A PHILOSOPHER’S COLUMN

Back to Basics: Learning, Teaching, Love and Wisdom - 500 B.C.

by Ann Kerwin

This is the first in a series of brief articles by former HERDSA Visiting Scholar (1994), Ann Kerwin. Ann has migrated from the U.S.A. to be Philosopher-in-Residence at Auckland University of Technology. New Zealanders may know her as Resident Philosopher on Radio New Zealand National, Nights with Bryan Crump, where she speaks on philosophy and philosophers.

When you hear the word “philosophy,” what do you think of?

Do you think of reason? Do you think of the “clash of ideas”? Do you think of cosmic flights of fancy or impenetrable French prose?

Do you think of love?

“Philosophy” derives from two Greek words: philo (love) and sophos (wisdom). Etymologically, philosophy is the love of wisdom.

Many accounts of Western philosophy begin with three great thinkers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They were “family” actually. Socrates was the teacher of Plato, whose student was Aristotle. Socrates charged no fees and published nothing. So effective was he in modelling critical thinking for the youth of Athens that outraged victims of Socrates’ public interrogations orchestrated his fatal rendezvous with hemlock. Socrates died, quite happily, philosophising. Plato was the first “academic,” having founded a lively pluralistic school in a walled park outside Athens (an area known as Akademikos). A mathematician, theorist and master storyteller, Plato chronicled the last days of his much-loved mentor and—in the decades after Socrates’s death—crafted imaginative philosophical dialogues in which Socrates featured as a character and catalyst for inquiry. Aristotle thrived at Plato’s Academy. An interdisciplinarian par excellence, he wrote perceptively about physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, and biology. Aristotle tutored Alexander the Great, critiqued both Socrates and Plato savagely, and pronounced women categorically inferior to men—deficient in reason and unfit to lead.

Most of us have heard of Socrates. Most of us have heard of Plato. We’ve heard of Aristotle. But few—professional philosophers included—recognise the name Diotima. Diotima was Socrates’s teacher. Strictly speaking, Diotima

continued page 3
From the Editor

“Engaging Communities” was the theme for this year’s annual HERDSA conference held in Rotorua, New Zealand, and certainly there was a great feeling of community among the participants. You can experience some of this feeling from the article in which a number of delegates from a range of different backgrounds share their personal impressions of the conference. The conference convenors, Kathryn Sutherland and Mark Barrow and the conference organiser, Debbie Woorton, are to be congratulated on a superbly organised conference.

A new prize for the best scholarly paper at the conference, which was sponsored by the HERDSA Executive Committee, was awarded to a group of researchers from South Africa. This will now become an annual prize.

While on the subject of conferences there are two contrasting reports about the International Consortium of Educational Developers (ICED) conference held in Salt Lake City in June. One from Virginia King reflects on some of the big themes that emerged from the conference. The other contributed by the Challenging Academic Development (CAD) Collective continues to challenge the educational development world and shows how academic conferences can be made creative and exciting events.

This edition of the News sees two new features. First we welcome Ann Kerwin as our “philosopher in residence”. Ann was a HERDSA Visiting Fellow in 1994 when she was based in the United States. She now lives in Auckland and has offered to write a monthly column for us. Judging from the first article we are in for an intriguing series.

The second feature is the series about classroom situations and how to react to them. The first situation concerned students using mobile phones in class was published in the December 2007 issue while in this issue we look at reacting to students who interrupt classes with emotional outbursts. We have set up a website which makes it possible for readers to post comments and suggest other topics to be explored in the series. We look forward to some lively interchanges and invite comments on how to make this feature as effective and useful as possible.

One article, by Yoni Ryan, sounds warning bells about the role of sessional staff in Australian Universities. It is stunning to realise that 50 percent of all university teaching and perhaps 70 per cent of First Year teaching is now undertaken by sessional staff. There was a time when it was believed that First Year teaching should be in the hands of professors who could inspire new students and introduce them to the basics of the discipline. The article gives useful links to reports and resources related to the work of sessional staff.

HERDSA News is now available online and as from April 2008 each edition will be available as a PDF file from the website, www.herdsa.org.au/publications/newsletter/. The contents of the issues from April 2005 to December 2007 are also available and these may become available as PDF files later. In the meantime if there is a particular issue in that period you would like to receive, contact me and I will send you a file, provided I do not get swamped by the requests!!

The next issue of HERDSA News, due in December, will be edited by Maureen Bell and Peter Kandlbinder. I’m looking forward to seeing a new touch to the News.

Roger Landbeck

HERDSA News
September 2008

HERDSA Executive

President
Sheilda Debowski WA

Vice President
Mark Barrow NZ

Treasurer
Kathryn Barrimore-Aufflick NSW

Occasional Publications Editor
Allan Goody WA

Journal Co-Editors
Izabel Soliman & Ian McDonald NSW

Newsletter Editor
Roger Landbeck QLD

Executive Members
Maureen Bell NSW
Geoffrey Crisp SA
Deanne Gannaway SA
Gordon Joughin NSW
Robert Kennelly ACT
Kogi Naidoo SA
Janet Taylor QLD
Gail Wilson NSW

HERDSA Office
Jennifer Ungaro (Administration Manager)
PO Box 27, Milperra NSW 2214
Phone: +61 2 9771 3911
Fax: +61 2 9771 4299
Email: office@herdsa.org.au
Website: www.herdsa.org.au

HERDSA News
Editor Roger Landbeck
28/242 Parklands Blvd, Currimundi, QLD 4551
Phone: +61 7 5438 2789
Email: landbeck@ozemail.com.au

Editorial Committee
Maureen Bell and Peter Kandlbinder

Issue Dates: April, September, December
Contributions for the next issue must reach the editor by Monday 4th November 2008. They should be sent to Roger Landbeck at the above address.

Advertising rates. Please contact the HERDSA Office.

Views expressed in HERDSA News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of HERDSA. Written material from HERDSA News may be reproduced, providing its source is acknowledged.
Desk top publishing by Donna Bennett, Office Logistics, Brisbane
Printed by Instant Colour Press, Canberra

Keep in touch with news from HERDSA
Subscribe to the weekly email News
HTTP://MAILMAN.ANU.EDU.AU/MAILMAN/LISTINFO/HERDSA
was the founder of the most famous school of Western philosophy.

She was a woman. We learn of her in Plato’s SYMPOSIUM.

Socrates was young when he apprenticed himself to Diotima, the priestess of Mantinea. He recalls telling her: “I realise I need teachers… that’s why I came to study with you, Diotima … you’re very wise”. What did Socrates learn from Diotima? He learned to say he didn’t know. He learned to ask for guidance. He learned about inquiry, argumentation, myth and narrative. Diotima honed Socrates’ thinking, and his humility. She inspired. According to Socrates, Diotima taught of Love. And Wisdom.

Diotima held that philosophy is not abstract. Our thoughts, our desires, our aspirations: all have consequences—for ourselves and our communities. Philosophy, she taught, is partial, imperfect, provisional, and ultimately practical: we ought to concern ourselves with being good and creating good societies. Why?

Because we are wise enough to see we are all connected: that my good is your good and yours mine.

Because it feels good to love what is good.

Because it makes life, and lives, worth living.

This is philosophy a la Grecque: the art of living.

Humans are not perfect. We never know all. But we have the privilege of learning. Learning and love go hand in hand. Fear can drive us, but we tend to develop—hence to become—what we love. So we ought to choose carefully what we love. For thus we fashion what we learn, how we live and who we are. Individually, institutionally, culturally. When we love wisdom, we grow wise.

But what is wisdom?

As the ancient Greeks conceived it, wisdom is virtue. From their perspective, virtue is not a trait. It is not a rule. It is not a roster of “thou shalt’s” and correlative prohibitions. Virtue is joyful, purposeful life, care-fully, thoughtfully led. According to Diotima, THAT is a beautiful life. THAT is “the good life”. Wisdom is a goal never attained. Because we are human, because we are limited, we can only strive toward goods which exceed our imperfect powers. According to the ancient priestess, it is foolish and futile to aspire to god-like omniscience. Mourn it not, urges Diotima—for we fallible humans enjoy pleasures and privileges denied the gods.

We learn. We unlearn. We discover. We develop. We are not set. Our eager questing species comes hard-wired with a desire to learn. If we fail to learn perpetually, we stagnate; we atavise. Fear motivates—but much less well than love. Diotima was not the last wise teacher to affirm: students who lose themselves in love of learning will not be deterred, distracted or detached from the objects of their ardour—be they racing cars, physics or face book.

If some, or all, of these ideas seem familiar, you will find them echoed in the renowned teachings of all three of Diotima’s venerated progeny. Each, in turn, has greatly influenced Western philosophy. We have Plato to thank for preserving Socrates’s reminiscences of his mentor’s discourses. And while the SYMPOSIUM is a delight in itself, this fact astounds: the “seminal” ideas—even the precise phrases uttered by this ancient priestess to her impressionable, devoted student—recur nearly verbatim in Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Diotima must have been a brilliant philosopher. She must have been a superb teacher. But she has not received much credit.

What do we know of Diotima’s pedagogy?

Socrates described it thus: “She put questions to me …. She used against me the same arguments that I had put forward! proving that, according to my reasoning, [my thoughts were contradictory]”. Defty, brilliantly, wittily, Diotima employed a methodology we now call “Socratic inquiry”. She also explained to the young Socrates a form of agnosia (an “enlightened ignorance” which propels a questing, questioning mind) which we honour as “Socratic ignorance”:

None of the gods love wisdom or has the desire to be wise because they already are, nor does anyone who is already wise love wisdom. Nor do the ignorant love wisdom or have the desire to be wise. The problem with the ignorant person is, despite not being good or intelligent, he regards himself as satisfactory. If someone doesn’t think he’s in need of something, he can’t desire what he doesn’t think he needs.

Diotima was a gifted weaver of imaginative tales. She spins her philosophy simply yet elegantly with rich, compelling myths and allegories. We can almost see the impoverished Love—tenacious, road-weary yet ever-resourceful—always in pursuit of better: seeking beauty, craving wisdom. “He’s brave, impetuous and intense; a formidable hunter always weaving tricks; he desires knowledge and is resourceful in getting it; a life-long lover of wisdom; clever at using magic, drugs and sophistry”. It is tantalising to wonder whether Plato’s own narrative brilliance, his art of storytelling, which after two and one-half millennia remains brilliantly fresh, derived from Diotima. For the passionate teacher glimpsed in the SYMPOSIUM melds impeccable logic with vivid and tender invention to expound and enliven her conceptual insights. Those who advocate storytelling in today’s hallowed halls of learning may be inspired by this obscure narrative genius lovingly engaged in humanising the abstract, animating thought.

Socrates called Diotima wise. She was an inquirer. She questioned Socrates. Better yet: she listened to him. Diotima prodded Socrates. He questioned her. They dialogued. They enjoyed good conversation.

There is no pretense, but much playful wit and good-humoured banter in their lively interchanges. Self-actualised, this teacher lived and loved, modelled and inspired philosophy as she defined it: “the life-long love of wisdom”. 
Even if you have never heard of Diotima, I submit: her work lives on. If she were alive today, and on our patch, she would find like-minded lovers of wisdom in HERDSA. I would be keen to see what kind of conference presentation she would produce ... no power points, I imagine. She was a formidable thinker, top notch, but—according to Socrates, recounted in Plato—Diotima taught about love and wisdom. On her account, philosophy is not content. It lives. We live it.

I expect she would resist attempts to make education big business. Diotima was a priestess. I don’t know what that involved, but I suspect it was neither corporate nor quantifiable. Although she was never to know it, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle ensured Diotima’s work lives on. I like her emphasis on learning, her passionate commitment to life. I revel in her sharp mind and gift of fantasy. I would like to believe we would welcome a Diotima today. Educational theorist, psychologist, mentor and creative mind—even now Diotima gives us heart for what we do. I expect she would concur with Matthew Fox: “There is a difference between a job and work. A job is something you do to pay the bills. Work touches your heart and it has the potential to touch other peoples’ hearts. If there is one question I would ask to awaken spiritual work, it would be: ‘How does your work touch the joy in you and what joy does your work bring out in others?”’ It’s a good question, I think.

Notes.
Christopher Gill and Desmond Lee have produced an especially readable translation of Plato’s *The Symposium*. All quotes above are from the 2005 Great Ideas edition by Penguin: London., pp. 1–80 Diotima features in the section from pp. 45–63. (By the way, “symposium” means banquet. For the ancient Greeks, it meant food, wine, lively banter, excellent conversation and leisurely exchange of ideas.)

Contact: akerwin@aut.ac.nz

---

A Pre-Conference Workshop on Bikes!

One of the unusual and very enjoyable features of the Rotorua conference was a pre-conference workshop conducted as a tour of the town on bicycles led by Maureen Bell. The title of the workshop was “A Reflective Cycle Built for Two. A workshop on Peer Observation of Teaching”. The pictures shows some of the participants comparing notes during a stop by the lake.
The 31st Annual HERDSA Conference was held from 1-4 July at the Millenium Hotel, Rotorua, New Zealand. During the conference a number of prizes and awards were made, the details of which appear in this article. A book published by HERDSA entitled “Making a Place: An oral history of academic development in Australia” was launched at the welcome reception and powhiri.

Prizes and Awards

HERDSA Award for the Best Scholarly Paper

This was a new award offered by the HERDSA Executive Committee.

The conference convenor selected three to four papers for the judging panel. These papers were selected following a consideration of the scores that a paper was given by reviewers.

The Best Scholarly Paper Award for the 2008 conference was won by:

Vivienne Bozalek, University of the Western Cape, South Africa; Linda Biersteker, Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa; Leslie Swartz, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Brenda Leibowitz, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Ronelle Carolissen, Stellenbosch University, South Africa; Lindsey Nicholls, University of the Western Cape, South Africa; and Poul Rohleder, Anglia Ruskin University, United Kingdom

For their paper “Depicting difference through community mapping: Using participatory learning action techniques in higher education contexts”.

This paper describes the use of community mapping as a participatory learning action (PLA) technique in a cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary higher education context. A group of higher education academics from historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions in South Africa formed a community of practice to devise, implement and research a joint module on Community, Self and Identity during 2006 & 2007. The module involved interaction between senior undergraduate students from Psychology, Social Work and Occupational therapy across diverse institutional contexts. A blended model, where students engaged in face to face and online conversations and were exposed to critical readings on community, self and identity was used. The process enabled students who have been geographically and socially separated in South Africa to become aware of difference in relation to privilege and deprivation, particularly with regard to resources in their communities.

The judges noted that it was also a very good example of authentic learning.

Edith Cowan Authentic Learning Award

The award was won by:

Ann Quinlan, University of New South Wales, Australia; Linda Corkery, University of New South Wales, Australia, and Ben Roche, NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change, Australia

For their paper “Establishing a faculty community engagement unit: a case study from built environment”.

This paper proposes that the cluster of disciplines that constitutes the built environment is well placed to demonstrate an approach to scholarship that aligns the educational and inquiry activities of the university with social engagement and application. The paper begins by connecting the organisational, epistemological and pedagogical implications of Boyer’s scholarship of engagement model. It then provides a case study of a unique unit within the Faculty of Built Environment at the University of New South Wales. Established in 2005, the FBEOutThere! unit consolidates the community engagement and outreach activities of the Faculty of the Built Environment. It facilitates community interaction with the educational and research resources of the Faculty and the University through designing faculty courses that provide students with a service learning experience while they work in interdisciplinary project contexts on challenging social issues identified by communities. The unit also undertakes research projects driven by community concerns the development of this unit attempts to position community engagement at the intersection of organisational, epistemological and pedagogical values. The purpose in writing this paper is to illuminate for others the experience of establishing a faculty engagement unit that realises the challenge of implementing Boyer’s vision for the scholarship of engagement.

Taylor and Francis Prize

The judges decided not to award the Taylor and Francis prize for best paper from a new researcher, but would like to award a commendation (and a $200 book voucher) to

Lucienne Tessens, The University of Western Australia, Australia, for her paper “A review of current practices in women-only staff development programmes at Australian universities”.

Women-only staff development programmes have been conducted at Australian universities for many years, and considerable work and effort have been invested in them as a strategy to address gender inequity. However, gender imbalance remains prominent in the senior echelons of the higher education sector. This prompts the question, have staff development programmes for women done enough for the advancement of women into leadership positions? This paper reviews the current practices in women-only staff development programmes being offered at Australian universities. It aims to analyse and define the nature of women-only staff development programmes in the Australian higher education sector and to raise questions about their effectiveness in promoting a more equitable gender balance. What we
learn from this review is applicable beyond Australian universities to any organisation that aims to improve gender balance, particularly in the senior ranks.

The full papers can be accessed on the HERDSA website www.herdsa.org.au

The University of Sydney Institute of Teaching and Learning Creative Presentation Award

The award was won by Kym Fraser and Yoni Ryan for their presentation of the paper “Academic Development Directors: where have they gone?”

Kym and Yoni took on roles as former academic directors having a conversation about their experiences. The transcript of their conversation appears below.

Academic Development Directors: Where have they gone?

Yoni Ryan, Kym Fraser, Sharon Parry, Margaret Hicks, Leone Hinton and Geoffrey Crisp

The Setting

In 2007 the Executive of the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD), located a 2002 list of Academic Development directors who were meeting annually. The Executive recognised that the majority of directors were no longer directors. The Executive's concern was that a key part of the director's role is to engage the institution's senior management community and their university's communities and that's very difficult to do with a 70% turnover in directors every few years.

We instituted a project to track down and interview these ex-directors about:

1. their reasons for leaving;
2. what they were doing now; and
3. their experiences as directors.

The following dramatisation is based on the major themes arising from those interviews. It includes direct quotations. The scene opens on a bar in downtown Rotorua. Two ex-directors of Academic Development have bumped into each other.

Sheila – G'day! How are you Bruce? It’s so good to see you again – it's been, what, four years! What are you up to?

Bruce – I’m PVC T&L at the First-in-Family University.

Sheila – Congratulations! You’ve done well then!

Bruce – I’m pretty happy about the role but you know what it’s like Sheila, it’s a high pressure job. Teaching and learning change is incremental and slow and there’s no such thing as a work/life balance. What are you up to?

Sheila – You didn't hear I was restructured out of Ocker University three years ago? You’ll remember from that 2002 meeting that my unit at Eastern Melbourne university was restructured – well, the PVC from there followed me to the Ocker University and did the same thing! The one thing I definitely do not miss is the awful stress and wasted effort that goes with these restructures and the toxic environments that are created and I definitely don’t miss the funding battles. The endless reviews … So after four restructures at four universities, I went into HE consultancy – I come in, I’m the outside expert, it’s a short term project and I don’t have to get involved in the internal politics. You know what Weimar says about burn out in academic development directors. Well, in my experience, you either burn out or you get burned. Either way you're toast.

Bruce – Yes, there certainly are some challenges to being a Director of an Academic Development Unit. Managing up was always a key part of the role for me and it made the job so difficult when senior managers really didn't understand academic development. I reported to one PVC who always wanted to introduce the latest fad, rather than work with an incremental, enduring program of change. I also recall that aligning resources with university priorities and then demonstrating that our resources were aligned, was a real challenge.

Sheila – What I found really hard was the need to constantly demonstrate that you had a legitimate role within the university. The problem is credibility. You had to convince the university of the continuing value of a central academic development unit and shield your colleagues from more doom and gloom so they could go on being positive in their work. You know in the Grad Cert we fought heads of school who didn’t want their staff to enroll because they saw it as taking time away from research. You set up all of these workshops to try and 'engage your communities', and nobody has time to come.

Bruce – True but we did some really good work when we were directors Sheila. Recruiting good people to the team and getting the different elements of the unit to work together effectively was a real success for me. And influencing policy, not as often as I would have liked, and developing systems and processes that were effective, really helped both the university and the individual staff.

Sheila – Yes, but the problem though Bruce, that's all invisible if they are effective! People just take them for granted, just as nobody recognises how much work we put into helping people get a grant application or a teaching award. So much of our work is enabling work but it's just invisible! Although, there is one thing that I thought was the highlight of my four years as director and that was the two year program - integrating the LMS with curriculum, on time, in budget – without putting staff noses out of joint in the process. The whole unit was proud of that – and with some pedagogic credibility as well. Getting the Foundations program made compulsory was pretty good too … and working with some of the individual teachers was special.
Seeing people excited about students’ learning and seeing them “leap ahead in their own careers”, that was pretty nice.

Bruce – Yes, and with the increasing profile of T&L in the sector these days academic development is really moving away from the periphery and onto the centre stage of institutions.

Sheila – You’ve got to be kidding! I think that the future of academic development is pretty grim. You’re told to do an AUQA report every five years and then disappear beneath the radar again. ADUs are collapsing under endless restructuring regime. Every time we attended our directors’ meetings, someone had been moved out, someone was being restructured, someone was being reviewed, there was a constant sense of uncertainty – “who’s still standing?” – we told war stories.

Bruce – You are such a pessimist Sheila! Academic Development is enormously important to the sector and to the institution. ADUs are the only proper agencies to guide and promote large scale T&L changes.

Sheila – Yes, and they are often the changes that are very unpopular with the troops! Units are seen as part of the problem because they are identified with “senior management”.

Bruce – I hear what you are saying Sheila, but academic developers are the “enablers” for the institution. They are the obvious researchers of the higher education discipline. It is so important that academic developers maintain their distinctive academic role – as researchers and change agents.

Sheila – Research! Who gets to do research? What do you do when your PVC says “it’s not in the university’s interest for you to do research” or says “well yes, you can do it, but only under the bed clothes at 2 AM with your torch”.

Bruce – Well I suppose that depends a bit on what management wants from the development unit. I think that academic development needs to be more performance and evidence-based and focus more on outcomes. Maybe Sheila, the future of academic development is a different model like the hub and spoke model. Disciplinary context is important as the 23 UK subject centres attest. They’ve been reviewed recently and the report will be out shortly. It will be interesting to see how effective they are perceived to have been.

Sheila – Well I’ll be surprised if they have been a real success system-wide.

So Bruce, are Academic Development director positions up the ladder like yours, or up the creek like mine?

Kym Fraser is Leader of Teaching and Learning Development at Charles Darwin University.

Yoni Ryan is Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, Australian Catholic University

HERDSA Fellowships

Two HERDSA Fellowships were awarded at the conference to Merran Govendi and Shelda Debowski. Their citations read as follows:

Merran Govendi is Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Pharmacology at the University of Sydney. Merran has a very student-centred approach to her teaching; she incorporates a social and constructivist approach to scaffolding learning with her students. Merran uses student feedback effectively to improve the student experience and has enhanced student learning through the provision of diagnostic and formative assessment tasks coupled with extensive feedback.

Shelda Debowski is President of HERDSA and Director of Organisational and Staff Development at the University of Western Australia.

Shelda has facilitated learning development in others through her exemplary role in using her leadership positions to promote teaching that is grounded in approaches that emphasise scaffolding; reflection and knowledge sharing. Shelda has been instrumental in building productive bridges between the academic development and organisational development disciplines so that each is enriched by the epistemologies of the other. Shelda has established both institutional and national programs that allow others to enhance their skills and capabilities.

Shelda wrote some personal reflections on preparing for the Fellowship and encouraging others to enrol.

On being a HERDSA Fellow

It is an amazing feeling to be recognised as a HERDSA Fellow. I hadn’t expected the experience to be so powerful but on reflection, I should have. The HERDSA fellowships are a journey – a time for each of us to think about our professional practice and why we operate in the way we do. It is also a time to critique our philosophy and to consider ways in which we might push forward in the future. The fellowship portfolio challenges us to reflect deeply and yet, to show this in a very controlled manner in a very small word count. As part of the portfolio each candidate needs to set some new challenging goals for the coming years. My reviewers challenged me to be more adventurous in my goals – and I am now enjoying planning to achieve those. The Fellows’ meeting at the conference was also very welcoming for a new member of the group. The opportunity to have a mentor through the development process is also a valuable component of the preparatory process.

I strongly commend the process to you all – it’s worth the trip. And of course, I am very honoured to have the title FHERDSA.

Shelda Debowski receives her HERDSA Fellowship from Geoff Crisp
Impressions of the Conference

Editors Note. I asked a number of people who were first time attendees at a HERDSA conference to write their impressions of the conference. I chose some from overseas and one from a non academic background. First Amanda Burrell from Canberra shares her feelings about her presentation then James Derounian writes from the perspective of an overseas visitor. Alex Attewell is involved with educational programmes with the New Zealand Fire Service and so wrote from a non academic viewpoint. Josie Healey chose to write a poem, which is consistent with her creativity as evidenced by her conference presentation which went close to winning the prize for most creative presentation. Finally Noor from Mafikeng in South Africa, makes a plea for HERDSA to take its conference to more distant parts of the world so that others can share the benefits.

Amanda Burrell

It was with trepidation I approached my first HERDSA conference in July at Rotorua. I had a paper accepted, but not at the level submitted, I wondered what to expect. I co-authored the paper with Lisa, a movement specialist who worked with me on academic stage fright. Referees' feedback felt our style, grounded in theatre theory, was "so casual" they hardly knew where to begin with a critique, but the topic Keeping Lectures Alive, was exactly what should be discussed at HERDSA. Perhaps you can see why I was nervous? Prepare a “showcase” was the task ahead. A 10-minute slot, plus a few minutes for questions didn’t seem time to showcase very much, particularly when no one had had the chance to read “the paper” first. So it was a real challenge. Conscious of the numbing affect of PowerPoint, we agreed to simply talk about the work. Having researched academic stage fright for three years, this paper was about engaging (and reading) a student audience in the way of professional actors, to maximise lecture effectiveness. It seemed appropriate to demonstrate engaging an audience of scholars with just voices, and message, no frills.

The night before leaving, my husband was coerced into commenting on outfit after outfit, I needed the right look, although I didn't know what that was for an unknown audience. The “globo sapien” out-wrestled the feminist, as I packed a dark skirt for the Maori welcome. I left early on a cold Canberra winter morning, clad in hat, scarf, coat, gloves, surrounded by frost and full of nerves. I just managed to get to Sydney International terminal before the New Zealand plane boarded. Then we waited on the tarmac for 50 minutes for “late bags” to be loaded.

My usual pre-conference jitters reached a crescendo at Wellington airport waiting for the Rotorua sector. What was I doing here, who did I think I was, this was a conference for academic developers, and pedagogical specialists, what could I possibly offer? It cost a lot of money and four days away from my family, seriously what was I thinking. But the fares were paid and it was too late to turn back now … wasn’t it?

The welcoming reception was fantastic. Australia could learn from the Maori approach to fostering indigenous culture, guided by tribal elders with mana, using “language nests” and “nurturing nanas”. I felt clumsy saying New Zealand rather than Aotearoa after being so heartily welcomed by the locals. Next day’s keynote was the best I’ve ever seen. Funny, accessible, insightful and challenging delivered by two mighty women.

Two days after arrival was Showcase Day, and my bag had yet to arrive! I learned how lightly one can travel, without my carefully chosen outfits and regular accoutrement. Luckily The Millennium, a lovely hotel, had basic toiletries in marble bathrooms. I delivered my showcase in slightly damp trousers (rinsed through with shampoo and hung over the bath to dry the night before), and a new top purchased for $20, in a short break between sessions. Ironically at the time of paper delivery with no “visual crutch” from PowerPoint my nerves kicked in, in a major way. I didn’t know the audience, it was an unfamiliar style of presentation, and I was worried (after the reviews) they might think the work was pedestrian. The room was small. Better, I thought … if no one came. But come they did and the room filled to capacity, my hands were shaking, but folks said they didn’t notice. And I’m lucky in a way, my particular brand of stage fright doesn’t manifest in a quavery voice, so my voice supported me.

The showcase went not exactly as planned, but when you inhabit the work like Lisa and I do, the challenge is more what not to say. I wish, as possibly all “showcase deliverers” do, that there had been more time for questions. The audience I had imagined as aloof, elite academic developers turned out to be very receptive, passionate university teachers and educators keen to share ideas and give very positive feedback. Later through the conference, word had spread, and even those who hadn’t heard “the showcase” approached me, or Lisa, to talk about the work.

Conference attendees were kind, energetic and friendly, from all academic levels, easy to talk to and genuinely nice welcoming people—even the senior hierarchy of HERDSA itself. I will be submitting a paper next year, I hope to run a pre conference workshop and next time, I’ll pack a change of clothes in my cabin bag and I won’t be scared.

Amanda Burrell is a Lecturer in Advertising and Marketing Communication at the University of Canberra.

Contact: Amanda.burrell@canberra.edu.au

James Derounian

London – Rotorua is a long way! But HERDSA made it well worthwhile. Although the start was not auspicious ... as the customs officer at Auckland airport threatened me with a $100NZ fine for importing dirty walking boots. I wondered what kind of country I’d arrived in.

But from here on the arrangements never faltered. The conference organisation, in particular, was faultless; the hotel and conference were excellent, accommodation comfortable; food plentiful and pretty good, and the programme kept to time – impressive! And then there were the academic sessions. I was lucky enough to join about fifteen colleagues on a reflective bike ride— in bright sunshine— around Lake Rotorua. This workshop helped us view peer observation through the “vehicle”
of improving the technique of less confident cyclists. It also took in molten mud and steaming pools, all laced with a strong whiff of sulphur.

The keynote address by Barbara Holland & Judith Ramalay was stunning. They persuasively argued that “contemporary students crave action and experiential learning”.

The conference theme of “engaging communities” was broadly interpreted, with a strong thread around “communities of practice”. Other papers ranged across work-integrated learning, university - local community links, effective [academic] writing and peer observation of teaching. In “writing higher education differently”, Helen Sword demonstrated the “massive gap ... between what most academics say stylish writing is and what scholars of higher education actually produce and publish”? A timely rally cry for us all.

But as I reflected on the conference from the comfort of the hotel pool, I concluded that I had never attended a better organised or more welcoming conference. So for those of you considering HERDSA 2009 in Darwin, Australia, I’d say “do it”!

Only one “criticism” & one suggestion for the organisers: listening to Elvis singing “you ain’t nothing but a hound dog” is not conducive to digestion at breakfast! And for the future I’d suggest 30-minute papers, with twenty devoted to the presentation and 10 for questions. A number of times papers were concluded with no time for discussion.

The excursions were an inspired “add on”: I went to Mitai Maori village and thoroughly enjoyed the performances, singing, feasting and ... the glow worms!

James Derouman is a National Teaching Fellow in the UK and Principal Lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire.

Contact: jderouman@glos.ac.uk

Alex Attewell

Although I have been a member of HERDSA since 2005, Rotorua was the first conference I have attended, and that occurred largely as a result of a serendipitous meeting and shared taxi with Kathryn Sutherland in April.

Apart from anything else, the sign of a well organised conference is that things happen without drama or apparent effort, and that was certainly the case on Rotorua. The welcome powhiri was impressive and moving, with the opening keynote address by Dr Pita Sharples offering an insight and commentary on the revival of te reo Maori as a living language. This was achieved through the establishment of Maori language immersion schools (kohanga reo, kura kaupapa, and wananga) in the 1980’s by the community, but without government support.

With a conference theme of “Engaging Communities” the address was an incredible reminder of the power of education. A perhaps unexpected outcome of the revival of te reo Maori was a greatly increased awareness of both the language and the culture, as well as a rise in the demands by Maori for their rights as tangata whenua or first nation be recognised.

The challenge for me both before, and during the conference, was navigating through the variety of sessions and presentations to select those that were of greatest interest or value.

The New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) has a large training and education budget, and is currently developing a strategy for blended learning that will include aspects of e-learning. The challenge for us is that our students have a wide variety of skills and cognitive abilities, are dispersed over the whole country, and their access to computers and the internet ranges across a broad spectrum. In some areas carrier pigeon is still quicker than email so we need to find a range of strategies that will assist in delivering opportunities for learning.

As a result I spent a considerable amount of time at the conference in those sessions that looked at e-learning or distance learning, to see what lessons I could learn and what might help us improve our development methods as well student outcomes.

Any other session on the programme that addressed, discussed, or even remotely mentioned adult learning was fair game. A colleague from the NZFS, who has responsibility for learner support in the organisation, got enormous benefit from the sessions that looked at aspects of that topic.

Although we are involved in the development of training programmes, we found that many of the issues that were being discussed were applicable and relevant to the context in which we work. For that reason from an intellectual point of view the conference was an incredible success for us.

We both found that we were able to talk and network with people from a wide range of academic and tertiary backgrounds, and that often the networking filled in the gaps or provided contacts for ongoing discussion and dialogue.

My overall impression of the conference was of a superbly well organised, friendly, and collegial event and I congratulate the organisers for their efforts. It was a brilliant effort.

Alex Attewell is the acting Senior Training Development Advisor for the New Zealand Fire Service and responsible for supervising the National Training Development team. The development team is responsible for the design, development, and review, of training materials used by both career and volunteer fire-fighters. That presently involves a combination of distance learning, theory tests, and performance of practical skills to demonstrate competence. Blended or e-learning based solutions are also being explored.

Contact: alex.attewell@fire.org.nz

Josie Healey

The truckies stopped the nation
The All blacks faced the Boks
When HERDSA held its conference
By Rotorua's lakes

Tuesday July the second
In Rotorua's cool night air
The Powhiri began
Kawa and Te Arawa took their sacred place
The language and the spirit,
The ancestors and we, invited guests,
Joined in ritual and thanksgiving
Oration and song
The breath of life, the hongi, was exchanged.

Haere mai
Haere mai
Haere mai
No longer manuhiri, thrice welcome we
were made
Our spirits-past and present- now were
clear
Ready for the keynote
Who better to begin than the
Kura kaupapa Maori founder
Political story teller of renown
Pita Sharples took the stage.
He spoke of Manaakitanga
Of sharing common ground
Of the Treaty of Waitangi
Of tertiary priorities
Of charade or dialogue
Lessons still in progress in Aotearoa
(and in Australia).

With the freeing of our spirits
And our intellect provoked
We launch the book* and share our food
Thence adjourn to our abodes
To navigate the HERDSA conference book!

For the HERDSA newbies
There’s Wednesday’s early morning walk
To the breakfast
At a café called “Fat Dog”
Then back to do the real work
It’s the “Barb and Judy” show…
Universities are communities
Not just economic ones
Producing educated people –they propose.
We are knowers not just subjects- so they say
Creating social fabric not credentialing alone
Ah yes, quite pointed all around.

What else do I recall?
An afternoon Symposium
SET* a controversial tone
Another on trialectics
(More fun than it sounds)
In fact I try to buy the book* but it’s sold out.
There’s the luncheon conversations

Among the lowly and the great
(I’m the lowly, they’re the great)
Lorraine and I talk ethics
With Sally Brown: assessment as you’d know;
It’s U3A and doctoral students, over posters with Susan
And a little bit of all of them with Alex from Yerpoon

Thursday bright and early
Stuart Middleton takes the floor
With graphs and funny stories
He calls for flexibility and more
He reminds us
If “access” rates a mention
To ask “to what”?

Thomas Olsson from Sweden
Lund University is next
He describes a teaching Fellowship
Criteria and all
A question from the audience confirms
To change communities, there is no easy way
Let the doers and the bosses have their say

All conferences have a dinner
HERDSA’s at the top
Skyline skyrides takes us there
There’s food
There’s wine
More conversation
With the visionary from Switzerland
And, of course, some sort of dancing to the band.

Early Friday morning it’s Shelda’s turn to speak
Cultivating community is her goal
Then the Mokia room is empty
It’s my twenty minute slot
I try to create community
Daunted by the room’s large size
None too soon my showcase over and complete

The chair, who’s Roger Landbeck, assures me I did fine
He asks if I’ll write for HERDSA’s newsletter
About my conference time
I get mentioned in dispatches
Though I didn’t win the prize
To go to HERDSA Darwin in ’09

Acculturation to Kiwi practices
Martin has a message to present
“Fornication” and “apostasy” are not what we expect
For Martin’s lucky students it’s more than language learnt
They engaged in the community
And knew their time there was well spent.

Friday after morning tea,
Straight rows are gone at last,
Our circle of community emerges
Etienne, the COP practitioner, does what he does best
He speaks in conversation
Shares the mike
And shares the floor
Gives power to ideas
Says “Designs do not realise themselves”
And even knows his limits when with bears.

Then the conference closes
With a politician who can sing
Who isn’t Peter Garrett even so
Through Pokarekare ana despite its gloomy theme
I feel a sense of hope
And remember the Curnow quote from days before

It August now and as I write
You’ll be glad to hear
I’m searching for an ending to this poem
To complete the HERDSA time at Rotorua
Where Te Awara’s responsibility we shared
To Curnow and the Maori culture once again I turn
And calmly leave this close to them….
Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa (Let us keep close together, not far apart.)

“Time
To go and be gazed at going
On a fine morning, in the Name of God
Into the nameless waters of the world”.
(Landfall in Unknown Seas Allen Curnow)
# SET(Student Evaluation of Teaching)
* Making a Place: An oral history of academic development in Australia. Edited by Alison Lee, Catherine Manathunga and Peter Kandlbinder. Published by HERDSA 2008.

Josie Healy is Programs Educator, University Entry Programs at QUT International College, Brisbane.
Contact: jf.healy@qut.edu.au

Noorullah Shaikhnag
Greetings from South Africa. Thank you for having asked me to write a short report on the HERDSA conference. Though I have attended only two such events, viz Sydney 2005 and Rotorua 2008, I nevertheless feel honoured and privileged to oblige.

HERDSA 2008 was very well organised. The entire organising team, especially Mark Barrow and Kathryn Sutherland need to be commended for putting together a very successful conference, not forgetting the sterling work done by Debbie Wootton. HERDSA’S willingness to accommodate delegates from different cultures and value systems by providing them with meals as requested, is much appreciated. The venue, viz The Millenium Hotel in Rotorua was an ideal choice being in close proximity to most delegates.

HERDSA 2008 was very well organised. The entire organising team, especially Mark Barrow and Kathryn Sutherland need to be commended for putting together a very successful conference, not forgetting the sterling work done by Debbie Wootton. HERDSA’S willingness to accommodate delegates from different cultures and value systems by providing them with meals as requested, is much appreciated. The venue, viz The Millenium Hotel in Rotorua was an ideal choice being in close proximity to most delegates.

HERDSA 2008 provided an ideal platform for academics, in particular those involved with research to build on what they already have. I found all the presentations which I attended to be of a very high standard and this can only enhance quality. The abstracts in the conference handbook, bear testimony, that the overall paper presentations, complied with the high standards expected of HERDSA delegates.

The keynote speakers were excellent, however, I would like to mention one or two presentations which particularly captured my imagination, those made by Dr. Stuart Middleton and Dr Etienne Wengerwhose interactive session during his keynote address was for me the pinnacle of the conference.

Recommendations
Although the papers presented at HERDSA 2008, were of an extremely high quality, most, if not all were based on Research Methodology. (How to do research / How is research conducted) This in my opinion led to proceedings becoming too cumbersome. To avoid repetition, I believe that a corridor be opened, albeit on a limited scale, for a diversified approach to the central theme. This, together with a few “INTEREST GROUP” sessions will add variety to the conference proceedings.

From approximately 275 delegates registered for the conference, 92% were from Australia and New Zealand. Such a scenario is rather unfortunate as HERDSA ought to be attracting delegates from all over. In order to enhance their international character, HERDSA’S management should explore the possibility of holding such events outside Australasia, once every two or three years.

Diversification is important and a more diverse set of delegates can do HERDSA’S image no harm. Changes are healthy and helps to bring about innovative ideas, creativity and critical thinking. To this end, I strongly recommend that future HERDSA conferences be also held in other parts of the world, in particular Europe, Middle East / Gulf Region and South Africa.

Noorullah Shaikhnag is a Lecturer in the School of Continuing Education, North West University, Mafikeng campus, South Africa
Contact: Noorullah.Shaikhnag@nwu.ac.za

Finally an unsolicited email from Shirley Bennett from the University of Hull in the UK.
Hi Roger,
I just wanted to thank you for your *email. I had no idea that registering for the HERDSA Rotorua conference would also provide membership of HERDSA, and I am delighted that there will be this ongoing contact. I am about to follow up the specific links made during the conference, but would like to say how very friendly I found HERDSA people to be! When attending a conference on one’s own, it can sometimes be a little lonely, and some organisations can be rather “cliquey” when they get together. Not so HERDSA! I never felt lonely once and the warmth of welcome was notable. It is one of the things I tell people about when they ask me about my visit “downunder”? :-) I look forward to your weekly messages!
Shirley Bennett
* The email welcomed her to the weekly HERDSA email list.

Vivienne Bozalek with Kathryn Sutherland, Conference Co-Convenor. Vivienne was a member of the team who won the prize for the Best Scholarly Paper.
The sense of belonging to a community is an important feature of a society like HERDSA. Each year we look forward to the HERDSA conferences as a focal point of our calendar, offering a chance to reflect, learn and interchange with others in a sociable and inclusive environment. Our New Zealand colleagues set another benchmark for excellent conferences with their outstanding Rotorua event in July this year. Our warm thanks go to co-conveners Kathryn Sutherland and Mark Barrow and their Conference Planning Committee for an impeccable event. The conference theme, Engaging Communities, was aptly reflected in the activities and interactions as well as the excellent range of papers. The strong keynotes also encouraged reflection on the need for robust communities, and the importance of making space to create and nurture professional networks in our higher education settings. Importantly, the HERDSA conference also hosted the new members’ breakfast, a lunch for branch presidents, and the fellows’ meeting and dinner. These are valued opportunities which encourage our members to build new connections with their colleagues.

Our 2009 conference will be in Darwin from July 6 – 9. The Conference Committee is working hard to match this year’s offering and has identified the theme “The Student Experience” as its focus. This is relevant to us all, and is particularly important as Australia faces new challenges with its various reviews of higher education. If you hope to come to the conference, you may be interested in the early call for papers which will commence later this year. This will assist people in forward planning their trip as Darwin flight planning can be more difficult closer to the date.

A number of HERDSA conference delegates contributed ideas for our response to the Bradley Review Discussion Paper. This panel will have a major impact on Australia’s higher education sector. The response will be available from our website for your review. As we hear more about the outcomes of the review, we will advise you via your weekly email update.

The 2008 conference also saw the launch of Making a Place: An oral history of academic development in Australia. Alison Lee, Katherine Manathunga and Peter Kandlbinder have produced a lovely collection of oral histories drawn from HERDSA lifetime members. (Our Roger Landbeck is one of the significant people featured.) This is a fascinating exploration of how academic development and teaching and learning has evolved and yet still faces the same issues as those evident in the very beginning. This book is now available from the HERDSA publications section on the website, and worth purchasing as part of your professional collection.

At its meeting in July, the Executive also decided to move forward with a new publication that will become an annual work. Titled Higher Education Perspectives, it will invite think pieces and scholarly publications on topics pertaining to higher education and its evolution. An initial call for proposed submissions will occur shortly through our weekly digest and the HERDSA Website. This is an exciting initiative which will offer another quality forum for educational scholars.

HERDSA was also very pleased to see Higher Education Research and Development, our journal, ranked as an A* publication in the recent Australian review of research journals. This will be very useful to those publishing in the journal, as it illustrates the strong reputation and recognition that HERD has garnered over the years. (HERDSA is also seeking ISI recognition, but this can take some time to come through.) The journal is moving toward six issues per year to meet the demand, and is now in the process of moving toward electronic submissions through the Taylor and Francis website. We are very pleased to see this happening as it will enable full tracking of submissions from the moment they are lodged.

For now, I hope the remainder of your year is successful and enjoyable. And don’t forget to take time to nurture your own professional community – particularly through a local HERDSA event. If there are none happening – think about hosting one yourself. You never know who you might meet!

Contact: Shelda.Debowski@uwa.edu.au

Mark Barrow, Conference Co-Convenor with Debbie Wootton, Conference Organiser
Sue Johnston began her career as a pharmacist but changed direction almost immediately on graduation. She became a science teacher and, as an educator, found her true vocation. Her first position in higher education was as a research assistant. In 1982 she worked at the University of Queensland developing and evaluating computer assisted learning (CAL) resources. This set the tone: her work was always on the “edge” of development in higher education.

In 1985 she became a lecturer in education studies at Brisbane College of Advanced Education (now QUT) and in 1991 she was awarded a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Fellowship for study in the USA. Over the next fifteen years she worked in key leadership roles in Canberra, New England and Tasmania, initially as the Director of central teaching and learning departments and later as Pro Vice Chancellor Teaching & Learning. As the inaugural Pro Vice Chancellor Teaching & Learning at the University of Tasmania, Sue made a major and enduring contribution to the development of the teaching and learning policy and quality assurance processes. Most recently, Sue joined Southern Cross University as Head of the Coffs Harbour Campus.

During these years Sue made a significant contribution to higher education well beyond the scope of her formal roles. She organised the first national teaching forum, was a member of the Australian University Teaching Committee, qualified, and accepted numerous appointments, as an AUQA auditor and worked as a consultant. She undertook a national study of credit transfer between vocational and higher education and was key to the development of the new National Protocols for Higher Education. In 2006 she was made an Emeritus Professor of the University of Tasmania. In recognition of her influence on higher education and her legacy of sustained contribution to her discipline, Sue was awarded one of the two inaugural Career Achievement Awards from the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in 2007.

As well as her commitment to higher education Sue Johnston was an elite athlete and made a significant contribution to her chosen sport of orienteering at both a state and national level. (Google Sue Johnston Orienteering to learn more about this aspect of her life.) While working in Tasmania she also gained her pilots licence for light aircraft.

Sue was a capable, energetic, independent and focused individual. She was also a generous and compassionate friend. The diagnosis of motor neuron disorder in March 2006 seemed a cruel and unfair blow. Nevertheless, Sue dealt with this challenge with characteristic resolve and courage. She continued to work until her voice faltered and made it impossible to continue. Then, with her partner Peter, she travelled to Antarctica - a long held dream. For the last nine months of her life, Sue was unable to speak but she kept in touch with friends and colleagues by email. She never complained. She remained interested in the lives of others and was generous with words of support and encouragement. Just days before her death, with movement limited to one finger of her left hand, she continued to respond with thoughtful and wise advice.

On Friday 4 July 2008 Sue Johnston died peacefully at her home near Coffs Harbour. Peter and Phoebe (her beloved Labrador) were at her side. At her funeral service a colleague and friend, Lenore Cooper, read a message that Sue had prepared for all who knew and would miss her. She acknowledged the love and care that Peter had provided and urged all of us to follow our dreams while it is still possible. She will be greatly missed by Peter, her sister Marg and her many friends and colleagues.

Gail Hart, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Teaching and Learning, at the University of Tasmania, and a good friend of Sue kindly prepared this tribute.
A coalface view: Models for teaching in higher education institutions

As most, if not all Australian academics would be aware (with our Antipodean and British colleagues having already experienced the harsh vagaries of quantitative based assessment of research output, recognition, and excellence); the introduction of the research quality framework into the lexicon of the academy dramatically altered the workspace for the individual within higher education. With performance management and workload allocation formulas becoming more hierarchical in nature, the personal observation of this author is that teaching has increasingly become subjugated to the demands of research and the performance standards for the norm now significantly higher than what was perceived to be the mean in the past. With supervisors able, more than ever, to exercise administrative control over the performance targets, with this then leveraged into the work undertaken, those who fail to meet these canons are increasingly marginalised, if not threatened. With universities increasingly using teaching-focussed as against research-focussed appointments, and with the use of strategic funds to attract high quality, high profile, and successful grant recipients to an institution, the move towards a division between the research and teaching within higher education becomes unstoppable.

With the reflection and insight offered by experience, and the uncertainty engendered by the introduction of a new Federal Government, the question becomes how to structure teaching within a division driven by research imperatives. Not only does this model all academics would be required to under this model the suggestion was made possible models for how this divide (whilst recognising the underlying and threshold question of whether there should be a divide) can achieve the best outcomes for a government driven by fiscal accountability and quantifiable outputs from an inherently qualitatively creative enterprise. At this point, it is important to note that what is suggested comes not from empirical work or a detailed literature survey, but purely on the reflection of an academic at the coalface of this teaching research bifurcation (or union).

Model 1: Faculty/Division responsible concurrently for teaching and research

This, for the most part, has been the model adopted throughout Australia. With the occasional swing from a research emphasis to mandated quality assurance and technical compliance with teaching standards, under this model all academics would be required to spend part of their time devoted to research (and in this context research in the sense of the creation of new knowledge, rather than scholarship designed merely to keep one up to date in their discipline), as well as teaching. Each Faculty would have its own broad guidelines as to a standard teaching load, with this deviated from where a greater administrative load was undertaken, or in recent times as part of differential workload allocations with exceptional researchers undertaking less teaching. Research would feed into teaching as well as the converse, each making us better at the other (Demski, 2000, 346). Our capacity to undertake research providing the verification that the standards adopted and required to be met in our teaching were appropriate and meeting higher, rather than just further education. Under this model, promotion criteria would be bundled with staff required to quantify their work on each, with arguably the hardened benchmarks of research more easily identified by promotions committees than the more subjective ideas of what qualifies as exceptional teaching. Equally however, under this model the suggestion was made that the same qualities that makes one an exceptional teacher are similar to that of an exceptional researcher (at least in my discipline of law) – these being the capacity to structure and outline a thesis, consider the various arguments for and against, and then to make a considered case for acceptance by another audience. Looking at it this way, the possible reason a far smaller number of people are able to meet a definition of research-active, as against simply engaging in acceptable teaching (at least from the university mandated evaluations) is that the peer review audience for research is far more critical and knowledgeable. Similarly, the academic comfortable with the largely lonely pursuit of the discovery, testing and retesting of new ideas rewarded, but still required to be instrumental in the three axioms of teaching: learning, instruction and application (Schwartz, 2001). The advantages of this model well understood. It is the basis on which Australian universities are currently funded, in inexorably links the creation of new knowledge to employment growth, and allows independent standard setting (Scott, 2004). Similarly, teaching brings together the theoretical frameworks, the change environment within the discipline and requires an ordering that must meet the expectations of an increasingly demanding clientele. But its disadvantages are similarly obvious – the difficulty in determining exceptional teaching, the imperative to require some form of efficiency in teaching, the capacity to provide the time and resources to the exceptional researchers (who in some instances may also be the departments quality teachers) and the inherent involuntary servitude (if not
smothering) that some quality assurance processes ensure.

Model 2: One Faculty, but Divided within Between Teaching and Research

This model sees appointments made within Faculties based on the capacity of the individual to engage in either (or both), traditional research, or the scholarship of teaching. For example, the University of Queensland now offer teaching-focussed appointments with the intent that the person concerned will be engaged in the scholarship of teaching and learning and the capacity to contribute to the pedagogy in their discipline. In so doing, universities have been quick to emphasise that scholarship of teaching moves significantly beyond excellence in teaching. Specifically, it will require that teaching practices be peer reviewed as with the concrete benchmarks of traditional research measures and involve the same conceptual breakthroughs as with other recognised forms of scholarly work (Boyer, 1990). To a Faculty these appointments have a number of advantages. First, and with the simple understanding that every hour spent teaching is one hour less on research, it will permit the exceptional researchers to spend the quality time that they need to develop successful research grants, supervise postgraduates and produce peer reviewed research monographs. With the observation that the research output of a collective group is largely confined to a small section within a division the identification of research-focussed appointments will allow that person(s) to be more fully utilised and exploited. Similarly, those with a teaching orientation and the ability to translate this into discovery, dissemination, and application to a wider audience will similarly benefit from having their personal workspace identified with a focus on the scholarship of teaching. Just like research, it will only be the exceptional few who are able to translate their passion for exceptional teaching into the rewards offered at the highest level of the academy. In law faculties, where teaching has been described as “locked in an instructional methodology of dubious merit”, (Schwartz, 2001, 349), it offers opportunities for innovation to be tried and tested, all in the name of acceptable research. Teaching-focussed appointments will arguably allow a better harnessing of the internal conflict that each academic faces when dealing with that inevitable conflict between teaching and research as well as leading to less tension within performance management and workload allocation where managerial dictates and individual drive can often be misaligned. With workplace stress commonly associated with confusion as to roles, the specialisation of teaching and research appointments offers a lot to commend it, however one may question whether a system which permits excellence in research to lead to higher honours, but requires excellence in teaching to reach further is entrenching disadvantage by another name.

Model 3: The Establishment of Distinct Research Centres, Separate and Apart from Teaching Faculties.

This model, which takes the previous closer to the end of the continuum, more sharply and explicitly brings the benefits of separation to the stakeholders. It could of course operate within an institution, or may even be considered at a macro level, where some higher education institutions engage solely in research, with some marketing themselves purely for a teaching role. It does of course identify equally as clearly the disadvantages of a complete divergence as well as the benefit. It will complete eliminate the complementary advantages that can occur with simultaneously engaging in research and teaching, and destroys the generational renewal that comes with engaging the undergraduate in the realisation of the creation or discovery of new knowledge.

Conclusion

There will never be a pat answer as to the institutional model that will achieve the best outcomes for society. Each has its own distinct weaknesses, and as with the current mantra of the Rudd Government that universities should not be a “one size fits all” model, it is likely that within this country, the higher education sector will face continued turmoil. However, what each academic will need to articulate better, what each Faculty will need to clearly express, and each institution more precisely define is that entities role within the modern academy. At the coalface, it will be critical that each of us make the right choice as to the institution we are joining and whether the values that we personally hold can be accommodated within the organisation where we sit. Academia initially attracted great freedoms, but with this came great responsibilities (Becker, 1997). What is possibly happening now is that freedoms are being reduced, and as a corollary, our responsibilities. Bifurcation of institutions, divisions, or staff between teaching and research may well allow those freedoms to be reclaimed – the question will be whether the reclamation occurs only for a select few.

References


Lynden Griggs is a Senior Lecturer in law, University of Tasmania. He is a Fellow of HERDSA and was previously the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning. Prior to academia Griggs was employed in private legal practice. His teaching and research interests are Consumer Protection, Property Law, Competition Law and Sports Law.

Contact: Lynden.Griggs@utas.edu.au
RED: The Sessional Staff Project

By Yoni Ryan

In late 2006, the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD) undertook a follow-up study to the landmark 2003 Australian Universities’ Teaching Committee report “Training, Support and Management of Sessional Teaching Staff”, with funding from the Carrick Institute, now ALTC. The project reported in June 2008, as The RED Report with an associated RED Resource (available on the ALTC website at http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/go/home/grants/pid/558 and the CADAD website at http://www.cadad.edu.au/sessional/RED. The last site also includes the Literature Review.

The intent was to establish the extent to which sessional staff employment underpinned the workforce capacity of Australian universities, in light of the reported and anecdotal evidence of increased reliance on casual staff, and perceived shifts in the nature of casual staff, away from Higher Degree by Research students working to supplement staff, and perceived shifts in the nature of academic career, to “practising professionals” bringing industry experience to academic programs. The Project Team was also tasked with identifying and analysing good practices in the professional development of sessionals, a major sector-wide deficit emerging from the 2003 study.

Project design was dictated by the need to survey the use of sessionals in different types of institutions and across all states, an assumption being that a Go8 may have a higher proportion of HDR tutors progressing into an academic career than an ATN or HE-VET institution where there might be a heavy reliance on practising professionals, with a contingent relationship with the institution. Hence, eight project universities linked with eight others across the spectrum of university types.

In gathering the demographic data, it became clear to the Project Team that very few universities could supply robust comprehensive data on their sessional staff numbers, the range of their roles or patterns of employment. HR systems often conceal the contribution of “consultants” who invoice a department directly for teaching services, for example, in law programs. Hence such staff do not appear on payroll. More alarmingly, the DEEWR formula used to calculate Full Time Equivalence (FTE) of casuals no longer accounts for the changed workload practices in many universities, as teaching and associated administration consumes more than the notional one-third of academic time. As an example of the curious effects of the DEEWR formula, at one institution 69 sessionals in various roles converted into 9.25 FTE (derived from the central HR unit headcount), while in another, 62 sessionals became 2.64 FTE, and in another 168 sessionals collapsed into 16 FTE (Sem 1 2007 figures). In another university, fully three-quarters of staff were casual, in another only one-third. As one might expect, there were wide disparities in the proportion of sessional employment between faculties, although no valid pattern could be inferred from the data gathered.

Clearly, HR systems must be revised to accommodate the flexible employment modes apparent in more deregulated workforce regimes. Equally clearly, the FTE formula must change to acknowledge workload changes among “permanent” academic staff towards increased teaching and administrative roles.

Despite the passage of four years since the AUTC Report, the 2007 survey found little improvement in systemic attention to policies, practices and professional development for sessional staff. A handful of universities had coherent policies around sessional staff recruitment, clear duty expectations, and consistent conditions of employment across the institution.

Most universities’ stated policies prohibited the use of sessionals as unit coordinators, for example, yet this was more often breached than observed in practice. Casual staff reported last-minute appointment in response to unanticipated enrolment figures, lack of access to facilities, unreasonable marking schedules, and lack of guidance in relation to teaching approaches and assessment. Where induction and professional development for teaching occurred, it was generally at the school or campus level, and was provided by an enthusiastic and generally over-burdened coordinator. There was almost no evidence of ongoing professional development, even where orientation and induction had occurred, unless the individual coordinator assumed this responsibility. Indeed, one of the overall findings of this report is that the sheer numbers of sessional staff (ignoring the FTE data) are placing a huge administrative and coaching load on unit coordinators if those coordinators are effective in their supervisory and “quality control” roles.

There are major challenges to universities in providing professional development for their casuals. How does one deliver a consistent program across a multi-campus institution? Should Professional Development be generic or discipline-specific or both? What is the optimal scheduling for PD? How is it funded? Should staff be required to undertake PD on a regular basis? Should their re-employment be contingent on PD activities? Should they also be required to evaluate their performance through student or peer observation or both?

The findings of this report do not provide any simple answers to these questions, but they do provide some guidance. The title of the final report and resource – RED – reflects the expressed needs of sessionals themselves for:

- **Recognition** of their critical role in “delivering” up to 50 per cent of all university teaching and perhaps 70 per cent of First Year teaching.
- **Enhancement** of the quality of institutional policies, conditions of employment, and administrative and supervisory practices.
- **Development** of sessionals in pedagogical approaches appropriate to contemporary student learning needs.

The RED Resource also provides specific case studies of good practice in various institutions, at local and university-wide levels. Tellingly, of the 10 cases, only three illustrate university-wide good practices. Given one of the criteria for LTPF funding
is evidence of systemic professional development for sessionals, this is curious at the least. However, all case examples provide excellent strategies and models of how sessional staff PD can be managed in a range of contexts.

As a member of the Project Team, I found this project challenging for many reasons, from locating a competent Project Manager in a short timeframe for a limited term contract, to overseeing productive collaboration amidst staff changes and restructures, negotiating different institutional Ethics Clearance protocols, to the frustration of obtaining reliable data, and my personal emotional reaction to some of the “horror stories” around sessional employment.

As Vice-President of CADAD, I want to put on record the deep gratitude of the CADAD Executive and the Project Team to Alisa Percy, Coordinator of the University of Wollongong’s Sessional Teaching Project, and also a 2008 ALTC Citation winner, who pulled together the disparate data and resources collected through the project to produce this excellent Report and Resource in such a tight timeframe.

It should be read by all HR managers, DVC/PVCs Teaching and Learning, course coordinators and program managers and supervisors of sessional staff, as well as casual staff themselves. It should change policies and practices across the sector so that in four years’ time, a similar survey could report real progress in systemic PD for the “invisible force” that is our casual cohort.

**Note:** Hard copies of the report and Resource have been sent to all VCs. Several members of the Project Team have been requested to report on the project at various forums, and will seek further opportunities to disseminate identified good practice. The Project Team thanks ALTC for its support of the project, and in particular Dr Elizabeth McDonald, whose commitment to the project was maintained despite its “bumps”.

**Professor Yoni Ryan, is Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, Australian Catholic University and Deputy-President, CADAD**

Contact: Y.Ryan@mcauley.acu.edu.au

---

**NEW HERDSA GUIDES**

Three new HERDSA Guides are expected to be published in the next few months.

**Conducting Tutorials** *(Revised Edition of Green Guide No. 6).*

*By Jacquie Lublin (original author) and Kathryn Sutherland.*

**The Research Matrix: An Approach to Supervision of Higher Degree Research**

*By Robyn Smyth and Tom Maxwell, University of New England*

**Academic Writing Retreats: A Facilitators Guide.**

*By Barbara Grant, University of Auckland*

Publication dates will be advised in the weekly HERDSA email news.
Notes on Publishing in HERD

By Izabel Soliman

Publishing in HERD's refereed journal Higher Education Research & Development (now in its 28th year of publication) involves a process developed by the previous editors and accounts for the high quality of the journal. Support for this claim is the A* rating (the top 5%) allocated to the journal by the Australian Research Council in its recent ranking of journals. The current Editors have continued to implement the process which involves submission, initial screening and reviewing of papers.

Submission of a paper is by email, to the HERDSA office (office@herdsa.org.au) rather than to the current Editors. One reason for this is that Editors change every couple of years and thus their addresses would change. Another reason is that HERDSA's Administrative Assistant, Jennifer Ungaro, acknowledges receipt of the paper first by emailing the authors and then by a letter which also indicates the number allocated to the paper which is henceforth used to track the progress of the paper. Inquiries about the progress of the paper should include this number. If you don't receive an email and a letter, you should contact the HERDSA office.

The paper is then emailed to the Editors currently located at the University of New England (UNE). Upon receipt of the paper at UNE, it is prepared for the monthly initial screening meeting. This involves stripping the author's name and affiliation as well as references to the author's own work in the list of references. Members of the editorial team, which includes the two Co-Editors and eight Associate Editors, attend this meeting, where an average of nine papers are screened each month. Screening involves an overview of each paper by three or four members of the team. The purpose of the screening is to decide to what extent the paper satisfies the seven criteria indicated on the inside of the back cover of each issue, and to eliminate those papers that are considered very early drafts on a topic and require more work to qualify for being allocated to a detailed review by at least three experts in the relevant field. About 40–50% of the submitted papers are eliminated at this stage. The authors are informed about this decision by one of the Editors.

Finding expert reviewers for the papers that have been accepted at the screening stage is the task of one of the Editors. This involves identifying at least five potential reviewers whose publications indicate a sufficient grasp of the issues around the topic and/or its related aspects, and who are also able to comment on the methodology employed in paper. The Editor then invites by email each person to review the paper, provides its title and abstract, and stipulates a six-week time period to complete the review report. If this is accepted by the reviewer, he/she is emailed a copy of the paper, stripped of author identification, and a reviewing template. Normally those contacted respond positively or negatively in one or two days. There have been, however, some who do not respond at all. On average, two out of five respond positively, which necessitates finding a third appropriate and willing reviewer. This makes finding reviewers a time consuming process.

Many reviewers who accept to review, do not meet the stipulated six-week time period. Thus monitoring is required and reminder emails need to be sent. Currently this task is also handled by the reviewer-finding Editor. The time between receipt of a paper and receiving reports from the reviewers can take three or four months and sometimes longer. The journal publishers, the Taylor & Francis Group, have indicated that in 2009, they will introduce electronic means of monitoring the progress of the paper in the submission and review process. This may facilitate a speedier processing of papers.

The template sent to the reviewers includes the following seven criteria to guide the reviewing process:

1. Says something of interest to the HERD readership;
2. Provides important critical and/or analytical insight;
3. Is succinct and coherent;
4. Its conclusion is well supported and persuasively argued;
5. Demonstrates methodological soundness;
6. Issue/problem is well situated in appropriate literature; and
7. Overall it reads well and engages a broad higher education audience.

The template requests the reviewer to assess the paper in terms of each of the above criteria as being either a strength, being acceptable, or being a weakness, and to provide an overall recommendation on whether to

- Accept the paper as is;
- Accept subject to limited revision;
- Resubmit following substantial revision; or to
- Reject.

The reviewers are also requested to include constructive comments for the authors.

One of the Editors notifies the authors of the outcome of the review and indicates the revision required or the reasons for rejection. The papers that are resubmitted after “limited revision” are checked against the reviewers’ reports. Those requiring “substantial revision” are again sent to either the same reviewers or to new ones who may need to be found.

Recently I analysed the reports on 24 papers which were either rejected by the reviewers or required substantial revision. I was interested in finding out which of the above seven criteria were noted as a weakness in the paper. I found that a majority of the reports, 22/24, noted weakness with regard to the conclusions or criterion no. 4. The following are examples of the comments provided:

- Gross overstatement of claims;
- Reader is left with “so what?” feeling, implications of findings are not well drawn out;
- Unsubstantiated assertions or not based on evidence;
• Conclusions not supported by relevant references or by the data/findings presented;
• There was a distinct lack of “meat” in the findings;
• Paper was submitted prematurely. Further work is needed on significance of outcomes; and
• Overall argument is unconvincing.

A second area of weakness in 19/24 papers, was in regard to criterion no. 5, methodological soundness, indicated in the following comments:

• No proper introduction to methodology;
• Does not explain why methods are appropriate for the research questions;
• Does not provide sufficient detail to make clear that measures are appropriately used;
• Need more detail on recruitment of participants;
• No information provided about method of analysing transcribed focus data;
• Reader is not informed about how analysis of data was conducted and that it followed accepted methods;
• Insufficient information on sampling; and
• Insufficient analysis of reported data.

A third area of noted weakness in 18/24 papers, was in relation to criterion no. 7, relevance to specific topic. The names of the awardees can be found at http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/go

The ALTC recently awarded citations for improving student learning in higher education to 169 individuals and 41 teams. The names of the awardees can be found at http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/go

Congratulations to everyone.

Contact: isoliman@metz.une.edu.au

Izabel Soliman is Co-Editor of HERD.

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC)

The ALTC recently awarded citations for improving student learning in higher education to 169 individuals and 41 teams. The names of the awardees can be found at http://www.altc.edu.au/carrick/go

Congratulations to everyone.
The HOW TO ... Teaching Series

How to...

Defuse a Classroom Terrorist

By Peter Kandlbinder

When Robert Boice asked his colleagues about students’ behaviour in their classrooms he found a common range of minor misdemeanours. He also found one or two encounters with “classroom terrorists”. These were individual students whose unpredictable and highly emotional outbursts made the entire class uncomfortable. Students and teachers particularly disliked classroom terrorists because of the bad feelings that remained long after the incident. Students interviewed by Boice said they felt intimidated, distracted and demoralised, blaming their teachers for not handling the problem.

Students getting angry in class, shouting or making insulting comments is rare but Virleen Carlson says it is more likely to happen to women and inexperienced teachers who may feel that they are unable to interrupt an aggressive student. Carlson recommends avoiding sarcasm, humiliation and other ploys to magnify the teacher’s power and drawing on our experiences of dealing with difficult people in other settings to help manage the situation in the classroom.

Most university teachers aren't prepared for the possibility of an explosive situations suddenly arising in a class. If one does arise, Peter Schwarz suggests the first thing to do is to check how you are feeling, try to remain calm and confident, and don't personalise your remarks. A hasty remark could destroy any efforts to build a rapport with your students. Instead, focus on the student behaviour and the consequences of their behaviour.

For example if they are shouting say “I’d like to listen to what you have to say but I can’t understand you when you shout”. For threatening behaviour you might say, “It is very difficult to teach you when you are making threats. Come back in and we’ll start again”. Withdrawal of attention through some form of “time-out” can help to calm the situation.

Lee Warren describes emotionally changed situations in the classroom as a “hot moment” and suggests that when such hot moments result from difficult subject matter it can be turned into a topic of discussion. He recommends channelling students feelings by saying something like “many people hold these views, let’s look at their reasons and why others hold a opposing view”. If there is a major breakdown in your class, acknowledge the incident, ask the student if they would like to leave and talk to you after class or in extreme cases recommend the student to a counsellor.

References


Add your comment on this issue and other dilemmas of academic practice on the How to… web site of HERDSA News: http://herdsanews.wordpress.com/

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


www.AkoAotearoa.ac.nz

Full details of the 2008 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards can be found on the website
Reflections on the 2008 ICED Conference

Editors Note. ICED stands for The International Consortium for Educational Development. The web address is www.osds.uwa.edu.au/iced

Two months have elapsed now since the 2008 ICED Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah (USA) and that may be time enough for the myriad details of the conference to fade and broader themes to emerge. Indeed before and during the conference there was mostly an overwhelm of detail: 275 conference participants from Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, South Africa, Turkey, Thailand, China, Japan, New Zealand, and more; approximately 140 conference presentations in a variety of formats—pre-conference workshops, 75-, 60- and 45-minute concurrent sessions, roundtables, poster sessions, and three plenary sessions—with topics as diverse and seemingly unrelated as the use of student ratings, coming to terms with Facebook, and master's thesis supervision. Gradually though with time and reflection, a few general themes have emerged for me as tensions and counterpoints to the overall conference theme.

Implicit in the conference theme—Towards a Global Scholarship of Educational Development—is a tension between our individual efforts as educational developers, bound by local cultural and societal contexts, and the larger landscape of educational development worldwide. Indeed, I've played with the subtle differences between "a global scholarship of educational development" and "a scholarship of global educational development". Acknowledging local and national variations in the scholarship of educational development, the former implies a richer scholarship that represents a productive synthesis of parochial scholarships. The latter, on the other hand, posits a practice of educational development put to the service of a global agenda that transcends local boundaries and national interests and its distinctive scholarship. The tensions between local, national and global practice played out in a number of ways throughout the conference.

Stimulated by a discussion in the ICED Council meeting immediately preceding the conference and remarks by Shelda Debowski, HERDSA and ICED President, in her opening plenary address, I have been thinking a lot about the development of human capacity and what we mean by it, its relationship to worldwide capacity building, and the role of higher education and educational development specifically in both processes. Frequently we cast worldwide capacity building in materialistic terms, harnessing it to a vision of universal prosperity inspired by the unsustainable standards of living of Western economies and their toxic patterns of consumption. Bound to that vision, the higher education agenda becomes little more than rarefied vocational training, focused on helping students acquire the skills and attitudes required to compete in an increasingly global economy and thereby secure national competitive advantage. Lost is the classic vision of a liberal education and education as vehicle for social activism: the development of wide understanding, reflective discernment, and a sense of identity and purpose towards a broader conception of human and social betterment. In fact the two other conference plenary sessions challenged us to think more deeply along these lines: Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, Interim Vice President, Academic Affairs, Johnson C. Smith University described the role of historically black colleges and universities in the United States in securing social equality for African-Americans; Joseph Sebareni, former Speaker of the Parliament, Rwanda, challenged us as an international body of educational developers to educate for peace and reconciliation at all levels of society from the family to the world. Indeed, how do we as educational developers build worldwide capacity in light of larger global agendas related to sustainable development, peace and reconciliation, eradication of worldwide hunger, and narrowing the widening disparities in standards of living between the developed and developing world?

In this context, the conference's China Higher Education Forum, a series of sessions conducted by representatives of higher education from China, was particularly challenging as a case study of the relationship between national, higher education, and educational development. To support its unprecedented economic expansion, China is pursuing higher education planning on a very large scale: an orchestration of rapid expansion and consolidation; environmental scanning; candid analysis of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; and topdown projects supported by massive investments from the Chinese government.

With strict accountability to the societal context, it is paying special attention to the development of a university-based applied research agenda and the quality of students' learning experiences in light of the rapidly changing job market. A major obstacle to transformation of its university system along these lines, however, is the absence of a really good and motivated faculty team. Worrying about the important issue of quality assurance during a time of rapid expansion, one Chinese representative posed a series of probing questions, which I have thought about a great deal: How do we define quality?, What is the relationship between money and quality?, and Is faculty development the final answer?

The tensions between educational development in service to parochial views of national development and a catholic view of global, sustainable development also poses challenges for evolving educational development networks such as HERDSA, SEDA and the POD Network as we assist emerging networks in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. In addition, these type of partnerships also raised questions about the existence (or more accurately, absence) of universal standards of educational development, another implication of the conference theme noted above. The ICED Council talked quite a bit about these issues in its pre-conference meeting as it tries to support the involvement of more emerging networks in ICED.

By Virginia S. Lee
The question of the role of educational development in worldwide capacity building as well as its limitations is an important and pressing one for ICED as an international network of national educational development networks. Further, we need to negotiate that difficult discussion amidst subtle variations in uses of language and local practice, orientations to our work that are at times more theoretical or more practical, and working in higher education contexts that are more or less centralised. Finally the ground is shifting beneath our feet. The field of educational development is changing rapidly with new understandings of its scope and modes of practice. In the United States, for example, we are struggling with the limitations of our traditional terminology (i.e., faculty, instructional and organisational development) towards a broader understanding of educational development. At the same time, in response to the growing complexity of the higher education agenda, even the term educational development may be inadequate: in its place the term academic development may become the coin of the realm with changing views of academic work, the role of the faculty member, and responsibility for student learning increasingly vested within the entire university community.

Virginia Lee is Senior Consultant, Virginia S. Lee & Associates, LLC (Durham, NC, USA) and President, POD Network in Higher Education She was Program Chair, at the 2008 ICED Conference
Contact: vslee@virginiaslee.com

Some decades ago George Lakoff made linguists and others aware that an analysis of the metaphors contained in the daily idioms that pass unnoticed in vernacular speech can be revealing of cultural attitudes and values. Some years ago a member of senior management at our institution of higher learning was accustomed to talking about getting academics “in line” (moving in the same direction, facing the same way, sharing the same vision) as being like herding cats. The expression will be familiar to you if you are a speaker of vernacular English. It contains a figure of speech.

It also contains a management imperative. Staff should face the same way, share the same vision, move in the same direction. But the process of achieving that desirable end is difficult. Why? Cats are known to have minds of their own and known to do what they feel inclined to do, unlike ruminants, which may be herded. In the morning ruminants line up quietly to be milked and at the end of milking walk quietly back to their assigned paddocks. The incongruity of the figure lies in applying the verb herd to the object cat. So the way the simile plays out is that academic staff are cats in being ornery and management is the farmer in wishing them to be more pliant. Notwithstanding the equation of people with animals, there is something complimentary about being a cat and thus of independent mind and habits (as opposed to being a ruminant).

Recently another figure has been heard in management discourse at our institution of higher learning, a member of the academic staff is “spitting the dummy”. This metaphor can also be readily unpacked. The colleague in question is a baby. Baby objects to management imperative and spits out her/his pacifier. Doing this is of course silly. Dummies serve a useful purpose. They simulate breastfeeding and keep baby quiet.

The direction of the change is worth thinking about. Note too the role played by milk.

Koenraad Kuiper is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.
Contact: kon.kuiper@canterbury.ac.nz

From Herding Cats to Spitting Dummies

By Koenraad Kuiper

NEW HERDSA PUBLICATION
Higher Education Perspectives
To be published July 2009
For details see President’s Report in this issue
Dancing in the Desert: A CAD Festival of Ideas at ICED 2008

By the CAD Collective (in order of their presentations): Peter Kandlbinder (with Tai Peseta); Trevor Holmes and Kathryn Sutherland; Valerie Clifford, Peter Kandlbinder and Brad Wütherick (with Tai Peseta & Susan Wilcox); Kim McShane and Catherine Manathunga (with Gail Wilson and Wendy Green), Valerie Clifford, and Anna Jones; and new members Elizabeth (Liz) Chapman Houtl and Gail Ratbun.

At the 2008 ICED Conference in Salt Lake City, a number of members of the Challenging Academic Development (CAD) Collective presented a range of papers that were designed around the theme of a Global Festival of Ideas. This idea had first been floated at the post-HERDSA Conference meeting of CAD in Adelaide in July 2007 and was developed further on the CAD Listserv. The Festival of Ideas approach involved several international groups of CAD members celebrating, questioning and engaging with some key readings or ideas about educational development. In line with the festival metaphor and in an attempt to engage a variety of senses that might capture how educational development feels (Peseta, 2007), we have chosen to represent these papers as a series of dances that took place at Salt Lake City in the Utah desert.

The first dance in the CAD Festival of Ideas was performed by Peter Kandlbinder and, from a distance Tai Peseta. It sought to display the key concepts used in Graduate Certificates in Higher Education. Before the dancing began in earnest, Peter and Tai introduced participants to our old dance partners (the key thinkers in Higher Education). The dance card of key thinkers in higher education teaching and learning turned out to include all our favourites plus some golden oldies. Unfortunately some of our US colleagues felt wrong footed by so many unfamiliar faces and wanted to see who the best dancer of the lot is.

A constructive alignment dance was then performed by Trevor Holmes and Kathryn Sutherland. The provocatively titled workshop session “Creativity Unbound: Rethinking ‘Constructive Alignment’ as Paradigm and Method” included some risky choreography. Their biggest risk was in constructing a session about John Biggs’ (1999) alignment that was deliberately without certain pieces (explicit objectives tied to some kind of assessment, for example). Effectively, Trevor and Kath made a happening and the audience became the weavers of meaning. After first asking the workshop participants to adopt a stance as “audience” rather than as “learners”, we presented three short skits to set the scene. From there, the workshop developed its own dance, far beyond any steps that we could have choreographed as facilitators. The workshop participants physically wove together the paper streamers strewn around the room with the slips of paper upon which they had written their challenging questions and nascent metaphors, and they symbolically wove together their ideas, our ideas, and Biggs’ ideas. As one audience member wrote, this dance not only entertained (and stunned some of the participants) but led us to seriously think through and articulate the problematics of Biggs’ ideas.

A dance of love in educational development was performed by Peter Kandlbinder, Brad Wütherick, Valerie Clifford and, from a distance, Tai Peseta and Susan Wilcox. This dance drew on Stephen Rowland’s (1997) Lover’s Guide to University Teaching. It explored what it would mean to educate “for love” and what it might mean to inspire in our students the same love and passion for the discipline that we experienced in our own learning. The room became especially emotionally charged when participants reflected on Tai’s contribution (in absentia) on what it means when you love your discipline, your academic pursuits, too much. Some participants pointed out the riskiness of a love dance in educational development, while another participant wondered what it might mean to change educating for love to educating with love.

With Gail Wilson and Wendy Green directing some of their steps back in Australia, Kim McShane and Catherine Manathunga staged an intercultural dance between participants who came along to their developers’ trading zone workshop very early on Saturday morning. Exploring the paper written by David Mills and Mary Taylor Huber (2005) about educational development as a trading zone, Cath and Kim began with some quick footwork, inviting reflection on some familiar historical trading zones. A readers’ theatre scenario introduced some of the issues and possibilities that might emerge if we developers re-conceptualise the work of educational development as an intellectual trading zone.

Noting that the earliest encounters between British First Fleeters and Indigenous people in New South Wales were characterised as “improptu dance parties” between strangers (Clendinnen, 2003, p. 8–9), Cath and Kim orchestrated some refreshing square-dancing in disciplinary groups, before brave individuals sallied forth to find a new dance partner and indulge in some intercultural dancing and pedagogical gift-giving. Strangers danced in pairs, sharing pedagogical wisdom and practices, and reflecting on various assumptions and values. Closing the session, the discussant, Mary Taylor Huber stepped into the circle and regaled with us more tales from the (anthropological) trading zone. Participants mentioned how powerfully the session enacted the problematics of the “trading zone”, how quickly everyone in the session was able to share innovative dance moves and how they are still playing over in their heads the contrasting imagery of the “contact zone” and the “trading zone”. The involvement of Mary Taylor Huber, whose work with David Mills had inspired the session, was a special highlight of the session for many participants.

Valerie Clifford invited participants to think about how the disciplines could be encouraged to join the dance of internationalising the curriculum. Allowing samples of interview scripts to be circulated
amongst the participant-dancers, vividly drew out not only the differing reactions of various disciplines to the discourse of internationalising the curriculum, but also the complexities and tensions of qualitative analysis and how different eyes interpret text so differently. Whole new dances are likely to emerge from this energetic discussion.

Anna Jones performed an intriguing roundtable dance that explored the presentation of the Self in academic life. Her dance drew upon the ideas of Erving Goffman to rethink notions of how “the front”, “the team” and “the stage” play out in educational development performances. Participants eagerly joined in this dance, adding their own moves and suggesting a CAD educational development performance at the next ICED in Barcelona.

A number of new or lurking members joined in the CAD dance with enthusiasm and the relief of finding a dancing home. Here are their reflections on the CAD Festival of Ideas:

Elizabeth (Liz) Chapman Hoult: I have been writing in exile for so long. My work on representations of resilience in adult learners in higher education falls between two disciplines – Education and English Literature. This does not give me two homes; it makes me homeless. I chose this path because I sincerely believe that human resilience in learning situations is far too complex and too elusive to be captured and pinned down by the sorts of methods of enquiry and explanations offered by social science. Resilience is constituted in the deep, difficult words that most of us have exiled from mainstream education discourses – love, hope, loss, death and resurrection. I needed to find a language that could cope with those ideas. That’s what poetry provides. Drama offers a mask through which the truth can emerge. Stories matter. This approach has put me in a subversive position in relation to the dominant education research discourses (in the UK at least) because it has led me to challenge some basic assumptions about ways of knowing, ways of writing and research. When I include interviews with real adult learners in my work I use the tools of literary theory to deconstruct them, rather than presenting the “evidence” in a way that would make a social scientist feel comfortable. My opinion that writers such as Willy Russell, David Mamet, George Bernard Shaw and, most of all, Shakespeare, have more to offer a deep understanding of adult learning than any number of social scientific studies, is not a popular one.

I had been in the wilderness for some time – I had set up camp beneath the stars and although I was beginning to reach a point of clarity and truth, it was so lonely. So I went to the ICED conference with realistic expectations. I had almost given up the idea of ever finding a community, a home, in any of the barricaded cities. I was resigned to my lonely desert existence where at least I had the treat of meeting other nomads and even the odd prophet once in a while. I guessed this one would be the same. But from out of the silence and the vast empty space I heard a new sound, of music accompanied by whirling and dancing feet. There was a party going on and they invited me to join it.

The work of the CAD collective is very distinctive for two reasons. Firstly, it is marked by an intellectual confidence and vibrancy that is rare. Members of the group draw on their own scholastic backgrounds, rather than dumping them in an amnesic attempt to join a generic and diluted approach to thinking about teaching and learning in higher education. Catherine Manathunga’s use of post-colonial theory as a way of opening up our understanding of why this happens is very powerful and, as an historian, her analysis of the accounts of migrants and exiles is incisive. Others I met talked with vigour and playfulness about the idea of drama and the theatre as metaphors for teaching and art and music featured strongly in conversations. Since the conference we have shared poetry (yes – poetry!) as a way of understanding the boundaries between the official discourses and what goes on in the margins. Secondly, the group itself is remarkably open and welcoming. This is not the walled citadel of other specialist interest groups. This desert community is an open, generous and fluid one and joining it has given me hope. I have much to learn from them.

Gail Rathbun: The ICED conference in Salt Lake City was the first ICED event I have attended. I go to the US Professional and Organizational Developers Network conference annually. What ICED offered me, as it evolved, was the opportunity to have one-on-one extended conversations with US leaders in professional development in higher education. I have never had that opportunity at POD. But even more energising was the opportunity to have extended contact with the ITL–CAD members, who compelled me to dredge up theories and conceptual frameworks that I spent much, much time with in the past. In the past because there are few around me who are interested in socio-cultural, participatory, and emancipatory perspectives—not to mention the power of metaphor, and the notion that educators are architects of aesthetic experience. I attended the Trading Zones workshop, which was an example of a thoroughly engaging, carefully architected, aesthetic experience. What I will remember from it is the “goodness” and the delight that flowed from the presenters and then from the participants. After reflection, I believe that the wonderfully scripted and acted play that began the workshop was not required to be intentionally connected to the activities that followed. Rather it was meant to produce an effect via juxtaposition. That effect was to induce “flow”, to loosen inhibitions perhaps, and to create and solidify among us a mutual bond from recognising familiar “melodies” we have all heard. I am not sure that I have the talent or the intellectual fortitude (or the time) to actively participate, but I am willing to perform some role in the collective.

For people who would like to visit or join the CAD Collective dance, please go to http://mailman.ucc.usyd.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/itl-cad

References
Catherine Manathunga compiled the article from the many contributors.
Contact: c.manathunga@uq.edu.au
Professional Development Day for New Academic Developers

Late last year, HERDSA(NZ) sponsored a professional development day for new academic developers in Auckland. We scheduled two workshops the day before the national meeting of university staff developers (ASDUNZ), opening up the afternoon session to learning advisers as well. Attendance far exceeded expectations, with more than 30 registering for each session from universities, polytechnics and private training organisations, many far beyond the Auckland region, and not everyone was new!

The morning workshop on “Teaching Observations: Principles and Practice” was facilitated by Adele Graham with assistance from Ian Brailsford from the University of Auckland. Adele is an experienced academic developer who has worked in both Hong Kong and New Zealand. The purpose of the workshop was to engage new academic developers with the “why” and “how” of teaching observations. Given the diversity of the group, participants discussed the implications of being asked to observe in a wide variety of situations – from formal lectures to massage instruction – and for different personal motivations or institutional requirements. Adele shared some principles that underpin her work with teachers when asked to give feedback. Drawing on the work of John Heron, she believes it is important that teachers are empowered by any feedback process and that a good structure is fundamental to this. Central to her approach is the importance of pre-and post-observation discussions at which boundaries and responsibilities on both sides are negotiated.

In the spirit of nurturing an active classroom, workshop participants were given a scenario to work through whereby an academic developer had been asked to observe a relatively inexperienced lecturer without much prior information; small groups had to think of questions, issues or concerns that the developer needed to broach with the lecturer before doing the observation. These were written up on large sheets of paper for other groups to compare with their list. The purpose of the exercise was to remind observers of the need to clarify the purpose of the observation, find out more about the teacher’s approach, and to see if there are any hidden agendas before agreeing to do the work.

In the second half of the workshop, participants focused on strategies for actually doing the observations. Ian – who is an early-career academic adviser with a strong interest in undertaking teaching observations and who had shadowed Adele earlier in the year while she worked with a lecturer – talked about some of the practical issues he faced when observing: when to arrive, where to sit, what and who to look for during the teaching session, how to record what is happening. The final part of the workshop dealt with examples of good practice in writing up a teaching observation report in a practical format and how to handle the de-briefing session itself.

After lunch (provided courtesy of HERDSA(NZ)), the afternoon workshop was entitled “Evaluating our Work as Academic Developers/Learning Advisers”. Barbara Grant, academic developer at the University of Auckland, led the workshop assisted by Alison Kirkness, HERDSA Fellow from the Auckland University of Technology. The session started by exploring exactly what work academic developers and learning advisers do that could be evaluated. What variety! We offer workshops (small group and online), consultations, credit-bearing courses, resource preparation, collaborative research, policy advice, retreats and public forums. Then, after defining evaluation, the participants identified the values they thought they were adding in their work and the values they thought the institution recognised. This discussion brought some of the complexities and contradictions that attend evaluating our work to the fore, such as tensions between mixed or competing agendas (eg between quality and quantity, “fixing” and “developing”) and organisational “ignorance” of what we do.

The group discussed the challenges in evaluation and established criteria for “good evaluation methods” (GEMs). After that, in an interactive group task, they chose a teaching scenario, outlined two different ways to evaluate it, and shared their ideas with other groups. The workshop facilitators modelled the GEMs process by inviting participants to contribute their evaluation of the workshop in a one-minute paper and then enabling them to hear the facilitators’ post-session reflections on these evaluations. Feedback was really good (but then we were still in the room!): participants liked the idea of GEMs and the interactivity. They also appreciated the general insights garnered about the evaluation process. There were good suggestions for things that could be done differently – including providing more time (or less activities) to explore the issues in greater depth and for wider sharing of current practices.

Learning advisers and academic developers all, we enjoyed the opportunity to learn from each other and from local “experts”. The cross-institution collaboration by the facilitators enabled us to benefit from working together with different or more experienced colleagues – a worthwhile form of professional development in its own right. The community of interest that was proposed aims to continue the group discussions in electronic form on Moodle (thanks to Helen Martin at Unitec) and to generate a list of topics for future workshops. Such outcomes testify to the energy and enthusiasm generated by this inaugural event and we hope to hold more.

Compiled by Barbara Grant (The University of Auckland) with Ian Brailsford, Adele Graham and Alison Kirkness

Contact: bm.grant@auckland.ac.nz
A summary of the top stories on higher education from the last three months of Australian Higher Education Supplement (www.theaustralian.news.com.au), Times Higher Education (www.timeshighereducation.co.uk) and the Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com) found that research assessment dominated the higher education press in Australia and the UK. Other themes included: attracting students to higher education; teaching quality; the Australian Budget; university fund-raising; the review of Australian higher education; university staff pay increases; university management and staff plagiarism.

Research Quality Review

Times Higher Education (THE) had a major focus on the move to a metrics-based research assessment system in the UK. In April it reported that a majority of academics fear targets will harm scholarly work yet the funding council seems determined to continue with the new scheme ordering panels to shred all existing RAE records. In May it reported that the Australian experience has shown that institutions bear a large data-gathering burden in research reviews. In June THE reported a warning that blind faith in metrics for research assessment is unfounded. In July, Arts academics expressed fear that metrics will skew the allocation of research funding. Meanwhile in the US, the Chronicle of Higher Education (CHE) reported in March that colleges receiving large amounts of the noncompetitive grants dropped in rankings for federal research money. The Australian Higher Education Supplement (AHES) reported in April that scientists had reservations with hub and spoke plan proposed for research funding. In May it reported that an Australian university announced large-scale teaching and research expansion schemes and in July the AHES warned that the Australian Government’s proposal to measure academic research performance will inevitably result in an unofficial university rankings system.

Attracting students to higher education

In March AHES discussed the high demand for overseas students while THE predicted a drop in local student numbers as UK demographics shift. In March the AHES reported UNSW’s introduction of an education passport to promote Bologna style portable degrees. In March CHE reported that visa restrictions were keeping Iraqi students out of US and in June it questioned the value in US institutions making overseas study mandatory. In April THE reported on the desire to encourage more school leaves to go to university. CHE reported a new system for loans for students in crisis and later discussed the results of their survey that showed the main concern of Deans in the US is affordability. It also reported on student-housing project to attract and retain students. AHES argued that the focus of government polices should be on professions not trades but also reported an expansion in paid internships. In May CHE reported a debate on whether it is necessary to maintain the high level of science literacy in the US. It also discussed the last male-only colleges in the US and THE reported claims that an institutions’ class still bias academic results. In July the AHES reported an accord to bring Chilean students to Australia and the CHE described a consumer satisfaction approach to student services at a US university to attract local students.

Teaching quality

THE focussed on teaching quality over the past three months, reporting a group’s call for an end to the obsession with grades in April and discussing how underestimating the full costs of teaching puts university budgets at risk in May. In June it described how universities are increasingly having to deal with fanciful excuses from students hoping to avoid poor grades and that students infantilised by lecturers are undermining the pursuit of knowledge. In July THE reported that the drive to improve university teaching and reward good teachers is having only limited success in changing practices across the sector. However, it also reported the London School of Economics had moved to give teaching equal status to research following student complaints.

Australian Budget

The budget of a newly elected government focussed discussion in AHES on higher education funding. In March it reported a call to link funding with innovation and community engagement and announced that it would be 2010 before universities are likely to see significant new funds. With the lack of discussion of universities at the 2020 Summit there were low expectations of the budget but after its release AHES reported a surprise $11bn cash injection into the sector. On seeing the budget universities called for all infrastructure funds already promised to be locked in.

University fund-raising

University fundraising was a theme in CHE over the past three months. In March it discussed the charitable donation to a struggling religious college. In April it reported the challenges for the new leadership at University of California and in May how struggling communities turn to Colleges for help with redevelopment. In June CHE reported the success of a major fund-raising campaign and discussed how private-loan reliance by college students is worrying smaller private institutions. The AHES also reported Griffith University defence for accepting Saudi funds in April.

Review of Australian higher education

The Bradley review of higher education was another focus of the AHES. In June it reported that Bradley predicted the quality of university education is set to decline, a view that received general endorsement by the higher education sector. In July AHES reported that substantial political will is going to be required for the Bradley changes to the sector to be implemented and the union was reported to want greater academic freedoms than suggested in the review. In July AHES reported the
establishment of the first US-style system university in Australia

University staff pay increases
In March THE reported some university’s inability to meet pay rises, pensions or inflation costs and in May reported that financially stretched institutions planned to delay any pay rises. In June AHES reported GO8 claims that pay rises will mean staff cuts and that sessional lecturers are already carrying most of the teaching load. In contrast, THE reported a survey that found work conditions for academics are among best available in June.

University management
In March THE reported on an employee survey that gave sector managers low marks and CHE reported that a private College was taking a risk in planned to expand its campus when other colleges are finding repairs and maintenance difficult because of budget tightening. In April CHE reported help being given to Virginia Tech to recover after the gunning incident in April 2007. In June it discussed the proposal for a standardised test to make schools more accountable.

Staff Plagiarism
THE looked at the question of staff plagiarism and reported on anti-plagiarism software being used to check academics work by journal publishers. In July it reported scholars were passing off old work as new to raise their citation counts and the UK Government had established a new integrity office detecting misconduct by research staff.

Contact: Peter.Kandlbinder@uts.edu.au

---

NEWS OF HERDSA MEMBERS

PROFESSOR MARCIA DEVLIN WILL LEAD DEAKIN UNIVERSITY’S NEW HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH GROUP (HERG) FOCUSING ON PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULUM IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY.

GORDON SUDDABY FROM MASSEY UNIVERSITY IN NEW ZEALAND HAS BEEN APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRALASIAN COUNCIL ON OPEN, DISTANCE AND E-LEARNING (ACODE) AND WILL BE SUPPORTED BY A NEWLY ESTABLISHED ACODE SECRETARIAT HOSTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA.
Making a Place:
An oral history of academic development in Australia

Edited by Alison Lee, Catherine Manathunga and Peter Kandlbinder

Contains interviews with

Barbara Falk
Don Anderson
John Powell
David Boud
Peggy Nightingale
Terry Hore & Ian Thomas
Alan Lonsdale
Ernest Roe
Ingrid Moses
Roger Landbeck
Margaret Buckridge
Jackie Lublin

Published by HERDSA

Copies available on line through www.herdsa.org.au/publications

Cost AUD $25 plus post & packing