

HERDSA NEWS

The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Incorporated

I.S.S.N. 0157-1826

VOL. 15 No. **2**

FEATURES

DOING MORE WITH MUCH LESS: THE OPEN LEARNING INITIATIVE

Barry Leal

Page 3

DEVELOPING A FOCUS ON QUALITY IN A UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT

Brenton Dansie
& Ramona Sims

Page 7

FROM THE PRESIDENT An Open Letter to Members

Phil Candy

Page 10

WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T IN ACADEMIC STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Neil Fleming

Page 12

REGULAR ITEMS

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

Page 11

CONFERENCES

Page 13

HERDSA ABSTRACTS

Page 14

JULY 1993

Editorial

Margaret Buckridge

HERDSA Queensland recently held its first state conference. It was a 2-day conference, intimate and leisurely in spite of its 90-odd participants, and taking full advantage of Brisbane's autumn weather in the well-watered groves of a university college. Its theme, perhaps not entirely in keeping with these trappings of an older academia, was 'Doing more with less: Maintaining quality in the face of diminishing resources.'

As might be expected, many of the presentations and discussions concentrated on strategies, at various institutional levels, for maintaining and improving quality. It is clear that, to the utmost extent possible - and perhaps beyond it - many academic practitioners, developers and administrators are responding creatively and generously to drastically reduced resources. In this spirit, although problems - horror scenarios, sometimes, of gigantic classes with hardly any teachers and even less support - were identified and analysed, the main game was solutions and strategies. Perhaps this is to be expected; perhaps the usual instinct of a HERDSA conference is, sensibly, towards 'can do' and commitment. But there are, of course, bigger pictures and longer terms. And in this context, some of the problems of our national higher education system may be more intractable than we are yet wanting to admit.

At the end of this conference, the organizers, taking to heart the desire for varied formats for conference activities, presented us with what might have been a totally non-serious debate. The topic of the debate was 'Reducing the funding per student increases the quality of higher education.' It was a debate impelled by the promise of 'lavish prizes', fuelled by free-flowing alcohol, and chaired and adjudicated in utterly partial fashion by our new national President. The dragooned team members later disclaimed all knowledge of the selves that had participated!

Surprisingly, (or maybe not) what this debate did - as its participants constructed improbably extreme positions - was to bring into focus much more clearly than any of the earlier sessions had done the very



radical changes that our higher education system has undergone. It has changed from being an 'elite' system where fewer than ten per cent of the population could expect to participate to being a 'mass' system where up to thirty-five per cent can expect to participate post-school and a further significant percentage can expect to have some participation during their lifetime. This change has been swift. And it has been by no means fully resourced.

The ramifications of this are immense. There is probably not one of us who would not acclaim the extended participation in higher education. Philosophically and ideologically, it is the preferred direction - even if it is often argued in economic and utilitarian terms. But perhaps we are only now beginning to realise that a system that may touch fifty percent of the population is very different from a system that touches ten. It has a wider range of starting and finishing standards; it presents infinitely more logistical problems; it has a necessarily closer relation to both the government who funds it and the society who will employ its graduates; it is, most difficult of all, an education system at least as much as it is a research or knowledge-producing system.

What fat there was in old academia has long gone; the system has been feeding on muscle for some time. Academic workplace stress is common. Perhaps it is time - as in the debate - to let our darker selves out of their closets to say this. We will run out of solutions and strategies soon if we cannot begin to think at the level of the system as a whole.

Information about membership of HERDSA is available from

**The Membership Secretary, HERDSA Inc.
c/- PROBLARC
P.O. Box 555
Campbelltown, NSW, Australia, 2560**

Tel. (046) 203 326
Fax. (046) 281 298

*The following articles, by Barry Leal and Brenton Dansie/Ramona Sim were both presented as papers at the 2-day HERDSA QLD Conference in April. The theme of the conference was **Doing more with less: maintaining quality in the face of diminishing resources**. HERDSA News is grateful to the organisers and to the speakers for permission to publish this material.*

Doing Much More With Much Less: The Open Learning Initiative

Where is Australian going with open learning? Does it provide a possible solution to problems of unmet demand? Or is this view of it itself part of the problem? Barry Leal, himself a player, provides this commentary on what has gone on to date.

I would like to begin with a clear statement of the perspective from which I am tackling this issue.

I am the Vice-Chancellor of a university which has for some time been amongst the lowest funded higher education institutions in Australia. One result of this background is that our institution certainly does do some things particularly efficiently. We have developed one of the best Distance Education Centres in Australia, for example, and we find that we are able to offer on-campus teaching programs for a price that would make us extremely competitive if the university sector were to move to a more free market situation. But before devotees of economic pragmatism seek to put forward USQ as a model for how productivity gains actually can result from decreased funding I must tell you in all honesty that these efficiencies did not come without a price. Rather than representing efficiency gains they reflect an imposed policy of a tough assessment of priorities. For example, the low funding meant that in order to build up a world class DEC, we were forced to compromise the development of our library. Our efficient on-campus program delivery is, moreover, a result of having to do our very best to cope with a student:staff ratio which is far higher than we believe is desirable.

Efficiencies can always be introduced into a system, but there is a limit to the extent to which this principle can be pushed before important considerations of quality are compromised. My basic argument centres on the idea that in higher education delivery there is, in fact, little scope for pushing efficiencies much further than they have been pushed already. Doing much more with much less, in the context of higher education today, invariably implies educating more people less well.

ATTITUDES TO DISTANCE EDUCATION

In a paper presented at the 1992 AITEA Conference, Gavin Moodie provides a concise history of the development of distance education in Australian higher education (Moodie, 1992, 7-8). It is clear that from the earliest examples of 'correspondence teaching' by the University of Queensland (from 1911) and RMIT (in the 1920s) to the recommendations by the Committee on Open University (1974-75), which led to the expansion of distance education from that time on, the

major consideration was the provision of educational opportunities to people in rural and isolated areas. It was therefore a mode which could be utilised when no 'better' option was available. The Martin Committee (1964-65) clearly considered it an inferior form of (higher) education and, as late as 1986, a CTEC Committee chaired by Hugh Hudson, established to review the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education, noted:

[External studies] is not [. . .] an appropriate mode for all types of training [. . .] and it may not be suitable for all students, particularly those who are disadvantaged or who have not had previous experience of higher education. Contact with other students and staff is an important aspect of learning and the external mode limits this contact.
(*Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness*, 1986, 238)

Yet by 1988 some 30 institutions were offering courses by distance education to over 46,000 students, representing a growth from 1975 of 65% (Moodie, 1992, 7). But this growth was not due to significant increases in participation by students from rural and isolated areas. Rather, external students were typically from the middle class areas of the capital cities and the reason for choosing external studies was to overcome inconvenient teaching times and provide greater flexibility.

. . . in higher education delivery there is, in fact, little scope for pushing efficiencies much further than they have been pushed already. Doing much more with much less . . . invariably implies educating more people less well.

The Committee on Open University clearly recognised the potential for flexibility of learning and convenience to many potential students as a major role for external studies which was quite separate from the provision of educational opportunities to rural and isolated areas. However the rapid growth to 1988 was often poorly planned and important infrastructure components were not put in place. In consequence the quality of the educational provision varied enormously across the sector. Duplication was common and the system was generally recognised as being inefficient.

These problems supported the establishment of the DEC system in 1989. This permitted a limited number of DEC's to continue as the suppliers of the service for the entire sector. The system has certainly led to the improvement of the overall quality of offerings, both in terms of materials and delivery; it has increased the level of cooperation between the DEC's; it has rationalised staff development and research efforts in the field; and generally it has served to keep costs in check. However, the DEC system created a certain degree of resentment from other institutions engaged in external studies. They argued that it robbed them of control over their external students. All institutions came to view the move as concentrating the new technologies, which clearly had value as tools in on-campus teaching as well, into a select number of institutions. And, perhaps most significantly, distance education did not represent the cheap alternative that DEET had been hoping for. An independent report (Harman, 1991) published in May 1991 concluded that: 'There is some expectation in DEET that it should [. . .] be possible to fund external teaching at 75% of the cost of internal teaching. The data reported [. . .] indicate that [. . .] the majority [of DEC's] show discounts of 1-10% not 25%.' (p.25). The study showed that '[the] lower central or apportioned costs charged against external teaching [. . .] are almost entirely off-set by higher other direct costs (e.g. the cost of running a distance education unit).' In particular, 'the [very significant] salary component for external teaching is not substantially less than for the internal mode.' (p.25)

So during the early 1990s, being faced with growing unmet demand and decreasing levels of funding per EFTSU despite growing overall expenditure, as King (1992) put it, 'DEET, and Minister Baldwin, appear to have given up on distance education and [were] looking around for some other way of achieving open education.' (p.9) Distance education was perceived as having failed the cause of mass higher education.

Enter the OLI proposal.

THE OLI INITIATIVE

Several events immediately preceded the proposal for the Open Learning Initiative, which was initially put forward by The University of Queensland. One was the Television Open Learning pilot project formulated by a consortium of universities headed by Monash University. I understand that the impetus for this project came from a visit to Mr Dawkins in 1988 by Mr Kenneth Baker, the British Minister for Education and Science, who described the success of the British Open University. The British model was originally intended to be a 'university of the air' exploiting the medium of television, but, in fact, this came to represent a minor element in the British Open University delivery strategy.

A second event was a visit by Mr Baldwin to the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong some nine or ten months ago. The Minister was extremely impressed by what he saw on that occasion and determined that something similar should develop in Australia. However, what he overlooked or chose to ignore was the fact that in Hong Kong OLI units cost approximately double the current Australian figure and about 60% of available funding is spent on student support. Even with this support there is in Hong Kong a 40-50% attrition rate in first-year units.

The third event was the formation of the National Open Learning Policy Unit in DEET, which was associated with consultancies being conducted on various aspects of open learning. With this background, and with a favourable general educational climate, the Government was very responsive to an approach to put the ideas into practice.

The proposal centred on appointing an 'independent broker' to make available fee-paying degree programs. They would be equal in standing to existing degree programs, make use of existing distance education materials and eventually exploit the full range of available technologies. The fee would equate to the existing HECS fee. This was finally announced at \$300 per unit or \$2,400 for a full-time equivalent year of study.

Faced with the burgeoning problem of unmet demand, the Government was presented with a course of action which not only promised to squeeze more utility out of existing materials and technologies (providing increased efficiency within the system which it could exploit within the electorate) but promised to be self-funding after initial seed funding. Naturally the Government jumped at the proposal and, realising an election was nigh, sought to get it under way in time to soak up some of the politically embarrassing unmet demand through enrolments by early 1993.

I should say at this point that Minister Baldwin consistently denied that OLI was intended to address unmet demand. However, there is little doubt that a strategy had always been sought to attract mature age students in order to make more funded places available to school-leavers.

The first action by Minister Baldwin was to prompt The University of Queensland to negotiate with Monash University, as head of the TV Open Learning Project, to submit a joint proposal which would be likely to be granted government support to the tune of \$39 million. Mr Baldwin's subsequent announcement literally raised a storm amongst other institutions and the publicity generated forced the government to abandon its initial plans and call for a tender process.

. . . in Hong Kong OLI units cost approximately double the current Australian figure and about 60% of available funding is spent on student support. Even with this support there is a 40-50% attrition rate in first-year units.

Submissions were received from The University of Queensland (which later withdrew), a small number of institutions headed by Monash University, and a consortium of DEC's under the title of University Partnerships. USQ was part of the latter consortium. The behaviour of some participants in this process was unbecoming, to say the least. At one critical point in the negotiations I was contacted by the Vice-Chancellor of another member institution of the consortium and asked why I had withdrawn USQ's support. This was the first that I had heard of such an alleged action, although

Monash was actively campaigning to bring it about.

At the end of the process Monash University was asked to establish the necessary infrastructure to make the process work. However, the University Partnership's bid did succeed in forcing more equal representation on the OLAA Board, in requiring Monash to invite other institutions to contribute units to the OLI, and in producing equal representation of all participating institutions on an academic board which will have control of all academic issues.

As at 23 March, 1993, OLAA reported that the 22 units on offer for Semester 1 1993 had enrolments totalling 3,786 (data supplied by Monash University). It had been reported that the break even point was 2,400. Only 10 of the 22 units offered attracted enrolments greater than 100, despite the assertion in minute 12 of the OLAA Interim Planning Committee of 2/11/92 that 'Units will generally be in areas of high student demand so that no unit will be offered unless it attracts at least 100 enrolments.' The most popular subjects on offer are Psychology, Accounting, Marketing and French. Monash has suggested that enrolments will increase dramatically for Semester 2 when there is a greater number of units on offer and up-front fees are not requested. Some pundits suggest that sustained enrolments of around 4,000 would represent a reasonable achievement from the existing base. If this is correct then enrolments will fall far short of the 8,000 to 14,000 forecast last year for the 1993 academic year.

DEET is promoting the initiative as a third stream to tertiary study. They anticipate that it will achieve enrolments of 50,000 over the next three years. The projected advantages derive from the potential for increased opportunity, the flexibility of entry and offering, the ability to exploit more efficiently the products and expertise of the higher education sector, and the added impetus to the use of new technologies for educational purposes. However, there are also many concerns which must be faced honestly and addressed.

CONCERNS RAISED

My first concern lies in the means by which this proposal has been allowed to develop. Hidden agendas, plots and counterplots, and the appearance of 'magical pots of cash' from a government which assured me assiduously throughout 1992 that 'magical pots of cash do not exist' have marred what should have been, and could have been, an assessment made on sound educational considerations. The timetable has been too rushed, the process too conspiratorial and the agenda too obviously political for my comfort.

My second concern relates to the targeting of school-leavers. It is unclear what proportion of the current intake represents school-leaver enrolments. Some sources put the number as high as 1,000, although Monash claims that enrolments under the pilot Year 13 scheme will not exceed 300 for 1993. It is perhaps inevitable that the nature of the advertising that has been undertaken and the need to net as many students as possible (numbers being all important in the economies of scale which make the whole process viable) would have in any case produced a student body including numbers of school-leavers. But what I find quite unconscionable is the specific targeting of school-leavers who failed to gain a normal university

place. This is a serious concern as school-leavers should not be a part of the OLI. Leaving considerations of Year 13 aside, OLI as currently implemented is inappropriate for this student group especially with regard to the level of study support afforded.

Related to this is the potential for greater pressure to be exerted on universities to take school-leavers to fill funded places in preference to the wide range of students it currently accepts. For some in power the OLI may come to be seen as the preferred alternative for mature age students. Despite the assurances given by Mr Baldwin, I cannot believe that unmet demand is not the central issue underlying the government's support of OLI.

But what I find quite unconscionable is the specific targeting of school-leavers who failed to gain a normal university place. . . OLI as currently implemented is inappropriate for this student group especially with regard to the level of study support afforded.

Another concern is the basis of the costings which have been put forward. Participating institutions are being offered \$180 out of the \$300 per unit fee. For this amount they are asked (in Open Learning correspondence dated 10 February 1993) to provide:

- the full range of study materials;
- access to a student liaison system (involving 45 minutes per student of telephone inquiry time on academic and administrative enquiries);
- assessment to the same standard as for regularly enrolled students;
- at least two items of continuous assessment and an externally invigilated assessment;
- local administration, assessment and record of results on behalf of OLAA;
- notification of assessment results;
- access to laboratory or practical work facilities where necessary.

For the level of funding available this is an extraordinary request and raises questions about the standard of the support that can be offered. The impression remains that the OLAA Board is seeing how much responsibility can be put back on to the participating institution. The Board is counting heavily on the degree of pressure which exists for institutions to participate in the program. Certainly USQ has decided that it is better to participate in OLI in order to contribute to and have an influence on its development rather than to watch from the sidelines.

The extent to which OLAA has sought to minimise its costs at the expense of the participating institutions is well illustrated by the issue of library support provisions. The OLAA Board has proposed a voucher system whereby \$20 in \$4 vouchers is made available to each student for each unit of study. Vouchers can be cashed in participating libraries to cover individual transactions. The sums proposed would barely cover the overheads for a few loans, let alone allow the system to

gear up for the needs of an additional 50,000 OLI students. Again the emphasis has been on supporting the program through unrealistic costings, which may be tolerated in the short-term but do not represent sustainable developments.

Arguments as to how the cost-benefits might be realised range from the plausible, yet unsubstantiated, reference to economies of scale, to the rather shameful suggestion that the system can rely on high attrition rates following up-front payments. There is also the strong possibility that the zeal with which the initiative is being promoted will force institutions to absorb some of the true costs into administrative overheads.

Moreover, the unrealistic costing raises the potential for a new assault to be made on the cost of distance education. It has been on DEET's agenda almost since the establishment of the DEC system to argue for reduced funding for external load. Sound economic argument supported by independent assessment (such as Harman, 1991) has prevented this to date, but one can't help believing that DEET's agenda remains.

Yet another concern is the potential impact of unrealistic costings on quality. The high quality of Australia's distance education effort has been attained through the production of high quality materials and the insistence on high levels of student support. Current levels of funding allow little leeway for revising and gearing materials for OLI users. The OLAA Interim Planning Committee has recommended that materials be made available according to a common Open Learning Style Guide (2/11/92). Such developments carry inherent costs, which the marginal costing structure does not allow for. With regard to the provision of student support, there are two equally unattractive scenarios. If we were to provide the level of support corresponding to the level of funding, then we risk creating a stream of second-class education which will be detrimental both to the individuals concerned and to the reputation of the higher education system itself. If students demand more attention than that to which they are entitled then the institutions will be morally obliged to offer this assistance and absorb the costs themselves. This may certainly be the case if the OLI clientele includes the weaker students, who could otherwise not compete later for a funded place.

Furthermore, given the fact that the OLAA plans to move into Asia shortly in areas where the quality of some Australian education is already viewed as suspect, because of overzealous entrepreneurial activities, the implications of this quality issue for the whole Australian higher education sector may be considerable.

It is noteworthy that discussion has now commenced on the development of a central OLAA Management Information System and the development of a quality management plan for services provided for the OLAA central office.

The OLAA marketing push has, to its credit, emphasised educational opportunity, but has been insufficiently insistent about indicating the degree of self-discipline and dedication which will be required to obtain a degree through OLI. The need to achieve high enrolment levels in order to make this exercise economical is no excuse for raising false expectations in the minds of the potential clients. The risk to the reputation of the higher education sector from a large number of disgruntled clients is, I suggest, currently

high.

A major constraint, which may in itself serve to limit enrolments, is the fact that OLI, despite purporting to be an open learning initiative, is, in fact, extremely inflexible. Students cannot work at their own pace, but must complete units within a semester in order to gain credit towards a degree. This pressure, especially in the absence of significant student support capabilities, can only lead to increased attrition or failure rates.

Finally, there is general concern about the feeling which persists in DEET that technology can provide magical solutions to difficult educational problems. Such beliefs tend to be fuelled by such statements as the following from a recent EIP report (Abbott-Chapman, et al, 1991):

We cannot ignore that provision of new facilities or courses in a climate of economic stringency may not seem realistic - and this means that the most successful and effective programs are likely to be those which [. . .] illustrate innovative responses within delivery systems within the context of existing educational frameworks - and at little cost! (p.44)

Technologies will play a major and increasing role in the provision of higher education opportunities in the future, but they are not in themselves cure-alls, and they do not come without their own price. Promises have been made that Open Learning Centres will be made available to provide all the technological needs that may be required. However, little thought has been given to the true capital and operational costs which this will involve.

REFERENCES

- Abbott-Chapman, J., Hughes, P., & Wyld, C. (1991) *Improving access of disadvantaged youth to higher education*. Evaluations and Investigations Program, Department of Employment, Education and Training, Canberra: AGPS.
- Harman, E.J. (1991) *The cost of distance education at Australian distance education centres*. A report prepared for the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Working Party on External Load Funding of the National Distance Education Conference.
- King, B. (1992) *The Open Learning Initiative: new directions for higher education*. Paper presented to the Conference of the Australian Society for Educational Technology, City Campus, University of South Australia, 1 October, 1992.
- Moodie, G. (1992) *New modes of higher education - a radical transformation? Paper presented at the AITEA 1992 National Conference, Ballarat, Victoria*.
- Open learning, communications technology and educational outcomes*. (1992) A report to the Australian Educational Council Working Party on a National Education Communications Framework produced by Edith Cowan University and the University of Southern Queensland. Consultancy 4.
- Review of efficiency and effectiveness in higher education*. (1986) Report to the Committee of Inquiry (H.Hudson, Chairman). Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. Canberra: AGPS.

Professor Barry Leal,
Vice-Chancellor
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba.

Developing a Focus on Quality in a University Department

Over the past year, improving quality has become the central endeavour - or at least the dominant discourse - of the Australian higher education system. Although it may not have an overt presence in all departments or schools yet, there are some where it is beginning to have 'on the ground' meaning. Brenton Dansie and Ramona Sims explain what it has meant to initiate a quality-improvement project in a School of Mathematics.

THE PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

In February, 1992, a meeting of staff was organised to discuss various issues relating to quality within the School of Mathematics. The three main areas for discussion were matters relating to teaching in our own degree (a small program in Mathematics and Computing), service teaching (which accounts for approximately 85% of the budget of the school) and matters relating to the way in which the School administers and organises itself. Staff were asked to identify opportunities for improvement in these three areas. A reasonably large number of ideas were generated. The main areas of concern seemed to be: communication and efficient access to information within the School and the need for more interaction with the schools to which we provide service.

During the first semester of 1992 we set up, and ran, a general evaluation of teaching for each individual member of staff. We were pleased that we were able to involve every member of staff in the School in this exercise. The questionnaire used was reasonably standard - it contained questions asking students to rate various aspects of their instruction, including lecturer's performance, feedback, assessment, etc, as well as two open-ended questions designed to give students the opportunity to identify strengths of the course and areas that needed improvement. The data was summarised and given back to each individual staff member, who was free to use it as they saw fit. No copy of the data was given to anyone else; staff members were encouraged to discuss the findings with the project initiators and anyone else they wished to. A limited amount of discussion took place. The data was aggregated to give an overall picture of the teaching performance of the School.

'QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAMS'

In the second semester, two 'quality improvement teams' were established from staff who volunteered for the task. One group, numbering 7 out of the 20 staff of the school, took on the issue of how to make tutorials more effective. This group met six times over the course of the semester. In the first two meetings the group discussed the nature of the problems that individuals faced in relation to tutorials. A key issue that came to the surface reasonably quickly was a concern about the lack of preparation shown by students before coming to the tutorial and their unwillingness to be involved in the tutorial once they got there, the desire to be spoon-fed answers being much stronger than their

need to be involved. The group talked about what needs a tutorial should meet, and came to the view that the most important aspect was to give the opportunity for independent student learning to take place.

Were we, for example, by the way we illustrated the solutions of mathematics problems or by the way that we assessed the subject, creating dependence in our students?

At one of the meetings Kerry O'Reegan, one of the University's student language and learning advisors, was invited along to give some input to the group. One of the points that Kerry made to some effect was that we should think about the way that we portray Mathematics and Statistics and the effect that this has on our students. Were we, for example, by the way we illustrated the solutions of mathematics problems or by the way that we assessed the subject, creating dependence in our students? The group then considered some literature on what we might do to improve the situation and decided that an approach which encouraged more group work, within what many would regard as excessively large tutorial groups, might be one method worth trying. A joint training session with staff from the Mathematics Department at Adelaide University and an expert in group dynamics, was arranged for early in February, 1993, to provide some training in group skills as well as a chance to talk over these issues with kindred spirits. The group has not yet (April) met again, but we hope that it will do so shortly. Members of the group report that they are trying to experiment a little in this area, but a more organised and better supported experiment (for example, an action research project) is probably needed to encourage further development.

The second quality improvement group was formed out of academic and general staff from within the school and the Faculty administration. This group decided to tackle the problem of improving the access to information within the school. Two strategies have been developed. Work has commenced on the construction of a *How to/Who to* information book to provide members of the school with information on some of the processes in the school and how and where to get further information. Planning is also in progress for the development of a data base which will store subject specific information in one place and thus avoid repeated requests for the same information from a number of different people.

OTHER INITIATIVES

During second semester a small group of interested people was established to study Paul Ramsden's book *Learning How to Teach in Higher Education*. This group gets together on an irregular basis to discuss a chapter of the book in relation to our teaching. This has been a particularly valuable experience for members of the group. It is frustrating that lack of time makes it difficult to make progress on this and other tasks as mentioned above, but the effort has been worthwhile.

At the start of 1993, Ramona, one of the two project members, spent a significant amount of time talking individually with each member of the School in relation to their perceptions on the direction that they thought the School as a whole was taking, on their views on issues relating to research and teaching within the School and on how we might progress on improving our relations with the Schools to which we provide service. The information gained in this exercise was subsequently written up and provided a useful input into both the planning process required of the School by the University and also into our own plans for further developments.

In the early part of the semester, we organised a session conducted by Alan Reid, the head of the University's Centre for Teaching and Learning. We advertised this session as a discussion on the teaching of our two large subjects in Mathematics and Statistics. Alan suggested that we think about quality in relation to the purpose we see for teaching and how this should integrate with the teaching style and the methods of assessment that we might adopt. A useful discussion took place amongst staff on the purpose they saw for the two subjects. An evaluation of the session indicated a desire to continue the discussion at a level focussed on practical issues of methodology at a later date. Also more staff indicated a desire to read Ramsden's book. The school has purchased five copies, which will shortly be distributed to members of staff.

. . . qualitatively-based options for evaluating teaching . . . These include visits by a member of the Centre for Teaching and Learning to obtain verbal feedback from classes, observations by colleagues, open-ended questionnaires and small studies on how students allocate their time to their workload.

In the remainder of this semester we have a number of activities planned. A number of qualitatively-based options for evaluating teaching have been offered to staff for mid-semester evaluation of their teaching. These include visits by a member of the Centre for Teaching and Learning to obtain verbal feedback from classes, observations by colleagues, open-ended questionnaires and small studies on how students allocate their time to their workload. A small number of staff have indicated their interest in a range of these activities. We will be sending out shortly some material

which is designed to allow staff to evaluate their own teaching. This material will be based on the recently released HERDSA document entitled *Challenging conceptions of teaching - some prompts for good practice* along with other extracts designed to prompt their thinking.

We are planning to publish a small newsletter which gives people within the school a forum in which to put forward their views in relation to teaching and research, describe some of the things they are doing, papers they have read, etc. We will also be making available copies of papers on current thinking and practice in Mathematics and Statistics Education as we collect them, and have written to Heads of Mathematics Departments in universities in Australia seeking information on teaching innovations. Follow-up seminars are planned.

In relation to the Schools we service, we are organising both meetings and social occasions to improve the level of interaction and to seek feedback, ideas and resources (problems, etc) which might help us improve the relevance of our teaching. At the end of the semester we plan to offer staff the option of two questionnaires for the evaluation of their teaching. One will be identical to the one used last year so that we can evaluate the effect of changes that have been made. The alternative will be a questionnaire based more on a student-centred view of learning, for example, the Course Experience Questionnaire. We are also interested in co-operating with one or two other universities in having the same questionnaire applied to similar classes and comparing the results (in a 'benchmarking' exercise with the emphasis on seeking improvements rather than competitive comparisons.)

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

In designing (and refining) the program described above, we have spent some time studying the Total Quality Management literature and the general educational development literature. A reasonable summary of the application of Total Quality Management principles in higher education has been offered by Seymour (1992). The main principle we have adopted is to try and create an environment within the department in which learning about teaching and how to improve it is an accepted part of normal practice. This is in keeping with the following advice given by Ramsden (1992 p.258)

Using academic management strategies that will help teachers teach better implies showing concern for staff as teachers; creating a climate of openness, cooperation and activity rather than one of defensiveness, competition and passivity; developing an environment in which teachers are likely to learn from each other . . . Academic managers, in one phrase, must *learn to manage like a good teacher teaches*.

There is also a body of writings in the general management literature which describes the concept of a learning organisation (see, for example, the work of Senge [1990a, 1990b] and Argyris (1991). These writings point to the capacity of an organisation to learn as a key aspect of its survival. As an example of this concept, Senge (1990b p.7) writes



VALUING DIVERSITY

A Strategic Plan for Gender Inclusiveness

The Development of a strategic plan in the policy area of valuing diversity with particular reference to gender inclusiveness.

BACKGROUND

The working party was asked to produce a draft strategic plan for the Society focussing on gender inclusiveness.

The Executive determined that such a strategic plan should be developed in the context of a general policy on equity, inclusiveness and valuing diversity.

Accordingly the working party has drafted a policy statement about equity and inclusiveness in general and then gone on to draft a strategic plan with specific reference to gender issues.

It is anticipated that the Society will subsequently produce a strategic plan for meeting the needs of other disadvantaged groups as seems appropriate. It is hoped that the plan produced in relation to gender will provide a model for this later work.

PRESENT DOCUMENTS

It follows from what has been said above that two documents are presented. Members are invited to comment on either or both.* The documents are structured as follows.

I Policy on equity, inclusiveness and valuing diversity (Draft)

1. Policy statement
2. Priority areas for the application of the policy

II The application of policy on equity, inclusiveness and valuing diversity in respect of gender

1. Rationale
2. Structure of the strategic plan
3. The strategic plan
 - 3.1 Publications
 - 3.2 Communications
 - 3.3 Members Services
 - 3.4 Administration
 - 3.5 Policy Advice
 - 3.6 Branches

* Comments should be sent to: Assoc. Professor Phillip Candy, President HERDSA,
C/O ASDU, QUT – Gardens Point Campus, Brisbane, QLD, 4000



VALUING DIVERSITY

A Policy Statement

HERDSA is a leading international interdisciplinary professional organisation in higher education. The Society is committed to upholding and affirming the values inherent in higher education. These include respect for diverse views and experiences, promotion of informed discussion and debate, and equitable access to educational opportunities.

With regard particularly to valuing diversity, it is HERDSA's policy to model a respect for diversity – of backgrounds, needs, interests and views – in the conduct of its affairs and in the pursuit of its objectives. However, there is considerable evidence to suggest that certain groups – including women, indigenous peoples and some ethnic minority groups - suffer as a result of both structural and systemic inequalities in terms of their participation, their representation in leadership roles and in the incorporation of their perspectives, in both higher education at large and in the Society itself.

A policy of inclusiveness implies, first, a commitment to equitable representation in management and operation of the Society, and second, the inclusion of the perspectives and concerns of all groups.

The first commitment - to equity in involvement and management – can and should be achieved through appropriate action and through active monitoring of patterns of participation.

The second commitment - to the inclusion of alternative perspectives – is based on a belief that enhanced quality and effectiveness in all areas of higher education cannot be achieved without the inclusion of perspectives and experiences of all groups. The Society recognises that this inclusion will only occur when there is conscious effort to broaden the discussion of learning and teaching and to scrutinise the processes of that discussion, both in formal and in informal situations.

To be effective, these commitments must have the following features:

- they must inform all of the functions of the Society;
- they will be continuous and active, changing as new understandings emerge to illuminate problems and issues;
- they will be monitored appropriately and sensitively.

Accordingly, it is HERDSA's policy to take positive steps to:

1. reduce systemic disadvantage;
2. draw upon the richness of diverse experience; and
3. create a supportive Society in which all groups are enabled and encouraged to participate fully in both higher education generally and in the leadership and management of the Society's own activities.

The following areas have been identified for attention:

- gender inclusiveness;
- indigenous peoples inclusiveness:

HERDSA is committed to the development of strategic plans for both these areas.

The strategic plan for gender inclusiveness which follows is an articulation of the first area identified for attention.



1.0 RATIONALE

HERDSA cannot do what it is dedicated to doing, and what it is best at doing, unless it is operating with a policy of gender inclusiveness. Women constitute half of the population. They comprise more than half the undergraduate population of Australian universities. There are large numbers of women employed in academic positions, but largely at the lower levels. Women are not well represented in positions of leadership in higher education institutions or in most professional associations. Many of the disciplines of higher education have given little consideration to possible differences in women's experiences and women's scholarship.

It is critical that HERDSA regularly reviews its ideas, its processes and its structures of involvement to ensure that it is not excluding women to any degree or in any way. This strategic plan is designed to ensure that women are equally valued and that their interests and perspectives are not marginalised. It commits the Society to being proactive in recruiting women members and especially in encouraging their involvement in both academic and leadership roles.

2.0 STRUCTURE OF THIS PLAN

The plan is organised in accordance with the HERDSA Executive's current portfolios of responsibilities:

Publications
Communication
Member Services
Administration
Policy Advisory Group

Branches have also been included as entities responsible for the implementation of this policy.

3.0 THE STRATEGIC PLAN

3.1 Publications

HERDSA's publications include: the journal, HERD, the newsletter, HERDSA News, the Green Guides Series and other occasional publications.

HERDSA's policy in relation to its publications is established by the Executive and is consistent with the Society's overall objectives, which hereby include the valuing of diversity.

The policy is implemented by the Editors, who report annually to the Executive on the implementation. Editors function autonomously within this framework.

Action: *With the assistance and support of the Executive and, where necessary, the Branches, the Editors will:*

- implement, where appropriate, greater use of reviewers with expertise in alternative perspectives;
- commission papers in areas where there are few submissions but which are of interest or importance to readers and members of the Society;

- encourage women to submit papers for publication;
- suggest to authors whose submitted work needs development that they consider using local or accessible mentors whom the Society will help them to identify; (*Executive members and branches to help with identification of people local to the author*);
- examine the adequacy of the structure and format of the publication to respond to this policy;
- develop methods/materials/workshops aimed at increasing awareness of publishing opportunities provided by HERDSA.

Persons: *The editors of each publication.*

Monitoring: *The editors will report to the Executive annually on:*

- patterns of submission/publication/authorship, review of manuscripts, success of mentoring initiatives, analysed by sex;
- content analysis;
- adequacy of support/networks provided by Executive and Branches to the editors for the implementation of this policy.

Achievement to date: *A workshop at HERDSA Conference to encourage more diverse publications.*

3.2 Communications

The role of the Communications portfolio is primarily that of liaison.

Actions: *With the assistance and support of the Executive and Branches, the Convenor of the portfolio will:*

- set up networking strategies with disciplines and professional associations in which women are well represented, eg the Royal College of Nursing;
- set up networking strategies with disciplines and professional associations in which women are under-represented, eg Australian Institute of Electrical Engineers;
- share information regarding the implementation of HERDSA policy on gender inclusiveness with other higher education professional associations;
- collect and disseminate relevant position statements or policy documents from other higher education professional associations;
- highlight and disseminate policy developments to HERDSA members;
- establish procedures whereby members contribute to policy development, thereby sharing in the decision-making process.

Persons: *Convenor of the portfolio.*

Monitoring: *Annual reports to the Executive.*

3.3 Member Services

The role of the Member Services portfolio includes a number of related functions:
the organisation and monitoring of conferences;
the proposal of visiting scholars to the Society;
the development of any occasional papers and new initiatives.
In ensuring each area is consistent with valuing diversity, a number of strategies will be employed.

Actions: *With the assistance and support of the Executive, the portfolio group will:*

for Conferences

- ensure that Convenors are explicitly advised of HERDSA policy on gender inclusiveness;
- ensure that Convenors report, prior to the Conference, on their arrangements for implementation of this policy;
- make available to the Convenors the material in the conference folder which outlines gender inclusiveness;
- ensure that Convenors, when organising a conference, are mindful of the content of papers, the balance of male and female speakers and the conference process - such as a conducive environment and a variety of presentations;
- encourage conference organisers to communicate to speakers, writers and participants to ensure gender inclusiveness practices;
- make provision for evaluation of conferences - asking participants if HERDSA is seen to be valuing diversity and inquiring if there are any further areas which could be explored.

for Elections

- ensure, when elections are held, that both sexes are equally solicited or encouraged;
- encourage or target women with expertise and experience who can take leadership roles in HERDSA

for Visiting Scholars

- aim for the equal weighting and consideration of women which is already explicit in the visiting scholars document;
- ensure that women are adequately represented on proposed list of potential scholars;
- allow for both sexes to be represented on the search committee;
- evaluate past, present and future scholars with an eye to equity issues.

Persons: *The Convenor of the portfolio.*

Monitoring: *Annual report.
Evaluation of conferences.
Evaluation of visiting scholar programmes.*

3.4 Administration

The role of the Administration portfolio is to develop and monitor implementation of policies for the management of membership records and for the conduct of the Society's business.

Actions: *With the assistance and support of the Executive the Convenor of the portfolio group will:*

- arrange for collection of membership information to enable analysis of membership patterns by sex;
- report on membership patterns analysed by sex;
- arrange for membership data to support special interest groups on gender issues.

Persons: *The Convenor of the portfolio.*

Monitoring: *Annual reports to the Executive.
Assessment of the adequacy of the data supplied.*

3.5 Policy Advisory Group

The role of the Policy Advisory portfolio is twofold: monitoring the higher education context in order to provide advice to the Executive on important trends and issues; and proactively promoting the aims and values of the Society by responding appropriately to calls for submission and policy formation in higher education.

Actions: *With the assistance and support of the Executive the portfolio group will:*

- institutional levels in terms of their implications for women;
- collect, analyse and disseminate within the Society position statements and policy documents on gender inclusiveness from other higher education professional associations;
- ensure that the HERDSA Executive and membership are informed regarding developments in higher education relating to equity, gender inclusiveness and affirmative action;
- liaise with other higher education sectors, government and advisory bodies, and discipline-based societies with a view to developing policies in relation to gender and equity;
- from the point of view of gender inclusiveness, respond appropriately on behalf of the Society to publicly advertised inquiries, investigations and other calls for submissions in the area of higher education research and development.

Persons: *Convenor of the portfolio group.*

Monitoring: *Bi-annual reports to the Executive. Regular liaison with President of HERDSA regarding possible actions by the Executive.*

3.6 Branches

Actions: *With the assistance and support of the Executive, the Branches will:*

- respond constructively to, and assist in the elaboration and refinement of the Society's policies, including those on gender inclusiveness;
- endorse and publicise HERDSA's policy on gender inclusiveness both amongst Branch members and within the regional environment;
- conduct their affairs – notably their meetings, publications, training activities and administration in ways that are reflective of gender inclusiveness;
- identify local people who, by their innovative practice and/or mentorship and encouragement of others, may contribute to the implementation of this policy;
- undertake initiatives which, while consonant with this overall policy, will address the special needs, interests and profile of their individual constituencies;
- identify issues and advise the Executive of areas where development is needed or expertise required;
- identify issues and advise the Executive of areas where development is needed or expertise is required;

Persons: *The Chair of the Branch Committee.*

Monitoring: *Annual meetings of the Branch,
Report of the Branch to the Executive and to the HERDSA Annual General Meeting.*

Ironically by focussing on performing for someone else's approval, corporations create the very conditions that predestine them to mediocre performance. Over the long run, superior performance depends on superior learning.

The idea of a learning organisation is in keeping with the notion of continuous improvement which forms a central part of the Total Quality Management philosophy.

The main principle we have adopted is to try and create an environment within the department in which learning about teaching and how to improve it is an accepted part of normal practice.

Our attempts at beginning to focus on quality have been guided by the need to establish feedback mechanisms with people we provide our services to. To date this has primarily been our students and members of the other Schools. We have also tried to come to develop a better understanding of the nature of effective teaching in relation to the teaching of Mathematics and Statistics. We have made a small attempt to focus not only on the quality of teaching but also on quality in relation to the way that the school organises itself and provides support services for its staff.

In addition we have tried to make use of groups of people to focus on quality improvement initiatives to provide support for these activities. We have tried to provide opportunities for staff to develop their own skills and understandings in relation to teaching. We have also tried to stimulate discussion on the purpose of the material that we teach under the assumption that a key determinant in improving quality is the need for a strong sense of purpose about the activity under consideration.

We have also tried to stimulate discussion on the purpose of the material that we teach under the assumption that a key determinant in improving quality is the need for a strong sense of purpose about the activity under consideration.

We are aware of the highly autonomous nature of the staff that we are working with and the fact that they are likely to exhibit considerable variation in their response to and interest in programs directed primarily at teaching improvements. We have tried to provide a range of varied activities from which we hope each staff member will find something of value.

PROGRESS TO DATE

At this stage we haven't done a formal evaluation of the program since we are still in the middle of it. We can report though on some responses to various aspects of the program thus far. These are some of the comments made during interviews following the evaluation of teaching carried out last year.

- I don't do as much in lectures now as I did before so I don't have to rush at the end of the lecture
- I altered the assessment formula to allow other options to the original specific one
- I loosened up a bit
- It made me aware that changes could be made
- I am more aware of the way I speak
- I found out that the students were having problems with the tutor and they (the students) had very little idea of what they were doing
- I provided solutions to tutorials because of the number of requests that were made
- I became more sympathetic and tolerant of students who did not read what they were told and asked you instead
- I will try to resolve the problem of lack of feedback this semester
- I changed my teaching style because students did not understand when 'it' was taught in a certain way
- I use more illustrations now than I used to.

A number of staff mentioned that they couldn't make changes because of the current system and because they were doing the best they could with the current teaching load.

We have noted good attendance at talks that we have organised and an interest in activities such as reading about and discussing matters relating to teaching. We conducted evaluations on the two major group activities mentioned above. Members of these groups reported a high level of enthusiasm for the group process. It was a good opportunity for people within the School to find out what others were doing and to learn that we share a number of similar problems. The general members of staff in the administrative group expressed the view that they were pleased to be involved in a group which had the potential to make a positive contribution to improving the effectiveness of the School.

REFERENCES

- Argyris, C. (1991) Teaching smart people how to learn, *Harvard Business Review*, May/June 1991: 99-109.
- Ramsden, P. (1992) *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Senge, P. (1990a) *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.
- Senge, P. (1990b) The leader's new work: building learning organisations, *Sloan Management Review*, Fall 1990: 7-23.
- Seymour, D. (1992) *On Q: causing quality in higher education*. New York: Macmillan.

Brenton Dansie
Ramona Sim
School of Mathematics
University of South Australia



An Open Letter to Members

from the President

Phil Candy

Dear Colleagues

First of all, thank you for entrusting me with the leadership of the Society. These are tumultuous times for higher education in Australia and New Zealand - indeed throughout the world - and consequently it is a particularly vital time for HERDSA as well. In taking on the Presidency, I am all-too-aware of the distinguished people that have preceded me in this job, and I hope to maintain as far as possible the high standards of leadership that they have established.

I believe it is incumbent on any people entrusted with a leadership role to develop, and as far as possible to articulate, their vision for that role. It is doubly important when, as in the present case, those leaders have not been through a formal process of election, nor had their policies scrutinised and challenged by their constituents. Accordingly, I would like to outline just a few ideas and issues which, at this early stage, seem important to discuss.

The first concerns the Executive itself. To many people, the Executive is something of a mystery and how it is constituted is a closed book. In reality, members of the Executive are just ordinary members like you or me, who have indicated a willingness to serve the Society. The President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected directly by the membership of the Society. So too are the ordinary members, who are elected for a two-year term, with half retiring every year. There are always vacancies at each annual election: if you would like to be a candidate all you need is to be nominated by two other financial members of the Society when the election is announced. Some people are ex officio members of the Executive on account of their role in the Society: the editors of the journal, newsletter and occasional publications are all ex officio, as is the convener of the next year's conference and the immediate past-President. Finally, some members may be coopted to the Executive, perhaps to fill a casual vacancy, to undertake a particular project, or to represent some particular interest or group of members.

The Executive members are all working academics, and all give their time and effort to the Society free. With

the enormous increase in academics' workloads in recent years, this is becoming more and more onerous. This, combined with the complex policy environment and the need for quick responses by the Society, means that before long we should probably be looking to establish a position for a paid administrator - part-time in the first instance.

The second main point concerns the diversity of interests across the membership. Not only do we represent two different countries, but we come from different institutions (and even different types of institutions) within those countries. Our membership includes practising academics, academic developers and researchers as well. In part, we cater for this diversity through our branches, and I am very keen to strengthen the work of the branches, especially in providing support and mentorship for new members, and in addressing issues of particular relevance to each geographical region. There are, however, at least two other things we might do to acknowledge and build on the diversity of membership. One is strengthening our ties with discipline-based professional associations, perhaps undertaking joint activities, and offering combined memberships. The other is considering the formation of special interest groups which support networks of members with shared interests. In time, the work of the special interest groups might even form the basis of special publications or of themes or strands within the annual conference.

Related to the issue of diversity in our membership is diversity in higher education itself, and this brings me to my third point. Recently, the Society committed itself to a Policy on Valuing Diversity. The first of its initiatives under the policy - a strategic plan on gender inclusiveness - was released in draft form at the 1993 Annual Conference for comment and feedback by the membership. It would now seem appropriate to turn our attention to a companion document - a strategic plan for recognising and valuing the rights of indigenous people - especially since 1993 is the International Year of Indigenous People. The Executive has already taken steps in this direction.

My fourth point is that, unless we act decisively, I think we may be in danger of losing a balanced emphasis on

Research - the 'R' in the middle of our name. There is much good quality research into higher education currently being undertaken in Australia and New Zealand, and it might be a propitious time for HERDSA to recognise this by making awards, offering workshops and/or sessions on research within its Conferences, and supporting participation and attendance by graduate-students researching aspects of higher education.

Fifth and finally, HERDSA has a long and distinguished tradition of advocacy for the importance of teaching and learning in our system of higher education. At long last this message has been taken on board by Governments and by institutions themselves, and we are now witnessing a greater priority for and commitment to teaching than at any time for many years - perhaps at any time in HERDSA's 21 year history. But the debate is moving in to other issues: recognition of prior learning, articulation of awards, the competency movement, quality and quality audit, the emergence of private providers and so on. If HERDSA does not actively engage in, and contribute to these debates and the policies that result from them, we will surely be relegated to the sidelines, bypassed in the very areas that are of vital concern to our membership. Consequently, I am committed to ensuring that

HERDSA is viewed as a prestigious and impartial forum for the discussion of these important issues, and to providing a platform from which its voice may be heard as an authoritative, informed and influential commentator on higher education issues.

In closing, because this is our Society, I encourage you to engage actively in shaping its direction, both through your own actions and advocacy, as well as through active participation in branches and by discussions with members of the Executive. In particular, if you have any issues you would like to bring to my attention - activities you would like to see, policies or practices we should endorse, or other suggestions about the work of the Society - please do not hesitate to contact me directly, by phone (07-864 2220), fax (07-864 1805) or email (p.candy@qut.edu.au).

I look forward to a stimulating and rewarding time as President, and to working with you in creating the kind of higher education systems and institutions we would like to see in both Australia and New Zealand.

With best wishes.

Phil Candy

News from the Executive

The HERDSA Executive met on Tuesday afternoon, 6th July, following the close of the 1993 conference. The following points may be of interest to members.

1. One task emerging from the Annual general Meeting is the further development to the Strategic Plan on Gender Inclusiveness under the auspices of the Valuing Diversity Policy

A copy of these documents is included as the centre section of this newsletter. Members are encouraged to contribute to this further development. As indicated, please direct comments, re-wordings, further points, etc. to Assoc. Professor Phil Candy, President, HERDSA, C/O Academic Staff Development Unit, QUT - Gardens point Campus, Brisbane, QLD, 4000. Fax: 07 864 1805. E-mail: p.candy@qut.edu.au

The deadline for responses is September 15th

2. The support at the A.G.M. for the Valuing Diversity Policy commits the Executive to the task of beginning work on the development of the second Strategic Plan foreshadowed in the policy document. This plan will focus on indigenous peoples. The executive has resolved to liaise with a number of people who may be prepared to assist us in this project.

3. The minutes, etc. of the A.G.M. will be included in the November edition of HERDSA News, and will include a full list of the 1993/4 Executive. The Executive has also used its co-option powers to co-opt two other members for 1994/4.

They are:

Carol McLeod from Swinburne University of technology, and Owen Hicks from the University of western australia. Carol has been a very active Convenor of the Policy Advisory Portfolio and the Executive believed that its work in this area would be enhanced by her continuing with this role. Owen Hicks was co-opted in order to enable us to liaise with and encourage the fledgling HERDSA branch in Western Australia.

The executive may seek a further one or two co-options as particular tasks arise.

4. It may be useful for members to know that the Executive is considering two constitutional changes which are likely to be presented as motions for next year's A.G.M. One would be a change to a two year term for the office Bearer positions; the other would change the voting system to a full postal system in place of the current A.G.M. vote. The motions would accompany electoral material mailed out in April next year.

What Works and What Doesn't in Academic Staff Development

Neil Fleming comments on the potential of small-scale staff development interventions to effect change not only in teaching practice but also in institutional culture.

There has always been concern that some of our activities, especially campus-wide seminars, workshops and excellence awards may have very few tangible spin-offs. What would constitute tangible spin-offs probably needs to be defined within each university. But for me, any impact from a staff development activity has to be measured in terms of 'changes in the behaviour of a staff member on Monday morning.' If the participants get a warm feeling, or a good buzz, or even a host of good and new ideas, there may still be few changes that we, as staff developers, can identify as 'worthy of our hire.'

Of course, these general events have a role. They are a visible sign that staff development exists, they are a marketing ploy and they can be measured (number of staff who attended) and evaluated (percentage of staff rating the success of the course). We may even claim that some of the ideas will bear fruit at some later stage even though participants may never realise or acknowledge the source of the inspiration for their changes. So we should continue with these visible signs of our own activity. But are there some other and more fruitful stimuli for change on Monday morning?

Recently, I have been impressed with changes resulting from three rather traditional offerings. These changes in staff have made me re-examine the worth of these low level interventions. In the first of these, I put the findings of Perry (1968) as summarised by Magolda and Porterfield (1988), onto a four-page handout, copied it onto blue paper and mailed it with a personalised label to each academic staff member. The level of debate about teaching increased markedly. Teaching became a focus for animated discussion and reflection in a way that had seldom occurred before. Staff who would infrequently acknowledge that teaching was important became articulate about *relativists* and *dualists* and *transition stages*. One professor decided to explore the truth of Perry's categories for teaching economics and this has found a place in his recent text book on that subject. I also received some phone calls of relief. At last there was an acceptable explanation for the dullness or the brightness of the students in front of Dr X. I could even refer to Perry *en passant* and assume that some staff in the tea room would join me in extending the conversation. The second surprise was another lightweight intervention. I often received references to journal articles about teaching. We all do. They may be like *The Higher Education Abstracts* or sometimes they are publishers' blurbs, or reviews, or articles inter-loaned in error by me but valuable to someone teaching chemistry or computer science or tourism. I photocopied the appropriate pages and even snipped out or highlighted the articles that suited the teaching interests of particular staff. Consequently I have had several staff make an extra effort to thank me for sending the information, which indicates that they are being read.

Some have written for the full article or have engaged me in consultations about how some teaching innovation might work for them. Some cooperative research ventures about teaching are in the wind. They were not there before.

Students will be keen to hear the answers to some of their written questions and there is a fair chance that learning could occur!

The last example came from my study leave where I was given a copy of *The Harvard Assessment Seminars (1990)*. This summary of an amazing process is a most readable statement on innovation and assessment in higher education. I was directed by colleagues in the USA to page 35 where the best low-tech teaching innovation was described. It is called the Harvard One-Minute Paper (attributed to Patricia Cross, University of California, Berkeley) and consists of two questions given to students after a topic, section of work, lecture, whatever. The students are asked to reflect, in writing, on

- (a) what is the big point you learned in class today?
- (b) what is the main unanswered question you leave class with today?

Again, I used the photocopier, the personally-labelled mail and distinctively coloured paper. The response was heartening. Several staff tried it. Some have had fascinating results. Some found the one-minute paper did not work well, but was 'interesting' to do. It has been, and still is, a topic of conversation, even for those who may never try it. Some who have used it are those who have not frequented the staff development seminars and workshops. Some have asked me to analyse the responses into themes or categories. As described in the Harvard compilation, some staff have received enough questions from their one-minute papers to structure their next teaching sessions. Students will be keen to hear the answers to some of their written questions and there is a fair chance that learning could occur!

No doubt there are some students of marketing who could explain why these three things 'took off' and some psychologists who could explain why they were taken up by some staff who had not been participants in other development opportunities. If there is a common thread, it is probably something to do with the individual or personal touch in each one. I am not worried about the explanation of the phenomena but I

want to try again. Maybe an excerpt from the Belenky et al (1986) book on *Women's Ways of Knowing* should be my next blue paper? Sorry, I have to rush to organise a seminar on 'Teaching Large Classes'!

Copies of my mailings on *Perry* and *One Minute Papers* are available on request, but let me know if they work for you.

Email: Fleming1@Lincoln.AC.NZ

Post: Neil D Fleming
Director, Education Centre
Lincoln University.
Canterbury, New Zealand.

REFERENCES

Belenky, M.F., Clinchy, B.M., Goldberger, N.R. and Tarule, J.M. (1986) *Women's ways of knowing: the development of self, voice and mind*, New York: Basic Books.

Magolda, M.B. and Porterfield, W.D (1988) *Assessing intellectual development: the link between theory and practice*. Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counselling and Development, 6-9.

Perry, W.G. (1970) *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years: a scheme*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Conferences

Fourth International Conference of the Australasian Association of Institutional Research

Theme Implementing the Quality Review Process: Strategies, Systems and Experiences.
Place Sydney, Australia.
Date 29 September - 1 October, 1993.
Information Dr Ken Doyle, Director of Planning, UTS, PO Box 222, Lindfield, NSW, 2070.

Third International Seminar on Student Wellbeing and Development

Theme Putting the Student at the Centre
Place ICSC Drienerburgh, University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands.
Date 5 - 8 November, 1993.
Information H&E Associates Ltd, 18 St John's Close, Saffron Walden CB114AR, England.
Phone & Fax: +44 799 527 853.

#rd Annual conference: HERDSA Victorian Branch in conjunction with South Australian Branch

Theme Collegiality: Working together in Higher Education
Place Port Fairy, Victoria
Date 2 - 4 December, 1993
Information Jim Sillitoe, Dept. of Education, Victoria Univ. of Tech. PO Box 14428 MMC, Melbourne, 3000.
Phone: 03 688 4410; Fax: 03 688 4646

Fifth Annual Convention and Conference of The Australasian Association for Engineering Education

Theme Aiming for quality in engineering education
Place Auckland, New Zealand
Date 12 - 15 December, 1993
Information School of Engineering, University of Auckland. Phone: 64 9 373 7599; Fax: 64 9 373 7464.

SRHE Annual Conference

Theme Governments and the Higher Education Curriculum: Evolving Partnerships
Place University of Sussex at Brighton
Date 14 - 16 December, 1993.
Information SRHE: 344-354 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8BP.
Phone: UK: 071 837 7880; Fax: UK: 071 713 0609.

APITITE 94: The Asia Pacific Information Technology in Training and Education Conference and Exhibition

Place Brisbane
Date 28 June - 2 July, 1994.
Information Apitite 94 Secretariat; Phone: 07 369 0477; Fax: 07 369 1512.

Seventh International Symposium on World Trends in Science and Technology Education

Theme Science and Technology Education in a Demanding Society
Place The Netherlands
Date 24 - 31 August, 1994
Information Associate Professor Graham Mulroney, RMIT.
Phone: 03 468 2497; Fax: 03 467 3089.

ABSTRACTS

HERDSA Abstracts are based on a regular survey of relevant literature. They are intended for use by tertiary teachers, research workers, students, administrators and librarians. The abstracts are classified into the same groups used by the Society for Research into Higher Education in their quarterly publication *Research into higher education abstracts*.

The *Abstracts* attempt a coverage of current English-language publications in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Hong Kong. Publications describing research, teaching, administration, staff and students in tertiary education are abstracted.

Educational or other non-profit organisations may reproduce a limited number of these abstracts in their own publications provided that HERDSA receives suitable acknowledgment.

HERDSA is most grateful to the editors of the journals abstracted. The *Abstracts* are edited by Professor Amy Zelmer, Dean, School of Health Science, University College of Central Queensland, Rockhampton M.C., Queensland, 4702.

A. GENERAL

Kember, David and others **A Synthesis of Evaluations of Distance Education Courses** *British Journal of Educational Technology* 23 2 (May/92) pp 122-35

Reports on a study which collated and compared evaluations of seven distance education courses in Hong Kong using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Conclusions about tutorials, group activities, interstudent contact, telephone counseling, and video and television broadcasts are synthesized; and guidelines for formatting courses are recommended. (ERIC abstract)

C. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Prideaux, David **Left to Pick Things Up?...Self Directed Learning in Clinical Settings** *ANZAME Bulletin* 20 1 (Jan/93) pp 2-10

Clinical learning in medical education is often predicated on the 'immersion' principle where students are given a clinical placement and expected to 'absorb' the relevant learnings from their surroundings by means of self directed learning or other strategies. Some limitations of the immersion approach to clinical learning are presented using evidence from a three year Curriculum Evaluation and Development project in the School of Medicine at Flinders University of South Australia. One of the constant concerns raised by students was the lack of a clear statement about the knowledge and skills on which they should concentrate their efforts during their clinical attachments; it appeared that the most popular indicator of what students should learn were past examination papers.

(summary from article)

Warner, Lesley **WIST - A science and technology access programme for rural women: The determinants of success** *Distance Education* 14 1 (1993) pp 85-96

The University of Central Queensland access programme, Women Into Science and Technology (WIST), has successfully attracted and retained a large number of rural women as students. Careful analysis of the needs of rural women has resulted in a distance education mode programme which is community based, has a consultative approach to programme development and monitoring and strong student support systems. These systems include elements of both peer and institutional support. Strong feelings of ownership and belonging, which WIST women have contribute to the low drop-out rate and continuing programme growth.

(journal abstract)

D. INFORMATION NETWORKS

Hedberg, John G and Deborah Bloch **Educational Information Systems: Problems of the Small Educational Organisation** *The Australian Journal of Educational Technology* 8, 2 (summer/92) pp 132-160.

This paper describes the issues surrounding the provision of information systems to small educational organisations, in particular, the concerns which need to be considered when generating a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of an educational integrated information system. The paper reviews both information systems strategy research and innovations in educational technology, and reports on two studies of the problems in information systems strategy of educational professionals. In the major study, survey responses from 432 high schools were analyzed to examine the relative use of microcomputer school information systems for efficiency of routine functions versus effective decision-making defined as greater use of information by school personnel. Schools showed significantly greater use of the systems for more efficient processing of routine tasks. However, operational factors related to the use of the systems as informing tools for more effective decision-making were able to be singled out, and relationships among measures of efficiency, effectiveness, decision-making and operational factors were identified. The article concludes with implications for institutional practice, related research and professional preparation of educational administrators.

(Journal abstract)

Sharples, Mike **A Study of Breakdowns and Repairs in a Computer-Mediated Communication System** *Interacting with Computers* 5 1 (Mar/93) pp 61-77

There have been few naturalistic studies of synchronous computer-mediated communication. For two years a telewriting system was used for tutoring students at the UK Open University, connecting up to ten study centres and adding graphic communication to voice-only tele-conferencing. This paper presents the findings of a study of the operation of the system, concentrating on breakdowns in communication and the technical and organisational changes needed to overcome them. The paper concludes with recommendations for the design of future telewriting systems and guidelines for the deployment of computer-mediated communication systems as part of working life.

(Journal abstract)

E. STUDENTS -- GENERAL

Chapman, Bruce J and Ann Harding **Australian Student Loans** *The Australian Economic Review*, No 101 (Jan-Mar/93) pp 61-75

The Australian Government introduced the so-called 'AUSTUDY Supplement' in the 1992-93 budget. The scheme gives AUSTUDY recipients the option of trading in up to \$2000 per year of their grant for \$4000 of an income-contingent loan, to be paid back according to the current HECS arrangements, implying that the Government is acting as an insurer against future default by students. This article addresses the theoretical basis of the scheme, and explores two related questions: will it be in the financial interests of average students to take up the option? and what is likely to be the take-up rate of loans? Through the use of both cross-sectional data and the HARDING microsimulation model it is demonstrated that for many students the loan option will result in financial advantages, and that the take-up rate is likely eventually to be high.

(journal abstract)

Diwan, Nandini and Lillian Menezes Attitudes Toward Women as a Function of the Gender and Gender-Role Identity of Indian College Students *Journal of Social Psychology* 132 6 (Dec/92) pp 791-793

Attitudes toward women are influenced by many factors, one of which - gender - has been found to have a strong, reliable, and universal effect: Women have been found to have more favorable and egalitarian attitudes toward women than men have. However, the effect of gender-role identity on such attitudes has not been found to be as clear and consistent. Our subjects were 160 male and 160 female students from four colleges in Bombay. The presence of feminine qualities in men and of masculine qualities in women appeared to be associated with more egalitarian attitudes. The overall finding - that the gender effect was far stronger than that of the sociopsychological variable of gender-role identity - has important implications in contemporary Indian society. The unexpected, significantly disproportionate pattern of frequencies found per sex-role category reflects some special features of the Indian society and also highlights the need for more cross-cultural research on masculine and feminine traits.

(Summary of article)

Phillip, Angie Problems for women in distance education at the University of Papua New Guinea *Open Learning* 8, 1 (Feb/93) pp 3-9

A second chance to take matriculation studies for those who did not reach National High School is provided through distance education at the University of Papua New Guinea. Despite the fact that this mode of education seems particularly appropriate for women, very few females even in the urban areas enrol in the matriculation programme. Angie Phillip of the Department of Extension Studies reports on questionnaire-based research into the circumstances of study of women distance education students. The main difficulties hindering women from continuing their studies seem to be the interrelated problems of financial sponsorship and pressure from family and society not to continue education.

(Journal abstract)

F. STUDENTS: SELECTION & PERFORMANCE

Ryan, Greg Student Perceptions about Self-directed Learning in a Professional Course Implementing Problem-based Learning Studies in Higher Education 18 1 (1993) pp 53-63

In a climate of rapid change and proliferating knowledge, there is an onus on teachers in higher education to assume more responsibility for helping students to develop as self-directed learners in their courses. In particular, problem-based learning is a potential educational framework within which to provide this assistance. From its theoretical

basis, the paper reports on a study which explored the perceptions held by a group of students about their self-directed learning during a university semester. The professional course within which the students were enrolled implemented problem-based learning, and overtly encouraged the development of self-directed learning ability as one of the published objectives of the course. Results showed significant changes in their perception of the importance of self-directed learning; and highly significant changes in their perceptions of their ability as self-directed learners. It is suggested that the results are most likely due to the influence of the educational environment.

(Journal abstract)

Tiggemann, Marika and James R Crowley Attributions for Academic Failure and Subsequent Performance *Australian Journal of Psychology* 45 1 (1933) pp 35-39

Using a prospective design, this study sought first to investigate the role of attributional style in the development of depressive affect following a negative life event, and then to extend the inquiry by investigating whether depressive attributions produced poorer subsequent performance. At the beginning of the academic year, university students taking a course in behavioural statistics completed the Academic Attributional Style Questionnaire. Five months later they were asked their particular causal attributions for their grades on an examination and completed measures of self-esteem and depressive affect. Some time after the initial examination, some students took a reexamination. Depressive affect following receipt of the examination grade was determined by a stable and global attributional style and by the interaction of attributional style with a satisfactory grade, thereby supporting the hopelessness model of depression. However, this relationship was not mediated by actual attribution. Furthermore, there was no relation between depressive attributions and performance on the reexamination.

(journal abstract)

G. STUDENTS: CAREERS & EMPLOYMENT

Hafner, R Julian and Nicholas Proctor Student nurses' specialty choice: the influence of personality and education *Contemporary Nurse* 2 1 (Apr/93) pp 38-43

Before and after a nine week psychiatric-mental health (PMH) nursing program of their Diploma course, 51 second year student nurses completed a questionnaire on which they rated their interest in 14 nursing specialties. They also completed measures of personality and attitudes to psychiatric treatment. Factor analysis showed that students' initial specialty interests fell into three groups that were termed 'procedural', 'child/infant orientated', and 'action orientated'. After the PMH program, the popularity and interrelationships of specialty choice changed substantially. Community and psychiatric nursing became more popular, whereas some of the 'procedural' specialties became less so. Correlations showed that the more conservative nurses initially selected the more traditional nursing specialties, and there were statistically significant relationships between psychological defence style and specialty choice. These findings have implications for nursing specialty choice and recruitment.

(journal abstract)

H. STAFF

Johnson, Neil Preparing Educational Administrators: An Australian Perspective *Australian Journal of Educational Administration* 31 1 (1993) pp 22-40

Suggests that educators in Australia are displaying a growing interest in graduate instruction in educational

administration. Examines issues that are central to making courses relevant, stimulating and appealing for educational administrators today using the review of one Master's degree course as an illustration. Discusses the need to review courses, then considers decisions about the primary instructional focus, the educational clientele, neglected content areas, experiential components and flexible modes of attendance. Proposes teaching arrangements that add diversity and relevance to curricula, including the design of subjects in conjunction with local education authorities, lecturing by expert managers, and reliance on part-time and visiting appointments. Presents continuing education as a further responsibility of educational administration departments. Advocates course promotion and ongoing contact with the profession and advances some strategies. Cautions, however, against innovations designed only to capture additional enrolments and funding. (Journal abstract)

EVALUATION

McTaggart, Robin **Meta-Evaluation, Consultancy and Participatory Action Research** *Evaluation Journal of Australasia* 4 2 (1992) pp 43-50

Meta-evaluation is traditionally understood as the evaluation of a completed evaluation study or studies. In this paper the author reflects upon his participation in a project where he worked as a consultant for the self evaluation of the project, as a 'meta-evaluator' of the project, and as a resource person for participatory action research aspirations of the project workers. The paper includes reference to his proposed way of working, the meta-evaluation report itself, and reflection on some of the issues he thinks important in working in this way. (Journal abstract)

FINANCE

Stone, Marian **Cost Analysis in an Educational Setting** *Studies in Educational Administration*, 57 (Dec/92) pp 1-10.

This paper argues that, if Australian Federal and State education authorities are sincere in their desire to have a

cost-effective education system, then these authorities must come to terms with the full implications of the conceptually attractive tool of cost-effectiveness analysis. Cost-effectiveness is a seductive term to educational policy makers, although not necessarily to educational administrators, because it implies the use of a strategy or strategies which will provide the greatest benefit in educational terms for each dollar spent. This argument addresses three questions related to the cost side of the cost-effectiveness ratio. What are the relevant costs? How may these costs be identified and then measured? What difficulties confront an analyst when making these decisions in an educational setting? (Journal abstract)

RESEARCH

Perrott, Christine **The Chaos Theory Story: Explorations of Implications for Education Research** *Australian Educational Researcher* 19, 3 (Dec/92) pp 49-56

This article explores some implications for education research of the story of the development and acceptance of Chaos Theory as told in *Chaos: Making a New Science* by James Gleik. The following are considered: 1) Issues in observation - what and whose perspective(s); 2) Explanatory power and the issue of simplification vs detail; 3) Problems in prediction and generalisation; 4) Collection and interpretation of data to reveal and explain order vs disorder; regularities vs irregularities; 5) Discipline specialisation vs multidiscipline/cross-discipline approach; and 6) Support for research process can often result in more enlightenment than support for research products in the safe, predictable and publishable. These issues are not new, but the Chaos Theory story highlights the importance of revisiting and noting them, especially in the current climate of valuing 'efficient', 'productive', 'relevant', 'useful' and 'acceptable' research. (Journal abstract)

ABSTRACTORS

Amy Zelmer, Faculty of Health Science
Venupriya Nardella, Research Asst
The University of Central Queensland
Rockhampton MC, Qld 4702

Deadlines for future issues

November 1993:	1 October
April 1994:	1 February
July 1994:	1 June

Editor:	Margaret Buckridge, Griffith Institute for Higher Education, Griffith University, Qld 4111
Additional Typesetting:	Toni Benton
Production Supervision and Layout:	Ian Dunn
Cover Design:	Carole Griffin
Printed by:	Clarendon Printing, 12 McGill Street, Lewisham, NSW 2049