

## Introduction

Reference was made in the preamble to the source of inspiration for the 2003 HERDSA Conference theme. It was chosen for its ability to support multiple perspectives on higher education, such as teaching in the disciplines, research and research methodologies, students' needs and expectations, technology and education, policy, lifelong learning, and professional development. In this regard it has been successful, attracting a wide range of contributions on multiple topics from Australasia, South East Asia and Europe. In their book, Bowden and Marton (1998, p. viii) argue that, first and foremost, a University should be "a place of learning". We would like to extend this argument and suggest that higher education as a community of learners is premised on the notion that it is a *place* of learning. And, given the abstraction, the idea of *place* becomes aspatial and atemporal and thus flexible and dynamic.

A key idea of Bowden and Marton's book is "that learning—in the sense of knowledge formation—can be considerably facilitated by paying attention to how knowledge is formed within different fields, how new ways of seeing different phenomena are brought about, and how critical aspects are discerned and focused on simultaneously" (p. x). These Proceedings illustrate not only the power of the idea of *a place of learning* but also the construction of knowledge through access to different fields.

It is not surprising therefore that the "critical aspects that are focused upon and discerned" in the 26<sup>th</sup> Edition of the HERDSA Proceedings reflect current global discourses in higher education. Almost all the contributions focus to varying degrees on the academic *world of work*. Yet the boundaries of the world of work are more fluid than they once were and the academic focus extends well beyond the traditional walls of *the* University. An underlying theme of these Proceedings is managing a changed work environment for both staff and students, or an academic response to change. Emphasis is placed on learners rather than learning, and on the *provision* of education for a wide range of learners' situations. Contributions focus on *managing* offshore teaching, and online teaching, and on the more familiar variable—larger numbers of students. As never before, there is evidence of a degree of integration of theory and practice at the teaching interface. This trend may be an indication of a critical mass, a reaction to increasing institutional emphasis on 'good' teaching and on the provision of tertiary teacher education. At the same time, the contributions emphasise process and activities—the *doing* of teaching—rather than a concern with knowledge, values and issues that constitute the substance of our profession.

In general, contributions suggest that research and evaluation are not keeping pace with advances in practice. However, several kinds of contributions are worthy of particular comment—the evaluation of the provision of flexible learning, challenges to the accepted wisdom of proponents of independent learning, and the critique of higher education policy. The first and the third are much needed. The second is a more realistic acknowledgement of where students are currently 'at' rather than where theorists would like them to be. Despite these explorations most contributions are situated within accepted discourses.

## Organisation of the Proceedings

In the editing process we made changes to grammar, style and format while maintaining the authors' overall intent.

### Peer review

All intending delegates had an opportunity to submit a full paper for publication in these Proceedings. Full papers were subjected to a double blind peer-review process and each paper was reviewed by at least two referees. Our pool of referees was truly international coming from Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and the USA.

Review criteria included: relevance to the conference theme and potential audience; the potential to promote discussion among participants; the quality of the writing; the contribution to scholarship and/or new and innovative practice, reflective of current practice and/or policy; and, demonstrated application of appropriate research methodology and/or conceptual framework.

We tried hard to match papers to referees' areas of expertise and in most cases we succeeded. We wish particularly to thank the referees for the considerable time and care that they expended on this task. Many of the authors have conveyed their appreciation of the referees' comments. We list all the referees below and acknowledge their contribution to the Conference.

Matthew Absalom	Kate Andre	Trish Andrews
Roger Atkinson	Craig Baird	Mark Barrow
Laurette Batmanian	Colin Beasley	Maureen Bell
Gillian Boulton-Lewis	Sid Bourke	Alison Bunker
Robert Cantwell	Jenni Case	Di Challis
Victor Chen	Tom Clark	Sally Clarke
Kaye Cleary	Valerie Clifford	Geoff Cooper
Geoffrey Crisp	Brian Delahaye	Sukh Deo
Rita Di Mascio	Laurence Dickie	Allan Doring
Lee Dunn	Katie Dunworth	Susan Elliott
Pip Ferguson	Beena Giridharan	Allan Goody
Maree Gosper	Barbara Grant	John Green
Chris Heath	Debra Herbert	Anthony Herrington
Jan Herrington	Geof Hill	Lynne Hunt
Geoff Isaacs	Cate Jerram	Marion Kemp
Beverley Kokkinn	Trevor Landers	Ann Lawless
Gerry Lefoe	Lee Hean Lim	Peter Ling
Shona Little	Gillian Lueckenhausen	Janne Malfroy
Kenn Martin	Coralie McCormack	Daniel McGill
Catherine McLoughlin	Mary Melrose	Noel Meyers
Christopher Morgan	Sid Nair	Robyn Najar
Tonia Naylor	Love Nneji	Nick Noakes
Janice Orrell	John Ozolins	Rob Phillips
Kaya Prpic	Alex Radloff	Ern Reeders

Maureen Reid  
Gary Russell  
David Schodt  
Bob Snoke  
Tari Turner  
Gail Wilson  
Shelley Yeo  
Craig Zimitat

Leonora Ritter  
Yoni Ryan  
Michelle Scoufis  
Matthew Thomas  
Owen Watts  
Tracey Winning  
Belinda Youn

Jane Robertson  
Shankar Sankaran  
Kin Wai Michael Siu  
Michael Turk  
Marissa Wettasinghe  
Gina Wisker  
Peter Zeegers

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Carol Bond and Philippa Bright  
Editors