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"Speaking of which ...": The Intriguing Case of the Spoken Word in Assessment

by Gordon Joughin

I am increasingly convinced that something quite important happens when students speak, rather than write, what they know when they are being assessed. This can happen across a range of formats, including vivas, debates, moots in law, "OSCEs" (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations), class presentations – the forms of oral assessment are almost endless. I know from conducting numerous seminars and workshops contacts that many academics in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK, and Norway share this conviction. Perhaps more persuasive have been the dozens of conversations (including research interviews) with students who have taken time to share their experiences of oral assessment with me.

My interest was first triggered fifteen years ago when a law student told me, in the course of an interview:

> "You think, "I'll just read this book and I'll go (to the exam) and do it like I do an assignments and just write some kind of bull, whether it related to the topic or not". But in the viva you know ... you're going to look a fool ... so you make sure you know what you are saying" (Joughin, 1999, p. 153).

Having to speak to his assessors had clearly triggered a major shift in this student's approach to study. Another law student told me:

> "In an exam you're just a number but the viva's personalised and you're in direct contact with the people who assess you" (Joughin, 1999, p. 153).

By now my interest was well and truly piqued. More students who had completed this mini-viva (see Butler & Wiseman, 1993, for details) made similar comments and it was becoming clear that the viva was not merely changing students' study strategies – it was engaging them in a more personal way with both their discipline and their teachers. I started talking to other students and lecturers, and eventually completed my PhD on students' experience of oral presentations.

The Death and Life of Oral Assessment

Now, 15 years later, oral assessment is alive and well, despite my good Norwegian colleague Stephen Dobson's writing about its "life and death" (Dobson, 2007). This fact was powerfully reinforced for me when visiting the University of Windsor, Ontario in 2010 where I encountered a viva enthusiast in the person of the University President, Dr Alan

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From the Editor

As I looked through the list of articles for this issue I was amazed at the variety of topics and issues in learning and teaching that have come together to make up the content for the issue. Quite fortuitous, I have to say, but very pleasing.

Starting with assessment, which is central to learning and teaching, Gordon Joughin raises questions about the nature of learning that takes place before and during oral assessment and leaves us asking more questions that demand more research.

From there we move on to descriptions of large scale, university wide curriculum development projects at La Trobe and Edith Cowan Universities. It is encouraging to see the efforts that are being made build new curricula based on sound principles and to realise what great team work is involved.

Then we have reports of projects in the disciplines, accounting and quantitative skills in the sciences, followed by a project focusing on the kind of teaching and support needed by students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. All these projects illustrate how academics from across many universities are working together on projects in teaching and learning in ways not seen before. This is one of the great legacies of the work of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) which one hopes can be continued under the new Office of Learning and Teaching.

After focusing on big picture curriculum issues we turn to individual academics and recognise the many HERDSA members who have been honoured by awards from the ALTC. Continuing with that focus on the individual we hear from Ksenija Napan, recipient of a National Teaching Award in New Zealand, about her teaching methods. These contain some novel characteristics, which focus strongly on the student as learner. Finally Deb Clarke from Charles Sturt University writes about a programme designed to help professionals recently appointed as academics understand and feel comfortable with the culture they have joined.

To round everything off at the end of the year enjoy some wit and wisdom collected by our resident philosopher, Ann Kerwin, and smile at the very serious discussion of the work of Smurfs in a Harvard University seminar related by Bob Cannon in his latest "Meanderings".

Once again I am grateful to all those who have generously contributed to HERDSA News in 2011especially those who write regular columns, Ann Kerwin, Peter Kandlbinder, Roger Atkinson, and Bob Cannon. I hope we can all find time to take a pause during the holiday season to be refreshed for another year. I wish you all a happy time.

Roger Landbeck

The HERDSA Weekly E-News

News about HERDSA, forthcoming seminars and conferences, positions vacant, research databases, and news from higher education.

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"Speaking of which ...": The Intriguing Case of the Spoken Word in Assessment

from page 1

Wildeman. His conversion occurred during a two year stint of teaching in Germany where the viva is a staple form of assessment in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. So keen was he on oral assessment that he took me to dinner at his country club for an extended discussion! Over fine Canadian salmon and Ontario wine, Dr Wildeman expounded his belief that a profound transformation occurred when students articulated their knowledge to a senior member of their discipline; that in such "moments of articulation" not only was their understanding confirmed, but their identity as an emerging member of the discipline was being powerfully shaped.

Was this a case of Teutonic romanticism, or did it reveal a penetrating insight into the potential power of the spoken word? I think Dr Wildeman was onto something. Just last week (I am writing this in November 2011) a veterinary science student at The University of Queensland emerged from her final viva and described it like this:

> "I felt like I was treated as a colleague. There was a shift in the relationship. You can have a conversation with a senior lecturer about cases and you can hold your own. It's a shift in our minds: we aren't students any more, we're vets. You do have that experience of having the conversation with people who are now your colleagues as opposed to your teachers. I like that feeling!"

The Power of the Spoken Word

The above examples of oral assessment involved forms of the "viva", short for "*viva voce*". Googlists will recognise Viva Voce as an indie rock group from Portland. The classicists left amongst us also know that the phrase literally translates as "by (or with) the living voice". What makes any kind of assessment "oral" is simply that students speak, rather than write, what they know. The oral component can be, and often is, complemented by other modes of communication – for example a written report, a plan, a physical model, PowerPoint slides (often particularly problematic), interactions with genuine or mock clients – but the essential aspect is the use of the spoken word.

But does the simple act of speaking make a difference? Is the spoken word "living" in a sense that the written word is not? Some certainly think so. Roger Säljö and his colleagues recently noted that "talking and writing are two very different modes of communication that mediate the world differently" (Shoultz, Säljö and Wyndhamn, 2001, p. 213). Plato, not so recently asked: "Now can we distinguish another kind of communication which is the legitimate brother of written speech, and see how it comes into being and how much better and more effective it is?", concluding that this kind of communication, the *spoken* word, "is written on the soul of the hearer with understanding" (Plato, 1973, p. 276). Many students I have interviewed certainly see major differences between writing and speaking. One theology student I interviewed spoke for many students from disparate disciplines when she concluded that "I own the words I speak more than I own the words I write" (Joughin 2008, p. 86). The educational implications of this simple statement would seem to be profound.

Speaking *per se* seems to have an effect, but in most forms of oral assessment, this core element is associated with other significant features, and here the assessment plot thickens: assessors are usually physically present; there is interaction between student and assessors; questions are difficult to predict; the context may be highly authentic; feelings of anxiety or heightened self-awareness are commonly reported. In short, orality is often an invitation to authentic complexity in assessment, not simply an alternative mode of communication.

Oral Assessment: Why Now?

"Authentic complexity" is what many current movements in higher education demand of assessment. If we want to truly know what students know about, what they can do in, and how they are disposed towards their chosen field, at some point we must get them to talk to us! And in preparing to talk to us, many of them will experience a greater depth of engagement with their subjects, with themselves, and with us, than is likely if our interactions are restricted to less personal forms of interaction. At a time when universities are being called on to persuasively demonstrate what their students know and can do as they enter the world of practice, I associate oral assessment with all of the following terms that we have come to know and love so well over the past few years: "threshold learning outcomes"; "program-level outcomes"; "graduate attributes"; "learning standards"; "student engagement". Oh – I almost forgot "competence". Why? Because assessment in this challenging environment requires contextualised performance incorporating a range of communication modes, including the spoken word.

New Media: Ancient Mode

Must oral assessment be face-to-face? In a recent *HERDSA News*, Will Rifkin and his colleagues report on their intriguing New Media for Science project. Here they identified over two dozen types of new media assignments, and when a small sample (13) of colleagues completed a survey of the types they would like to try, nearly all of them nominated assignments with major oral components, including lab report videos and video or audio performances such as a radio show or a YouTube video. In a related paper, Bartle, Longnecker and Davis (2011) have published an extended description of assessment requiring groups of students to develop a podcast to explain a concept in chemistry. Clearly oral assessment has jumped a major hurdle – no longer is it necessary for the audience of an oral presentation to be physically present. This is a space to watch (or to throw ourselves into)!

Validity, Reliability, Fairness, Practicality

Whatever its form and whatever media are used, oral assessment needs to be well designed and fundamental principles of assessment adhered to. Elsewhere Ashraf Memon, Breda Memon and I (2010) have proposed 15 conditions to be met if oral

assessment is to be valid, reliable and fair. We were pleased to see these conditions recently acknowledged by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board in the UK (PMETB 2009). The basic principles underpinning them apply to any form of oral assessment: (1) We must be crystal clear about what is being assessed. (2) Students and assessors alike need to be well prepared for the form of assessment being used. (3) We need to guard against bias, especially bias arising from differential cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

The fourth fundamental condition of good assessment is practicality – many believe oral assessment simply takes too much time. It doesn't have to – I have encountered three-minute interrogations that are marked instantly. On the other hand, as Davis and Karunathilake (2005, p. 294) point out, "any well-planned examination ... is costly in terms of examiners' time and effort. The challenge is finding assessment instruments where the effort spent is educationally 'profitable'." (Davis & Karunathilake, 2005, p. 294). If the oral task is intrinsically engaging, if it calls on students to adopt deep approaches to learning, if it encourages "time on task", and if it provides an otherwise unavailable opportunity to assess particular knowledge and abilities, its "profitability" will soon be apparent.

Theorising Oral Assessment

My Norwegian colleague Stephen Dobson argues for "a more theoretically and empirically founded understanding of the academic viva". The same is needed for most, if not all, forms of oral assessment: while we may be able to consider aspects of oral assessment within existing frameworks of learning and assessment, the uniqueness of the oral form lends it characteristics that are not well understood or conceptualised. While "personal narratives and anecdotal reflections" abound, empirical research and conceptualisation do not. Oral assessment is edgy, it's integrative, it exposes knowledge, and it's personal and engaging – why this is so and how oral forms of assessment can be incorporated efficiently into mainstream university assessment practice demand exploration.

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Gordon Joughin is an associate professor of higher education in the Teaching and Educational Development Institute at The University of Queensland. He has written extensively about learning and assessment, with a focus on oral forms of assessment. He is always keen to hear from, and meet with, colleagues wanting to explore oral assessment and its impact on students and their learning.

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More Resources on Oral Assessment

Paper by Gordon Joughin and Gillian Collom on Oral Assessment (2003)

Oral assessment is increasingly used to assess achievement in a range of disciplines. It is particularly useful in 'authentic assessment', in encouraging good learning, and in countering plagiarism. While many students can experience oral assessment as a powerful form of assessment, it needs to be designed and implemented with particular care in order to avoid pitfalls and maximise benefits.

Download paper from:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id433_oral_assessment.pdf

See also a discussion paper prepared for the Assessment subcommittee of the University of Queensland Teaching and Learning Committee (April 2008).

http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/resources/oral-assessment

ALTC Awards and Citations for HERDSA Members

HERDSA members have been honoured in this year's Australian Learning and Teaching Council Awards for University Teaching Excellence and Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning. HERDSA congratulates our award and citation winners and celebrates their achievements.

Australian Awards for University Teaching Excellence

Dr Debra Bateman

Deakin University, Victoria

Award for Teaching Excellence — Early Career

Dr Clinton Golding

The University of Melbourne

Award for Teaching Excellence — Social Sciences

Professor Amy Kenworthy

Bond University

Award for Teaching Excellence — Law, Economics, Business and Related Studies

Dr Richard Tucker

Deakin University

Award for Teaching Excellence — Physical Sciences and Related Studies

Dr Debra Bateman

Debra is a passionate educator who is creative, critical and committed to providing rich and authentic opportunities for pre-service teachers who will in turn contribute to the education of future generations. She is innovative in her conceptualisation of physical, cognitive and affective learning domains, and playful in the ways that she synthesises theoretical understandings of her field with applied knowledge and disruptive pedagogies. She is focused on her students' needs and learning and on their future identities as teachers. Over her first six years in higher education, Dr Bateman has designed a cutting-edge learning space integrating multiple learning theories, sustaining strong student feedback that affirms her outstanding practice. She is internally and externally recognised as a leading educator, having won a number of awards. She also provides invited consultation across a number of university committees and boards and works with the Australian Council of Deans of Education. Dr Bateman is passionately enthusiastic about teaching and learning and strongly committed to providing equity and access for all students in preparing learners for multiple futures.

Dr Clinton Golding

Clinton is recognised nationally and internationally for "education for thinking". In a 16 year career he has developed and implemented thought-provoking curricula, resources and assessment techniques which result in critical, creative and insightful students. He receives outstanding average student survey scores of 4.8 out of 5, and frequently 5 out of 5. His innovative teaching and learning methods have led to over $400,000 in education partnerships, grants and prizes, 22 refereed publications, four books and over 60 conference presentations. As a result, numerous educational organisations in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore employ his methods, and he has won faculty, university and national teaching awards. Using co-inquiry, questioning, and the reverse engineering of thinking, he has taught or presented to tens of thousands of pre-service, graduate and professional teachers, as well as students from five faculties. Clinton enables students from these diverse backgrounds to be expert thinkers and to educate for thinking.

Professor Amy Kenworthy

Amy is a Professor of Management in the School of Business at Bond University. She teaches in the areas of Negotiation and Organisational Behaviour. Her teaching and research interests are focused on the development and application of service-learning projects and principles as a catalyst for student learning and university-community development. Her teaching philosophy is grounded in the belief that people learn through doing – that concrete experience coupled with active reflection is one of the best approaches to learning. Her overall goal is to stimulate passion and excitement in her students about every subject she teaches as well as

Australian Awards for University Teaching Excellence cont ...

to encourage interest and enthusiasm for life-long curiosity, application and learning. With over 18 years as a service-learning practitioner, author, and consultant, Professor Kenworthy has developed an international reputation as an expert in the domain of service-learning in management education. She consults both nationally and internationally and has an extensive record of publications and presentations in this area. She has won numerous teaching and research awards at the university, national and international levels and is the Founding Director of the Bond University Centre for Applied Research in Learning, Engagement, Andragogy and Pedagogy (LEAP).

Dr Richard Tucker

Through sustained, evidence-based innovation and research, Richard has become an internationally recognised specialist in teaching architectural design and building science. His teaching excellence lies in teamwork, studio-based learning, inclusive learning, flexible delivery, and work integrated learning (WIL). His work has involved eight grant-funded teaching and learning investigations, including five as project leader, resulting in over 30 publications. The outcomes from his scholarship have directly informed teaching improvement, enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. Richard has received the highest ever student evaluation of teaching (SET) scores in his school. Through his teaching and learning leadership, he has initiated and led curriculum renewal that has seen significant improvements in his school's SET scores. Richard has implemented a highly innovative model of WIL, the first use of its type in Australia, and designed multi-institutional self-and-peer-assessment software. Richard's research has improved teamwork learning across the university and in the other institutions he has collaborated with, and has inspired his students to become architects of their own learning. His work has been recognised with an ALTC Citation and a WJC Banks Award for most outstanding teacher at Deakin University in 2007, and the F.E. Crowle Hansen and Yunken AIB Construction Management Teacher of the Year Award in 2010.

Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning

Mr Stephane Bouchoucha

Charles Darwin University

For designing unique approaches to assessment promoting connectedness between a dispersed cohort of students, providing timely feedback and enhancement of peer based critical appraisal.

Dr Carmel Coady

University of Western Sydney

For sustained commitment in enhancing students' mathematical abilities in providing a superior mathematical learning experience by developing and implementing inspirational learning resources.

Professor Judy Currey

Deakin University

For commitment to developing advanced critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork skills in students through teaching excellence in postgraduate critical care nursing courses.

Mrs Janelle Davis

University of Western Sydney

For delivering transparent equitable systems for increasing access opportunities to improve engagement and transition of VET learners to University.

Dr Allan Goody

Curtin University of Technology

For sustained and outstanding contributions to student learning through the preparation and ongoing development of academics as teachers in higher education.

Professor Richard Ladyshewsky

Curtin University of Technology

For the development of authentic approaches to learning in postgraduate business education through the innovative use of elearning, peer coaching, and evidence-based practice

Ms Helen Larkin

Deakin University

For leadership and excellence in curriculum creation and scholarship to develop professional and personal attributes in occupational therapy students.

Dr Kerry Mullan

RMIT University

For awakening a love of French language and culture in students and for proving that learning grammar can be fun!

Ms Marina Nehme

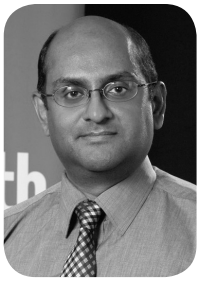
University of Western Sydney

For motivating, inspiring and positively influencing students' learning in Interdisciplinary Law units by an early career academic.

Dr S. Niru Nirthanan

Griffith University

For innovative teaching approaches that integrate scientific theory with nursing practice to engage large classes of academically diverse students insufficiently prepared in prerequisite science knowledge.



Dr Joan Richardson

RMIT University, Victoria

For embedding new technologies in end-user computing curriculum to create "work-ready" students.

Dr Sharon Thomas

University of Tasmania

For sustained empowerment of both undergraduate and postgraduate education students to enhance their own learning and teaching practices.

Dr Jane Warland

University of South Australia

For sustained commitment and enthusiasm in creating innovative learning environments which foster student engagement and promote student learning.

Dr Mario Fernando

University of Wollongong

For engaging commerce students in ethical issues through curriculum and resource development that highlights the affective domain.

The Office for Learning and Teaching

On 16 November 2011, Senator the Hon Chris Evans announced the establishment of the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) to support learning and teaching in higher education.

For details go to

http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Programs/Quality/Pages/OLT.aspx

Watch for article about the Office in the next issue of HERDSA News.

La Trobe University's ***Design for Learning*** Project Transforming Student Lives Through ... Standards?

By Mark Reedman

A cursory glance at any Australian university website will reveal a set of graduate capabilities or graduate attributes. In many cases, the attributes look reasonably similar: writing, speaking, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving, quantitative reasoning/numeracy, and the like. These are the essential employability and life skills which every student is supposed to have achieved by graduation.

A great number of commencing students would cite "getting a job" as one of their main reasons for attending university. According to a report by the Business Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council[1] in 2007:

> Employability skills can be effectively assessed where the specific skill and its application is described in course materials and learning objectives, and where it is clearly located within the context of a given discipline. Good assessment practice is underpinned by curriculum and course design which makes explicit the requirements for employability skills and describes how and at what point in the course they will be addressed.

As a result, many universities in Australia appear to be in the process of reviewing and redesigning curricula in light of TEQSA and the new higher education regulatory framework. In fact, it might be said that "curriculum mapping" and "assessment standards" are now considered "the new black" of Higher Education in Australia. Many institutions are grappling with how to define, evaluate and measure "teaching and learning (T&L) standards".

Under the leadership of Professor Tom Angelo, for the past three years, La Trobe University has been engaged in defining and developing standards for curriculum design, teaching, and learning as part of its own pre-TEQSA curriculum review and renewal program, which has the working title of the "*Design for Learning (DfL)* Project". The *DfL* Project supports La Trobe University's strategic objective #1: to "transform student lives through learning". Specifically, *DfL* is an institution-wide project involving the review and redesign of the undergraduate curriculum, and related student engagement and academic support services.

One aspect of the project has been to map where the graduate capabilities are explicitly taught and evaluated, and the points at which feedback is provided to students in the curriculum of all Bachelor-level courses or programs. This of course is not a new concept and La Trobe is not alone in doing this. However, there is one more dimension to the La Trobe approach to evaluating graduate capabilities that is perhaps less common – learning standards.

Academics have been developing and field-testing faculty-based learning standards for the six university graduate capabilities: writing, speaking, teamwork, critical thinking, creative problem-solving and inquiry/research. These graduate capability learning standards are being defined at three quality levels – Standard Not Met, Standard Met, and Standard Exceeded – and for use at three points in time – Cornerstone (first year), Mid-point (mid-course), and Capstone (final year).

It has not been an easy process. The articulation and agreement of standards for graduate capabilities across broad discipline groups is difficult. However, after much spirited debate, there has been a strong consensus that meaningful standards and assessments of broad graduate capabilities must be located within disciplinary contexts. Despite the complexity of the task, faculties have succeeded in articulating an agreed set of standards for the majority of graduate capabilities.

It is clear that TEQSA will consider both discipline-specific skills and generic skills in their review of learning standards. The approach we have taken at La Trobe should stand us in good stead. The *DfL* Project provides a framework for the university to show evidence of the way graduate capabilities are embedded in the curricula, and to be transparent about the standards of student performance. This will allow a meaningful comparison of expected and achieved standards for those "generic skills" across courses or programs within the same discipline area, or between discipline areas within the University. There is also the potential for the benchmarking of standards between institutions at the three points in time – Cornerstone (first year), Mid-point (mid-course), and Capstone (final year).

Systematic curriculum mapping and educational design of courses or programs brought about as part of the *DfL* Project are intended to embody good practice in curriculum and course design. Many universities have now completed, or are in the process of curriculum redesign. It is clear that prospective employers want evidence that a graduate possesses the discipline-specific skills and knowledge appropriate to the degree studied *and* how well a graduate can perform those generic employability skills. At present, it is easy for a student who graduates to produce an academic transcript which shows the degree awarded and the grades attained. However, it is less clear how an employer might evaluate the graduate's achievement of generic skills or what a graduate might use to demonstrate those capabilities.

Some Australian universities can identify the points within their curricula where these graduate capabilities are being taught and, in a few cases, where they are assessed. However, not one Australian university can yet tell the public whether graduates have

achieved their graduate capabilities; how many graduates have achieved the listed graduate capabilities; or how well those graduates can demonstrate those graduate capabilities. In other words, no Australian university has yet made public their expected quality standards for graduate achievement of graduate capabilities, or their performance record in terms of overall student achievement of the outcomes. La Trobe University plans to be the first Australian university to answer those key questions and in doing so, provide employers and students with evidence of how well a graduate can demonstrate graduate capability outcomes, and make those expected standards public.

For further information about *Design for Learning*, visit the website: http://www.latrobe.e du.au/ctlc/dfl/index.html

Mark Reedman is the Design for Learning Project Manager at La Trobe University

Endnote

1. Business Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council. (2007). *Graduate employability skills.* Melbourne: Business, Industry and Higher Education Collaboration Council.

President Update November 2011

By Shelda Debowski

Returning to the role of HERDSA President after two years absence has been a fascinating experience. On the one hand, it was very pleasing to see the consolidation and growth that the recent executive has achieved, building on the solid foundations from past committees and adding its own innovations. On the other hand, there is the excitement of moving into new territory as the sector continues to evolve to meet new challenges and expectations. Australia has certainly shifted in its higher education foundations and priorities over the last two years. The demise of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC), establishment of the Office of Learning and Teaching in DEEWR, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency and the Excellence in Research Australia has created a very dynamic sector that is still recasting itself to fit the new parameters.

In this dynamic context, HERDSA has a potentially large role to play. Your new executive met last month to build its strategy for the coming two years. With a largely new committee, we have taken the time to induct our members into the policies and processes that have previously been established and consolidated. There is a strong recognition that the committee needs to operate at two levels: building the ongoing legacy that has been developed over many years, and looking for new and innovative ways to support our diverse membership and the sector at large. While many of the portfolios have continued from the previous executive, we have established a stronger emphasis on early career academics. This is an area that requires increasing support as the desirability of being an academic decreases - as a recent study by Richard James and his associates has highlighted. (See: *The Academic Profession in Transition*, 2011. Available at: http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/bexley_docs/The_Academic_Profession_in_Transition_Sept2011.pdf) The committee also reviewed the HERDSA constitution and we will be bringing that to you to seek ratification. As a forty year old constitution, there was a need to tighten up a few areas and acknowledge the way processes have shifted with the advances in technology.

A key initiative for the incoming HERDSA executive is the oversight of a portion of the ALTC legacy. We were fortunate in being granted some funding to provide facilitation, advocacy and dissemination around teaching and learning scholarship and research. We met by teleconference today to map out Phase 1, which will focus on critically reviewing the current knowledge that has been generated through Australian learning and teaching scholarship and research. This preliminary phase will allow us to harness the knowledge that has been accrued and to also identify the knowledge and research gaps that could be addressed in future research. This is a very exciting initiative and melds well with HERDSA's long-standing focus on higher education research and scholarship. Our approach will also complement the work of other groups such as ASCILITE, CADAD and many other networks. There will be more on this initiative through our website, and a call for Expressions of Interest to conduct this consultancy role will be opened up shortly.

For now, I hope you find some time to enjoy a space with family, friends and some creative pursuits before we move into another busy and productive 2012.

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Curriculum 2012 and Beyond: Enabling the Student Learning Journey

By Marguerite Cullity, Terry de Jong and Fiona Wright

Introduction

Higher education curriculum has shifted from a traditional curricula of "knowing a disciplinary area" to an emerging curricula of students engaging with knowledge and transform their thinking. An undergraduate curriculum is an active process that engages students in learning how to research information, problem solve, judge knowledge, communicate, and create and apply knowledge.

Edith Cowan University (ECU) has designed an active and emergent undergraduate curriculum: *Curriculum 2012 and Beyond,* which will evolve with the advances made in disciplinary areas, knowledge, research, learning and teaching. It is responsive to students, community and industry partners.

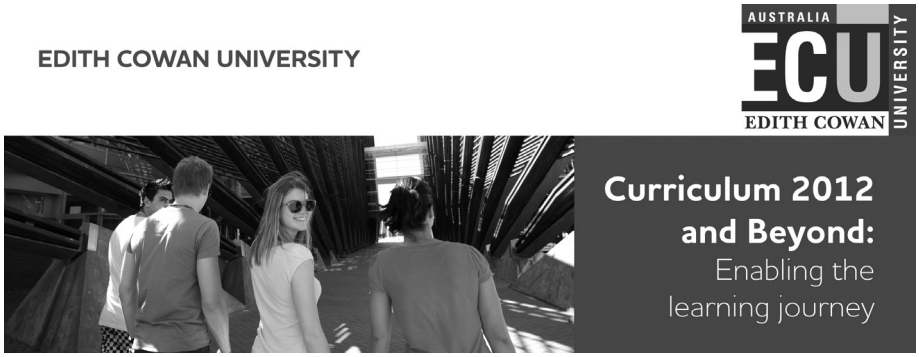
Curriculum 2012 and Beyond is an adventurous project. In March of 2011 the project was awarded $6.9 million from the Australian federal government's Structural Adjustment Fund, with the money being used to:

> transform ECU's curriculum and the way it is delivered, providing a consistent whole-of-university approach to learning and teaching that meets the needs of the students, the community at large and prospective employers by better preparing graduates for the world of work and communities they serve.

This paper locates Curriculum 2012 and Beyond within the context of ECU and details its features, implementation plan, and proposed resources and evaluation.

ECU: Responsive to a Changing Higher Education Environment

ECU has a long standing focus on learning and teaching in higher education. It is a large multi-campus institution serving metropolitan and regional communities in Western Australia and international offshore campuses. The University was formed from an amalgamation of local teaching colleges with a history dating back to 1902. It was granted university status in 1991. ECU's target undergraduate market is young and job-focused (i.e., 88% of commencing students are under 30 years of age).



Recent federal government higher education reports stress the need to increase and diversify the undergraduate and graduate population, with the aim of investing in and building "a stronger, fairer and more productive Australia" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p. 2; Bradley, Noonan, Nugent & Scales, 2008). To meet this aim the government has released major reforms designed to advance learning, teaching and research; improve access to higher education for all able students; and fund students who experience financial hardship. In addition, an uncapped demand-driven system will exist from 2012; this reform will increase institutional competitiveness for student places.

In response to an internal desire to advance learning, teaching and assessment across ECU and address federal government reforms, the University has developed a broad curriculum framework known as *Curriculum 2012 and Beyond*. The aim of Curriculum 2012 and Beyond is to:

> Develop *a broad coherent plan for all undergraduate courses at ECU, one that promotes and enables: employability, a student focused environment, and learner-centred teaching for a diverse range of students. Active learning opportunities are designed to graduate knowledgeable, professional and valued citizens who engage critically with, and contribute to, the future and sustainability of their local, national and international communities.*

Curriculum 2012 and Beyond (hereon referred to as Curriculum 2012) is designed to meet the needs of the institution, government, industry partners and our communities. It was informed through consultations with staff across the University and some interested students. In addition, national and international scholars conducted workshops for staff regarding Constructivist learning, teaching and assessment practices.

Curriculum 2012 places students first and takes a strength-based approach to learning, teaching and assessment. Students enrol at university with existing talents and capabilities, and, accordingly, the curriculum framework includes "features" and "principles" that will enable them to develop as informed and self-directed learners.

Features and Principles of Curriculum 2012 and Beyond

Curriculum 2012 has three features (i.e., characteristics) that are distinctive to ECU.

It also highlights principles (i.e., guidelines) and practices for staff when they plan, design, chart, deliver, monitor and reflect on the learning, teaching and assessment that occur in their units and courses (see Figure 1).

Feature 1, "employability oriented", focuses on preparing graduates for the world of work and lifelong learning. *Feature 2,* "student focused environment", targets ways to better enable and sustain successful learning in a culture of care and ease of transition to and from university. *Feature 3,* "learner-centred teaching", is based on the Constructivist approach and, therefore, considers students' social and educational backgrounds and their learning goals, needs and capabilities.

ECU students are an active component of the curriculum. They work with staff and each other to attain an educated awareness of personal and social responsibility and develop the whole person (i.e., cognitive, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural self). Students are involved in Knowing, Doing, and Being (Delors, 1998; Barnett, Parry, & Coate, 2001).

The Student Learning Journey: A Developmental Approach

Central to Curriculum 2012 is the notion of a "learning journey"; a university-wide developmental and cohesive approach to learning, teaching and assessment (see Figure 2). The interactive and developmental nature of Curriculum 2012 aims to: incrementally advance ECU undergraduates' theoretical- and practical-knowledge, transform their thinking and practice, and develop the whole person.

Implementing and Resourcing the Curriculum

Curriculum 2012 has two implementation phases:

- "Phase One: Course alignment with the framework" was completed in early 2011.
- "Phase Two: Embedding Curriculum 2012 features, principles and practices into institutional infrastructure and course delivery".

Phase One was successfully completed in October of 2011. It involved course coordinators in mapping (Step 1) and aligning (Step 2) course-based learning, teaching and assessment to Curriculum 2012 features and selected principles. Specially organised mapping tools assisted course coordinators to explore course alignment to Curriculum 2012 and plan units that need revising.

In September 2011, ECU learning designers checked course alignment to Curriculum 2012 and gave feedback to respective course coordinators. Faculty reports were consolidated into one report and tabled for endorsement at two University executive meetings.

The main aim of Phase Two (in progress) is to develop and embed the Curriculum 2012 philosophy, features and principles into the University's infrastructure and undergraduate programmes. The Curriculum 2012 project management

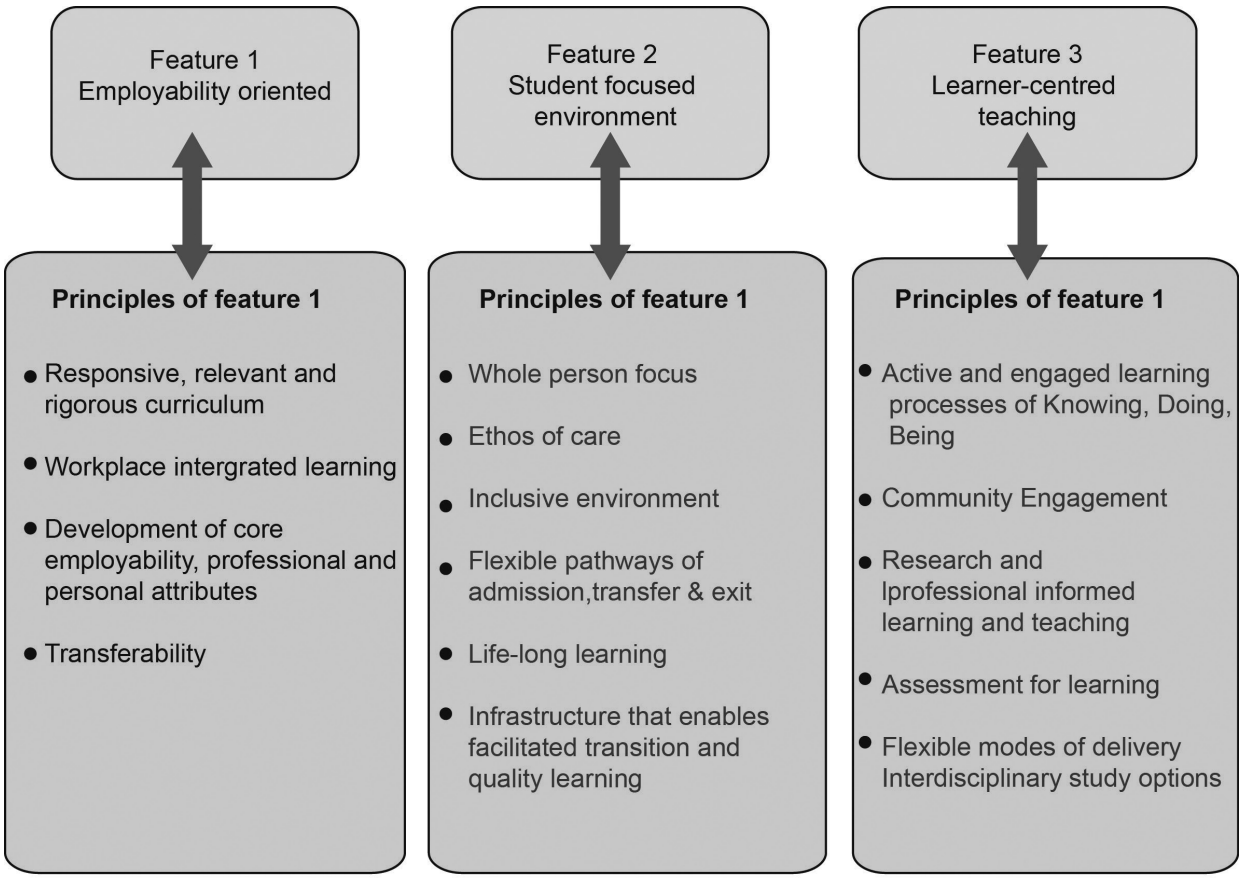


Figure 1. Curriculum 2012 and Beyond Features and Principles

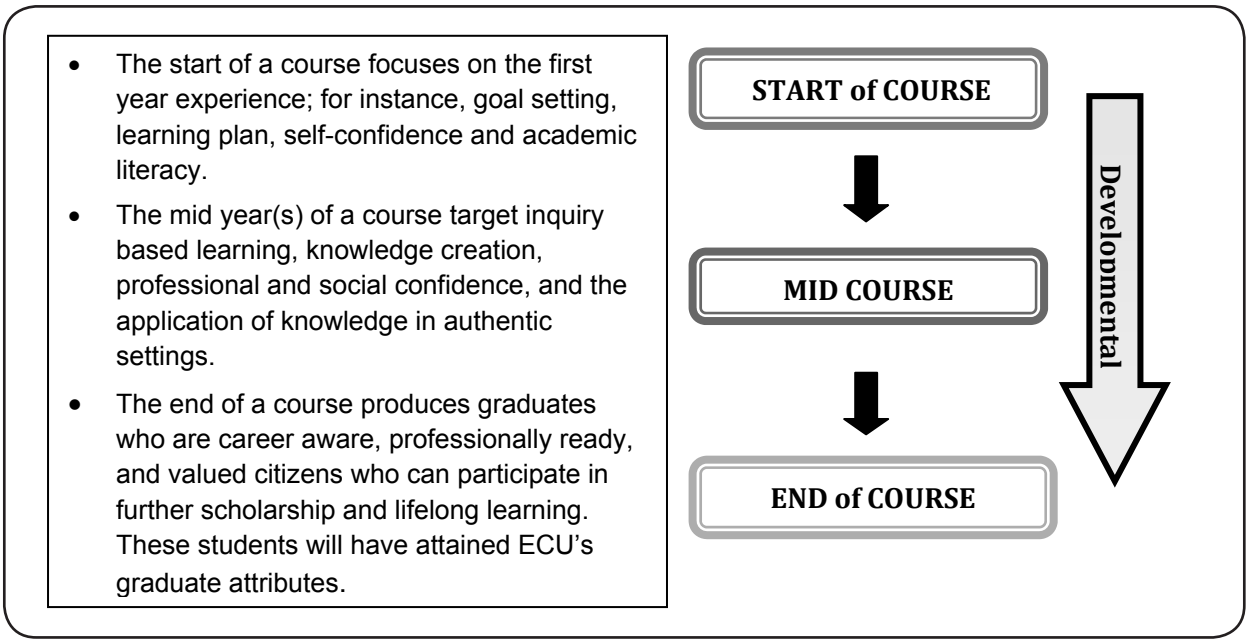


Figure 2. Curriculum 2012 and Beyond: A developmentally organised curriculum

team works closely with the University staff development office (Centre for Learning and Development) in designing appropriate professional development (PD) resources for staff as they implement Curriculum 2012 into their courses. Phase Two will enable relevant and engaged student learning to be implemented into course design, with the aim of achieving Curriculum 2012 outcomes, including generic and disciplined-based graduate attributes. This will occur over a three year period (2011 to 2014).

The University will provide resources and appropriate learning spaces that enable students to engage with each other, with staff, and with learning where they develop a sense of community and belonging. There will be dedicated support services that assist learning on campus, off-shore and online as well as opportunities for mentoring with other students. These resources will be constructed to meet student and staff needs.

Evaluating the Curriculum

A senior research officer has joined the Curriculum 2012 project management team and will evaluate:

- Ways in which Curriculum 2012 has enabled the student experience, in particular student learning and the achievement of intended generic and discipline based graduate outcomes.
- What is enhancing and impeding Curriculum 2012 in meeting its aims?
- How can these findings improve Curriculum 2012 and impact on the student experience and graduate outcomes, in particular sustainability of good practice?

It is proposed that the continued evaluation of Curriculum 2012 and Beyond will allow ECU to meet the overall aim of the project: "to enable relevant and engaged undergraduate student learning which achieves intended generic and disciplined-based graduate outcomes".

For information about Curriculum 2012 and Beyond contact: Marguerite Cullity, 08 6304 5570, <m.cullity@ecu.edu.au>

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Dr Marguerite Cullity is Project Manager of the Curriculum 2012 and Beyond project. Marguerite has a child and adult teaching background and, also, extensive education and qualitative research experience. She has assisted to advance child and adult student outcomes including students with English as a second language background.

Associate Professor Terry de Jong is Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Education and Arts. He is Project Leader of Curriculum 2012 and Beyond, and coordinator of the Internationalising Curriculum project. Terry is an active researcher and post graduate research supervisor. He provides leadership in teaching and learning scholarship and developing the quality of teaching and learning practice in the School of Education, Faculty, and University as a whole.

Ms Fiona Wright is the Communications Development Officer for Curriculum 2012 and Beyond. She has a journalism, and online web marketing background. Fiona has worked in higher education in South Africa and Australia as a research assistant and an online web editor.

The Dance of Science and Mathematics in Higher Education: the Quantitative Skills (QS) in Science Project

By Kelly E Matthews

Every discipline has a shared history, usually stories of influential people or defining pieces of work. In the Life Sciences, Darwin would be one of the key shapers of the discipline with *The Origin of Species* being an example that shifted the field from infancy into childhood. Perhaps we could think of his work as a necessary step in science, just as crawling precedes walking. Despite the profound impact of his work, Darwin considered himself deficient in mathematics and felt this affected his practice as a scientist. In his day, mathematics was well established as a distinct discipline dating back to the Greeks, with Euclid in particular documenting and naming the discipline. While science was learning to crawl, mathematics was already running and dancing. In the past two decades science has been learning to run, catalysed by advancements in technology, which have resulted in our ability to collect data in ways not imaginable to Darwin. In today's world, science and mathematics are obviously interconnected with science finally learning to dance with mathematics as its partner.

Gone are the days of Darwin. The big questions facing society (climate change, genomics, poverty, human health), the avalanche of data available and the wealth of scientific knowledge, represent profound shifts leading to new ways of doing science. For example in conservation biology, the impact of over-fishing has been enhanced immeasurably by the ability to model populations using mathematics. Much of this work has gone in to the formulation of marine protected areas on the Great Barrier Reef. As we look to the future, science will increasingly rely on mathematics. The implications for how we teach science are equally as profound. The science Higher Education community is only recently coming to grips with the rapidly changing nature of modern science and need to become leaders in how these changes in science are translated into how we teach the future generation of scientists. There is little doubt that science students will need greater levels of quantitative skills (QS), that is, the ability to apply mathematical and statistical thinking and reasoning in science.

In a recent workshop of 20 scientists from diverse fields teaching in the undergraduate science program, we focused on a single question: what quantitative skills are we teaching our students? What we learned is that many felt as Darwin did, deficient in mathematics, while recognising its essential nature for being a modern scientist. The consensus that came from deliberations was that students today require ever more sophisticated levels of QS to be competent in the world of modern science. It was also apparent that we need to continue working on how QS are articulated to students and staff, and work together to create better links across the units in first year and across year levels such that QS are systematically built across the majors in the program.

The *Quantitative Skills (QS) in Science* project seeks to address the challenge of embedding QS in undergraduate science programs, and brings together an impressive team representing core stakeholder groups including STA (previously FASTS), ICMI, MERGA, HERDSA and ACDS. Acronyms aside, the message is that key academic and professional organisations acknowledge the importance of QS in science, recognising the issue represents a national and international challenge facing undergraduate science programs. Our project team argues that the movement to transform science education, to reflect the interdisciplinary and quantitative nature of modern science, requires a "whole of program" approach with QS as an essential component of any undergraduate science curriculum. However, institutions continue to struggle to integrate QS across undergraduate science programs. Workshops, like the one described above, fit into a range of strategies we have undertaken in the past year to contribute to our ultimate goal of enhancing student learning outcomes in the sciences.

Our website at www.qsinscience.com.au offers a concise overview of our project aims, outcomes and activities. Our focus is at the program-level, exploring and sharing information on how science undergraduate curricula are designed to include QS. We started by identifying Australian institutions at which QS had been identified as an outcome of the science degree program. Next, we contacted Associate Deans (Teaching and Learning) or equivalent in science and requested their agreement for us to visit them, to discuss QS with them and academic staff teaching into the science program. We received 100% agreement, indicating yet again the importance of this topic!

In presenting the project outcomes to date, we have adopted a case study approach, based on a model for educational change from the work of Michael Fullan (2007). The project has been underway for one year, and there are approximately 11 case studies on our website highlighting how Australian science curricula have been designed to build QS. In addition, we have selected two international universities as international comparative case studies.

Our findings thus far are exciting and promising. Of course, we are still creating case studies and analysing a wealth of interview data so conclusions will be teased out more thoughtfully as the project continues. However, some key emerging findings can be organised around two themes.

1. There is a growing movement around QS in science. The Australian science Higher Education community has QS on its radar and there is a range of activity occurring within individual institutions and at a national level. QS have been acknowledged broadly as an area requiring action. Nationally, the recently articulated *Threshold Learning Outcomes* for Science, endorsed by the Australian Council of Deans of Science, highlights the underpinning role of QS for science graduates. Many universities are articulating learning outcomes in science to drive curriculum development that implicitly and explicitly mention QS. A quick glance of our online case studies will highlight the diversity of curricular structures and approaches being implemented to build QS.

2. Evidencing QS in Science needs urgent attention. Our initial analysis from Australian case studies has identified a substantial gap in thinking about undergraduate science curricula. In the institutions participating in our study, only 10% of the focus on building QS in science was directed towards assessing or evaluating student learning of QS, either at a unit level or a program level. The implications are huge, given the recent creation of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) with a keen focus on learning outcomes and how these are evidenced. In the coming year our project will present a case study with a robust QS in science assessment and evaluation strategy that includes data on both performance and student perception. Evidencing QS learning outcomes, given the vast array of curricular approaches we have documented in Australia, is an exciting opportunity to gather evidence on varying approaches and how they influence student learning. We hope to act as a catalyst for future projects, in the area of evidencing QS learning outcomes, as the work to build QS in science will extend far beyond our 2012 project completion date.

Moving into Year Two of the *QS in Science* project, we hope to further engage the Higher Education community to make a meaningful contribution to how science is considered and taught at the undergraduate level. Our team has planned several dissemination activities; here we would like to highlight two. The first centres around face to face events: our *QS in Science* symposium which will be held under the auspices of the Australian Council of Deans of Science in July 2012 and planned workshops at the Australian Conference of Science and Mathematics Education in September. For the second dissemination activity, we will seek academic articles for inclusion in a special edition of a journal on the topic of QS in science.

For science, as a discipline, to advance, practitioners will require increased mathematical competence. Our belief is that to prepare science graduates in the undergraduate learning environment, science and mathematics need reacquainting. Our project proposes QS as a core skill set that future scientist will require, which should then be explicitly threaded throughout the curriculum and evidenced to inform on-going curricular reforms. Our findings to date highlight the fact that universities in Australia are adapting a myriad of approaches and we must capitalise on the opportunity to gather evidence to inform the sector.

Visit our website, www.qsinscience.com.au, for more information. If you would like to keep up with the project activities and findings, email v.simbag@uq.edu.au to be added to our email list for our monthly *QS in Science* Update.

Reference

Fullan, M. (2007). The new meaning of educational change (4 ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

The QS Project team: Kelly Matthews, Peter Adams, and Vilma Simbag – The University of Queensland;

Shaun Belward – James Cook University;

Carmel Coady and Leanne Rylands – University of Western Sydney;

Kaci Thompson – University of Maryland; Nancy Pelaez – Purdue University;

Mark Parry is a communications consultant with Parryville.com

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Resources from Professor Mick Healey, HE Consultant and Researcher

Available at http://www.mickhealey.co.uk/resources

Bibliographies

1. Active learning and learning styles: a selected bibliography
2. Discipline based approaches to supporting learning and teaching: a selected bibliography
3. Linking research and teaching: a selected bibliography
4. Pedagogic research and development: a selected bibliography
5. The scholarship of teaching and learning: a selected bibliography
6. The scholarship of engagement: a selected bibliography
7. Dissertations and capstone projects: a selected bibliography

Case Study Collections

1. Linking discipline-based research with teaching
2. Engaging students in research and inquiry

Research Instrument

The student experience of teaching, research and consultancy: a questionnaire

Preparing for the Brave New World of Higher Education

By Mark Freeman, Bryan Howieson, Phil Hancock, Anne Abraham, Brendan O'Connell, Paul De Lange and Kim Watty

A stronger focus on student achievement of academic standards is inevitable with the brave new world of higher education nearly upon us. The perfect storm includes: expanding and widening participation, or 40/20 in short, to improve national productivity; demand driven funding for domestic undergraduates; a single national regulator that has strong powers; some academics feeling the pressure to pass substandard work from international full-fee paying students; more and tighter performance indicators in Compacts for publically funded universities; and international trends. In particular, there is a desire for comparability of educational systems built around common tests of generic learning outcomes and disciplinary learning outcomes.

The Accounting discipline is seeking to proactively prepare for this brave new world. In 2010, nationally-agreed thresholds for accounting graduates were developed under the national Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project. The latter included learning standards built around accounting judgement, knowledge, application skills, self-management and communication and teamwork. Our project, appropriately titled *Achievement Matters: External Peer Review of Accounting Learning Standards,* is seeking to collaboratively develop and implement a national model of expert independent peer review for benchmarking achieved learning outcomes against nationally-agreed learning standards.

External peer reviewers, rather than common tests which were another option proposed under the TEQSA teaching and learning standards discussion paper, provide evidence about the achievement or otherwise of standards. While academics are the most likely contenders as peer reviewers, our project also involves engaging practising accountants in interpreting the threshold learning standards and in calibrating understandings using sample student work. Importantly, reviewers are also providing feedback on the validity of the assessment task to allow students to demonstrate the learning standards. Improvements in assessment practice have already arisen from these professional development opportunities. Shared understandings of standards are emerging for project participants. This and similar initiatives in project team institutions are the beginnings of capacity building for assessment literacy and practice within accounting which is expected to flow on to other business higher education disciplines.

In many ways the activities within this project emulate peer review of research. Just as double blind external peer review involves those with relevant expertise in research, assessment task requirements and completed student work are de-identified before anonymous review by two experienced peers from another anonymous participating institution. Just as academics research and author in niche areas but must submit to a journal with a particular focus, participating institutions choose to submit for review diverse assessment tasks they consider demonstrate achievement of a particular national threshold learning outcome. Following the pilot cycle which is establishing the process using the threshold learning standard for written communication for bachelor and coursework masters degrees in accounting, four further cycles will be played out where other thresholds will be the focus. To ensure participants application of national threshold standards are calibrated, assessment moderation activities have been an important part of the process.

The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), who established and attracted professional bodies into the project, hopes that what is started in accounting can be rolled out to other business disciplines. To prepare for the latter, the ABDC is currently sponsoring the next business discipline, namely marketing, to set learning standards. Funding from DEEWR (under the program grant scheme previously administered by ALTC) has also recently been added. This has enabled the project to be extended to 3 years and assisted in expanding from the current ten universities involved in the project to potentially, all other private and TAFE-sector providers of accounting bachelor and coursework master degrees.

Those interested in learning more about the project can contact any of the project team members which include Phil Hancock[1] and Mark Freeman[2] (co-leaders), Anne Abraham[3], Paul De Lange[4], Bryan Howieson[5], Brendan O'Connell[4], Kim Watty[6] .

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Targeting Effective Teaching and Support of Students From Low Socioeconomic Status

By Marcia Devlin

The federal government targets an increase in the number and proportion of students from low socioeconomic status (LSES) participating in higher education within the next decade. However, following recruitment, there is a need to focus on retention and success and enhancing the learning and experiences of students from LSES in Australian higher education. Our current national project titled, *Effective teaching and support of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds: Resources for Australian higher education,* will contribute to enhancing the learning and experiences of students from LSES in Australian higher education. It focuses on effective approaches to teaching and supporting students who come to university with greater diversity in preparedness and in social and cultural capital. The findings will be applicable to a range of higher education contexts and to enhancing the experience of all students, irrespective of background.

Originally funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council, the project is now overseen by the Learning and Teaching Excellence Branch of the Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The project team comprises myself, Professor Sally Kift (QUT), Professor Karen Nelson (QUT) and Ms Liz Smith (CSU). Project support is provided by Deakin colleagues Dr Jade McKay and Ms Juliana Ryan. Dr Maureen Bell is providing project evaluation and the reference group is an international group of experts in the area.

Interviews with staff and students at universities are nearing completion and these interrogate existing expertise within the Australian context where it is already concentrated. This rich qualitative data will underpin the outcomes of the project.

The research also includes a review and synthesis of relevant peer-reviewed literature and an environmental scan of the available evidence of curricular and co-curricular initiatives that contribute to the effective engagement and learning of students from LSES backgrounds.

The project will generate a new, research-based, integrated national resource. It will comprise five interrelated sets of materials and exemplars, all of which will be made available to the sector via the project website:

(a) A conceptual framework relevant to the Australian context;

(b) Advice for policy makers and teaching and learning leaders;

(c) Practical guidelines for academic staff;

(d) Materials to support professional development; and

(e) A repository of effective policy, programs and practice.

The conceptual framework has been partly documented and published (see Devlin, 2011).

In addition to a national launch and promotion of the project outcomes in mid 2012, a continual dissemination program incorporates the involvement of multiple learning and teaching leaders and practitioners throughout the project.

If you would like to contribute to the project, we warmly invite you to visit our project website at: www.lowses.edu.au and to get in touch with a member of the project team.

Reference

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Professor Marcia Devlin is the Chair of Higher Education Research at Deakin University and a member of the HERDSA Executive.

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Ako Aotearoa. The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, New Zealand

http://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa

See the extensive range of resources for teaching and learning.

For a report on the National Award Winners for 2011 see:

http://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ako-aotearoa/news/excellent-teachers-inspiring-learner-success-0

How do I Teach?

By Ksenija Napan

Editors Note. After the Teaching Excellence Awards had been announced a colleague of Ksenija's contacted me to say she thought that Ksenija would be interested in writng an article for HERDSA News. I got in touch with Ksenija and this is the result. I think it is a most unusual way of describing teaching and one which will be of great interest to readers. One of the well known characteristics of a good teacher is that she cares about students and this is obviously true about Ksenija.

I was over the moon when I received the AKO Aotearoa Teaching Excellence Award Being a teacher might be considered similar to being a parent; you are noticed when things turn sour, but rarely when your children are thriving and the whanau (extended family) is in good spirits. Regarding my teaching, I certainly cannot evaluate my pedagogy / andragogy to be "right" or "wrong", but I know that I do things differently and all I do is always reflective of the ***context*** of a specific class I teach. However, I was not aware of this until my students persistently pointed it out to me. Upon receiving exceptional evaluations year after year, I started inquiring, "What exactly do I do differently?" They told me that I come ***prepared,*** give ***choices***, ***quickly respond*** to e-mails and assessments, ***know my subject*** and ***inspire*** them to ***do their best***. I could not believe my ears – all these are merely foundations of effective teaching, but perhaps I should attend to their comments more closely. Perhaps we academics get carried away with sophisticated theories and constructs and as a result, forget about the basics. To put it simply – I care and I love my job. Having a very low tolerance for boredom, I take the Co-creative Inquiry approach which is underpinned with seven basic qualities. Each quality is accompanied with continuous inquiry that goes on either in my head or in a reflexive dialogue with colleagues and students.

These qualities emerged as being essential in my practice but not exclusive.

They manifest in various ways and I discovered that when I attend to these qualities, they tend to engender integrity, coherence, responsibility, students doing their best, more curiosity, love for learning and cooperation ... all useful traits for bringing forth the world ...

Reference

Chickszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity-Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention,* New York: HarperCollins.

Ksenija Napan is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Practice, Faculty of Social and Health Sciences, Unitec, New Zealand

Ksenija's passion and interest is in inquiry learning and she developed an approach called Academic Co-creative Inquiry where students co-create the content and the process of their study which involves a lot of peer learning, peer and self assessment. Please do not hesitate to contact Ksenija if you would like to learn more about the method.

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Quality	Corresponding questions
Context	Is my class a safe place and how do I know that? Which conscious activities do I undertake to make it a safe place? How students contribute to it? How do I convey my passion and interest for the subject I teach? Do I know my students' names? Can I pronounce them well? Am I interested in them? What are my most common criticisms about my students? What are their strengths? Do students appear to enjoy learning? What do I think they like the most about my class? What is interesting about my class? How is it special? What students remember at the end of it? Which processes contribute to creating a learning community in my classroom? How many students do their best? How come? How students contribute to make it their own? Is my course challenging enough? Do my students appear to be bored? Would I like to be a student in my class? Why or why not?

Flow[1]	Have I ever noticed the flow in my classroom? What happened? Did anybody else notice it? How do I manage and encourage curiosity in the classroom? What brainstorm activities do I enjoy? What activities my students enjoy the most? How do we engender curiosity? What is the most interesting part of the subject I teach? What excites me? When am I most creative? How do I express my creativity? How students express their creativity in classroom discussions, assignments and presentations?
Choice	What academic requirements, proposed by my academic institution are non-negotiable? What academic requirements, proposed by my academic integrity are non-negotiable? What is negotiable about my course? How is flexibility manifested in my course? Which choices do I make to make the course different each year? What do I believe about choices in academic work? Which choices do students have in terms of process, content and assessment in my course? How important is the ability to make a choice in my students' future profession?
Trust	How does trust manifest in my class? Does the content of my course require a level of trust between students themselves and between students and lecturers in order to learn better? How can trust be ignored in academic environments? How can trust between students be encouraged? Do we have "us and them" culture within my department? How does it manifest? Are students treated as colleagues? Do they need to do something to deserve this status? How is respect manifested within my department? How do I do it? Do I see my colleagues doing it? Do I notice when students show trust?
Relevance	How will learnings from this particular course shape my students' future practice? How is the content of my course related to what students do or are planning to do? How much of my and students' practice is integrated in the course? How often practitioners contribute to my course? How is mutual learning promoted – how much students learn from one another? What are my students' special skills and abilities and how do they manifest them in the classroom and in their work environment? Are students aware of the relevance of this course?
Integration	How do I see education having a transformational potential? How are the values, skills, knowledge and beliefs integrated? How do I cater for diversity in my classroom? How is students' prior knowledge acknowledged and utilised? How are theory, practice and experience integrated? Do we talk about purpose and meaning of what we learn?
Integrity	How do I act with integrity and how I teach my students to do so? Is integrity teachable? Is the course I teach compatible with my personal beliefs? Are beliefs something people should talk about? Why or why not? How personal beliefs influence professional practice? With whom can I talk when having an ethical dilemma? How can I manage my power and not impose my beliefs on students?

Footnote

1. According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996) flow is the optimal experience which often involves painful, risky, difficult activities that stretches the person's capacity and involved an element of novelty and discovery and in his research respondents described it as a feeling when things were going well as an almost automatic, effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness.

Academic Tribes: Fashioning a Professional Identity in the Academy

By Deb Clarke

We all join tribes. Whether it be the Saturday morning coffee club, the local netball team, or the church choir, our identity is shaped by our tribe. Learning the rules of engagement in a particular tribe may be challenging and can require new members to (re)negotiate their identity. For academics recruited from the professions, learning to "be" an academic may present as a challenge to their sense of professional self. For the new academic, the tasks of navigating the tribal landscape, the discipline cultures and the assumed customs and language of the academy can be overwhelming. In a competitive environment that values research capacity and output, and teaching quality, assuming a central position in an academic tribe is a high stakes goal.

As a means to ensure a systematic approach to assisting new academics to undertake a seamless orientation to the expectations and territories of the tribes of the academy, all probationers at Charles Sturt University (CSU) enrol in an eight credit point one session subject *EEL409 Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*. The subject aims to sequentially scaffold new academics' learning in their workplace, and provide a scholarly community of practice, in which a (re)fashioned professional identity may be rehearsed and refined. The initial subject assessment requires the new academic to create a Blog posting that describes their professional background and motivations for joining the academy; their learning and teaching context; and their learning and teaching philosophy. This assessment allows them to explore the context of CSU and articulate their learning and teaching role within their particular discipline tribe.

As tribes share common language, rituals and customs, *being included* necessitates "learning the lingo" of the tribe. In order to engage in dialogue with tribe members, a further assessment in the subject entails constructing a dictionary of learning and teaching metalanguage. Terms such as pedagogy, blended learning, problem based learning, and constructive alignment are defined using i) scholarly literature, ii) academics' own definitions, and iii) examples of these terms in their learning and teaching practice.

To create further opportunities for new academics to be immersed in tasks that authentically represent their work in the academy, the subject draws on the principles of work based learning. The final assessment requires academics to design and implement a work based learning project. The aim of the project is to modify aspects of a subject to enhance student learning outcomes. At the completion of the subject, academics are invited to complete an online evaluation questionnaire and participate in focus interviews with the subject coordinator.

For those academics newly recruited from the professions, positioning themselves in the tribes of the academy requires an element of self reflection and an emotional openness to (re)fashioning their professional identity. Participants in the subject *EEL409 Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* expressed their awareness of the devaluing of their *real-world professional profile* by some of their academic colleagues. An EEL409 participant who had been recruited from the Business Industry presents his perspective of the valued capital in the academy:

> I mean I'm coping with the academic snobbery that's going on around the place… I've come out of industry and I had a "PhD in the university of the world", but that doesn't have much grounding here, so there's a whole lot of "how come these people are here? And what can they bring to the table?" The fact that I'd been teaching for 12 years and I have industry experience and I was teaching business, which nobody prior to me really had. I mean they hadn't actually *done* it. They'd read about it, and they'd thought about it, but they'd never *done* it.

This academic further commented on the role of EEL409, and in particular the work based learning project in assisting him to assume the identity of an academic.

> you suddenly get into that role and I think, what it [EEL409] does, it sets you on a path to merge you into the world of academia without loss of your professional knowledge. You gave us the academic framework to support us into becoming an academic through the work-based project.

Having completed the EEL409 subject, several of the academics noted their changed self-described role as an academic tribe member:

> I do see myself as more of an academic. I do see myself as being a lot more knowledgeable than what I was about academia and learning and particularly in the university sector. So while I wouldn't say that I was a full academic, I am well on my way.
>
> Whilst I still have the industry focus, I now have it with an academic background. It's improved my academic assessment of things. Coming out of the industry you still need to learn how to become an academic, and I honestly believe that's what I've learnt. I now see myself as an academic. I am a professional academic and I now have the qualifications and the backing.

The feedback offered by the new academics provided a range of evidence that confirms the efficacy of the probationary subject in guiding the (re)fashioning of their professional identities. As legitimate participants in the tribes of the academy these "professional academics" are using the knowledge gained, and skills developed in EEL409, to craft an inbound trajectory to the central practices of quality teaching, valued by the tribes of the academy.

Deb Clarke is a senior lecturer in curriculum and higher education at Charles Sturt University, NSW. Deb was awarded an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning in 2008. She is the course coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. Her research interests include authentic assessment, curriculum design, academic identities, learning spaces and Indigenous pedagogies.

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International Column Exchange
HERDSA/POD/STLHE Newsletters
Times of Change and Challenge

By Shelda Debowski

Back in June this year I attended the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) annual meeting in Belgium, where a number of national higher education networks were represented. This network has been in existence since the 1970s, but it is now becoming a more mature presence in the higher education sector. ICED is now graced by representatives from the U.S., Canada, U.K., Europe, Asia and Australasia, with new nations joining on a regular basis as they build a stronger emphasis on higher education teaching, learning and research. In many cases, their emergence as a new network has been assisted by existing ICED members or past presidents of the more established networks.

Each year we compare notes as to the issues that are emerging and the challenges that are being encountered by our respective members. This year was particularly fascinating, as we saw some immense shifts in policy, practice and sponsorship around the globe. It is very clear that there are increasing societal and government expectations relating to the skills and expertise that academics should demonstrate in their roles, particularly with respect to teaching and research productivity. Similarly, governments are regarding universities as employment incubators, and seeing the economic imperative as a primary function of the sector. However, the funding to help academics develop those skills is generally lacking. Instead, there has been a retraction of sponsorship in many countries as funds become tighter.

Of additional concern is the ongoing merry-go-round of governments copying each other as different policies are trialled. The demise of the funding to support the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) as a central hub for educational excellence and innovation parallels a similar diminishment of the Higher Education Academy Subject Centres in the UK, once an international beacon for those seeking guidance on disciplinary-based teaching and learning.

A concerning issue is that university stakeholders appear largely powerless in the face of political decision making that ignores the long-term benefits that these national services provide. The focus on short-term economies has reduced the capacity of the higher education community to share, exchange and learn from colleagues around the world as sponsored services have been pared back.

One reassuring note, however, is the strong response by higher education networks to pick up where our governments have left off. In Australia, for example, HERDSA and other like societies have been able to take responsibility for preserving elements of the previous work of the ALTC. HERDSA has been fortunate in gaining funding to promote the ongoing exchange of knowledge and support for leadership, teaching and learning and dissemination of research outcomes. With its well established journal, *Higher Education Research and Development*, it will be aiming to continue to share and promote high standards in scholarship, research and practice, and to maintain productive spaces for professional and disciplinary learning. However, there is a real risk of losing the holistic support for higher education development as these different areas are preserved through voluntary societies, particularly as initial funding is for a 2.5-year period. Australia's experience offers an important caution for other nations as their governments watch with interest and consider how they might save some funding. The legacy of many decades can readily be lost if governments are not committed to maintaining that heritage. The real costs are yet to be calculated.

Through these experiences a number of questions have emerged: Why is higher education so vulnerable to short-term political expediency? Does society value higher education? Is the sector seen as an essential partner in building creative innovative knowledge economies, or is it viewed more mechanistically as an employment sausage mill – as many politicians would have us believe? How can we start to build a more secure platform to work toward our likely future/s? And what are they?

It is a time of change, and perhaps a time of reassessment as to how the needs of higher education can best be met. We need to work actively in promoting the growth of an international body of knowledge that is not dependent on government funding for its preservation and retention. We need to ensure that the learning and knowledge so far acquired is preserved, shared and reviewed by any who need it – anywhere in the world. Perhaps these troubling times are a good opportunity to look at international collaborations that will better serve a global higher education agenda. We need to ensure that the scholarship and research that underpins good educational practice is readily accessible for new nations moving into this sphere, and for other nations that have possibly forgotten that quality learning needs to be nurtured and valued. While the times are challenging and certainly confronting, they also offer a valuable time for reassessment and perhaps a new direction?

Shelda Debowski is President of HERDSA and Director, Organisational and Staff Development Services, University of Western Australia.

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The Philosophers Column

Borrowed Wit and Wisdom

By Ann Kerwin

In the book of life, there aren't answers in the back.

Charlie Brown

An original idea. That can't be too hard. The library must be full of them.

Stephen Fry

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.

Winston Churchill

Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose.

Bill Gates

Try not to have a good time. This is supposed to be educational.

Charles M. Schulz

Without work, all life goes rotten. But when work is soulless, life stifles and dies.

Albert Camus

For every person who wants to teach, there are approximately thirty who don't want to learn - much.

W.C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman

There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full.

Henry Kissinger

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.

Peter de Vries

The three little sentences that will get you through life. Number 1: Cover for me. Number 2: Oh good idea, Boss! Number 3: It was like that when I got here.

Matt Groening

It's all that the young can do for the old, to shock them and keep them up to date.

George Bernard Shaw

My mother said, "You won't amount to anything because you procrastinate". I said, "Just wait".

Judy Tenuta

An error doesn't become a mistake until you refuse to correct it.

Orlando A. Battista

It wasn't until late in life that I discovered how easy it was to say, "I don't know".

Somerset Maugham

Creativity always dies a quick death in rooms that house conference tables.

Bruce Hershensohn

You know there is a problem with the education system when you realize that out of the 3 R's, only one begins with R.

Dennis Miller

I am righteously indignant; *you* are annoyed; *he* is making a fuss about nothing.

Anon.

Most of us live our lives as if we had another one in the bank.

Ben Irwin

I'll not listen to reason ... Reason always means what someone else has got to say.

Elizabeth Gaskell

If you don't dare say "no," how will you ever dare say "yes"?

Paul Tournier

To those of you who received honors, awards and distinctions, I say, "Well done". and to the C students, I say, "You, too, can be President of the United States".

George W. Bush, Address to Yale University

Don't be yourself - be someone a little nicer.
Mignon McLaughlin

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

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Quotations

If you would like to see more quotes there are several web sites. For example:

http://www.brainyquote.com/

http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/

Meanderings

By Robert Cannon

In these times when great stress is placed on productivity and profit within organisations, I often wonder why I spend such inordinate amounts of my professional time on tasks that were once performed efficiently and at lower cost by skilled secretaries and printers. I have in mind the time spent on laying out and formatting documents and figuring out how to fit that troublesome last line in a table onto a page, unravelling the mysteries of the numbering of chapter headings, deciding whether I need a page or section break, formatting headers and footers, determining what font to use, and so on and on ... And, if I ever get there, I suppose that my document will look nice, even though the time available to enhance its substantive content will have been seriously eroded by my "secretarial duties". So, when the very gentle reminder came from our Newsletter editor that my *Meanderings* was almost due, I was tempted to say "sorry, I am too busy aligning shapes in a text box"!

On a closely related technological "improvement" in our lives, the use of the Internet, I have begun reading Nicholas Carr's book *The Shallows* (Atlantic Books, London, 2010) in which he explores how the Internet is changing the way we think, remember and read or, as he neatly expresses it "the Net's deeper cognitive consequences". I was hooked early on by Carr's discussion of how he now finds it very difficult to concentrate on books and articles. He blames this on his use of the Internet. "Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski" (p. 7). I am looking forward to reading more!

The great Chinese philosopher, Confucius, has contributed one of the most succinct and powerful observations about learning that has underpinned educators' practices for many centuries: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand".

I was reminded of this observation repeatedly during a recent USAID consultancy that I consider to have been the most fascinating I have ever been invited to undertake. The consultancy, with Chris Knapper from Queen's University in Canada, was to begin a process of evaluating recently established educational development centres in Palestinian universities. So, what did I see and do and what do I now understand? I could happily write a book in answer to this question but there are a few matters that stand out in relation to educational interests. One important understanding was how my own ignorance about Palestine and the conflict in the region had been shaped over many years by a very one-sided media perspective on events and that I needed to address this shortcoming by seeking more balanced perspectives.

I was astonished that Palestine has such a well-functioning university system. I had wrongly assumed that circumstances would have made this almost impossible. There are eleven universities, nine in the West Bank and two in Gaza. During the brief time in Palestine, we were only able to work with three universities, all in the West Bank, as entry to Gaza is almost impossible. In the new educational development centres we visited, the qualifications, the experience, knowledge, hard work and commitment of centre academic staff was most impressive. That so much is being achieved in the universities during a period of conflict and occupation deepened our admiration for their achievements, particularly when the constraining circumstances never once led to a complaint or expression of bitterness, but to simple description of the trying circumstances and of sometimes quite traumatic personal experiences. For us this attitude was a most humbling experience. It places complaints here, as reasonable as they may be, about workloads, management, student numbers, and conditions of service in an entirely fresh perspective.

The second matter of educational interest was how quickly my understanding developed by observing, talking to people, asking, listening, and clarifying ideas. Observing, in my case, was immeasurably assisted by my interest in photography and so I accumulated a massive file of photographs of universities, people and the many and varied new sights: the massive barrier wall separating Israeli from Palestinian areas, the extent of Israeli settlement in the West Bank and the numerous sites of major religious significance in Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This learning process turned out to be far more influential than simply listening to explanations and uninvited opinions and reading books and articles.

Finally, I was taken by the friendliness and warmth of the people we met and their terrific sense of humour and fun – perhaps best demonstrated by their Oktoberfest complete with large quantities of locally brewed beer, great food and a rock concert at a small Christian village named Taybeh near Ramallah! I hope that Palestinian academics can use their strong sense of humour and fun in their professional work and in ways that may contribute to worthwhile quality innovations in education.

Thank you, Confucius, for summarising these experiences so succinctly!

Higher education leaders fret and worry about the international rankings of their universities. As research output, creativity and innovation are linked to rankings and as humour has been shown to have a link to innovation – as I discuss below – perhaps we need more humourists in leadership roles in universities.

Writing in the *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 13, 3, 2008, Y-T Tang reports the results of a study that has implications for the management of innovation through the use of humour. First, he suggests that it may be possible to affect employee innovation if supervisors are trained and encouraged to use humour. Second, hiring or selecting new managers who have good humour skills is one way of helping ensure that their employees will make creative contributions. Third, since the product of innovation is knowledge, and

this knowledge is best created through interaction within a group, good employee communication and group cohesiveness in the performance of innovation activities using humour is necessary. Tang argues that managers can use humour to improve employee communication and cohesiveness in conducting innovative efforts.

Humour arises in many and varied ways in academia and some of it conveys powerful messages as the following excerpt from *Expecting Adam* (M.N. Beck, Times Books, 1999) demonstrates. This book is an autobiographical tale of an academic Harvard couple who conceive a baby with Down's syndrome and carry him to term. This memoir of the young, student mother awaiting the birth of her baby, while simultaneously pursuing a doctorate at Harvard, has some sad and also very funny material of which the following story that I reproduce in full, is one example (pp. 76–78):

"It was mid-November and the few remaining leaves rattled on the trees. I welcomed the winter chill, since ice air helped keep my mind off the nausea. I breathed it carefully one day as I waddled over to William James Hall to attend a class.

I arrived a few minutes early and decided to use the extra time to visit a friend in the Psychology Department, one floor above the Sociology Department, where my class was held. My friend was in her lab, conducting an experiment that consisted of implanting wires into the brains of live rats, then making the rats swim around in a tub of reconstituted dry milk. She told me why she was doing this, but I have no memory of what she said. Maybe she was making soup. Whatever the reason, she had put the rats and the milk in a children's wading pool, the kind you fill up with a hose so that toddlers can splash around on a hot summer day. The tub was decorated with pictures of Smurfs. Smurfs, for those of you who are not culturally aware, are little blue people whose antics you may have observed on Saturday morning cartoons during the 1980s. I personally feel that the Smurfs were cloying, saccharine little monsters, but my daughter Katie adored them.

After chatting with my rat-molesting friend for a moment, I excused myself and headed downstairs for the seminar. There were seven or eight other graduate students in attendance, along with a couple of extra professors who had come to hear the latest twist on established theories. I felt the way I always did when I walked into a classroom at Harvard, that I had just entered a den of lions – not starving lions, perhaps, but lions who were feeling a little peckish. The people in the room were fearsomely brilliant, and I was always terrified that I would say just one completely idiotic thing, make one breathtakingly asinine comment that would expose me as a boorish, politically incorrect half-wit.

"Ah, Martha," said the course instructor, "we've been waiting for you".

I blushed. I had been hoping that the class would start a bit late. I did not want to be the focus of attention.

"I'm sorry," I said. "I was upstairs in the Psych lab, watching rats swim around in a Smurf pool".

"I see," said the instructor, "Yes, I believe I've read about that".

A professor, one of the visiting dignitaries, chimed in. "How is Smurf's work going?" he inquired. "I understand he's had some remarkable findings".

"Yes," said a graduate student. "I read his last article".

There was a general murmur of agreement. It seems that everyone in the room was familiar with "Dr Smurf", and his ground-breaking work with swimming rats. It took me a few discombobulated seconds to figure out that everyone at the seminar assumed a Smurf pool was named for some famous psychological theorist. I guess they thought it was like a Skinner box, the reinforcement chamber used by B. F. Skinner to develop the branch of psychological theory known as behaviourism. Comprehension blossomed in my brain like a lovely flower.

"I think," I said solemnly, "that Smurf is going to change the whole direction of linguistic epistemology".

They all agreed, nodding, saying things like "Oh, yes," and "I wouldn't doubt it".

I beamed at them, struggling desperately not to laugh. It wasn't so much that I wanted to mock these people. I was giddy with exhilaration, because after seven years at Harvard, I was just beginning to realize that I wasn't the only one faking it. I had bluffed my way through many a cocktail party, pretending to know all about whichever scholar or theory was the current topic of conversation. I had always wondered how I survived among the staggeringly intelligent people lurking all around me. Now I was beginning to understand.

"He's a good man, Smurf is," said the instructor solemnly.

And thus I learned that at Harvard, while knowing a great deal is the norm and knowing everything is the goal, appearing to know everything is considered an acceptable substitute".

Robert Cannon is a consultant in educational development currently engaged in impact studies in Indonesia and Palestine.

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Teaching & Learning Resources in the Disciplines

Looking for some resources to help your teaching in your discipline?

The Higher Education Academy in the UK has links to a wide variety of disciplines. Start at:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/disciplines

and search from there.

HERDSA Branch News

Tasmania

Chair: Tracy Douglas

The newly formed HERDSA Tasmania Branch was launched at the University of Tasmania's (UTAS) Teaching Matters conference in Hobart on in November. An information booth about HERDSA was made available. Branch members are gearing up for the 2012 HERDSA conference to be held in Tasmania which will be a great opportunity for some attached sight seeing in this beautiful part of Australia.

One of the first initiatives of the Tasmanian branch will be to increase awareness of HERDSA in Tasmania, and hopefully, as a consequence, increase Tasmanian membership. The establishment of the Tasmanian HERDSA branch will benefit members by providing professional development opportunities in areas such as the scholarship of teaching and peer learning support as well as facilitating an increased awareness of HERDSA activities and opportunities. It is anticipated that UTAS will provide in-kind support such as making venues available for meetings, as most HERDSA members are based at UTAS.

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New Zealand

Chair: Tony Harland

HERDSA New Zealand successfully completed the second Researcher Development Symposium in September. There were 48 participants from NZ and Australia. Experienced HERDSA researchers came to share their expertise and Associate Professor Bruce Macfarlane, University of Hong Kong, provided a key note entitled *A voyage across the seascape of higher education research: forerunners, pathfinders and pathtakers* which is to be published in the HERD Journal. At the evening dinner, Associate Professor Neil Haigh was awarded the Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand (TERNZ) medal for his sustained contribution to higher education research. The symposium attracted 10 new HERDSA members.

Between 23rd and 25th November, we have the annual New Zealand conference. This year is in Wellington and hosted by Victoria University of Wellington. On the first day of the conference we will have our inaugural Academic Development Special Interest Group. There are thirty papers that will be presented in 45-minute discussion sessions and workshops. The *HERDSA TERNZ conference* attracts delegates from both NZ and Australia and often from father afield, including Europe and Asia.

HERDSA New Zealand is also planning a *Landmark Symposium* series that will start in May 2012. These events will deal with critical issues the impact on the New Zealand sector. The first will be held in Wellington.

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Hong Kong

Chair: Anna Siu Fong KWAN

Another well attended *Dinner Dialogue* on the *Teaching Assistant Programmes* took place in October 2011 at City University of Hong Kong. Speakers were Nick Noakes (Director) and Rowena Liu (Teaching Associate), The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; Prof Keith Thomas (Associate Professor) and Dr Catherine Zhou (Postdoctoral Research Fellow), The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The presentations focused on the practices and issues in preparing university teaching assistants. For most of the universities in Hong Kong, the essential core of Teaching Assistant Programmes has been compulsory. For voluntary participation, there are also some additional provisions to support TAs' further professional development. Participants of this Dinner Dialogue found the sharing very inspiring and the discussion fruitful.

The *Teaching and Learning Innovation Expo* 2011 took place on 11 November 2011 organised by the Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. HERDSA HK Branch was the co-organiser of the Panel Discussion and keynote. Check out the website at: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eLearning/expo/programme.html

HERDSA Hong Kong invites HERDSA members who are working or will be working in Hong Kong to connect with us. We would really like to meet with them in our coming activities. Please visit our website for more details.

Contact Anna Kwan:
akwan@ouhk.edu.hk

HERDSA HK website:
http://herdsahk.edublogs.org/2010/09/

HERDSA Hong Kong Dinner Dialogue participants

ACT

Chair: Robert Kennelly

ACT Branch commenced a HERDSA TATAL (Talking about Teaching and Learning) at the last HERDSA conference and group meets for the 10th time on 12th December using Skype audio and consists of colleagues from 4 Universities. The 2008 TATAL group continues to meet via email and drop box and has submitted a draft HERDSA Guide *Using stories in Teaching* which we hope to launch at the Hobart Conference. The TATAL 2009 group has a participant nearly finished his HERDSA portfolio and two other members well advanced. In August this year Coralie McCormack and Robert Kennelly published a 2011 article about the theory behind the TATALS titled *We must get together and really talk … Connection, engagement and safety sustain learning and teaching conversation communities*, Reflective Practice, 12:4, 515–531. Coralie and Robert hope to offer another HERDSA TATAL at the next HERDA conference in Tasmania next July.

As usual ACT Branch conducted a workshop where members had the opportunity to test drive their presentations for the HERDSA conference and members will celebrate Christmas with a symposium attended by our new Teaching Award winners at the ANU on December 7.

Next July 2012 The Branch will co-host a *Showcase and Networking event* at the University of Canberra as part of the dissemination of skills and learning from the University of Canberra, Faculties of Health and Law ALTC project Bringing peer review of teaching out of the closet: A project to encourage and support greater participation in peer review of teaching in the Faculties of Health and Law at the University of Canberra. This event will be open to all university staff from the ACT region including UOW, CSU, and UWS.

Robert completes his 6 year term on the executive in March 2012 and will use that opportunity to step back into a support role with the Branch. It is timely to thank Jackie Walkington and Peter Donnan who were key movers in the reconstitution of the Branch of the ACT region in 2008. Coralie McCormack who is now a member of the HERDSA executive is welcomed onto the ACT Branch executive. Coralie works in the Teaching and Learning Centre at the University of Canberra.

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NSW

This Branch is still in development. NSW members who would like to be informed about HERDSA NSW activities please email Peter Kandlbinder: peter.kandlbinder@uts.edu.au.

Contact Shirley Scott: S.Scott@unsw.edu.au

South Australia

Chair: Dale Wache

HERDSA hosted a second (3 hour) Tri-institutional event for Academic Developers from Adelaide, Flinders and UniSA in November with two items on the agenda. Professor Ranald Macdonald Emeritus Professor in Academic development at Sheffield Hallam University facilitated a session on *Why, what and how to change our approaches to educational development-exploring some principles and practices*. A/Professor Heather Smigiel (Flinders University) and Prof Margaret Hicks (UniSA) trialed and discussed the new principles and resources associated with the *Preparing Academics to Teach in Higher Education (PATHE)* project. Margaret Hicks and Heather Smigiel were members of the steering committee for this ALTC project. For further information about the project please see: http://www.flinders.edu.au/pathe/

In September a HERDSA SA Panel was hosted at the ERGA Conference: *Transformations* at the University of Adelaide.

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Victoria

Chair: Dianne (Di) Waddell

HERDSA Victoria held a very successful event at RMIT in September - *Assessment in the cloud: Opportunities and Challenges* presented by Professor Geoff Crisp, Dean Learning and Teaching at RMIT. Over 100 discipline based academics and educational developers attended the event which was followed by a networking lunch. Geoff challenged HERDSA Members to "rethink our curriculum design so that it facilitates both the development and assessment of 21st century discipline skills and capabilities, as well as the assessment of the application of these skills and capabilities in an authentic environment that includes other people". Geoff reminded members that our job was to scaffold learning and that if we wanted students to develop 21st century skills we needed to assess these in different ways. Geoff challenged the audience to think about their teaching and feedback practices, associated learning environments and assessment options in the 21st century. In addition he cautioned that the Web 2.0 is a public space and that others will have access to view and assess the quality of the content that is uploaded.

The final event for HERDSA 2011 was the *Eighth Melbourne Computing Education Conventicle (MCEC 2011)* in November 2011, at Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, which was co-sponsored by HERDSA. The *Conventicle* consisted of a pre-conventicle workshops plus a one-day conference. Two workshops were offered. The first was an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Improving Teaching workshop: *Designing and facilitating learning at the subject level* facilitated by Dr. Sue Wright (University of Melbourne). The second was a *Doctoral consortium* facilitated by Professor John Grundy (Swinburne University of Technology). Keynote speakers included Professor Mark Guzdial, from the School of Interactive Computing in the College of Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) and Richard Buckland who is director of first year computing at UNSW.

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Western Australia

Chair: Rashmi Watson

2011 has been an engaging and productive year for both the WA Branch Committee and the WA members. A total of 10 seminars/workshops/presentations were run successfully with the inclusion of 4 international speakers on a variety of topics. In addition to the previous years "Scholarship Profiled" events, a number of "special events" were included wherever an opportunity for members to be involved was available.

One of the branch initiatives this year was an invitation to a number of Indigenous Academics to accept a one year HERDSA membership. This offer was a follow on initiative from the first event of the year (January 28) where HERDSA WA held the workshop *Knowing Australia and Being Australian: Reconciliation, Rights and Respect for Australia's First Peoples*, at Edith Cowan University by Brenda Cherendincko & Colleen Hayward. Two memberships have been confirmed for 2012. Further information will follow about the recipients in the next branch news.

There was a special invitation to WA members in October to attend two sessions during the 5th Asia Pacific Academic Integrity Conference, hosted by The University of Western Australia. The first invitation was to a hypothetical discussion named *A Priest and a Rabbi walk into a bar*. The session was lively, insightful and well received by the audience. Local media personality, Verity James convened the session providing her humorous, polished and professional touch. The second session run by ACT Branch Chair Rob Kennelly was based around *Talking about Teaching and Learning* and the HERDSA Fellowship, which again attracted a number of members' interest.

The annual mini conference *HERDSA Rekindled* proved to be popular again on October 6 (hosted by UWA). The half day format was an opportunity for local academics to hear the WA presenters from the HERDSA national conference. Emeritus Professor David Nicol, keynote speaker at the Assessment Conference (Curtin University, Nov 20–21) ran a half day workshop for members related to his work with the REAP Project on *Developing evaluative judgement through self and peer review*.

HERDSA WA committee with Emeritus Professor Mick Healey, University of Gloucestershire at Curtin University

Finally, the branch held an end of year social lunch for all members who were able to take the time out from their busy schedules on November 18.

We look forward to seeing you again at regular events in 2012 and wish you a safe and happy holiday.

The *HERDSA WA AGM* will be held again during the annual Teaching and Learning Forum in 2012 (see program on website).

We welcome new committee members so please send through your nominations now if you are interested.

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WA branch website: http://our.murdoch.edu.au/Educational-Development/ALTC-funding-and-awards/HERDSA-WA/

Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.

Robert Frost

It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated.

Alec Bourne

An education isn't how much you have committed to memory, or even how much you know. It's being able to differentiate between what you do know and what you don't.

Anatole France (1844 - 1924)

News from the HERD Journal, November 2011

1. Call for Papers for Special Issue of HERD

The role of disciplines: alternative methodologies in higher education

Methodologies in higher education have tended to be confined to a narrow range. This has left other forms of enquiry relatively under-utilised and under-explored, including but not limited to biography, ethnography, history, critical policy analysis, critical discourse or textual analysis and so on. Ironically, there is potential for a far greater range of methodologies to be utilised in HE research, as other special issues of the journal have demonstrated. In this special issue, we showcase the ways in which methodologies characteristic of humanities disciplines, or of education as a wider interdisciplinary field, are contributing to higher education research.

Given the breadth of disciplinary background amongst HE researchers, we consider it is timely to invite authors to consciously consider how their disciplinary knowledge and methodological training in other areas is influencing their HE research. One of the vital (and revitalising) ways HE can grow as a discipline is through its connections and links to other disciplines. The import of diverse methodological approaches may pose challenges to the field, but also opportunities to reflect on the goals of higher educational research.

There are several strands to what might be included in the issue. The first is a questioning of what kinds of data 'count' in higher education research. The dominant HE methodologies have involved interviews, surveys or multivariate analyses, as a recent analysis of submissions to Studies in Higher Education demonstrates (Tight, 2011). In conjunction with rethinking forms of data is an examination of what kinds of knowledge and truths are produced through HE research. As this special issue aims to explore, a significant contribution that alternative methodologies can make is to the epistemology (or epistemological politics) of higher educational research.

Dates to Note:

* **Manuscript submission due: 31 May 2012**

* **Anticipated Publication: late January 2013**

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere. A guide for authors along with other relevant information can be found on the journal's homepage: www.tandf.co.uk/journals/herd . Submissions should be made online at HERD's ScholarOne site: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cher

For any further information or queries regarding this Special Issue, please contact the Editors Frances Kelly (f.kelly@auckland.ac.nz) or Ian Brailsford (i.brailsford@auckland.ac.nz)

2. Tai's pick (from HERD Vol 30/6)

Has higher education lost its way, lost purpose? Has economics driven it off-course? It is fitting that the closing issue of HERD for 2011 returns us to fundamental questions of purpose. Jan McArthur's piece, Reconsidering the social and economic purposes of higher education does just that job. She asks whether we have drawn the relation between higher education and economics wrongly and too narrowly such that "the idea that people may engage in higher education to develop and realise their potential as human beings appears quaint and anachronistic" (p.724). McArthur turns to critical theory and critical pedagogy as an antidote. Leaning solidly on the work of scholars the calibre of Marx, Stephen Brookfield, Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and Peter McLaren, McArthur's argument is that economics could do with more heart; that higher education must help people deal with the material realities and inequalities of the social world. McArthur lies firm in her commitment to a higher education for social justice and human flourishing, and to my mind, hers is a noble project to be concerned with. It is a goal that should occupy our hearts and minds. Visit the journal's website at http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/07294360.html to gain access to the article.

3. Submit a piece for HERD's Points for Debate

HERD aims to foster critical debate and discussion of higher education research, practice and scholarship. In 2012, it will launch a new section of the journal titled Points for Debate – an opportunity for readers of HERD and the higher education community to raise critical questions, advance thoughtful commentary, or to offer a provocative view on matters related to research and practice in higher education. We welcome pieces up to 1000 words, and in alternative forms (for example, a cartoon, creative fiction, poetry, play-script etc). The Points for Debate pieces may be stand-alone or act as a response to an article published in the journal. Although submissions will not be double-blind peer-reviewed, they will be reviewed by members of the HERD editorial team, and may be solicited through invitation. If you have an idea for a piece or would like to submit something, contact the HERD Points for Debate Editor, Tai Peseta, at t.peseta@latrobe.edu.au.

Higher Education Research & Development Anthology

Peter Kandlbinder & Tai Peseta

Order this publication at

http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=35

University teachers studying teaching and learning are usually expected to read the literature to help them understand the key concepts in the field. The HERD Anthology provides an excellent introduction to the conceptual development of the higher education teaching and learning. A chapter is devoted to each of the 5 main concepts discussed in Graduate Certificates in Higher Education Teaching and Learning in Australasia and the UK.

1. Reflective practice 2. Constructive alignment 3. Approaches to learning 4. Assessment for learning 5. Scholarship of teaching. Each chapter has a brief introduction to the main tenets of the concept and how it has evolved over time. This is followed by a re-print of the three high impact Higher Education Research & Development articles focused on the concept. The selected articles are followed by suggestions for further reading designed to provide a guide to university teachers wishing to pursue their own research in these areas.

HERDSA Members can download parts or all of the Anthology as PDF files by logging into the members section on www.herdsa.org.au.