facilitate dialogue in the collaborative learning spaces that characterise the Sir Paul Reeves building.

The parallel sessions clustered into a wide range of streams and themes, including Academic development (20 sessions), Assessment and curriculum (20), Learning spaces (19), Technology (17), Postgraduate (16), Student experience (12), Graduate attributes (10), Online and distance learning (8), and Research and policy (9). The sessions ran smoothly with the assistance of AUT Centre for Learning and Teaching staff, which included the student LATTEs (Learning and Teaching Technology Enablers) who were in each room to provide technical support. The LATTEs were also on hand to assist delegates with using their mobile devices and accessing the conference mobile app (a first for HERDSA conferences).

The poster session, held on the Tuesday evening, was interactive and animated with 30 posters displayed, and nine presented as fast-paced and entertaining “pechakucha”

presentations. Food and drink then flowed allowing for a lovely evening, which concluded with the launch of Shelda Debowski’s book, *The New Academic: A Strategic Handbook* and Iris Vardi’s new HERDSA Guide, *Developing Students’ Critical Thinking in the Higher Education Class*.

The conference dinner was an enjoyable and elegant affair held at the five-star Langham Hotel. Several awards were made, including four new life members and three new Fellows (full details elsewhere in this edition). Delegates danced the night away in time-honoured HERDSA style, sustained by excellent NZ food and wine, and the glorious chocolate fountains!

Dr Ella Henry from AUT University delivered the closing keynote with local perspectives that drew on her Māori heritage, on the topic “Te Whare Ako: architecture speaks to the mind, heart and spirit.” Ella introduced delegates to a number of Māori concepts and ideas, including the word *ako*—which means both to teach and to learn. Her keynote flowed into the *poroporoaki* which was both the final blessing to farewell delegates, and the handover of the conference to the next organising committee. This was symbolised by the gifting of a *kete* or basket that contains the knowledge and spirit of the HERDSA conference, which will now accumulate at future conferences as it is successively passed on to the next venue.

Dr Anna Kwan of Hong Kong Baptist University will be the next conference convenor, and with the two members of her organising committee gave a short concluding presentation on the HERDSA2014 conference to be held in Hong Kong with the theme “Higher Education in a Globalized World”. We look forward to seeing you there next year!

Pedagogies of Earth



By Alison Phipps

*Is there a scholarship that grows
naturally as the lichen? How
did she, a daughter of the land, come
by her learning?*

(R.S. Thomas)

You would be better of [...] in gardens

Usually, come spring, I learn the hard way. Impatient as ever to put seeds in the ground I sow too soon. It is all too easy to sow too soon. There will be mud on my optimistic boots, clogging the tread in ways which I come to learn to be tell tale. But on I go, sure that the soil is warm, ready, inviting. The suppliers send the seed early, in time for the springs of the south, but in these northerly climes the temperature changes more slowly and the frost is fickle. But I make my furrow, in hope, trusting. And there they go. Tiny, like dust, flakes of almond white, delicate black beads, bluish spheres of potential.

I'm orderly. There are markers at the end of rows, felt pens, green garden wire. My technique is good, a little hasty, over enthusiastic even, but the furrow is deep enough, the spacing well measured, the lightness of my touch will not disturb the seeds, my raking is practised, if not perfect.

I have skills. They are transferable. They work as well for potatoes as for peas.

Except they don't.

For in my haste to sow, usually I will forget that May can bring a late coldness that will clay the ground again, and that for all my hope, the rain may wash away the seedlings as they sprout. Each year I note dates and

times, but the earth knows better than I. These days I do know that there is a warm smell to the soil and sweetness that will not represent certain knowing – that can never be with a garden – but which will promise

much for the months to come. Sometimes I know to wait a while, to curb my passion to the element. Sometimes, I remember to wait – ground open, broken, panting, ready – but not yet, not yet. I need more light, more warmth, more air.

And so it is that I am taught. Learning, as they say, the hard way, the way of dashed hope, broken promises, disappointed eagerness. And still, if I am attentive, I also know that I am, indeed, better off in my garden, learning from the pedagogies of my earth, than I am in a classroom learning with pedagogies of efficiency and effectiveness. Maybe, if I took a course, if I learned the science from a teacher, a laboratory, a book,

maybe then I'd know when to plant, and rake and sow. Maybe I should do a certificate, to qualify properly to spend and waste my time second-guessing the seasons. Of course there are kits, thermometres, bubble wrap, polythene and fleece, and I learn that they help, the keep things even, through the delicate days.

But mostly there is the learning to sow and then to let go, the learning to watch, to wonder, to wait.

For the first pedagogy of the earth is that of waiting.

Like a pregnant woman waiting in hope.

“I was so blown away by our keynote speaker on the first day that I'm still tingling. It just set the scene. I've probably been to hundreds of conferences and she was just awesome. It has still got me thinking deeply about the academy and what we are really about”

Terry Clark
University of Southern Queensland

“The atmosphere of the conference was really framed by Alison's keynote. Her advocacy of nonviolence has carried over and come across in how people have handled the presentations. People have been very positive. Some people have had new ideas in formative stages and they've had a lot of really constructive feedback”

Phillip Dawson
Monash University



Te Whare Ako: Architecture Speaks to the Mind, Heart and Spirit

A Journey Through Space, Place and Enlightenment



By Ella Henry, Te Ara Poutama, AUT

This piece is a summary of some of Dr Henry's ideas from her HERDSA Conference keynote

This is a Māori perspective on how and why architecture speaks to the heart, mind and spirit. It explores that ways that New Zealand tertiary institutions speak to Māori, and how that conversation might, or might not, contribute to Māori teaching, learning and Māori development. For Māori, a *whare*, (house) is often named for an ancestor, location or event. Māori use the verb, “*ako*” for learning and teaching, because of the symbiotic relationship between the two actions. One engages in both activities, often simultaneously, as a teacher and a learner.

But first, my story is about being part of the Māori urban migration, dislocated from language, culture and heritage, and lost in the urban morass. As a consequence, I left New Zealand, travelling for ten years, returning at 30, finding myself pregnant and abandoned, and enrolled in the New Start programme at Auckland University. In February, 1986, with babe-in-arms, I started a life-long journey, discovering the history of my country and people, in the newly established Māori Studies Department. In 1988, the Marae opened, and I found my “urban” home. *Waipapa Marae*, named after the *Māori Pā* which was once located on the foreshore below the current *Marae*, is a magnificent example of traditional and contemporary carving and weaving styles. I was one of the Māori students, a significant minority on campus, who used the *Marae* and Māori Studies Department as our second home, the lecturers and staff, benevolent aunts and uncles.

After completing a Masters, in 1996 I took a lectureship in Management and Employment Relations, in the Commerce Faculty at Auckland University. Then, Sir John Turei, the *Kaumātua* (elder) of Unitec Institute of Technology, encouraged me to apply for the position as Head of *Pūkenga*, the School of Māori Education. I was fortunate to be part of the original planning for the *Marae* at Unitec. At its centre of the Campus is the magnificent *Marae*, *Tē Noho Kotahitanga*, “to reside in unity”, named for the compact signed between Unitec and *Tāngata Whenua* in 2001. It is the *kaitiaki* (guardian) of its surroundings, nestled beside *Tē Puna o Wairaka*, the stream that emerges from *Owairaka*, Mount Albert. The *Whare Hui*, is named *Tē Ngākau Mahaki*, literally meaning the “peaceful heart”.

In 2003, I left academia to do other things until a colleague, Pare Keiha offered me work in Te Ara Poutama, where I finally finished a PhD in 2012, and found a “cultural homeland” in the only dedicated Faculty of Māori in the country. AUT comprises an eclectic assortment of spaces and places reflecting its long and varied heritage since first opening in 1895. The *AUT Marae*, *Ngā Wai o Horotiu*, standing at the apex of the campus, is named for the stream, *Waihorotiu* that once coursed down the gully now known as Queen Street. *Horotiu* is the *taniwha* that dwells within that stream. *Taniwha* were perceived as both *kaitiaki* (protectors) of the waterways and caves in which they dwelt, and cautionary creatures who reminded local people to respect the *tapu* (sacredness) of their environment. The custodians of the *Marae* are *Tē Ara Poutama*, the Faculty of Māori Development. *Tē Ara* can be used as a verb, meaning to rise up, or a noun, a pathway or route. *Poutama* is the stepped pattern of the *tukutuku* panels and woven mats, which

symbolise both genealogies and levels of learning and intellectual achievement. The *Whare Hui* (meeting house) is named *Tē Purengi*, representing the ropes which hold the mast of a *waka* (canoe) in place, keeping it strong and sturdy on its long journey. The *Whare Kai* (dining hall), is named *Kaipara*, the West Coast harbour, which has traditionally provided food and shelter to the *tāngata whenua* of the land on which this *Marae* is built, *Ngāti Whātua*. Each of these names, individually and taken in combination, tell a story about the buildings and the land, the history of the places and spaces, as well as the philosophy and values of those who bestowed those names.

At the HERDSA NZ conference we met in the Sir Paul Reeves building, a man of immeasurable wisdom, strength, dignity and humour. He gave selflessly of his time and energy, not only to the Māori world, but to the nation. To stand in a *Whare Hui* named for such a great man, Māori, New Zealander is a privilege. This building speaks volumes, not only to current Māori staff and students, but to the entire institution and our communities of interest.

These buildings, the *Marae* and their surrounding facilities, provide a home and sanctuary for Māori staff and students, who remain minority populations in the tertiary sector. These spaces speak to Māori about the important and relevant place we hold in these institutions, and that conversation empowers present and future generations of Māori to enter and succeed in tertiary education, which in turn contributes to the further empowerment and enlightenment of Māori communities, whose graduates have and will continue to lead and drive social, cultural and economic development for Te Ao Māori, the Māori world.

Impressions of the HERDSA Conference, Spaces and Places for Learning, New Zealand, 2013



The first experience of a HERDSA conference is for most people a mingling of scholarship, collegiality and fun. Lindsey Conner, Elizabeth Chinlund and Thomas Koruth reflect on their experience of HERDSA New Zealand 2013.

Elizabeth Chinlund, New Scholar and Travel Grant Recipient from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand



Liz Chinlund (left) and Karen Smith at HERDSA

HERDSA seems to be an innovative organisation committed to passing the torch to new scholars. I recently completed my Masters in Education, and only work part-time at Victoria University of Wellington, so I was extremely pleased to experience how well emerging scholars are nurtured at HERDSA through open exchanges. The inclusion of specific New Scholar workshops and activities provided a friendly induction to an academy of scholars, and enabled informal, yet collegial relationships

and academic support networks to form with both senior academics and other new scholars. Through this process, we've initiated a writer's group and exchanged ideas, such as the challenge of balancing personal values with institutional expectations. I contemplated various career roles in the sector and made plans for fulfilling my own objectives. Especially valuable was the Researching in Higher Education workshop and New Scholars "Pizza Pizza" dinner! Overall, attending the HERDSA Conference strengthened the higher educational research network between the more experienced researchers and myself, an emerging researcher.

The HERDSA Conference 2013 provided a space for belonging, regardless of ones apparent place in an imposed higher education hierarchy. With supportive, rather than confrontational dialogue, the HERDSA Conference setting felt introspective and thoughtful, not showy or elitist. It was a gathering of people from multiple disciplines with diverse perspectives, who all seemed to care deeply about facilitating transformation through learning. The delegates, presenters, and executives struck me as a humble group of research educators who authentically welcomed me and seemed committed to my personal and professional development (even if I started out as a stranger). I was especially inspired by the speeches made by the lifetime inductees at the tasty HERDSA conference dinner.

HERDSA's commitment to the research practice nexus, and strong avocation for evidence-based teaching, has always impressed me, therefore I am very grateful to HERDSA for awarding me with HERDSA Travel Grant, which enabled me to fully participate in the conference this year. I was pleased to present, and I look forward to following up with what I learned at the conference and more importantly maintaining these newly formed relationships.

Lindsey Conner



New HERDSA member from University of Canterbury, New Zealand

As a first time attendee at a HERDSA conference I wasn't quite sure what to expect. The blast from the keynotes certainly threw me into questioning mode and reflection on why we do what we do and how we can make a difference through higher education. Their use of metaphor and analogy, as well as the accounts of the amazing projects they have been involved, left no doubt that these leaders are finding systems solutions in uniting learning communities.

Wonderings from the ground ... War images, peace images, poetry to express difficult human issues and their relationship to the purpose of higher education as well as sowing seeds. How are we under siege? Is it important that we change? If change is inevitable, how do we manage substantive change that will impact social interactions? What does change for creativity and compassion imply for all aspects of the operations of higher education institutions?

Alison walks in the shoes of an empathizer and her stories move us. As well, a dialogic chance to reflect, share and expand our thinking. It's a pity we didn't get the same opportunity on the second day due to timing when Ann Pendleton presented her future of the university as being "Upside down and inside out". Ann also used metaphor and analogy to challenge our thinking about absolutes when empathy is

needed. She described the design solutions for developing a University for women from many countries in Bangladesh where diversity, conflict and social interactions had to be taken into account. Impressively the landscape from where the people lived was used to provide the canvas for building connections between people, including financial partners.

What can we learn from the projects profiled to create feelings of power and security, a sense of belonging in higher education institutions? Where are the spaces that enable orientation, contemplation and transformation? How can interdisciplinary studies that are more open-ended such as the Georgetown Studio project, provide the opportunities for the “next” generation to

combine their creative and critical thinking expertise to design solutions for the future while at the same time honoring historical and natural rhythms? Do we all feel like we have shifted from “sailing to white water rafting” or is it important to feel we can do both? It’s important to discuss what we are aiming at.

The rest of the conference presentations continued to develop these themes related to the interplay between environment and enabling thinking, whether that was from physical spaces (e.g. Geoff Mitchel’s presentation) that enable collaborative learning and socialising, to on-line places and the steps being made towards researching the difference changes make, without students feeling that they are being besieged by technology. Many presentations indicated that it is the small actions that contribute to the collective system, that are important. It was hard to choose during the parallel sessions because there were many sessions of interest. Comments from others

indicated that the ideas were often great but the quality of the research to support them was mixed or not explicitly evident.

Many presentations provided strategies for HE institutions to be dynamic attractors e.g. communities of practice (learning), events, “learning at large”, life-wide education, the use of campaigns and symbolism as attractors. But we also need aggregators (people, policies and practices) in these systems to sustain what is currently working well and to introduce new things, (e.g. COWs and spaces that can evolve), to make the systems cohesive with resilience and sustainability built in.

The posters were of an extremely high standard and some quite evocative. Thanks to all the presenters for all sessions, as it is the people and their willingness to participate that make a conference. Overall this conference was indeed a “Cambrian moment” for me and I congratulate the organisers for their very thoughtful programming and dedication to making this conference successful and provocative.

Thomas Koruth



**New HERDSA member from William
Blue College of Hospitality Management,
Australia**

As a first time participant of a HERDSA conference, I found it to be a wonderful opportunity to meet other academics with similar interests, exchange ideas about teaching and learning, and learn about current developments from experienced researches and practitioners within the area of higher education.

As a new member to HERDSA I felt very comfortable during the conference as there were ample opportunities to meet other new members as well as the members of the HERDSA executive team who were all very welcoming and easy to talk to. There were a number of social gatherings that ran throughout the four days including a welcome dinner for new scholars, the HERDSA new member’s breakfast and the conference dinner, which were all really beneficial as a means to meet and talk to likeminded individuals.

The networking opportunities and ability to share my passion for higher education was a great opportunity and one I would strongly recommend to any first-timer planning on attending a HERDSA conference in the future. The workshops, keynotes and choice of presentation topics were all well-chosen and linked in well with the theme of the conference. I especially enjoyed two of the keynote speakers, Professor Alison Phipps and Dr Geoff Mitchell as I found their discussion a topic area I connected with. Overall, the HERDSA conference was the perfect place and space for me to be able to learn and develop a strong knowledge base of current research within higher education, as well as meet and interact with some truly inspiring and dedicated academics.

I now look forward to the next HERDSA conference in Hong Kong, 2014!

Links to the full record of the conference, including abstracts and slides of presentations:

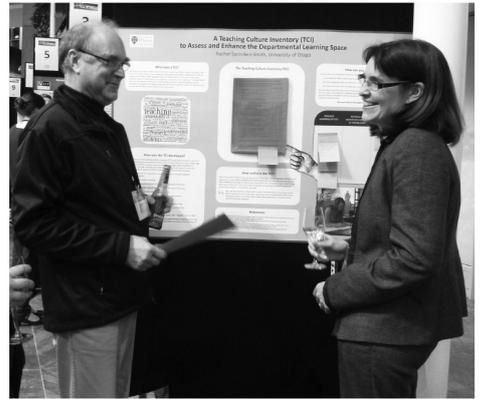
HERDSA2013 website: <http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2013>

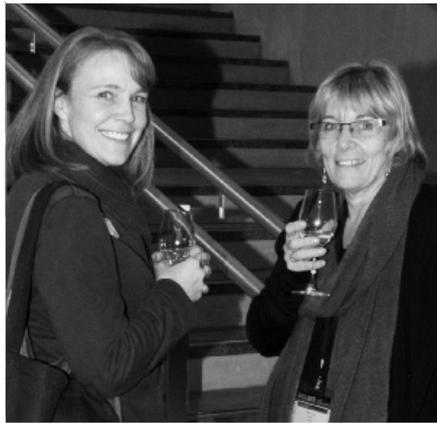
HERDSA2013 online programme (with links to abstracts & presentation slides): <http://bit.ly/16i2Ntj>

HERDSA2013 full refereed papers: http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=3502



A LOOK INTO THE CONFERENCE





HERDSA Life Members

Every conference provides an opportunity for HERDSA to acknowledge the contribution individuals have made to higher education research and development in our region. At the 2013 Conference the HERDSA President and President-elect conferred four life members:

Bob Cannon



Bob Cannon has been a member of HERDSA since 1974 when the society was less than two years old. For a long time, Bob was largely working solo in academic development in South Australia serving on the HERDSA Executive even though he was the only HERDSA member in South Australia for some years. Undeterred, he remained very active in disseminating the name and work of HERDSA through running seminars across all higher education institutions in South Australia. Bob worked in academic development at the University of Adelaide providing educational technology services and advice at a time when research and publication in the field was discouraged. Yet Bob managed to be a regular contributor to the newly established *HERDSA News* which he continues through his *Meanderings* column. In 1988 Bob authored the HERDSA Guide on lecturing, which is now in its third edition coauthored with Chris Knapper from STLHE. The list of contributions Bob has made to higher education internationally is long and extensive including consultancies in Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Thailand. He was appointed Professor and principal consultant by the University of Indonesia to establish Indonesia's first educational development centre and he continues his work through AusAID in Indonesia, The Philippines and Mongolia, most recently evaluating the Palestinian Faculty Development Program.

Neil Haigh



Neil Haigh has worked for more than 40 years on the professional development of staff in New Zealand higher education institutions. As Director of the Teaching and Learning Unit at Waikato University he established a postgraduate certificate to engender a more scholarly approach to learning and teaching. Neil has continued this work as an active researcher, supervisor, teacher and mentor at AUT University whether he is building the research capabilities of tertiary teachers undertaking research into their students' learning, leading initiatives in the scholarship of teaching and learning or sharing his experiences in supervisor development. Neil has been a key figure in two multi-site, nationally funded research projects, promoted indigenous perspectives through workshops and broadened the activities of the New Zealand branch of HERDSA. Neil spearheaded the inception of *Ako Aotearoa*, which is the New Zealand centre for tertiary teaching excellence which aims to advance tertiary teaching. He was the AUT University representative on the Massey- led consortium bidding to host *Ako Aotearoa*, and has continued to support the growing status and increasing influence of this body.

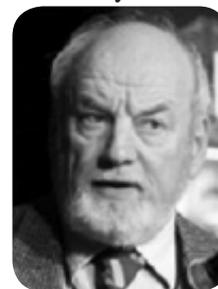
Owen Hicks



Owen Hicks became the director of the Centre for Staff Development at The University of Western Australia in 1992.

Owen joined HERDSA and discovered that there was no active local professional community. He was instrumental in the foundation of the HERDSA WA Branch and became the foundation Branch President and later the Branch Treasurer. The branch soon grew to be one of the largest and most active in Australia, with approximately 100 members. Owen also promoted collaboration between the academic development units in the Western Australian universities through activities such as the Teaching and Learning Forum and a range of cross-institutional programs. He was active in the Director's group that is now formerly known as the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development. Owen led HERDSA as the national President from 1997 to 1999 and was influential in promoting of local branch activities and redressing the gender imbalance in Life Memberships. In 1997 Owen drafted the first "HERDSA Discussion Paper on the Accreditation of University Teachers" with Graham Web, which eventually led to the HERDSA Fellowship Scheme as we know it today. Owen was a member of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) Council and hosted the first ICED conference in the Southern Hemisphere in 2002. Owen has been a Senior Consultant with the ALTC (now Office for Learning and Teaching) and is currently completing his third Australian Volunteers International assignment, this time at Pham Van Dong University in Central Vietnam.

Robert Kennelly



Robert entered university life as a staff developer at Australian National University in 1990. He has been a passionate advocate for the society since he joined it at the first HERDSA conference in Canberra in 1991. In 1996 Robert worked with two

colleagues to develop one of the early multi university senior leadership programs at Little Bay in Sydney. He was a co-pioneer of the national gathering of university general staff developers (NGOSDS) which met annually through the nineties, mirroring the HERDSA conferences. It also encouraged the development of NSW and ACT regional networks. Robert became a pioneer HERDSA Fellow in Christchurch in 2003 and has become one

of the scheme's most passionate advocates since that time. He has encouraged a more collaborative reflective focus on the fellowships and when he had completed his six years on the HERDSA Executive, Robert was seconded to the Executive for a further nine months to support the incoming Fellowship committee. In 2007 Robert re-formed the HERDSA Branch of the ACT with Jackie Walkington and has actively encouraged its growth since that

time. A particular contribution from the ACT branch has been his development with Coralie MacCormack, of TATAL: Talking about Teaching and Learning. This new mode of collaborative, reflective practice, commenced in September 2008 and was introduced to HERDSA conferences in 2011 and there are now seven small, functioning TATALs including two in Western Australia.

HERDSA FELLOWS COLUMN



By Lee Partridge

I am an academic developer at The University of Western Australia where I have worked since completing my doctoral studies in 2006. My thesis related to what it is that motivates adolescent boys with ADHD – which, I wryly tell those who might listen, equips me perfectly to work with academics! Of course, I mean no disrespect to either my colleagues or the participants in my research but merely ponder over the path that brings many of us to academic development. I do have a background in Education though so that does stand me in good stead.

My road to the Fellowship Holy Grail was a stop – start affair with early endeavours

not resulting in the desired outcome. Like all of us, other things got in the way and the Fellowship got bumped down the “to do” list. My final and successful run at the “prize” began at the Hobart HERDSA conference in 2012 where I was inspired anew to devote the required time for reflection to work on my portfolio. I credit my final success to a number of things not the least being a supportive community of colleagues in a TATAL group (see April newsletter for explanation of what this is) and good mentorship. Having finally made it, I would encourage anyone who cares about their practice to engage in this very worthwhile journey. I feel truly honoured

to be welcomed into a group of dedicated educators whose commitment to teaching and learning is obvious and unquestioned.

Like Glyn Thomas before me I have had the joint pleasures of joining the HERDSA executive committee and becoming a HERDSA Fellow at the same time. Auckland 2013, though currently still fresh in my mind, is likely to remain so for some time because of the personally memorable events that occurred at that gathering. I am delighted and excited about the new involvements both the Fellowship and the committee membership will provide and look forward to engaging with many HERDSA members in both capacities.



HERDSA Fellows attending a pre-conference workshop on mentoring

President's Column



By Allan Goody

This is my first column as President of HERDSA and I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to serve as President and work with a hardworking Executive and Officers of HERDSA to guide the Society through the next two years. First my thanks go to Shelda Debowski for the considerable work that she has contributed to HERDSA over the past two years as President and I wish her well in her future endeavours. Shelda will still be active with HERDSA through her leadership of the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) funded project that concludes in 2014. Thanks also to Rachel Spronken-Smith who has stepped down from the Executive to devote more time to her new role at Otago University. Rachel contributed across a range of areas within the Executive and made a major contribution to the portfolio focussed on early career academics.

For those of you who attended the annual conference at AUT University in Auckland, you are probably, like me, still reflecting on the conference and the learning and highlights from it. Maybe it was your first HERDSA conference and the first time you presented your work at a teaching and learning conference, in which case I would like to extend you a special welcome to the Society. From all the feedback I have received, the conference was a great success and all credit goes to Stanley Frielick and his team and the Aotearoa New Zealand branch for their vision and their planning and execution of the conference. The venue was outstanding and reflected the theme of The Place of Learning and Teaching. It was a joy to attend a teaching and learning conference in a Place of Learning and Teaching and not have to move from that location. For me, there were highpoints throughout the conference, from the opening keynote by Professor Alison Phipps to the Maori farewell and passing of the basket of knowledge to our hosts of the next

HERDSA conference to be held in Hong Kong in July 2014.

The conference dinner was especially memorable as I presented Bob Cannon and Owen Hicks with their life memberships. Owen offered me my first job back in Australia (at UWA) after I completed my doctoral studies at the University of Illinois. I clearly remember the job interview and presentation in the Ansett Club Lounge at Brisbane airport. Owen introduced me to HERDSA and the wider educational development community in Australia (including Bob Cannon) and so this was full-circle for me and a very special part of the conference.

Shortly after the conference I flew to Japan for the annual Council meeting of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED). HERDSA is one of 23 member societies of ICED and 12 of those countries plus observers from China were represented in a very hot and humid Kyoto. The meeting also marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of ICED. It certainly is a privilege to be able to spend several days with Presidents and representatives from these other societies and consider not only the direction and work of ICED but learn so much about what is happening with educational development around the world. We were hosted by the Japan Association for Educational Development in Higher Education (JAED) represented by JAED board member Associate Professor Hiroaki Sator from Ehime University and we met at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto and hosted there by Professor Hirotaka Oki from the Institute for Teaching and Learning at Ritsumeikan (and JAED Board member). It was especially significant to be in Japan as in 2012 Japan's Central Council for Education issued a report on pursuing the qualitative transformation of university education and the need for the coordinated development of quality university education, including reference

to the importance of active learning by students. Following the Council meeting we participated in a symposium and small group discussions attended by almost 100 Japanese educational developers who were keen to learn and to get answers to the questions that we have been grappling with for many years like how to get professors to engage students in their classes. Of course the meeting and symposium were conducted in the formal style of the Japanese and we enjoyed traditional foods and entertainment. The notion of student engagement began to take hold at the end of the symposium as Professor Oki gave the closing remarks from the floor of the auditorium rather than on stage behind the lecture. He joked that this was quite a shift for him to such informality.

The ICED Council meeting in Japan represented a great opportunity for Japanese educational developers to tap into the experience of the ICED council members – this is what this global network is all about and it is great to be a part of it.

And so to the year ahead. The previous Executive has set several projects in place and we will continue with those including the renewal of the webpage and further development of the HERDSA Fellowship Scheme. The OLT funded project has enabled us to fund more activities for the branches. The project is also funding a pilot of the HERDSA Review of Higher Education, a new online journal that Peter Kandlbinder is so ably leading. Look for the first issue in the early part of 2014. Another initiative that we are pursuing is the establishment of a scholarship fund to enable us to host a colleague from a developing university in a low-income country at one or more of our branches and for that person to participate in the annual conference. This is intended to be a reciprocal learning experience for our guest and HERDSA members. The opportunity to contribute to the fund on a voluntary basis will be offered to members at the time

of membership renewal. If you have other suggestions on how we can grow this fund, I am keen to hear from you.

As I reflect on this first rather busy month as President, I am also reflecting on how quickly life can deviate from that familiar path. About 48 hours after my return from Japan (and 12 hours before I was due to fly to Singapore to conduct workshops), I suffered a stroke. I am writing this column while recuperating at home. I have come through this unexpected event much better

than many people who have been similarly afflicted and I consider myself very lucky although I am still waiting for further tests and to have questions answered. I am doing ok and attending to HERDSA matters is a good distraction from the boredom of lying about. These life events do make you reflect on the important things in life and I encourage you to take the time to give them some attention. Thank you to those members who have contacted me and conveyed kind thoughts and good wishes.

Finally, thank you to our new Executive members (profiled in News) who have volunteered their time to serve HERDSA and to those members of the previous Executive who have agreed to serve another term. Your contributions are valued and I look forward to working with you all. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have suggestions or questions about HERDSA.

Contact: agoody56@gmail.com

Placing Learning and Teaching as a Sustainable Future

By Shelda Debowski, HERDSA President 2011 – 2013



Shelda Debowski launching her new book at the conference

Below is an edited version of Shelda's HERDSA Conference address.

The higher education sector is undergoing considerable reform as a consequence of many shifts at sectoral, national and institutional level. Each year sees a larger impact from globalization and the tightening funding base for higher education institutions. As resources become more constrained, the pressure to maximize institutional impact has become much greater. The growing focus on increasing reputation through research quality and productivity and building more economical practices across universities are very evident in the initiatives that are emerging across the sector.

Research continues to dominate as a major focus in promoting higher education effectiveness. The proliferation of ranking systems is offering a range of measures that are accessible, intelligible and comparable. Universities are not only employing them to assess their international comparability but as blunt tools to assess academic effectiveness. We have seen a number of institutions make substantial institutional decisions on staff employment using research as the proxy for performance. This is a dangerous practice, as it is denying the critical role that educational activities play in higher education.

Teaching and research have been long regarded as mutually complementary activities. However, there is evidence of an increasing tension between these two functions of higher education. In the early career academic phase the challenges of building effective teaching strategies and a strong research profile in a very short period have placed considerable pressure on new academics. Similarly, the need to re-energize careers and to build even more focus around research has challenged existing academics. "Middlescence" is emerging as a new higher education phenomenon: where academics who have existed comfortably for many years are suddenly under scrutiny for their marginal outputs. They are being challenged to reboot their research

profiles and capabilities to better reflect these changing expectations. The single-minded delineation of academic careers as being research driven has troubled many, particularly those who have regarded their careers as being more teaching oriented. The concern is that the function of higher education as a place where broad-based learning can be encouraged is being devalued as research takes precedence.

From another front, we are also seeing challenges relating to the nature of the educational experience that is offered to students. For example, there is a strong international push to see higher education as vocationally driven. That is, the sector is the engine room for employment, and students are only attending universities to gain a qualification for vocational reasons. However, this negates the value of higher education in supporting many other facets of higher learning. For example, the sector also plays a key role in promoting self-learning about:

- Values and beliefs
- Social / relational learning
- Inquiry, research, scholarship
- Lifelong learning
- Critical thinking and
- Global issues, among other things.

Similarly, the increasing focus on mass-education strategies (such as MOOCs) runs

the risk of further marginalizing quality learning and concern for the student experience. While the need for economical educational practices is certainly a critical concern, we will also need to be cognizant of the long-term benefits higher education can offer our students.

Behind all of these issues is a further, complex matter: educational leadership. The rapid evolution of universities is placing increasing pressure on those in leadership roles. Not only must they provide effective guidance to their communities, but they must also navigate increasingly uncertain futures. Institutions are showing a marked uniformity in the directions they are pursuing, despite their concern for differentiation. The challenge of attracting students in the face of global competition has created many challenges for those who are in leadership roles. Their focus must be on building a strong marketing strategy that will be attractive to students. At the same time, their role must focus on concerns relating to standards and quality assurance: ensuring students receive an education that fully justifies the appellation “higher education”.

We are at a pivotal moment where higher education is engaging in a process of reformation and identity building. At this stage in the process of reform and change, it is a good opportunity to ask ourselves some critical questions:

Do we want institutions where one size fits all? Is the sector brave enough and mature enough to recognize the need for diversity – in its own practices and as a broad sectoral push? This is a time for courageous vice chancellors and senior leadership teams to really think about how they can be

true to their constituents and perceived purpose. Good leadership will be critical in both setting a clear vision and pursuing it coherently across the institution.

What are the real measures of success? We need to be clear about what we understand and assess when reviewing institutional and academic performance. They operate across many facets: teaching, research, engagement and leadership. And each of these components is complex. They remain little understood and require further investigation to better understand how each contributes to university outcomes.

What should higher education contribute to society? We are in danger of losing sight of our broader goals in the frenetic race to be bigger, better and more prominent in the international market place. It is a good time to think more carefully about the distinguishing characteristics of a good educational institution. What are the key contributions that our sector makes to society and to each individual who enters our doors?

At this critical point in higher education development, it has been particularly pleasing to have the sponsorship of the Office of Learning and Teaching to encourage a stronger focus on educational matters. HERDSA was offered funding in 2010 to encourage dissemination of our knowledge about learning and teaching. We are now in stage 2 of the project, with a number of mini-projects in progress. In brief these are:

Piloting a new online journal that will explore topical issues relating to research in higher education.

Funding a number of mini-projects to seed educational collaborations between experienced and novice researchers;

Funding branch activities, including the recent Shane Dawson seminars on Learning Analytics; and

Supporting the provision of a final seminar for senior leaders on guiding educational innovation and reform in these turbulent times.

These activities are important elements of HERDSA's scholarly activities and have greatly assisted in promoting wider awareness of what we have achieved as a nation in our scholarly focus on learning and teaching. Each of these initiatives may also lead to ongoing innovations that will further encourage active engagement by higher education leaders and members in promoting optimal outcomes for the sector.

It is a time of change, which can be seen as confronting, conflictual and overwhelming. There are many competing pressures that demand attention. However, change is also a time when we are encouraged to look hard at what counts and to think more carefully about what we take forward into our future. Many of us are very pressed for time, and have perhaps left this hard thinking to our university leaders. It is time though, for every stakeholder in higher education to explore the options and to take a stand on what we will be in our next iteration. Is research the only thing that matters? What will students gain from higher education? Can we get the balance recalibrated? Should we? It is time to engage in some robust discussions... All of us; not just a selected few.

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HERDSA conference workshop

Meet the New Members of the HERDSA Executive

A central element in the success of HERDSA is the Executive members who volunteer their time for the running of the society. This group is recruited every two years in a call for new members to join the Executive and this year the election Executive members coincided with the election of Allen Goody as our new HERDSA president. Allen agreed to expand the Executive to include five newly elected members who join the seven continuing Executive members. Here is a short introduction of what to expect from our new executive members over the next two years.

Jennie Billot is the Postgraduate Research Education Leader at AUT University in New Zealand. Prior to working in higher education, Jennie taught and held positions in the compulsory education sector



and the Education Review Office. She has held varied roles within higher education, including teaching; programme and postgraduate research leadership; directing centres of research and evaluation; and leading executive leadership programmes. Her areas of research include educational leadership, academic identity, supervision and research capability building. Jennie supervises doctoral students in Education, having previously supervised across disciplines as the methodologist. Jennie is an Associate Editor for HERD and is looking forward to contributing to HERDSA through the Network Portfolio with leadership initiatives and supporting Significant Interest Groups.

Sue Bolt is a Senior Lecturer at Curtin University in Western Australia. She has 30 years of experience in education as a teacher, consultant and academic developer. Sue enjoys networking with early career academics and find out about the challenges they face in relation to teaching, research and publication. Sue plans to focus her time on the HERDSA Executive on the



Networking Portfolio where she is keen to work with fellow academics committed to researching and developing innovative approaches to promote and invigorate scholarship of teaching in order to advance teaching and learning in higher education.

Romy Lawson has recently been appointed as the Director of Learning, Teaching & Curriculum at the University of Wollongong. She has been actively involved in teaching and learning development in



higher education for more than 18 years in both the UK and Australia. Recently she led a National OLT Strategic Priority Project called "Hunters & Gatherers: Strategies for Curriculum Mapping and Data Collection for Assurance of Learning". This led her to undertake an OLT National Fellowship on Curriculum Design for Assuring Learning. Romy is looking forward to contributing to the HERDSA Network Portfolio which will provide opportunities for members to collaborate both internally and with other external organisations.

Lee Partridge is an Assistant Professor in Higher Education Development in Centre for Advancement of Teaching and Learning at the University of Western Australia. Lee may have been a little unsure of



what being on the HERDSA executive committee entailed until the two full days of committee meetings that preceded the latest conference in Auckland. As an academic developer, Lee spends a large amount of her time working with early career academics, something that she finds very enjoyable and rewarding. She was therefore happy to join the working group from the HERDSA New Scholars' portfolio, together with Coralie McCormack, Leslie Petersen and under the energised leadership of Deb Clarke. Lee is looking forward to helping initiate some exciting opportunities for New HERDSA Scholars in the near future.

Lesley Petersen is the Teacher Development Advisor and Mentor at the Eastern Institute of Technology in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. Her role encompasses mentoring academic



teachers at all stages in their professional career and very level of academic development. This is a natural extension of her PhD research which developed an evidence-based mentoring model as a mechanism for supporting professional development and enhancing leadership capabilities across an organisation. Lesley has been actively involved with HERDSA as a member of the HERDSA NZ Committee and by joining the HERDSA Executive she will to give HERDSA a presence in her region and an extensive professional network developed over the 20 years she has worked across the sector. Lesley is a member of the "New Scholars in Teaching & Learning" portfolio which will provide a significant medium to support these aims.

Cristina Poyatos Matas is an Associate Professor in the School of Languages and Linguistics of Griffith University, where she is the Chair of the Learning and Teaching



Committee, First Year Coordinator, and a member of the Griffith Academy of Learning and Teaching Scholars. She has been a HERDSA member since 2000 and a HERDSA Fellow since 2003. This is Cristina's second election onto the HERDSA Executive, having previously served between 2003 and 2005. In the last few years she has been actively involved in supporting others in their journeys towards their Fellowship, and now in the new Executive, she will be working in the HERDSA Fellowship Portfolio with Glyn Thomas (Chair), Susan Jones and Coralie McCormack, where her main interest is in the coordination of the mentoring side of the Fellowships.



NEW SCHOLARS COLUMN

What do Meerkats and New Scholars have in Common?

Answer: Quite a lot if they attend the New Scholars functions at HERDSA conferences! All members of a meerkat group assume responsibility for socialising their young in the ways and rules of the group. Similarly the role of the “New Scholars” portfolio of HERDSA is to assist new scholars to learning and teaching, and/or research in higher education, to feel comfortable, included, to meet like-minded colleagues, and most importantly, to enjoy their experience at the HERDSA conference.

Just like meerkats, new scholars do huddle together for security sometimes if they are unfamiliar with their surroundings. So to make our new scholars feel included and welcome, this year at the HERDSA conference in Auckland there were a range of opportunities for new scholars to meet each other at the Pizza Pizza informal dinner, be introduced to the HERDSA Executive Committee at the New Members’ Breakfast, engage in workshops specifically designed to meet their research needs during the “Learning to Research in Higher Education” seminar presented by Professor Tony Harland from the University of Otago, participate in dialogue with session presenters, and dance the night away at the Conference Dinner event.

As Chair of the New Scholars Portfolio I invited two of the New Scholars to comment on their experiences at the HERDSA Conference. So meet:



Lee Adams, University of Otago

The Sir Paul Reeves building at AUT provided a brilliant venue for meeting and networking with other HERDSA

2013 delegates. I was impressed with the friendliness of the HERDSA people, and in particular with how welcome I was made to feel as a PhD student, and a new member. Because of this, I found it easy to approach and initiate conversations with other delegates throughout the course of the conference, and met many interesting people.

Alison Phipp’s keynote speech was a stunning and thought-provoking start to the proceedings, and I came away from her session thinking that if it was the only interesting presentation at the conference, then it was well worth my attendance. I felt inspired by Alison’s passion and commitment, and was reminded of the necessity to not only “talk the talk”, but also to “walk the walk”. I found Alison inspirational, and she set the scene for a successful conference.

I attended many worthwhile presentations throughout the three days, and my only disappointment was that I could not attend more. I left the conference with a notebook crammed with interesting and useful research snippets, and a brain full of possible strategies for enhancing teaching and learning. What I found most helpful, however, was the respect and support shown throughout the conference, particularly during the sessions. I was impressed by the thoughtful questions that were asked during presentations, and the interesting discussions these provoked. I noted that session participants displayed respect and an eagerness to learn, and I was particularly grateful for this in my own presentation. I felt encouraged by the feedback and support I received for my research.

The conference social events were definite highlights, and allowed for further networking - albeit at the expense of an expanding waistline! In particular, the New Scholars dinner at Pizza Pizza, and the New Members breakfast, allowed me opportunities to make connections with people I might not otherwise have met. I now have a collection of contact details

from delegates with whom I am keen to have further conversations. I am looking forward to furthering these connections and making new ones in Hong Kong next year.



Dr Kirsten McLean, Monash University

The wonderful thing about the New Scholars Portfolio is having the dinner last night, not only because of the drinking and eating but also because I am here on my own. I didn’t know anyone Wednesday morning and now I’ve met lots of people at the workshop yesterday with Tony Harland and at the informal dinner. I felt very welcomed and very included and I really loved the fact that the Executive have made the effort to come to all the new scholars’ events. The Executive distributed themselves at all the tables at the New Members Breakfast and that makes you feel even more welcomed and valued. It was the first conference I have attended as a new person where I feel that I’m not alone. So that’s been really great.



Dr Deb Clarke, Chair of the New Scholars portfolio

Other HERDSA Executive members of the New Scholars portfolio are Associate Professor Lee Partridge (University of Western Australia); and Dr Lesley Petersen (Eastern Institute of Technology, Hawkes Bay, NZ).

Reflecting on the Art of Peer-Reviewing Journal Manuscripts

By Frances Kelly

What are the elements of good peer-review? At the HERDSA 2013 conference held at AUT University in Auckland in July members of the *HERD* journal editorial team facilitated a workshop on peer-reviewing manuscripts for higher education journals. With twenty-five participants the collective expertise and experience in the room was high, with almost all attendees having done peer-review of manuscripts and all having been peer-reviewed. Why did they come? You may ask. When we posed this question, the reply indicated that most wanted to learn more about peer-review and to reflect on whether what they were doing was *good* practice.

Our initial task was to collate ideas about what makes for a good peer review, and together we came up with criteria including the following:

- Constructive feedback, clear and sufficiently detailed suggestions for improvement
- Balancing critique with acknowledgment of the strengths of the article
- Tact and a respectful tone (kindness was mentioned several times)
- Acknowledgment of the limits of the reviewer's expertise, where relevant
- Some degree of challenge for the author (although "challenge" was a debated term) or encouragement to stretch the author, to bring the article to new heights

Along with tact, *trust* emerged as an important dimension; trust in a journal's processes as well as in a reviewer's professionalism and honesty. Similarly, *trustworthiness* is one of Kay Cheng Soh's "three Ts" of peer-review outlined in an article included as a resource for the

workshop. Soh points out that the process requires trust in the reviewers to be fair, and see the value in someone else's work. The other two Ts are *timeliness* to ensure reasonable manuscript turnarounds and *tactfulness* in conveying how improvements could be made (Soh, 2013). Two other resources likewise provided further food for thought on peer-review. Barbara Kamler (2010) discusses "revise and resubmit" and the important and complex work of writing that gets done after this decision, highlighting the need for peer-reviewers to recognise their role in contributing to the production of a high quality article. Likewise the Committee on Publication Ethics, or COPE (2013) guidelines for reviewers outline some of the important basic principles to which reviewers should adhere, including only agreeing to review manuscripts for which they have expertise, as the workshop participants discussed, and respecting the confidentiality of the peer-review process.

Although, of course, confidentiality is a vital dimension of peer review, it does mean that much of what happens in the process goes on behind closed doors hence it is sometimes difficult to *learn* about peer-review if you don't have much experience with it. The relatively large turnout for the workshop during the "graveyard shift" on day two of the conference is an indication of a healthy willingness and desire on the part of higher education reviewers to develop in this important practice. In order to get a glimpse behind those closed doors we set participants the task of reading and discussing two anonymous author responses to a revise and resubmit decision which included comments from the (also anonymous) reviewers. What is valuable about this exercise is that it offers the opportunity to see both sides – the reviewers' comments and how the author has responded to them. It allows us to see

the effects of constructive, detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement addressed to the author. We also discussed the *HERD* editorial team's practice of sending the decision letter to reviewers with both sets of (anonymous) reviews attached, so that each reviewer can see the other peer's response, and learn from their practice.

In her 2008 article for the HERDSA News on publishing in the *HERD* journal, Isabel Soliman notes in closing that peer-review is a vital but sometimes under-recognised element of scholarship in a discipline. *HERD*'s recent formation of the College of Reviewers provides the journal with an up-to-date database of experienced and internationally recognised reviewers in the field, formalises reviewers' commitment to regular reviewing, enables associate editors to match manuscripts to reviewer expertise, and (not the least) recognises the value and significance of the work that reviewers do for the journal.

The HERD workshop was facilitated by Frances Kelly, Barbara Grant, Mark Barrow, Bernadette Knewstubb and Sharron King.

Resources

- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Council. (2013). COPE ethical guidelines for peer reviewers. www.publicationethics.org
- Kamler, Barbara. (2010). Revise and resubmit: the role of publication brokers. In Claire Aitchison, Barbara Kamler and Alison Lee (Eds.) *Publishing pedagogies for the doctorate and beyond*. London: Routledge, 64-82.
- Soh, Kay Cheng (2013). Peer review: has it a future? *European Journal of Higher Education*. DOI:1080/21568235.2012.747877

Massive Open Online Courses: Is There a Lesson for Our Academic Professional Associations?

By Roger Atkinson



A recent posting to an educational technology email list caught my attention with its heading, “This is not a MOOC!” [1] Well, have MOOCs become so widespread, so “in”, that attention for one’s activity can be grabbed by proclaiming “This is not a MOOC!”? Of course, in this instance the attention grabbing was helped by other words and names: Professor Tom Reeves as poster, Open University of the Netherlands and the University of Twente as providers, “How to conduct educational design research” as topic, and “Online Master Class” as an indication of the kind of audience being appealed to.

Although “How to conduct educational design research” is not a MOOC (massive open online course), because it specified that “Enrollment will be limited” [1], it is a good starting point as an example of an open online course concerned with continuing professional development for practitioners (“CPD”). That’s the core topic for this column, with particular reference to how professional associations may use MOOCs and other recently emerged technologies to further their contributions to CPD for members and the wider community.

To illustrate a specific context, consider an example provided by the UK’s Association for Learning Technology (ALT). In 2013 it conducted a MOOC, “ocTEL” (Open Course in Technology Enhanced Learning), “... an online course to help you understand better how to use technology to enhance your teaching practice. The course is aimed primarily at people teaching at Higher Education level ... now over, but the materials will remain available for the next few months”. There were no fees charged, no prerequisites, no attendance required, and now readers are being advised that ALT is “... likely to run the course again in early 2014” [2].

Do we have any Australian counterparts to ALT’s “ocTEL” MOOC? The short answer is “No”, if we consider all of the key features in a MOOC, namely “massive” (i.e. large enrolments), “open” (no prerequisites, no

geographic or institutional restrictions, and no fees), “online” (no attendance; technology-enabled), and a “course” (i.e. a structured program with some interactivity, etc; being more than a multimedia textbook; though not a formal award course), together with the target participants being higher education teachers. However, the short answer “No” leads us into several obvious but nevertheless interesting questions: Why not? Do the initial developments of MOOCs by other kinds of organisations leave niches for “technology-enabled CPD” delivered by academic professional associations such as HERDSA and ascilite? Are there lessons for us?

To begin with the “Why not?” question, a number of influences could be nominated for further inquiry. Foremost is likely to be that attempts to create an association-based MOOC will encounter the problem of time constraints faced by potential developers. Although ocTEL was developed by a large team (presumably unpaid volunteers) [2], circumstances may be different in Australia. Potential Australian developers may be heavily committed to MOOCs and related activities within their individual universities, and they may be under pressure to produce research outputs for their universities, thereby limiting or precluding time allocation to “outside” activities undertaken for an academic professional association.

Evidence about the initial developments of MOOC activities by Australian universities is becoming abundant [3, 4], and evidence from elsewhere in the world is also readily available [5], although to date much of it is in the form of news and blog items rather than research articles. Academic associations wanting to enter the next generation of technology-enabled CPD will need to hurry, before all niches (and all of the potential creators) are pre-empted by university-based initiatives, and international initiatives such as ALT’s ocTEL. The problem of workload on potential creators of MOOCs could create the risk of a kind of technology weariness. Consider a lecturer who in earlier times may have worked hard on creating

multimedia resources for learning, perhaps with publication via an avenue such as Apple’s iTunes U, then more recently has worked hard to make best teaching and learning use of the university’s Moodle, Blackboard, or whatever, looked into virtual worlds, online simulations, etc, etc, and now may be hit with yet another new technology, the MOOC. At what point will technology weariness kick in?

Evidence about academics being under pressure to produce research outputs is also abundant, though often anecdotal. For some, this may mean concentrating their spare time upon writing up research for journal publication, possibly tempted by several recent calls for papers in special issues on MOOCs [6]. For others, chapters in a research-oriented book may be an attractive avenue, for example MOOCs are one of the topics in a current call for chapters issued by IGI Global, for a book edited by three Australians [7]. However, regrettably, it may be quite difficult for academics to secure any element of research recognition for participating in the creation of a MOOC, whether for their own university or for a professional association. The constraints are set out in the Australian Research Council’s publication ERA 2012 Submission Guidelines [8]. Adding to the difficulty created by the fuzzy dividing line between “chapters in a research book” and “chapters in textbooks”, Submission Guidelines specifies in Section 5.4.8.3 that the chapter must be “in a book that has been published by a commercial publisher”, though a follow on paragraph in 5.4.8.3 muddles matters by stating that “... the ARC recognises that there are cases ...” such that non-compliance may be acceptable in relation to free, non-commercial, online only chapters [8]. Given that ambiguity, we should not be surprised if Australian academics choose options perceived as safer, in relation to growing the number of their research outputs, than participating in MOOC creation activities.

Perhaps academic associations need more time to become accustomed to the MOOC push, with its emphasis on being free to any Internet user, and on seeking large numbers of participants. For example, HERDSA's Guide series is very "non-open", being available only via purchase of printed copies [9], and ascilite's webinar series ascilite Live! does not have a "massive" reach with its "... average of 20-30 attendees" per event [10].

Given the rapid expansion of MOOC developments by other kinds of organisations, will there be appropriate niches available in the near future for academic professional associations? This is not an easy question to address, owing to the existence of many sets of CPD-related learning resources that could be repurposed into MOOCs, perhaps in some cases after relatively little extra developmental work, though in other cases only after significant extra work. Indeed, one could argue that in many subjects we can find a near continuous spectrum of online, open access resources ranging from e-books (or "e-texts"); to online independent study modules, sometimes with computer-administered self-assessment, available anytime; to MOOCs which have study schedules that facilitate virtual group activities. Thus one could argue that MOOCs are rarely "entirely new", usually being a repurposing and extension of existing learning resources. So MOOCs are most likely to proliferate from providers who have existing resources that require relatively little extra developmental work.

From an abundance of illustrative examples, several may be especially pertinent. Open Universities Australia offers Open2Study ("Still deciding whether online study is right for you?") [11], and the UK Open University offers OpenLearn ("The home of free learning from The Open University") [12]. Both seem to have scope for relatively easy repurposing into MOOCs. Two examples of CPD-related modules that could be repurposed were collaborative modules developed by Curtin and Swinburne Universities (Transnational education professional development program), and by the Universities of Melbourne and Sydney (Tutor training: Professional development online).

The phrases "relatively easy repurposing into MOOCs" and "collaborative modules" may be the key phrases for academic professional associations seeking to go with the MOOC flow.

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Superficial and Trivial Development of Indonesia's Tertiary Education



By Robert Cannon

Introduction

In response to its concerns about Australian expertise in education and development, AusAID – the Australian Agency for International Development – commissioned a study to address the situation. The study, *A baseline study of the current status of engagement of Australian universities and research institutions in education for development*, was undertaken by Simon Marginson and Emmaline Bexley of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne and published in 2012.

A recent AusAID *Concept Note* outlining a proposed \$110 million program of support for tertiary education in Indonesia demonstrates that these concerns have not been addressed (AusAID, 2013). That proposed program of support deserves very serious consideration by educationists. It is also in need of substantial revision. Why is explained below.

The basic argument in the *Note* is that Indonesia's development challenge is to become a knowledge-based society, that tertiary education has a key role in supplying skilled workers, and that investing in the sector is in Australia's interest. To address the challenge, the program seeks 'to achieve knowledge-driven growth that is sustainable and equitable' (p.17). This means strengthening the tertiary education sector in terms of the quality of outcomes and enabling more disadvantaged students to complete tertiary education.

This focus on quality and equity is to be commended. However, in contradiction to this focus, the stated goal of the program is purely economic – "to create a prosperous society". The *Note* ignores all other possible goals of higher education. Further, it ignores lessons from the history

of educational development in Indonesia, what quality improvements require, and the evidence we have of ways of achieving quality improvements.

It is dispiriting to find that the same challenges for improving quality in Indonesian universities that I wrote about nearly 20 years ago are still being addressed today (Cannon, 1994). Isn't it time we asked why we are going over the same ground yet again? Part of the answer may be in the repetitive use of surface approaches to development (Cannon, 2012).

The *Concept Note* argues for an arid, economically driven, stress on more knowledge, more skills and more growth. There is no balance between the economic values of growth and skills – as important as these are – and traditional educational goals associated with the development of individuals' talents, values and attitudes, together with an understanding of culture and one's place in the world. Because these traditional goals are difficult to measure is no reason to abandon them.

Cultural and Intellectual Arrogance?

There is little evidence that Indonesian stakeholders were consulted about the development of the ideas in the *Note*. Our understanding of what Indonesians might actually think is drowned in a waterfall of words. Consider this example from the Introduction: "It takes into account evidence and lessons learned from a 2-year program of demand-driven analysis and policy engagement ... as well as independent and multi-donor analysis" (p.2).

What does this mean? This pompous writing perpetuates the myth that our culture reflects the pinnacle of human achievement and that we have superior

knowledge of the kind that 'demand-driven and multi-donor analysis' provides. This is cultural arrogance. It gives no consideration at all to Indonesian values or to the special history of Indonesian universities in national development. To be sure, there are references to Indonesian ownership and 'demand-led interventions' but then any expressed demand will be constrained by an externally imposed 'menu of options' (p.25).

It is not only cultural arrogance that undermines this *Concept Note*. It is also the intellectual arrogance that does not consider the way different fields of enquiry can help identify and address the challenges in education that Indonesia may have. For example, the bibliography has numerous references from economics but cites only one educational source. And that one solitary citation is about *Australian* education! Among other disciplines that can make useful contributions are history, education and anthropology. The *Note* correctly asserts the crucial role of knowledge in addressing the complexities of poverty. But is blind to its own very limited use of knowledge in its analysis.

History

Indonesian universities have had a distinctive history in nation building. This role warrants consideration. Moreover, there is a more recent history of other donor-led development activities. For instance, the Asian Development Bank funded the *Technological and Professional Skills Development Project*, which closed in 2007. This project sought to improve Indonesia's international competitiveness and to help achieve sustainable economic growth. It supported the strengthening of programs in priority disciplines in higher education. These are very similar goals to those in the

Note and it also used a competitive funding approach. But there is no analysis of the experience of this project or any other past and present higher education projects in Indonesia. Why?

Education

From the discipline of education, Alan Luke, in a significant paper (2011), has examined how policy crosses boundaries and the consequences of attempts to move educational ideas from one cultural context to another. His conclusions? First, policy does not travel at all well. To rip a policy out of its historical and cultural context, he argues, is to invite failure. Second, what Luke terms 'principled policy borrowing', depends on thorough analysis of the whole education system, cultural practices, demography, and much more.

There is no clear evidence in the *Concept Note* that this kind of thorough, cross-disciplinary analysis was undertaken. Without such analysis, we will most likely produce superficial development outcomes and failure.

Anthropology

Using approaches from the discipline of anthropology as well as from education, Christopher Bjork studied how Indonesian education actually functions (2005, 2013). Bjork opens a window to our understanding of the daily dynamics of education and its historical roots. Bjork found that teachers saw their work as primarily supporting the bureaucratic and nationalistic objectives of the State, not as educational. This attitude was partly responsible for the failure of efforts to implement educational change, Bjork concludes. Are there lessons for higher education here?

Economics

And from economics, Alison Wolf, in *Does education matter?* (Penguin, 2002), squarely addresses the knowledge economy. She asserts that a one-way relationship between higher public expenditure on education and economic growth does not exist. "Moreover, the larger and more complex the education sector the less obvious any links to productivity become." (From the Introduction.) She challenges spending on tertiary education and recommends investment in primary and secondary education. Why isn't this significant assertion evaluated in the *Note*?

Finally, there are several other matters of concern with the *Concept Note*. Here are a few:

Terminology and Focus

The *Note* uses the terminology 'tertiary education' and 'tertiary education institutions'. These terms are not defined. In Indonesia, for the kinds of institutions discussed in the *Note*, the term 'higher education' is used. Without any clarification of terms, there is confusion about the focus of this *Note*. If tertiary education, does it include all post-secondary institutions of education, or not?

Sustainability is a key concept in the goal of the program, yet there is no congruence with what is discussed about this. This complex concept is not analysed and repeatedly used as a slogan.

Missing: The Quality of Teaching and Academic Leadership

If a goal is to improve learning and research outcomes then several basic matters must be addressed: the quality of learning and teaching, academic leadership, and the policies that support good teaching. The *Note* does not seriously address any of these issues.

Australia has a leading reputation in the area of educational development but this expertise is ignored. The work of the *Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia* and its high-class journal are indicators of this expertise.

Conclusion

The *Note* exemplifies what John Dewey complained about in the 1920's. He argued that any enquiry into the human condition raises questions of morality. When such enquiry ignores human concerns and culture, the consequence is that such enquiry "...is confined to the superficial and comparatively trivial, no matter what its parade of technical skills" (Dewey, J. 1948, p. xxvi).

Have we learned nothing about educational change in nearly a century? Superficiality of approach is what AusAID has presented us with in this *Note*. Indonesian higher education needs better than this.

As educational developers we need to be alert to important proposals and reports such as this *Concept Note* that are stripping the complexities of education down to simple economic and management issues only. A similar, and possibly worse, approach is adopted in the 2012 Ernst and Young study of Australian universities. But that is another story.

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Meanderings

Travel and academic conferences share one thing in common – both bring you face to face with poor design.

Think of travel. Confronting poor design is a common experience. This includes transport where confusing road signs, airport facilities and hotel accommodation design are common challenges. A driver visiting Sydney for the first time will likely have encountered that very “informative” warning painted on motorways “ED Only”. Huh? Road signs are designed for locals who know the road, not visitors.

Airports abound with examples of bad design such as facilities exposed to the elements. Have you ever flown into or out of Coolangatta airport on the Gold Coast when there is a downpour? How can they have designed a major airport without aerobridges? Is this what “open skies” policy means? Poor design is with you all the way into your hotel. Hotel bathrooms are marvels: mirrors placed too high; grossly inadequate illumination; zero storage place for your stuff complicated by their clutter of potions and nick-knacks; shower doors that prohibit you operating the plumbing without getting wet; and then, that wonderful piece of graphic design – the tiny bottles of mysterious liquids labelled in what seems to be 2 point font in pale grey lettering on a similar grey background. Wonderful when you are soaking wet and stranded in the shower without your glasses!

Somewhat similar graphic design problems have long been a bugbear for conference attendees. Most of us will have sat through tedious PowerPoint presentations with far too many slides and too much information set out in small fonts and colour combinations that guarantee illegibility.

Happily, these kinds of design problems were not so much in evidence at the recent HERDSA Conference held at AUT University in Auckland. In fact, the really imaginative and – yes – legible PowerPoint

presentations were so good they caused me to reconsider my antagonism to this medium. The 2013 Conference was held in the beautifully designed Sir Paul Reeves Building. This building was purpose-built with a variety of spaces to accommodate learning and social interaction.

It seems that the labours of scholars concerned with design issues, like James Hartley, are beginning to bear fruit. It is a pity that Hartley’s valuable book, *Designing instructional text*, (Nichols, 1978) has not been updated. The book is packed with sound, research-based advice. However, Hartley, who has been a prolific contributor to design – (Google “James Hartley instructional text” to see the breadth of his work), remains very active and recent articles have centred on the design of papers for publication. New ways of making academic articles easier to read, in the *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 12, 1, 2012, 143-160, is a fine example of this work. Another of his contributions is a blog concerning titles of papers: Titles are the hardest thing: How can we make them more effective? (<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/05/24/titles-are-hardest-more-effective/>).

Another of Hartley’s blogs that I have on my reading list, which is available on the same site, is this: *Academic writing in old age: How retired academics can make considerable contributions to their institutions!*

Speaking of titles, the title of this book really attracted my attention and appealed to my restless nature: *How to be idle*, by Tom Hodgkinson, Hamish Hamilton, 2004. The Preface sets the tone for this excellent book. “It’s good to be idle. The purpose of this book is both to celebrate laziness and to attack the work culture of the western world, which has enslaved, demoralized and depressed so many of us.” Distilling considerations of idleness from 3,000 years of philosophy, fiction, poetry and history,

Hodgkinson asserts that: “the sheer number of great idlers in history proves also that we are not alone.”

Delightfully written and comprehensively referenced to some of the world’s greatest thinkers on idleness, and even referring to God – “after working six days, he rests for all eternity” – this book is the perfect antidote to the tumult of the electronic age and to those who promote time management strategies, organisers, performance criteria, quality assurance and all the other paraphernalia of management control in higher education.

What we need, among others he says, is the skill of skiving – the “act of revolt against the arid philosophies of living that we’re indoctrinated with at school and at work, the notion of suffering now, pleasure later” (p.40). Do we in academia contribute to this suffering?

One great friend of idleness was Robert Louis Stevenson, someone not widely recognised for his contributions to educational theory and philosophy. Stevenson wrote about the benefits of skiving off from classes and learning more about life. Bear with me while I quote in full:

“If you look back at your own education, I am sure that it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truancy that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-lustre periods between sleep and waking in class ... While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men” (p. 41).

For me this rings true. Beyond the fog of dimly remembered lectures – and even whole courses – some of the most vivid recollections of undergraduate days include wandering through the museums of Sydney, ridiculous dressing-up for Commemoration Days, escaping lectures and going to the pub at opening time to relax or to fearlessly



By Robert Cannon

discuss ideas from our lectures free of the constraints of a judgemental tutor.

I think this is a terrific book. Through its gentle, humorous and satirical style it helps us to think about a better work-life balance and see challenges through a different perspective. Its message of striking a proper balance reminds me of a health and fitness writer in a newspaper who responded to a correspondent in this way: "You ask about how I fit my exercise schedule into my busy day. The short answer is I don't! I regard my health and fitness as fundamental to everything I do. If I am not healthy I cannot live the life I choose. I give absolute priority to my fitness routines. So, your question is asked the wrong way around. It should be how to fit work and other commitments around your fitness and health program!"

Hodgkinson leads us to consider a similar conclusion for ourselves, how to balance constructive idleness with work. Further illuminating ideas on idleness can be found here on his website: <http://idler.co.uk>. This link includes information about "The Idler Academy". This Academy is based on the idea that the word *scholé* is Greek for spare moment or leisure. Leisure, in the classical sense, means time that we do not fill with distractions. From *scholé* we get the words scholar and school, so shouldn't academics feel naturally comfortable with leisure?

Another subversive story about education, is this one about James V. McConnell, then an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, and founder of the satirical journal, *The Worm Runner's*

Digest. For an explanation of the *Digest*, see *The Psychologist*, 26, 4, April 2013, 310 – 311. The *Digest* arrived on the scene as the 1960s counterculture was taking hold, especially in universities. The *Digest* was devoted to puncturing the pretentiousness of "science" and was, as McConnell noted, one of the first academic journals that published satire.

My Canadian colleague, Dr Christopher Knapper from Queen's University, wrote about McConnell as follows. "In the 1970s I corresponded with McConnell, who was then President of the American Psychological Association's teaching division. McConnell won a "genius grant" that gave him a large sum of money to do whatever he wanted. And so he decided to study medicine.

First off, the university would not let him into the pre-med course, because he did not have the formal prerequisites in biology, even though he was a full professor of biology and psychology at the University of Michigan. When he finally wangled his way in, he kept getting failing grades from the Teaching Assistant until another student took pity on him and showed him the prescribed lab results that had been passed around among students for ages. The labs had not been changed in years, but McConnell had made the mistake of actually doing the labs and reporting the genuine results he obtained. By the time he had passed pre-med he decided he would sit in on some of the medical degree classes before he went further. He found them so

badly taught he completely gave up the idea of proceeding!"

A similar example of the perversities of higher education relates to the recently deceased Professor Donald Woods, Professor Emeritus at McMaster University. A great educator in McMaster's illustrious educational history, Don Woods was widely known as a pioneer of inquiry and problem-based learning, as well as a recognized expert on engineering education. It was in this context that Don Woods sought to gain a deeper understanding of the student experience. He enrolled in an undergraduate engineering course. He only survived by engaging the mentoring skills of fellow students to successfully struggle through the overwhelming and confusing course work requirements.

Both McConnell's and Wood's experiences are challenging commentaries on the qualities of undergraduate education back then. It would not happen today, would it?

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HERDSA Conference Workers

In Defence of Acronyms: When Does Writing Cross from “Culture” to “Confusing”?

By Susan Rowland

“Intercultural language learning [...] is a dialogue that allows for reaching a common ground for negotiation to take place, where variable points of view are recognised, mediated, and accepted.” (Liddicoat et al., 2003)

In 2012 I published a Points for Debate piece in HERD journal (Rowland, 2012). The HERD editors worked generously with me to refine the piece; after publication more than one person contacted me to tell me they enjoyed my “Point for Debate”.

In the last edition of HERDSA News, however, a sentence from my piece was cited as an example of egregious overuse of acronyms and bad editing. In the spirit of full disclosure (and with some embarrassment), I reproduce it here:

“Given this type of competition for TF academic positions, can a student with a SE or SoTL PhD realistically expect to gain a Science faculty position at a university?”

When I first saw my sentence maligned I was offended, and I mentally ticked off my justifications. The piece was written to a tight word limit. I expected my academic audience to understand the terms I used. I defined each acronym the first time it appeared. I adhered to all the conventions of my scientific academic practice. The HERD editors were satisfied. Why, then, was my sentence “bad”?

Although I’m still not sure of the answer, the experience has made me think about acronyms and why we use them.

Although we often use the term “acronym” to describe any group of letters that stand for a longer phrase, some common terms, like SPF and ATM, are actually initialisms rather than acronyms. Initialisms are “words” formed using the first letters of the words in a phrase, but we pronounce each letter individually when we say the initialism out loud. An acronym, on the other hand, is a pronounceable word formed using the first letters of the words in a phrase. NASA (which stands for “National Aeronautical

and Space Administration”) is an example. Functionally, initialisms and acronyms serve the same useful purpose – to succinctly convey an idea.

In an age where communication is becoming more immediate, less considered, and more abbreviated, acronyms play a key role. They’re easy to type and easy to read, allowing the rapid transmission of information. They also take up less space on a page than a full sentence or set of words – they save screen space, printing costs, and trees. These aspects of acronym use are fairly obvious, but acronyms have another important role – they contribute to culture.

Acronyms are a form of language, and sociology tells us that language and culture are clearly linked (Fishman, 1972). Language has been described as “open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal” (Shohamy, 2006). This fits the way acronyms work. Acronyms are easily coined, easily explained, and often visually arresting – this means that they evolve rapidly in printed texts, particularly in texts where space is limited and a select readership is involved. New or obscure acronyms provide a set of “inside knowledge” for those that use them – thus, they provide a form of tribal culture.

Consider the mobile phone for a moment. Seasoned texters (or parents of teenagers) will be familiar with terms like CU, LOL, or the evocative ROTFL. You may be surprised to know there are over 2200 texting abbreviations and acronyms in common use (Netlingo, 2013). If these terms dominate your language, you’re part of a select group with an exclusive culture.

I am not a member of the serious texting community, but in my discussion I used acronyms like PhD, RHD student, and SoTL; they are common in the language for my tribe. Did I exclude readers who are not academics with at least a passing awareness of student supervision and educational scholarship? Yes; but, had I *not* used those acronyms, and instead had written each item out in full, my intended

readers would have wondered why I was wasting their time. Clarity of information transmission is an important and ongoing issue in academia. Confusing or tribe-specific language can reduce productivity and create frustration for both sides of an inter-tribe interaction (Quinton, 2007). Clearly this is a bad outcome for a piece of academic writing. Unless obfuscation is the goal, authors have a responsibility to make their work accessible. It works both ways though – the audience also needs to engage with the writer. Both sides need to make concessions and negotiations during intercultural exchange. So, next time you read a piece of writing with a few too many acronyms, stop, breathe, and consider your options. You could get angry and frustrated, and choose to exclude yourself from the tribe that uses the acronyms as common parlance. Alternatively, you could learn to speak the language, and join a new tribe.

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- Contact: s.rowland1@uq.edu.au

Higher Education in the Headlines

A summary of the top stories on higher education in the Australian Higher Education Supplement (www.theaustralian.news.com.au/highereducation/), Times Higher Education (www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/) and the Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com) from March to August found that issues of university fees dominated the higher education press, especially in the UK. Other themes included: student access, vocational education, academic staff, university leadership, quality assurance, research funding, affirmative action and online learning.

University Funding

In March the Times Higher Education reported the UK treasury was preparing universities for further austerity measures, along with warnings from Hefce that there were problems with part-time student numbers emerging under the new fees and funding system with universities advising Ministers to reverse the ban on second degree funding to halt the decline. In April the Australian Higher Education reported that two days after the federal government announced cuts to higher education they provided a \$30m hand-out to a university to build a city campus for its law and business students. In May the Australian Higher Education reported that there were few sweeteners in the Australian budget other than some postgraduate and enabling places. Also in May the Times Higher Education reported a bleak prognosis for health funding if it is transferred out of the academy to avoid spending cuts. In June the Times Higher Education reported that opening the market door US-style charges will prove costly in an unregulated tuition fees system, while a medical transfusion will not save anticipated cuts to widening participation funds. In July the Times Higher Education reported NUS and Hefce teamed up to fill a "black hole" left by failure in regulation through the higher education bill.

Student Access

In March the Australian Higher Education reported the plan to send thousands of young Australians to universities in Asia may face problems with accreditation. In

April the Chronicle of Higher Education reported President Obama's plan to increase Pell Grants and add incentives on some student aid. Also in April the Times Higher Education reported stalled progress on GPA may benefit from a national push as reform will require more work than previously thought and that Offa was not putting enough pressure on Russell Group universities to widen participation although there were unfilled course numbers despite cutbacks. In May the Australian Higher Education reported that some students from India were using the university-only streamlined visa system to get to Australia and are then jumped ship to cheaper private providers. In June the Australian Higher Education reported that the uncapping of student places was producing winners and losers as regional and outer metropolitan universities struggled to attract applications with school leavers flocking to inner-city campuses.

Vocational Education

In March the Chronicle of Higher Education reported a college degree was losing its appeal to employers. In April the Australian Higher Education reported business experience was not seen as an appropriate qualification to lead a large and complex government business like TAFE. In May the Australian Higher Education reported the federal government had withheld funds from cash-strapped vocational education because it was in dispute with the state government for cutting similar amounts from TAFE. In June the Times Higher Education reported the Minister and BIS were taking close interest in graduate earnings. In July the Australian Higher Education reported the hike in graphic design was an example of fee "madness" while in July it reported that employers were losing faith in the quality of training qualifications due to a proliferation of private providers.

Academic Staff

In March the Times Higher Education reported professorial salaries are rising more than twice as fast as pay for other academic grades raising fears about the inflationary impact of next year's research excellence framework. In March the Australian Higher

Education reported teacher-only roles are on the rise and will go up significantly in the next few years. In June the Chronicle of Higher Education reported a new test to identify good and bad behaviour in the academic workplace was producing some opposition while the Times Higher Education reported the gender gap in some institutions was just one in 10 professors being female. In July the Times Higher Education reported there were few promotions or pay rises for teachers as efforts to promote pedagogy have yet to pay off as Surrey considered grade targets for staff appraisals.

University Leadership

In March the Chronicle of Higher Education reported a US university president with a reputation with solving problems was unable to help his son get off heroin. In April the Times Higher Education reported the former prime minister's Thatcher's legacy in higher education still elicit respect and rancour. In July the Chronicle of Higher Education reported how the Gates Foundation's millions was remaking Higher Education while the Australian Higher Education reported Universities Australia calling for the policy reform of the demand-driven system not to be rushed to avoid unintended consequences

Quality Assurance

In April the Australian Higher Education reported criticism of TEQSA's quality assessment survey as an example of red tape crushing the sector. In May the Times Higher Education reported Southampton successfully appealed against full QAA review and the quality watchdog backed down. In May the Times Higher Education reported a quartet paid the hefty admission fee to join the elite club Russell Group and the Australian Higher Education reported Labor planned to slash red-tape in a new approach to quality control which meets university demands for a lighter regulatory burden.

Research Funding Impact & Quality

In March the Australian Higher Education reported liaising with ranking agencies had become a full-time job aimed at developing strategies for climbing league tables. In April the Australian Higher Education reported universities were using ERA to hide truth that they “game” the quality exercise using journal rankings to measure the performance of staff. In May the Times Higher Education reported a new grouping of southeast institutions accounts for a third of EPSRC-funded work. In July the Australian Higher Education reported measuring research impact was not a government priority and the Times

Higher Education reported Universities may lose places over falls in teacher training standards.

Affirmative Action

In May the Times Higher Education reported a long standing suspicion that universities accepted international students with weak qualifications to boost their income appears to be unfounded. In June the Australian Higher Education reported a disgruntled student who failed a unit in his business degree was suing to have his HECS bill refunded. In July the Chronicle of Higher Education reported affirmative action ruling will inspire legal challenges to race-conscious admissions policies.

Online learning

In March the Chronicle of Higher Education reported a professor’s attempt to teach students how to study without getting distracted while the professors behind the MOOC hype discuss what was it like to teach 10,000 or more students at once.

Athletics

In June the Chronicle of Higher Education reported one last shot for a coach who bounced around 12 coaching jobs in 16 years.

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

Assessment in Music Symposium

By Melissa Cain, Griffith University

45 delegates from five countries gathered at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University’s South Bank campus on July 16 and 17 to participate in discussions most pertinent to the assessment of music in higher education settings.

The 24 presentations covered a wide variety of topics including the assessment of performance, one-to-one teaching, assessment of teachers, the role of feedback, innovative assessment techniques, The Threshold Learning Outcomes for the Creative and Performing Arts, and self- and peer-assessment.

The highlight of the symposium was undoubtedly the key note address given by Professor D Royce Sadler: *Backwards assessment explanations: Implications for teaching and assessment practice*. Senior

Assessment Scholar in the Teaching and Educational Development Institute at The University of Queensland, and Professor Emeritus in Higher Education, Griffith University, Professor Sadler challenged participants’ reliance on predetermined criteria and the role of teachers’ feedback in students’ learning. Professor Sadler promoted a backwards derivation of criteria whereby academics develop criteria for the evaluation of the quality of each specific example of student work in order to explain what was good about it. Professor Sadler’s contribution to discussions throughout the symposium was also invaluable.

The symposium was also delighted to have the attendance of Dr Mary Lennon - Senior Lecturer in Music at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama in Dublin, Ireland - who spoke about the on-going work

of the AEC *Polifonia* Working Group on Assessment and Standards in Higher Music Education in Europe. Specifically, Dr Lennon explained how The Group have been involved in examining existing assessment methods and procedures in European conservatoires and developing a shared understanding of performance standards across higher music education institutions through international seminars and workshops.

The Assessment in Music (AiM) is funded by the Office for Teaching and Learning. The project team from Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University is comprised of A/Prof Don Lebler, A/Prof Scott Harrison, Dr Gemma Carey and Dr Melissa Cain. More information about the project can be found at: assessmentinmusic.com.au

The Branches: Sharing Expertise in Educational Research and Scholarship



By Iris Vardi

Over the years, I have had the pleasure to be involved not only with my local branch executive, but also with branch chairs from across the organisation. And I can say that 2013 is turning out to be quite a unique year for many of the branches. When I used to sit on the local branch executive, I remember us talking through those we knew in our local universities who had won a teaching award, completed interesting educational research, or developed a unique approach to teaching and learning. Would they be prepared to give a seminar or workshop? Would it be of interest to local members? Could we get interesting conversations and collaborations happening? Typically, local branches tend to work alone, being dependent upon those within or visiting the local community who are committed to teaching and learning, and passionate about sharing this with others. But for 2013, there has been change ...

This change has its genesis in a grant that HERDSA received in 2012 from the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) for the project *Advancing Higher Education Teaching and Learning*. The aim of the grant has been to look at the current state of play in research and scholarship into higher education within the Australian context and to build on that knowledge base. The starting point was the commissioning of a review of the research and scholarship evident through publications in Australian journals and conference proceedings as well as publications arising from OLT grants and fellowships. The resulting *Report into Australian Tertiary Learning and Teaching Scholarship and Research 2007 – 2012* identified a focus on sixteen overarching areas of interest to Australian researchers and scholars in the field of higher education: academic language

and learning; assessment and feedback; critical thinking; disadvantage; educational technology; graduate attributes; health and wellbeing; higher degrees by research; internationalisation, leadership and professional development; learning and teaching; research into higher education; student experience (perceptions), student experience (social); transition and retention; and work-integrated learning.

With this report in hand, branches could now look at how to capitalise on this Australian expertise. In March 2013, the Australian branch Chairs were invited to join the national HERDSA executive at a meeting in Sydney to discuss the project and to look at how the branches could build on the report. It was decided to make use of some of the OLT funding to bring expertise over to local branches; expertise that might not be readily found in their local community. Through discussion over the day, the Chairs identified areas which were of particular interest to their local communities. A number of these stood out as being of common interest to all the branches: educational technology and designing educational experiences for learning. Through this collaboration between the branches was born the idea for a HERDSA Road Show that brings together these two areas.

Now, instead of the executive of the local branch brainstorming possible presenters alone, we had Chairs from across Australia putting their heads together to identify the right person to make the Road Show presentations. Based on recommendation from the South Australia branch, it was agreed to contact Associate Professor Shane Dawson from the University of South Australia. Shane's expertise in using data extracted from learning management systems to improve design and delivery

for learning in real time seemed a good fit. Now all branches could benefit from this expertise.

The national HERDSA Executive felt that this was such a good idea, that decisions were made to take the Road Show even further. First, steps were taken to ensure that the Road Show also goes to New South Wales. While NSW does not currently have a branch, it does have a significant number of HERDSA members. Many thanks are owed to Shirley Scott who took on this responsibility in NSW. With this funding from the OLT, we have been able to take expertise around Australia in a way that benefits academics both within and outside of HERDSA. We have further been able to take it outside of Australia with the national Executive also deciding to fund the Road Show to New Zealand where we also have a strong membership.

By the time this article gets to publication, the Road Show may well have been round your way with July 2013 being scheduled for most locations. The Road Show, however, is not the only initiative being undertaken by local branches in response to the Report. The branches are also looking at bringing other expertise that matches local interests and needs. Look out for events advertised by your local branch.

Dr Iris Vardi has worked in a wide variety of roles in universities, and has been a past Chair of the WA HERDSA branch. She is Chair of the Branch Liaison Portfolio for the national HERDSA executive, and currently works as a Higher Education Consultant coordinating the OLT Advancing Higher Education Teaching and Learning Project.

Contact: i.vardi@amnet.net.au.

News from the Branches

HERDSA branches and regional networks form a key link in the HERDSA community's chain of networking and developmental events. Branch chairs and committees work hard behind the scenes to organise branch activities for HERDSA members. Local networking activities include colloquia, fora, pre- and post-conference presentations, network meetings, and speakers. If you have not yet made it to one of your branch activities we encourage you to get involved. News of past and future branch activities can be forwarded to mbell@uow.edu.au for inclusion in the next HERDSA News.

In recent months a number of HERDSA branches have hosted Dr Shane Dawson's workshops on Learning Analytics sponsored by the OLT and HERDSA.

Shane is a Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching and Associate Professor of technology Enhanced Learning at the university of South Australia.

Many thanks to Shirley Scott who sent us the following information about Shane Dawson's "roadshow".

The high growth in adoption of education technologies such as learning management systems (LMS) across the education sector has resulted in alternate and more accessible data on learning and teaching practice. As with most online systems, Learning Management Systems capture and store student interactions with course activities. These digital footprints can be 'mined' and analysed to establish patterns of learning behaviour and teaching practice, a process described as learning analytics. Tracking the patterns of student interactions can provide detailed insight into the learning process and allows for rapid evaluation of the impact of specific learning activities. Learning analytics can empower both instructor and student to make informed decisions about their learning and teaching processes, through the interpretation of educational data from both learner and teacher orientations.



Dr Shane Dawson, University of South Australia

ACT

Chair: Jean Rath

The start of the year has seen the Branch host two successful events. In June, a variety of presenters provided previews of their presentations for the 2013 HERDSA Conference. Lyndsay Agans (ANU) spoke about scalable learning and bilingual MOOCS. Elke Stracke and Sylvia Alston (UC) shared the findings of their OLT funded project focused on giving and receiving feedback in HDR supervision. Gesa Ruge (UC) looked forward to co-facilitating the reflective 'Talking about Teaching and Learning' (TATL) workshops that run each day of the HERDSA Conference. Jean Rath (UC) spoke about her work as part of a research team based at the University of Oxford conducting longitudinal research into the experiences of early career academics. Together with ANU Online the branch also hosted a well-received learning analytics workshop facilitated by Shane Dawson as part of his "roadshow" for the national OLT/HERDSA project Advancing Higher Education Learning and Teaching. Shane provided an engaging overview of the current state of learning analytics and participants were able to begin cross-institutional conversations about how analytics are being used to track and enhance student learning.

The branch committee adds congratulations to the applause that greeted the news at the HERDSA Conference in Auckland that

long time member and active contributor to the branch Robert Kennelly has been elected as a HERDSA Life member. Congratulations go also to John Gilchrist of the University of Canberra who has become a HERDSA Fellow.

Contact Jean Rath: Jean.Rath@canberra.edu.au

HONG KONG

Chair: Anna Siu Fong KWAN



Speakers and participants at the Dinner Dialogue

A HERDSA Dinner Dialogue was held at City Top Restaurant on the topic of Academic Advising. Speakers shared some of their work in academic advising in their universities, followed by Q & A and discussion among participants. This year the Hong Kong Team joined the 2013 conference in Auckland. The Branch is looking forward to hosting the HERDSA 2014 Conference in Hong Kong from 7 to 10 July, one of the most exciting cities in the Asian region. The conference theme is "Higher Education in a Globalized World". Details can be accessed <http://conference.hersda.org.au/2014/>

All HERDSA members who are working and visiting Hong Kong are most welcome to HERDSA HK activities. Please visit the website or contact Anna for the most up to date information. HERDSA HK Website: <http://hersdahlk.edublogs.org/>

Contact Anna Kwan: anna.kwan@outlook.com

NEW SOUTH WALES

Dr Shane Dawson, Deputy Director of the Learning and Teaching Unit, and Associate Professor of Technology Enhanced Learning at the University of South Australia, presented a workshop on learning and analytics at UNSW in July. The event was a collaboration between HERDSA and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at UNSW. The topic proved to be of wide appeal as the workshop attracted a mix of people already working in learning analytics and discipline academics interested in finding out more about the topic. All of the major universities in Sydney were represented and many seemed to be putting significant resources into implementing a system for interpreting student data. As to be expected UNSW had a strong presence at the workshop.

Shane was very generous in sharing what he knew about learning analytics and most people were impressed with his breadth and depth of understanding. He gave the workshop a practical focus, with a lot of local examples drawn from his collaborations in this area. He also stayed around after the workshop to talk to workshop participants about their specific situations.

NEW ZEALAND

Chair: Clinton Golding

A great big thank you to all of HERDSA NZ for the brilliant Auckland conference and to Tony Harland (outgoing Chair) who has worked tirelessly for HERDSA NZ. Tony has received the TERNZ/HERDSA NZ researcher medal for contribution to higher education research.

The fantastic new learning and teaching space, the Sir Paul Reeves Building, was a wonderful venue, and absolutely everyone was talking about the great keynote speakers.

Now HERDSA NZ is taking a deep breath but not stopping the action. A Learning Analytics workshop with Shane Dawson will be hosted on August 16 at the University of Auckland. More details from clear@auckland.ac.nz

Contact Clinton Golding: clinton.golding@otago.ac.nz

HERDSA NZ: <http://www.herdsa.org.nz/>

QUEENSLAND

The branch is planning a series of events for the year. Please check the website for news of activities.

HERDSA QLD: www.herdsaq.net

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Chair: Dale Wache

Thanks to Denise Wood (UniSA) and Sharron King (UniSA) who have agreed to join the HERDSA SA committee. The committee is now looking for members from Adelaide and Flinders universities as it would be great to have 6-7 people on the committee. Dale especially wants to encourage new academics to join – your energy and fresh ideas are needed on the committee!

The branch has an interesting schedule of events planned for the next few months. In September Shane Dawson (UniSA) and George Siemens (Associate Director, Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute Athabasca University) will present on *Learning Analytics* as part of the HERDSA/OLT Project Roadshow. Further information will be distributed via respective University information systems. In October Professor Helen MacGillivray from QUT (also as part of the HERDSA/OLT Project Roadshow) will present a workshop on *Postgraduate Capabilities* and a seminar on *Academic balancing of teaching, research and professional leadership*. In November HERDSA will be collaborating with the SA branch of the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and the South Australian and Northern Territory Promoting Excellence Network (SANTPEN) to present a day of presentations, panels and workshops by OLT Fellows.

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

TASMANIA

Chair: Tracy Douglas

Seven HERDSA Tasmanian branch members attended the 2013 HERDSA conference in Auckland, New Zealand (six presented at the conference) with Janine Tarr (deputy chair) representing

the Tasmanian branch at key conference events. The branch held a roadshow event co-sponsored by OLT, HERDSA and TILT (UTAS) at the University of Tasmania in Hobart entitled *Learning Analytics; Building Evidence* facilitated by Shane Dawson. The event was attended by a total of 18 HERDSA members and UTAS staff, and saw an active discussion around the theme of Learning Analytics. A lot of positive feedback about the event was received initiating discussions for collaborative work in UTAS in the area of learning analytics.

Contact Tracy Douglas: T.Douglas@utas.edu.au

VICTORIA

Chair: Joan Richardson

Committee members for the branch are Joan Richardson, Liz Levin, Chris Booth, and Julia Choate.

A two day symposium and OLT project dissemination event *New Generation Learning Spaces; Build it but will they learn?* was held that included several activities. This was the first of two joint research events planned for 2013 with the second in September. The event was designed with the dual aims of disseminating information on the outcomes of some of the recent OLT funded projects that relate to New Generation Learning Spaces (NGLS) as well as providing an opportunity to showcase and advance current research into NGLS. The morning session commenced with the question: "Build it but will they learn?" This was organised as a serious, yet light hearted, debate designed to enable both debaters and audience to explore issues related to both physical and virtual learning spaces. Shane Dawson presented a session on *Learning Analytics*. A series of presentations followed and a research workshop aimed at assisting participants prepare academic papers was then conducted. Presentations included: *The development of Academics' (OLT project dissemination)* Professor Peter Ling ; *Transnational education and the issue of equivalence*, Professor Margaret Mazzolini; *Ninth Melbourne Computing Education Conventicle – Developing Teamwork that works*, Dr Margaret Hamilton; *Higher Education Research and the Student Learning Experience*



in Business, Associate Professor Martin Davies.

The Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) in conjunction with an OLT funded project will hold a conference entitled: *Hunters and Gatherers: Strategies for Curriculum Mapping and Data Collection for Assurance of Learning*. The conference will be held from 10-12th December at Melbourne University

Contact Joan Richardson: joan.richardson@rmit.edu.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Chair: Melissa Davis

HERDSA WA congratulates two new HERDSA WA Branch Committee members, Dr Sue Bolt and Dr Lee Partridge, who have been elected as members of the HERDSA Executive for 2013-15. The WA Branch would also like to congratulate HERDSA member Dr Lynne Roberts on being awarded an OLT National Teaching Fellowship for "Identifying, developing and disseminating best practice in supporting honours dissertation supervision". The WA Branch has continued to present the Scholarship Profiled series, with presentations from ATLC/OLT award winning academics. The branch has conducted two excellent seminars so far this year – Dr Guy Curtis from Murdoch University presenting on "Preventing plagiarism" and Dr Lynne Roberts from Curtin University on her

work in "Engaging students in learning research methods and statistics" that led to a 2012 OLT Citation. Several events planned for the second half of the year include workshops co-presented by the OLT: Dr Shane Dawson on *Learning Analytics: Building Evidence Based Practice* as part of a National "roadshow" and Professor David Boud presenting on *Feedback for Learning*. The next annual "HERDSA Rekindled" is being planned. This is a very popular event on the HERDSA WA calendar and is an opportunity for WA academics who did not make it to the HERDSA National Conference to hear the presentations of their WA colleagues.

Contact Melissa Davis: m.davis@curtin.edu.au

"Higher Education in a Globalized World"

Get ready for the HERDSA Conference 2014 Hong Kong

Details at the conference website:

<http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2014/>



The venue for the 2014 conference is Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong.
7th to 10th July, 2014

Pencil in the date and start thinking about:

- learning to cook Chinese cuisine
 - Hong Kong shopping
- sight-seeing the Victoria Harbour
- exploring Hong Kong Island on a double decker tram
 - visit Macau and mainland China.



HERDSA Hong Kong Committee Members

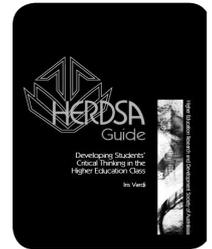
Dr Eva Wong, Dr Anna Kwan and Dr Theresa Kwong at the HERDSA NZ Conference

New Books by HERDSA Fellows

The New Academic: A Strategic Handbook



Developing Students' Critical Thinking in the Higher Education Class



Shelda Debowski's latest book: *The New Academic: A Strategic Handbook* was launched at the HERDSA Conference in Auckland. Deb Clarke from Charles Sturt University introduced the book, noting that it was a very readable, practical and wise book that offered extensive guidance to any new academic – and those mentoring them. The book covers all facets of academic work (teaching, research and engagement) offering a holistic framing of working in academe. It draws on Professor Debowski's work as a professor of Higher Education Development where she researched the best practices of successful academics and worked with early career academics in Australasia and overseas. The book is well suited to being a text in Graduate Certificates in Higher Education or as a personal resource to guide successful academic practice.

Professor Shelda Debowski is a Higher Education Consultant and HERDSA Fellow.

Email: Shelda.Debowski@nd.edu.au

Now available: Debowski S. (2012). *The New Academic: A Strategic Handbook*, Open University Press / McGraw-Hill.

Dr Shelda Debowski is former HERDSA President and Education Consultant.

Critical thinking is an important way for students to think deeply about what they are learning. It is fundamental to sound problem solving, decision making, research, critical reflection, and clinical reasoning. But how can critical thinking be effectively nurtured and developed within classes and across degree programs? Using the latest insights from the literature, this practical HERDSA Guide by Dr Iris Vardi addresses this question by examining:

- The nature of critical thinking and its relationship to learning
- Curriculum design that supports critical thinking development
- Teaching that develops critical thinking
- Assessment design, marking and feedback
- How to evaluate success.

Dr Iris Vardi is a Higher Education Consultant and HERDSA Fellow.

Dr Iris Vardi, winner of the 2012 HERDSA conference Creative Presentation award. Contact her for workshops for to support teaching staff in determining how best to foster critical thinking in their discipline.

Email: i.vardi@amnet.net.au

Now available: Vardi, I. (2013). *Developing Students' Critical Thinking in the Higher Education Class*, HERDSA.

For information and to order, go to http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=139.

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