

Preparing the Future Professoriate: Comparative Reflections Across Two Continents

by Kathy Takayama

Kathy Takayama will be giving one of the keynote addresses at the HERDSA conference in Hobart in July.

Although I was educated in the US, my first academic appointment was in Australia and I had the fortune to teach there for 13 years. Having returned to the US in 2007, I have spent the past 5 years reflecting on some of the key differences that shape the place of learning and teaching in relation to our institutional cultures and our national dialogues about learning and teaching. Putting aside the obvious differences in the sheer numbers and categories of US postsecondary institutions¹, a significant contrast exists between the kind of learning that is achieved through our respective curricular structures [depth in one or two disciplines in conjunction with breadth across the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences (US) vs. disciplinary depth (Australia)]. This has key implications on the roles of our universities' Teaching and Learning Centres and the impact we might have on future generations of academics.

"Too many students focus on understanding the world or a discipline and don't develop an understanding of themselves – what motivates me? How do I learn?" As articulated by a recent

panel of undergraduate students in the US, the traditional paths of disciplinary scholarship do not map the process through which students develop adaptive expertise for lifelong learning and critical engagement. Students acculturate to disciplinary practices from an early stage of their career², perhaps in response to what Shulman has described as signature pedagogies³. Discipline-centred practices encourage deep immersion into academic scholarship yet limit access to dialogic spaces⁴ that foster pedagogical exchange and the willingness to engage in unconventional exploration outside the perceived boundaries of pedagogical convention. I was intrigued to learn that not only do academics conform to the intellectual comfort of disciplinary practices; undergraduate students indeed become acculturated to these "norms" at an early stage of their career. While this may not seem unusual in Australian universities, many US institutions aim to balance breadth and depth for the undergraduate experience.

In 2005, the Association of American Colleges and Universities launched a national initiative (LEAP)⁵ that champions the importance of breadth as well as depth throughout the undergraduate course of study-

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From the Editor

This issue has quite an international flavor to it. In addition to the usual contributions from Australia we have articles by authors from the USA, Canada, the UK, and several from New Zealand. It is easy to forget the "Australasia" in HERDSA so for this issue I made a special appeal to colleagues in New Zealand to gather contributions from their institutions. The result has been encouraging with three interesting articles. The pattern set for the two day Researching Higher Education Symposium provides participants with a very valuable learning experience, which could well be copied elsewhere.

There are significant articles from Australia. The Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), has provided valuable insight into the early days of the organisation with plans for the future. Associated with the OLT is the HERDSA project funded by money left over from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. You will find details of that in Shelda's President's report. Then there is the important action learning project in science and mathematics led by Manju Sharma and her team. This is a great example how the former ALTC provided an opportunity for academics from several institutions to work together on a learning and teaching project that was not easily possible previously.

In July we will welcome Kathy Takayama back to Australia as one of the keynote

speakers at the Hobart conference, which is shaping up to be a wonderful occasion. Kathy has contributed an article comparing experiences in higher education between North America and Australia.

In his Meanderings this time Bob Cannon has moved away from humour (but not entirely!) to draw attention to what many are seeing as a sad decline in the standard of academic writing coupled with a superficial coverage of past research which tends to ignore work done before the year 2000. A salutary reminder.

There are some great insights into the experience of learning from Susan Bolt's journey to a HERDSA Fellowship, the three academics from La Trobe working with Tai Peseta to discover new research fields to the delightful entries to the Loving to Learn Day over in Canada. I encourage you to go to the website and read the many entries in this years competition. How about institutions in the Southern hemisphere launching their own "Loving to Learn" Day?

These are just some of the articles in this issue. I hope you enjoy reading the whole issue for its all good and I renew my invitation to readers to submit articles about their own work. I'm sure there are lots of inspiring things going on in teaching and learning that would be worth sharing. So, please contact me.

Roger Landbeck

The Weekly HERDSA Email News. (WHEN)

Important Notice on Submitting Posts.

We have been looking at ways of reducing the size of items in the Weekly Email News so that readers can quickly scan the contents and to also make it easier for the List Moderator to prepare the copy. At present considerable time is expended on cutting and pasting submitted copy and reformatting it.

A new system has now been devised whereby items can be submitted via the HERDSA website. Please go to

http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=2679

where you will see how to do it.

Thanks in anticipation for your co-operation in using the new system.

Roger Landbeck and Peter Kandlbinder

Preparing the Future Professoriate: Comparative Reflections Across Two Continents

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what US institutions refer to as a “liberal education”. As defined by the AAC&U, “Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.”⁶ Many institutions in the US (including Brown University) identify as institutions of liberal education and students engage deeply and widely across the disciplines. For new academics who have spent years focusing exclusively on their field of scholarship, it is crucial to not only be prepared for the diverse perspectives that the students in their classrooms will have, but also to serve as advisor to, and engage in critical dialogue with, students who are majoring in completely different disciplines.

As such, professional development in the US starts at the postgraduate level – what we call “preparation of the future professoriate”⁷. In the past 10 years, Teaching Certificate programs have grown at a significant rate across doctoral granting institutions in the US⁸. These programs are not a required component of PhD programs, and many are not credit-bearing courses. They are similar to the Foundations programs for academic staff at many Australian universities⁹, but are targeted predominantly for the postgraduate population and provide excellent opportunities for their preparation as academics. The increasing numbers of these programs at leading universities suggest that postgraduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and institutions are recognising the need for preparing academics who not only excel in research, but are also well-prepared to be effective teachers¹⁰.

For most postgraduate students, these Certificate Programs provide the only opportunity to be part of a multidisciplinary

learning community outside of their departments. Discussions that reveal disciplinary habits of mind and pedagogies present illuminating perspectives on teaching and learning for these students. This preparation stands them in good stead for successful academic careers, since they will be fully prepared to contextualise their field of expertise into a liberal education curriculum. Furthermore, participation in such communities stimulates novel interdisciplinary connections and ideas about pedagogy, allowing these future academics to develop an awareness of themselves in their own learning. When I was an academic in Australia, I was fortunate to work with a sizable group of postgraduate tutors (16 students) who led the tutorials and laboratory sections of my large introductory microbiology course. Our weekly tutor meetings and frequent interactions throughout the term created a strong learning community, which promoted productive sharing and engaged discussion about teaching and learning. While the community was limited in disciplinary scope to microbiologists, the opportunity for these postgraduate students to engage in critical discourse outside of their research brought forth their innovative thinking in new ways. The students found this community to be a socially and academically integrative experience. Indeed, Austin (2002) has noted the importance of the postgraduate stage as socialisation to the academic career¹¹.

What are the long-term implications of this increasing trend in professional development programs in the US for postgraduates and postdocs? One would predict that newly hired academics would be better prepared to design and teach courses, and in many cases, not only be effective and engaged teachers but successful academics all around. Interestingly, in the past 5 years alone, we are seeing more new faculty at US institutions who have taken courses or Certificate programs in learning and teaching (as postgraduate students) prior to their academic appointments. The substantive activities and opportunities to learn with peers across disciplines in

highly engaged learning communities over the course of a year has had significant impact on the postgraduate students in the programs at Brown University. Many of our students who have since gone on to academic positions at other universities across the world have reported back on the continuing impact these programs have had on their success as teachers and as researchers. Students from other countries who enrol in postgraduate studies in the US have also become increasingly aware of the benefits of these programs on their future careers, regardless of whether they remain in the US or become academics elsewhere.

As we continue to share our scholarship and our practices in teaching and learning, I hope that we might be able to extend this dialogue to include the voices of our future academics/professoriate to engage them in transcending disciplinary boundaries during a critical and formative stage of their careers.

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Endnotes

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 8. At Brown, each year, over a third of all PhD recipients complete one or more of the four Certificate Programs taught by the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning; over 200 postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows participate in the programs annually (http://brown.edu/sheridan_center/certificateprograms/).
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President's Report

By Shelda Debowski



It is now nine months since the new executive commenced. We have been very busy reviewing our strategy, identifying enhancements to existing approaches and ensuring the established processes and services continue to a high standard. Recently the committee met for a second face-to-face meeting in Sydney to develop and confirm its strategy for the remainder of its term. The key priorities are outlined below for your information and review.

Membership and Communication

Our members are the lifeblood of HERDSA. We have a healthy membership base and aim to keep providing the right support and engagement to ensure people feel that we are meeting their needs. While the services offered to HERDSA members are very extensive, we are looking to create stronger linkages with our members. A strength of the HERDSA structure is the branch chair role, providing leadership in each regional community. Stanley Frielick

is heading the membership committee and will be seeking stronger interaction with the chairs to discuss how we can better support the membership at large and interact with branches more regularly. This will be an important focus for 2012 and 2013.

Members will also receive more information shortly on a special partnership we are entering into with Epigeum, and online learning provider that is located in the U.K. This group operates as a collaborative learning arm that designs useful online learning for teaching in higher education. As a HERDSA member, you will be entitled to 5% off the cost of learning products. This is yet another benefit of belonging to this great society. See the website for more information.

You may also see that HERDSA occasionally endorses higher education conferences. These are chosen as being suited to members' interests. In exchange for endorsement, we negotiate a discounted rate for members, which you should take advantage of.

HERDSA Conference

A key element of our annual program is the conference. It will be held in Tasmania this year, and is shaping beautifully. There are a number of excellent pre-conference workshops being offered, along with many opportunities to interact with each other and to meet others with like interests. The program will strongly support the theme of "Connections in higher education". The conference will see the launch of several new awards designed to extend our recognition of excellence. Up to three travel grants for postgraduate students will be awarded for new scholars who have had papers accepted. We also hope to award at least one lifetime membership award, as it is some time since this happened. So if you know of a worthy nominee, please send your suggestion to me. We have also accepted a proposal for our 2013 conference to be held in Auckland New Zealand and the 2014 conference will be likely to be in Hong Kong, our furthest branch. This is a very exciting opportunity. We will be calling for nominations for 2015



soon, so start talking with your colleagues about being a potential host.

New Scholars of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

A new portfolio has been launched under the care of Deb Clarke and Rachel Spronken-Smith. We recognise the challenges that new academics face in moving into academe, and hope to build some great support for our members. As a starting point, Deb and Rachel will be focusing on developing a useful site with helpful resources and have other ideas percolating. Get in touch (rachel.spronken-smith@otago.ac.nz, dcclarke@csu.edu.au) if you would like to contribute ideas or energy!

HERDSA Fellows

This is an important year for the fellowship scheme. Existing fellows are moving into their third triennium, requiring completion of a reflective review of their progress since their award or last review. These are conducted in our triads who offer peer review and critical discussion as to whether we meet the requirements for renewal. My triad has just completed its review process, and I found it to be a fascinating snapshot of three very different careers and interpretation of academic work. What was notable was the growth that each demonstrated since the last review three years ago. The HERDSA fellowships had truly operated as a springboard for the development of leading scholars and / or practitioners.

The Fellowship Committee, which comprises Sue Jones, Coralie McCormack and Glyn Thomas, have a large brief on their hands. In addition to learning and managing the existing system, they have come into the scheduled review cycle of the fellowship scheme. This helps to ensure the process is smooth and well managed, meeting the needs of a rigorous and high-impact system. We are very fortunate in having secured the services of Professor Lorraine Stefani as our reviewer, and look forward to her report. Feed in from members and fellows will be an important element of the review.

HERD

The journal editorial team has been in operation for over a year now, and is starting to really show its strengths. Our

contract with Taylor and Francis has just been renewed for a further five years, and the team is delighted that it now has a little more administrative support to cope with the large numbers of submissions. As a journal with ISI ranking and six issues per year, this is a mammoth professional service by volunteers.

HERDSA Guides

The guides are a critical service to our members. Each year we try to introduce at least one new offering, drawing on the expertise of our scholars and practitioners. 2012 will see several new and some revised guides launched, which is an outstanding effort. Allan Goody has served many years as the editor and is acknowledged for his guidance of writers and careful quality assurance. Keep an eye out for the new titles when they are announced.

HERDSA Weekly Email News

An essential service to HERDSA members is the weekly news, which is coordinated by our dear Roger Landbeck, who is also editor of this excellent News. Roger spends considerable time trying to cut down news information to fit the format of the Weekly News. Please see the feature in this edition which will outline our new practice. It will streamline the procedure considerably.

ALTC Legacy Project

We were very pleased to receive funding from the ALTC to contribute to its ongoing work in encouraging dissemination of the many results from teaching and learning projects and fellowships. After preliminary consultation with the Office of Learning and Teaching, we scoped the project as two phases. In the first phase, the School of Education at the University of Adelaide successfully tendered to review the last five years of activity and outputs to identify the key trends and knowledge that has been accrued across our Australian community. They will also explore the main methodologies and gaps in our focus. This information will be shared in July and will then inform the balance of the project, where a range of initiatives will be undertaken to share and explore the learning and open up new areas for discussion and scholarship. This is a very exciting initiative that is stimulating considerable discussion. A full overview of Phase 1 will be provided to you

after the conference, and more information is available on the HERDSA website.

External Engagement

HERDSA has many links to external parties and societies. At present, it is working closely with other teaching and learning networks through another ALTC legacy project called the National Networks Initiative (NNI); collaborating with the Canadian Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) on joint publication of the recent *Lecturing* guide, actively contributing to international development of learning and teaching through continued membership of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED), and participating in a range of other projects and initiatives. If you feel that HERDSA should be an active voice in a particular issue, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The Constitution

Shortly you will receive a letter concerning our constitution. As new committee, we sat down and carefully worked through our requirements to ensure we reflect our agreed commitments and conform to the stipulated principles and bylaws. It is challenging, however, as the constitution was written many decades ago. After considerable review, we have agreed to seek your approval to change a number of critical elements that are impeding our effective management of HERDSA. In effect, the constitution, because it is quite procedural in focus, has not kept pace with the times. Please take the time to read the commentary and look at the proposed changes carefully. We value your input. We have decided to operate in two stages: in the first, we need to address the pieces that need to be fixed to help us do our work as your executive. In the second, we would like to obtain some professional help to redesign the constitution so that it reflects current practice. So watch out for your letter with more details.

You can see that your executive is very busy on your behalf. It is an exciting time as we add yet a little more value to the society and its support for members. Keep in touch if you see anything else that needs to be addressed. Your input is always most appreciated.

With best wishes,
Shelda Debowski

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THE HERDSA FELLOWS COLUMN

Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité: Reflections of a HERDSA Fellow



By Susan Bolt

I have been a HERDSA Fellow for almost a year now. I attended my first HERDSA Conference nearly two years ago in Melbourne in 2010. It was there that I first heard the term HERDSA Fellow. The HERDSA Fellowship Recognition and Development Scheme intrigued me and not long afterwards, in 2011 at the HERDSA 2011 Conference on the Gold Coast I became a HERDSA Fellow. So what attracted me to the scheme? How did I achieve my goal? Was it worth it? What happened? And what does it have to do with *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*?

What Attracted Me to the Scheme?

As an academic developer, I had mentored numerous academics applying for teaching awards at faculty, university and national levels. Further to this, I had been an assessor on numerous selection panels for Curtin University and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Even so, it was not until I heard Kogi Naidoo's invitation to participate in the HERDSA Fellowship that I considered putting myself through an experience similar to what I had been encouraging my colleagues to do. Everything about it gelled with me: professional development, improvement, quality teaching, scholarship, peer review, *liberté* and *égalité* (voluntary and open to all). How could I ask academics to apply for teaching awards without, also, submitting myself to rigorous reflection and peer review at a national level?

How Did I Achieve My Goal?

I was keen to submit myself to everything I had been asking others to do, so I asked

for a mentor – it's optional but I thoroughly recommend it. I am not sure who selected my mentor but I was overwhelmingly delighted with their choice. Cristina Poyatos-Matas from Griffith University mentored me over the phone and via email as I responded to the selection criteria. Although we were on opposite sides of the country and had never met in person we struck up a friendship and realised that we had lots in common, personally and academically. The seeds of academic collaboration and fellowship were sown. Further to this, I set clear goals, monitored my progress and was determined to complete my portfolio within a relatively short period of time. I have always been a reflective practitioner and professional development, continuous improvement, scholarship, peer review and quality teaching had been the key foci of my work for some time – so completion of my HERDSA Fellowship portfolio helped me to synthesise and articulate my teaching philosophy, experience and future plans.

Was It Worth It?

The first phase of the HERDSA Fellowship is recognition – and yes, the recognition was worth it. After successfully completing my portfolio I was awarded the HERDSA Fellowship at the 2011 conference. I received a framed certificate, a pin and accolades from the assessors and other Fellows. I included feedback from the assessors and the achievement of gaining a HERDSA Fellowship in a subsequent application for a Curtin Excellence in Teaching Citation award – which I won. However, recognition is only the start. The HERDSA Fellowship is fundamentally about professional development. The main reasons I embarked on this process were for collegiality and

professional development. I wanted to gain access to this prestigious national collegiate body. I sought like minded people with whom I could collaborate and develop professionally – *fraternité*.

What Happened?

I was invited to attend a meeting and dinner for HERDSA Fellows at the 2011 conference. There I was introduced to other Fellows and the concept of "triads". Fellows are put into groups of three and called a "triad". It was great meeting all these fabulous people but I had trouble getting my head around how "triads" worked. I was fortunate enough to meet the other two members of my "triad" but when I left the conference I still wondered how it all worked. The day after the conference I met my mentor face to face for the first time. We drove up to Mount Tambourine and indulged ourselves in the local cafes as we walked and talked and nurtured *fellowship*. We still keep in touch and hope to pursue common research interests in the future.

HERDSA Fellows must renew their fellowship every three years. As I approach the end of my first year as a Fellow, I wonder what I have done. My fellow "triad" members are up for renewal at the moment. This process has helped me to better understand the reflective and collegiate function of a "triad". It has helped me get to know my colleagues and opened doors for future collaboration and professional development. It has also reminded me of the importance of self-directed learning, goal setting and reflection.

For me, the experience of completing a HERDSA Fellowship has empowered me to grow professionally. Since becoming a



HERDSA Fellow I have won: a Curtin Citation *for academic leadership, staff development and scholarship of teaching and learning by an early career academic in higher education*; and a Vice Chancellor's Award for Excellence and Innovation in the category of *providing inspirational leadership*. This year I have been invited to participate in the Women's Executive Development Leadership Program for Senior Academic Women. Participation in this program has provided me with a broad range of professional development opportunities.

What Does It Have To Do With *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*?

Throughout this reflective narrative I have alluded to some of the connections between the HERDSA Fellowship and *liberté* (voluntary), *égalité* (open to all) and *fraternité* (collegiate). Through this motto, which coincidentally is a triad, I am subtly sharing something of myself – I enjoy language, culture and the arts. More profoundly it speaks of passion and commitment to effect change to bring about reform and improvement. Becoming a HERDSA Fellow requires a passion for and commitment to professional

development, quality teaching and scholarship; perseverance with which results in continuous improvement. So be bold, be brave and become a HERDSA Fellow – then choose your own adventure.

Dr Susan Bolt is a senior lecturer at Curtin University and a HERDSA Fellow. Susan leads the Curtin Business School Peer Review of Teaching Program and chairs the Curtin Research in Higher Education Committee. Her research interests include higher education, scholarship of teaching and learning, professional development and organisational change.

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ALTC Awards and Citations for HERDSA Members

Last edition featured HERDSA members honoured in this year's Australian Learning and Teaching Council Awards and Citations. The following information about one further HERDSA member did not reach us in time for the last edition.

Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning

Dr Mark Stoney

Edith Cowan University

For sustained and extensive contribution through a range of engagement, service and teaching activities that ultimately create enhanced learning opportunities and outcomes for students.



News of Members

We would like to include a new column in each issue of the News, which would contain brief mentions of HERDSA member's recent achievements such as awards, books published, new positions etc.

For this we need members to contact us. To remind members a notice will appear in the Weekly Email News in good time to meet the deadline for the forthcoming issue.

We look forward to hearing from you.

100 days in 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) and members of its Strategic Advisory Committee. The role of the OLT, which now sits in the Higher Education Division in the Department of Industry, Innovation, Research, Science and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE), is to promote and support change in higher education institutions for the enhancement of learning and teaching. Approximately \$50 million is available under the Promoting Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education program over the next three and half years. The OLT will work with universities and other key stakeholders to contribute to quality improvement in learning and teaching, with a particular focus on innovative approaches to ensuring quality in the new demand driven environment.

The Minister also accepted all 17 recommendations from the report on the consultations undertaken by Ms Alison Johns from the Higher Education Funding Council for England which has become the blueprint for our approach. Implementing these recommendations has been the primary focus of the work of the OLT in our first 100 days.

This article outlines our actions and achievements since the OLT formally took responsibility for the suite of grants, awards and fellowships on 1 January 2012 and our responses to the ideas for innovation and change from the consultation process. But firstly, it is important to identify how the OLT interacts with other initiatives in the complementary suite of measures including regulation, performance information, standards and programs that focus on quality.

Where Do We Sit in the Broader Policy Agenda?

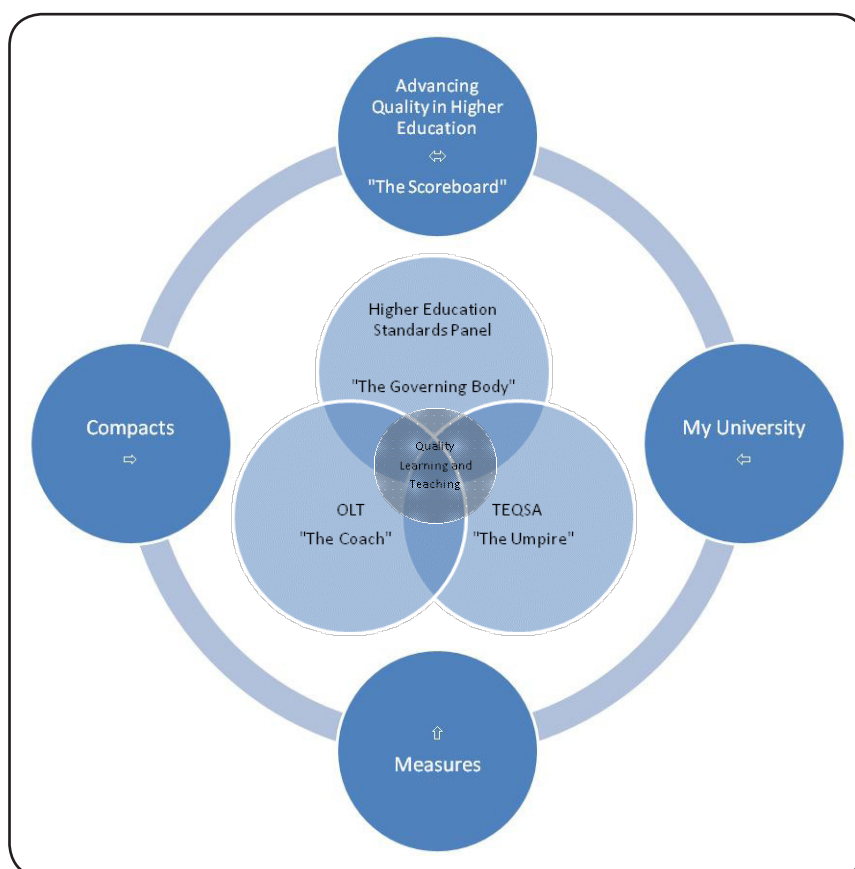
The Australian Government has committed to ensuring that universities and other higher education providers remain student

focussed and committed to quality and excellence in learning and teaching as enrolments increase. In addition, students have a right to open transparent information on which to base their decisions.

As one of the initiatives funded under Advancing Quality in Higher Education (AQHE), it is essential that the OLT builds strategic partnerships with other elements of the initiative, particularly TEQSA, the Higher Education Standards Panel and the AQHE Reference Group, and develops a shared conceptual understanding of quality teaching and learning in higher education. Being located within DIISRTE enables the OLT to work more effectively with departmental colleagues in the Higher Education Division (particularly those responsible for elements of the AQHE) and to leverage other programs and funding to enhance teaching quality and ensure a good

quality student experience. In addition, the closer alignment with industry and innovation brings with it an increased focus on the importance of high quality teaching in universities to producing graduates with the necessary attributes and skills, including generic skills, to more effectively contribute to the emerging needs of the economy.

The OLT has developed the following schematic as our contribution to unpacking and understanding the inter-relationships between these bodies. It builds on a sporting analogy which was promulgated throughout the consultation process, with the Higher Education Standards Panel (the governing body) developing and monitoring the Standards Framework; TEQSA (the referee) regulating and assuring the quality of sector; the OLT (the coach) supporting quality improvement and other initiatives





in the AQHE (the scoreboard) providing the metrics.

The OLT has commenced dialogue with the Panel, TEQSA and other branches within DIISRTE regarding the development of the non-threshold learning and teaching standards. Significant work has already been undertaken in the sector on learning and teaching standards and the Discipline Scholars Network has proposed that the OLT convene a forum in 2012 to clarify and define the role of discipline networks in contributing to the development of the standards as well as determining how the outcomes of previous standards projects can be used to sector-wide advantage, as the OLT's contribution to the process.

Where Are We Up To?

Innovation and development, as well as leadership grants, have been continued to facilitate scholarship and research into learning and teaching. A greater emphasis has been placed on commissioned work on strategic priorities, extension grants to support continued dissemination and embedding of completed learning and teaching projects, and seed funding for pilot projects which test and evaluate an original idea. Applications for the first round of grants have closed with the OLT receiving 66 compliant applications (35 for innovation and development, nine for leadership and 22 for seed funding).

The fellowship program provides us with a cadre of change agents that operate both within their organisations and across disciplines. Nominations for the fellowship program closed in February with nine national teaching fellowships and seven mid-career fellowships being received. Assessment is currently underway and it is anticipated that the successful nominations will be announced by the Minister in early June.

The awards program recognises and raises the status of teaching leaders in our higher education institutions. In response to the overwhelming support from the sector, the suite of awards including the citations, teaching and program awards, the Prime Minister's Award for Australian University Teacher of the Year and the Career Achievement Award is continuing. Nominations for citations close in June, and awards nominations close in July. The

awards will be presented at a national award ceremony in November in Canberra.

The OLT transition website went live on 23 December 2011. The Online Portal for the lodgement of grant application and award nominations is included in the website. Further development of the website will take place over the coming months, including work on re-designing the home page and improving the functionality of the search feature in the resource library, to bring it up to a comparable standard to that of the former Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) website. A logo design competition targeting students in design schools around the country is currently underway to develop unique branding for the OLT.

Upon its establishment, the OLT assumed management of: 215 current grant projects and fellowships; a further 25 in the final stages of completion; and 25 discipline, national and state-based promoting excellence networks, funded as part of the ALTC Legacy Program. Since October, 23 grants projects, and five fellowships have been completed. The learning and teaching networks – including HERDSA – are all active with the first round of six-monthly reports currently being received.

The OLT also has responsibility for ensuring completion of eleven Good Practice Reports, commissioned by the ALTC. These reports analyse the findings and outcomes of grant projects and fellowships addressing a particular topic, set the analysis in the context of a literature review and make recommendations for further work. The following reports have now been published on the OLT website: work integrated learning; assuring graduate outcomes; blended learning; assessment of science, technology, engineering and mathematics students; curriculum renewal; and supporting students' transition into higher education.

The sector was keen for the OLT to build strategic partnerships with international bodies to showcase the higher education sector and in particular the good practice examples from the networks and the grants projects, as well as learning from other international models of support for learning and teaching. The OLT recently hosted Professor Craig Mahoney, the CEO of the Higher Education Academy in the UK and has commenced dialogue with Dr Peter Coolbear, the Director of Ako Aotearoa –

New Zealand's National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence.

So What's Changed?

The ALTC left a strong foundation for the OLT to build on. In acknowledging the changed funding environment and the transfer of functions to the Department, suggestions from the sector for innovation or change included: a focus on projects and activities to bring about system change across the higher education sector, strengthening the process and structure of the grant and award programs, and strategies to increase Indigenous participation.

In addition to managing the grants, awards and fellowships program, the OLT has responsibility for commissioning work on issues of strategic significance to the Government and the higher education sector to inform policy development and practice in relation to learning and teaching. In its recent discussions the OLT's Strategic Advisory Committee acknowledged that inherent tensions exist in determining priorities for any commissioned work. Academics by-and-large relate to their discipline rather than the hierarchical structure in which they operate or their institution and if the OLT is to create real long-lasting change in learning and teaching, the focus needs to be on the discipline. However, if the focus moves too far away from the institutions, the agendas become narrower and less about system change and there is a risk of diminishing input from the institutional executive and less likelihood that the outcomes of any project or good practice recommendations will be implemented.

The sector's support for a focus on system change will see the OLT taking forward an agenda on three interlinking commissioned projects in 2012 that will help the sector prepare for the future in the demand driven environment: academic integrity; professionalisation of the academic workforce; and assessing graduate outcomes, including generic skills. While the OLT will not initially focus on a subject strand in the commissioned work, the Strategic Advisory Committee has prioritised the mapping, tracking and ensuring of learning outcomes for courses that are not professionally accredited and in response, the OLT will include two to three disciplines in the assessing graduate outcomes work.

With respect to strengthening the process and structure of the grant and award programs, the OLT will maintain a particular focus on dissemination of the outcomes of the grants projects, as well as support for award recipients to contribute to systemic change through knowledge sharing. The OLT will develop a comprehensive and rigorous review and evaluation strategy to collect and analyse data on the effectiveness and value for money of the programs which demonstrates which ideas are sustainable and add value. This will enable continuous improvement of the grants, awards and fellowships programs and enable the OLT to promote initiatives that are making a real difference. The critical importance of networks as a means of delivering systemic change in the sector is recognised. HERDSA's focus on promoting continuing scholarship in teaching and learning is a most welcome contribution to the field of knowledge and ongoing learning. As a priority, a formal evaluation of the networks

will be commenced this year to confirm effectiveness and outcomes.

There have been a number of ALTC projects which have examined Indigenous teaching and learning practices in Australia and in the work led by Professor Nereda White on the Good Practice Report, an overall picture and snapshot of good practice here and in North America and New Zealand is emerging. To ensure that the OLT is an initiative that is not just *for* Indigenous people, but also *by* them and *with* them, we have committed to good representation of Indigenous academics in the governance arrangements, on the Strategic Advisory Committee and on all three Standing Committees. The Good Practice Report includes a number of recommended approaches which are key to building success in Indigenous education, which will provide guidance in assessing, and commissioning, future work as will the upcoming report from the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Where to from here?

The OLT is still a "work-in-progress" and as recommended in the Johns report, the criteria and guidelines that were operated by the ALTC have not been overly revised in this first year to ensure a smooth transition.

Feedback from the sector on the Johns report is still encouraged and should be provided to the OLT at learningandteaching@deewr.gov.au by **30 April 2012** for consideration by the Strategic Advisory Committee at its May meeting, to inform program development in 2013.

EDITORS NOTE. *This article was kindly made available to HERDSA News by the Office for Learning and Teaching. I would like to express my thanks for the useful information that it contains about this new initiative of the Australian Federal Government to support learning and teaching in higher education.*

"Moving Forward" A Widening Participation Initiative for Primary Aged Pupils

By Carol Nairn

In the brave new Higher Education world, the promotion of social mobility and equality of opportunity is more important than ever before. Universities have a key role to play in shaping the aspirations of a new generation of educationally and politically engaged citizens, whether they are current or future students. Research increasingly shows that one-off, standalone interventions are of little value to raising and sustaining aspiration and attainment levels. Accordingly, a long-term, progressive strategy is essential to the cultivation of a successful widening participation programme.

The University of Chichester's Learner Progression Framework (LPF) is the cornerstone of a package of outreach initiatives, available free of charge, for target schools in low-participation neighbourhoods. Drawing on the aforementioned research and listening to our partner schools and colleges, we have devised the LPF to consolidate our work year on year.

The "Moving Forward" programme was introduced as a springboard into the opportunities offered to our target schools through the LPF. Research into barriers to progression has indicated that this

transition age is pivotal to pupils realising the opportunities available throughout their education (Sutton Trust, 2008). Evidence indicates that interaction with the "Moving Forward" programme will help to instil an "I Can" attitude before embarking on Key Stage 3 studies.

The activities offered are often a child's first experience of a university. Through this varied programme of both on and off campus activities the concepts of further and higher education are introduced in a fun and interactive way. The aim is to help raise awareness, aspirations and attainment at a crucial time in a student's

The diagram illustrates the progression of career guidance activities across the school's curriculum. A central timeline box lists the years: **Year 7**, **Year 8**, **Year 9**, **Year 10**, **Year 11**, **Year 12**, **Year 13**, and **UG/PG**.

Activities are organized into boxes around the timeline, with arrows indicating the years they apply to:

- Year 7:** Up For It Programme, Presentations, Parents/Carers Event.
- Year 9:** Presentations, HEI Mini Campus Visit, Parent/Carers Session.
- Year 10:** HE Awareness Day, Presentations, GCSE Support Sessions, E-Mentoring, Learning Skills Seminar, Parents and Carers Session.
- Year 11:** Multi Taster Days, College Progression Days, Learning Skills Seminar, Presentations, Parents and Carers, E Mentoring.
- Year 12:** Student Shadowing, ACCA Business Workshop, Children In Care Support, Taster Sessions, Year 12 Progression Day, Personal Statement Sessions, Mock Interviews, Pre and Post UCAS Workshops, Extended Project Workshops.
- Year 13:** Mock Interview Sessions, Student Shadowing, Uni Ready Workshops, Access Programme.
- UG/PG:** Student Support Services, Graduate On, Post Grad -Application Support, Careers Support, Refreshers Week, Mentoring—Level 2 to Level 1 students by subject.

The main focus is on raising aspiration and awareness of opportunities in both vocational and academic routes and is offered to all Year 6 students, ages 10/11, in mixed ability groups in feeder primary schools to our Widening Participation feeder target secondary schools.

Programme Details

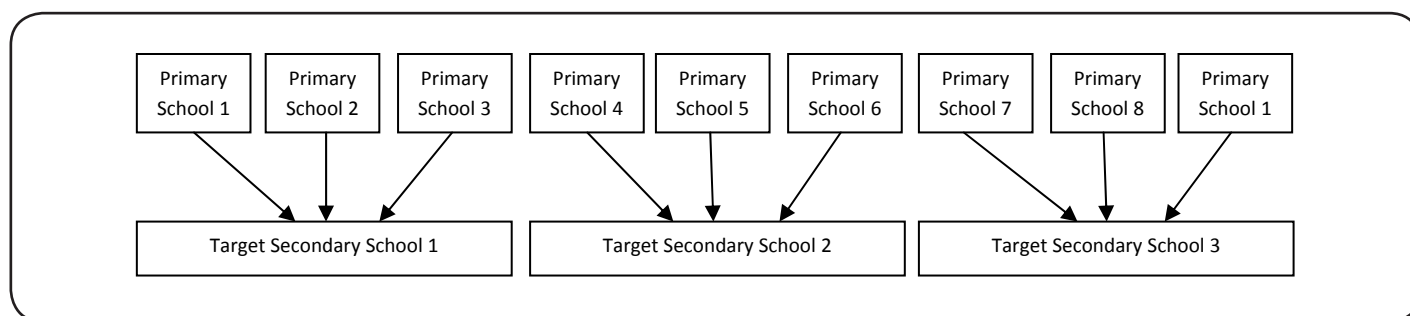
Students work on a ratio of 1:5 with a Student Ambassador on a range of activities that introduce the concept of further and higher education and progression pathways. The event offers an opportunity to interview then present their student ambassador's personal journey from primary education to university, complete a jargon buster and explore the differences between HEIs across the UK.

In teams, working with Student Ambassadors, students explore the campus through a “Treasure Hunt” activity and play the “Star Student” game. The “Star Student” game¹ is an innovative giant floor game that has been developed by Northumbria University specifically for students on their transition between primary and secondary education. The game introduces the concept of further and higher education in a fun and interactive way. Team answers are given in Pictionary, Acting, Spell It or Multiple Choice format ensuring participation by all abilities.

Following on from the campus visit, Student Ambassadors return to school to work with students on activities such as designing their own university campus, looking at skills, hobbies and interests and courses available at degree level. Primary schools can customise the activities to dovetail with their curriculum i.e. a Design Technology competition where Student Ambassadors are invited back to school at a later date to choose the university they would apply for.

The mini-graduation evening gives an opportunity for teachers, parents, carers and students to celebrate their success throughout the programme. Students process in graduation attire and are presented with a Star Student Graduation Certificate by a senior university staff member. The opportunity allows dissemination of how the programme will support the students in their next phase of education.

Primary Model



Outcomes

The project has been such a success with demand outstripping supply to the extent that, in September 2011, we recruited a dedicated Widening Participation Primary Project Officer to deliver the programme across the region. Feeder primary schools into our 32 Widening Participation target secondary schools are exploring ways in which the programme will support their existing transition support and can be customised to each school as required.

Pilot year 09/10 – 450 Year 6 pupils participated from 6 primary schools

10/11 – 680 pupils from the locality will participate by July 2011

11/12 – 1800 pupils will have the opportunity to participate.

Reusable resources now ensure the sustainability of the programme and we are currently exploring links with the Primary Education provision at the University to include teacher education students with the possibility of accreditation for their involvement.

Working with pupils in a low progression neighbourhood the key success has been parental engagement. The mini-graduation ceremonies attracted in excess of 150 attendees per evening which the schools had not anticipated. Many of the visitors had little or no prior experience of further and higher education and gave the Widening Participation team the opportunity to break down barriers with a different target group in their local community as well as raising an awareness of lifelong learning. A follow up parental event is planned with the students now participating in the Year 7 outreach programme in our target secondary schools.

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Endnote

1 <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/brochure/visit/el/stargame/>

Carole Nairn has been working at the University of Chichester for six years during which time she has been involved in the development of the Widening Participation department. In her current role as WP Manager she leads a team of 4 WP outreach staff and is currently co-ordinating the role out of the new Widening Participation outreach programme across 52 regional schools and colleges. She believes that the customisation of any outreach programme to individual partner schools/colleges requirements is crucial to its success.

A background in Business education, both in state school and further education sectors, has provided a clear understanding of the requirements for partnership work to be effective.

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Call for Papers for Special issue of HERD

The role of the disciplines: alternative methodologies in higher education

Editors: Dr Frances Kelly, & Dr Ian Brailsford, The University of Auckland

Dates to Note:

Manuscript submission due: 31 May 2012; Anticipated Publication: late January 2013

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Frances Kelly (f.kelly@auckland.ac.nz) or Ian Brailsford (i.brailsford@auckland.ac.nz)



Negotiating new research identities through the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education

By Sarah Barradell, Sarah Down, Damian Spencer & Tai Peseta

The piece which follows is a conversation between colleagues who have been working together in the context of the Graduate in Higher Education Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at La Trobe University, Australia. Sarah D (Dentistry), Damian (Biochemistry) and Sarah (Physiotherapy) worked with Tai (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Centre) to complete their studies. Our goal in reflecting and writing collectively about it, is to offer HERDSA members some insight into the experiences and challenges of formal learning about higher education.

Tai

Graduate Certificates focused on university teaching, learning and curriculum (and more recently, on academic citizenship and practice) are in lots of ways the bread “n” butter of academic development work. I call it the bread “n” butter because it’s where I have seen the most profound shifts in academics’ thinking and practice take place. It’s the context where participants often really struggle with fundamental aspects about the organisation and politics of academic life; where they wrestle with the contradictions of the student experience and how to be with it productively; where being a student again reminds them of what it feels like to be in a classroom and perhaps, to struggle with not-knowing; and where they are introduced to a new field of research and scholarship— that is, higher education – complete with its oddities about the conduct of inquiry. On the other side of the ledger, Graduate Certificates are known to provide a new and additional context for academic community, fellowship, and for time away from all the busy-ness to re-think and refresh practice.

The experience of academics’ learning in Graduate Certificates, of navigating, reading, conducting research into their higher education practice and then writing about it, is now a reasonably well-researched phenomenon (Ginns, Kitay & Prosser,

2008; Prosser et. al., 2006). It seems fair to say that the outcomes remain patchy: the main finding about the experience of learning in a Graduate Certificate seems to be that “it depends”. Whether academics engage fully in the opportunities offered by a Graduate Certificate depends on it being tied to mandatory probationary requirements, whether there’s workload recognition, how teaching and curriculum development is viewed and valued in their disciplines and departments, whether they have promotion in their sights, whether they have responsibilities to lead curriculum change, whether they are teaching small or large classes, whether the course can help them achieve something they value themselves, and so on. None of this is new to folks working in educational and academic development. The course sits in that odd space between personal development, orienting participants to the culture/policies of the university, and learning the “stuff” of a new discipline that can apply to their context and practice. It can however mean that teachers of Graduate Certificate programs are often caught up in designing curriculum that is less about a commitment to the field of higher education, than it is about the manifestation of institutional politics.

At La Trobe, the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Curriculum, Teaching and Learning enables participants to focus on aspects of their practice that can form the basis of a research project. Participants read and engage with the literature, design the research, carry it out, and then write it up for publication, with external peer review. It’s an ambitious undertaking, particularly because the move from “new to the academy”, “disciplinary teacher/professional practitioner”, “disciplinary researcher” to “researcher of higher education” entails a number of identity transitions. What follows is an account from three participants:

Sarah D (Dentistry)

Undertaking the Graduate Certificate required me to participate in another culture. It necessitated the acquisition and development of a new skill set through re-learning. As a consequence, my status transition from authoritative professional clinician in Dentistry to novice scholar in higher education, elicited a range of emotions, difficulties and challenges. The initial impact generated a sense of vulnerability; promoting the realisation of me needing to be reliant on my own devices to achieve the formidable in a finite period of time, without a complete set of tools. I had moved out of familiar territory and become the unconscious incompetent again.

The volume of material to source and categorise for the projects I carried out required me to appropriately identify and utilise the available resources and the expertise to implement the “funnel effect”. The application, integration and implementation of concepts were challenged by my non-expert stance, limited knowledge and uniformed opinion. I worked hard to define the parameters for my project, aiming to be realistic about my expectations although knowing that there were yet further considerations to be defined, overcome and mastered.

As I progressed through the programme of study, I engaged with an unfamiliar higher education language. It sometimes felt a potentially threatening and challenging vocabulary but it demanded me to apply them to my context, having now become a participant in an unfamiliar discourse. Identifying and arguing a new angle to the conversations in the literature meant uncovering themes and debates from a myriad of words, critically analysing their inference as well as reflecting on relevancy: in essence, I was exploring and participating in the scholarship of integration.

The experience of the Graduate Certificate proved to be a sound training ground for a novice researcher and academic to learn from. The non judgemental and constructive critiquing of the tasks required was considered, enabling me to continue development not only as a professional teacher but also to progress further opportunities in Higher Education with confidence. The enculturation into a different “community”, way of thinking and approach, transformed the experience into an inspiring, enlightening and exciting foray into previously uncharted (new) territory.

Damian (Biochemistry)

One issue with undertaking research outside your expert space is the difficulty in assessing quality, both in the field of literature and one’s own research. While identifying quality research is inherent in your discipline, it is often hard to define. The leading authorities, the conversation starters, the key players are all well-known to researchers in a field. If you are not one yourself, then you are at least an acquaintance or collaborator to one, and probably regularly share ideas at conferences and meetings. However, in a new discipline, this is not the case. While this lack of understanding may actually aid in eliminating personal bias in database searching and reading literature, it does present an issue in determining the key, pivotal articles in comparison to smaller, less significant studies. Fortunately for me, while wading through research into international students’ approaches to learning, I attended a workshop by John Biggs, and this was pivotal in setting me at least in the right direction. Nevertheless, for each and every article, a detailed appreciation of the methodology and limitations was still required before evaluating the rigour and reliability of the data presented. I must admit I felt like a first year student again.

Further to this, determining the scope of a “body of research” was also difficult. As a cancer researcher, I know what makes a stand-alone study. It is not finding a cure for cancer. Nor is it studying a single patient. I can discern the span of a novel project, but I would struggle to articulate it to someone outside of the field. In a new field of research, supervisor or peer input was therefore paramount in determining the extent of a research proposal. Often, much iteration was required before settling

on a decent and achievable project. And this was all before the research began!

Finally, and probably the most important issue I faced, was that I came with baggage. In the molecular sciences, it’s rare for new researchers to have expectations of what the results will show, because no one starts with pre-conceived notions about the inner workings of a cell. As a teacher however, I have spent many years observing students’ habits, approaches and learning styles, and it was difficult to not predict or pre-empt the outcome of a phenomenographic study simply based on my (often subjective) anecdotal evidence. Nevertheless, this also had its benefits, as I found myself engaging with my subject material to a greater extent, and knowing that I could use my findings to improve and further my teaching practice.

Sarah B (Physiotherapy)

I was a practising physiotherapist before my life as an academic. Shaped by years of particular professional thinking and practising, I held specific ideas about research – some of which I was not even aware I possessed, being so much a part of my disciplinary identity. My prior experiences had championed the scientific method. “Qualitative” research had been a dirty word when I completed both my undergraduate and postgraduate physiotherapy studies. A distinction between methodology and methods had never been established. In fact, much of the physiotherapy research that I read and critiqued used those terms interchangeably, and I had thought nothing of it.

So a significant challenge for me was coming to grips with different terminology—words such as epistemology, ontology and axiology for example – and learning why these words matter. Feeling like a novice all over again, I kept tackling this in the first instance because I thought I ought to. “Ought to” because I could sense that grasping these ideas was somehow critical; persisting despite the ideas often being very foreign to me and sometimes being very far removed from what I had “known” for so long. “Ought to” suggests an obligation and in some ways, it was, if I was to shift my thinking and practice. By understanding different research paradigms, theoretical frameworks and methodologies, I have gained important insights regarding my own research and that of others. Firstly, I am more equipped to determine the standpoint of the higher education research that I read,

to interpret its findings, its conclusions, and judge its quality. In turn, I can better position my own research and engage with existing conversations as well as create new ones. These insights not only apply to how I view higher education research but equally to how I now scrutinise research of my own discipline, for I have come to learn that these research frameworks also apply to the scientific method, albeit implicitly.

Tai

I worked closely with Sarah, Damian and Sarah for a good part of a year and it is still salutary to read their accounts of learning to navigate the field of higher education, their experiences of learning in the course, and changes to ideas of research especially in the disciplines within which they were schooled and trained. Like any teacher, I too need to be reminded that learning of the kind outlined here, carries all the hallmarks of vulnerability, challenge and transformation.

Further information about La Trobe’s *Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Curriculum, Teaching and Learning* can be found at: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ctlc/gche.html>

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- Sarah Down is a Senior Lecturer and Year Coordinator in the Department of Dentistry & Oral Health, La Trobe Rural Health School. Damian has been a Lecturer in the School of Molecular Sciences at La Trobe University for 5 years and researches into the molecular events of various diseases, including cancer. Sarah Barradell started at La Trobe in 2008 as a Lecturer and is now completing her PhD part-time. Tai is a Senior Lecturer in the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Centre at La Trobe University.*

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Action-Learning to Build Leadership Capacity: A National Experiment in Science & Mathematics

By Manjula Sharma, Will Rifkin, Stephanie Beames, Elizabeth Johnson,
Cristina Varsavsky, Susan Jones, Brian Yates, Marjan Zadnik,
Andrea Crampton, Kelly Matthews & Simon Pyke

Introduction

Significant change in university teaching requires a “movement”, says sociologist of higher education Parker Palmer (1992). Individual innovations need to gain collegial support and become fodder for widespread conversations, he argues. Then, one needs to establish reward structures to sustain this “movement” for change. This strategy is being applied in our Leadership project, funded by the Commonwealth Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) – *Fostering institutional and cultural change through the Australian network of university science educators*, which is funded for 2011–2013.

We aim to shift practices in university teaching of science and mathematics away from traditional, didactic, content-heavy delivery. Many worthwhile developments in university science teaching have failed to be adopted widely. That has made those pushing for such change all the more ready to attempt a new approach, or at least an approach that is new to them. Our initiative is a multi-pronged effort to develop the capacity of effective teachers to influence policy and practice within their schools, faculties, and institutions.

The capacity to influence is to be raised via action-learning projects that are now underway by teams of academic staff, academic developers, and associate deans (education). These efforts are being supported by communities of practice in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) that we are consolidating around areas of need – academic standards, laboratory and inquiry learning, and new media and communication. Project team members are being guided in cloaking their worthy undertakings in the language and rationale of key performance indicators of a dean and the legislated mandates seen

by a vice-chancellor. The action-learning within these projects is thus not simply about teaching and student learning or even about building capacity in the scholarship of learning and teaching. It is about the exertion of influence up to the institutional level and potentially beyond.

This influence is to be undergirded by communal support, specifically by establishing a national network, the Science and Mathematics network of Australian university educators (SaMnet), which is being formed via our OLT Leadership project. SaMnet, launched in July 2011, has evolved from: (a) regional hubs focusing on science teaching and learning, such as the Sydney-basin Network of University Science Educators (SNUSE); (b) discipline-based, education special interest groups; (c) communities of interest formed around projects funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council; and (d) a national conference on university science teaching that has run for 18 years, the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education.

This article outlines the issues that stimulated our effort as well as the strategies that we are pursuing and underlying rationale. We also outline early outcomes. A key objective of this project is to sustain the SaMnet movement beyond the two years of OLT funding. So, we seek from readers both constructive comment and identification of suitable academic developers and staff to help build and retain critical mass for SaMnet.

Why This Combination of Strategies?

The Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) and its predecessors have funded many innovations in university science teaching (e.g., Carrick Institute,

2007), more than 40 at last count. This focus reflects the common critique, that science disciplines are plagued by content-heavy, didactic teaching that is primarily assessed by exams. Despite development of effective teaching practices, their dissemination and adoption has been seen to dissipate when funding ceases (*D-Cubed Newsletter*, 2011), with much of their potential impact yet to be realised.

One can characterise the sector as needing to engage in the stages of reform outlined by American sociologist of higher education, Parker Palmer (1992), whose work we referred to above. Stage 1 encompasses inventions of isolated individuals. In stage 2, those developments become the work of mutually supportive groups, which would include the SoTL communities of practice that we are forming. Stage 3 sees widespread public discussion of issues and questions emerging, such as through regional and national forums that we initiating or contributing to. Stage 4 involves establishing reward structures to sustain the change movement. Formation of such a movement requires distributed leadership to drive change and embed new policies and practices within departments, schools, disciplines, and institutions.

The time is ripe for such a movement as leaders of SaMnet and discipline-based science networks funded by the OLT have been invited by Carol Nicoll, then director of the ALTC and now director of the new Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA), to have their members inform government regulatory initiatives (Carol Nicoll, personal communication, 22 August 2011). Such an invitation to align specific improvements in classroom practices with government mandates should enable innovative lecturers to improve their relationships with heads of school, deans,

and administrators on up to offices in the Chancellery. The operative term here is “should enable”, and the question is how this potential can be realised.

At the same time, a collective voice in this nascent movement is calling more loudly for reward structures for education-focused science academics. That was evident, for example, in a focus group run by authors Beames and Rifkin in Brisbane in February 2011. This thrust to push widespread adoption of agreed measures of scholarly teaching is supported by ALTC teaching awards and initiatives for peer review of teaching. The uptake of suitable reward structures will be hastened if they resemble the traditional reward structures of academia, which in the case of science involves a focus on refereed publication. To this end, SaMnet’s leaders are identifying, developing, publicising, and supporting modes of refereed SoTL publication that will enable network members to advance.

Opportunities for collaborative relationships across the sciences, initiatives to document and spread local impacts, and appropriate and consistent reward structures require a support network. They are also necessary to sustain that network, or so Palmer (1992) has argued. Sustaining the network, and the movement that it enables, would permit academics in science and mathematics to speak more clearly as “one voice” in relation to government regulation and support. That is critical in times when not only are regulatory and budgetary measures being reformulated, but university enrolments in science and mathematics disciplines are generally in decline. At the same time, the agenda for inclusion of non-traditional university students may require substantial shifts in approaches to teaching and resourcing.

Theoretical Framework

We are not focusing on positional power but at both individual influence and collective influence (*i.e.*, Parker’s “movement”). In this respect, we are using influence as a definition of “leadership” along the lines of Marshall’s paper for the ALTC (2006). Furthermore, we are focusing on what Southwell and Morgan (2009) identify as “transformational leadership.”

To gain a critical mass of “co-leaders”, we are working across the sciences collectively. That seems appropriate given that Fairweather (2008) has found in the literature that

good teaching strategies can be adapted readily to be effective in a range of science disciplines. In terms of social structure, we seek to support local action by teams with the communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) mentioned above, which are formed around key issues or themes. Aligning with these efforts are the OLT-funded discipline networks in biomedical science, chemistry, biology, and mathematics as well as self-initiated networks in physics and geosciences and our own national SaMnet network.

This sort of national initiative to support the generation of innovations and leadership of change has been pursued in the US by Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL) (2011). PKAL has been supported by the US National Science Foundation, as well as by charitable higher education foundations. It involves academics in “funded projects, national and regional meetings, community-building activities, leadership development programs, and publications that are focused on advancing what works in STEM education.” After two decades, PKAL leaders have concluded (2011):

What we are learning validates research on dissemination: how ideas evolve, emerge and are enhanced when like-minded colleagues pursue a common vision. This research also speaks directly to the impact of “near-peers” on influencing and persuading others to explore, adapt and assess approaches having demonstrable impact on strengthening STEM learning at all levels. The range and diversity of networks and collaborations now *making a difference* at the undergraduate level is remarkable; dissolving boundaries of discipline, geography, spheres of responsibility and career stage as they work to transform the undergraduate STEM learning environment in this country.

The PKAL strategy of working across science disciplines parallels our own plans. However, we are addressing a much smaller academic arena, 40 universities rather than the more than 5,000 institutions in the US, and we are providing various kinds of support, but no funding, for projects. It will be interesting to see how such differences in scale and differences in university-government relationships have an impact on the strategies undertaken.

Any national movement of this type relies on local initiatives, activities in the organisations where academics work. Case studies assembled by Tobias (1992) and

Gibbs (2005) support the notion that sustainable change in university science teaching occurs at the departmental level. One can infer from Gibbs that departmental governance represents a key intermediate structure within a university. It lies between individual (and disciplinary) practice on the one hand, which Gibbs (2005) portrays as the focus of traditional educational development, and, on the other hand, institutional policies as well as practices of hiring and promotion. Gibbs (2005) notes:

The kinds of networking, collating and discussion of practice and building functioning communities of practice that are associated with such change in individuals, are reasonably familiar to those involved in teaching development. However it also seems clear that the traditional educational development focus on changing individuals (or on individual practices or on individual courses) is also not enough. Without large scale strategic approaches, especially in crucial aspects of the teaching infrastructure, institutions have over the past twenty years changed much slower than have the environments within which they operate and have as a consequence run into severe problems that individual teachers feel powerless to tackle.

To foster insight into such institutional change, the SaMnet project is drawing on literature on change management and “organisational learning”. Kotter’s (1996) widely influential work on the stages of creating organisational change was employed by the ALTC-funded *Active Learning in University Science (ALIUS)* project. It represents a key starting point as the framework has resonated with ALIUS’s science audience, which suggests that it should resonate with SaMnet’s science audience, as well. That resonance has been confirmed in three workshop segments conducted by SaMnet to date.

The concept of “organisational learning” also appears relevant when one considers that not just individual practice but policies and practices of departments, schools, faculties, and institutions may need to shift. Research on organisational learning dates back to development by Argyris and Schoen (1974) of concepts of collective learning. Another benchmark is Senge’s (1990) popularisation of key elements of organisational learning, including “systems thinking” and “dialogue processes”. Rifkin and Fulop (1997) characterised important opportunities for collective learning as occurring when a “learning space” emerges,



where relationships of power are suspended, as in peer networks. A complementary line of research and practice is in “appreciative inquiry” (Thatchenkery and Chowdry, 2007), whereby one fosters change by building on strengths, rather than focusing on problems. That is relevant for expanding on successes from previous ALTC-funded projects and the local innovations of individual lecturers.

Action-Learning Projects

SaMnet’s action-learning projects are intended to enable innovative and effective lecturers to improve their own practices and the practices of colleagues and then ultimately to help change the culture of university teaching in science and mathematics. Case studies of practice locally and globally in educational settings suggest that action-learning projects by educators are a particularly effective means of stimulating change (OECD, 2001; Helen Wyatt, School Education Director, personal communication, 25 March 2011).

The action-learning projects being supported by SaMnet involve:

A. Multi-specialty teams – A local team is assembled, with SaMnet’s help if needed, constituting an innovative lecturer, a senior academic mentor, the faculty’s associate dean (education or teaching and learning), and an academic developer. Not all team members need to come from the same university. In late 2011, teams coalesced when we invited proposals for action-learning projects. Proposals were submitted on a pro forma that identified the specialties that we felt each team needed, e.g., a view across the faculty or across the university or an historical sense of approaches that would not work. The proposal also represented an outline of a team’s project plan, and it called for identification of key stakeholders and the challenges of getting them on board.

B. Workshops – Team members attend local workshops at least once a year for insights into pursuing their projects as well as to learn strategies for leading change. The local workshops, conducted in five capital cities, link project participants with colleagues whom they can meet face-to-face. As of 1 March 2012, we are mid-way through the first round of these workshops. Periodic national workshops are planned for May to August 2012 as teleconferences/Skype meetings. The specific aim is to enable members of teams with similar projects to

connect with one another, e.g., participants in the eight projects across the country in chemistry can talk and members of the four project teams focusing on first-year issues can engage with each other. Keeping face-to-face workshops local and national workshops online reduces cost and increases chances of sustainability. We go through the cycle of workshops twice, once in 2012 and once in 2013, with teams having two years to pursue their projects.

C. SoTL support – Team members are being guided in authoring and publishing in two areas: (a) case studies on their educational strategies and (b) case studies on their efforts for organisational change. Editors of two Australian journals in the scholarship of teaching and learning are preparing to welcome these publications to enable project team members to earn credit in “the traditional academic reward structures of science”.

D. No funding – Importantly, these action-learning projects are not funded by SaMnet. Some teams have already gained internal support, which signals the significance of the project to department, school, and faculty priorities. We are working with other teams to cultivate department, school, or faculty endorsement if not funding. The lack of funding from SaMnet is part of our aim to establish capacity-building activity that is sustainable beyond the two-year horizon of the OLT funding. In addition, we seek to make leading change part of the “day job” of key members of academic staff. That is what makes SoTL publication from these projects so important, as innovating and leading change can then be construed to be part of an academic’s research time. Such research outputs should be particularly valued in teaching-intensive universities and in teaching-focused positions in research-intensive universities.

Outcomes So Far

We had a launch of SaMnet for a key target audience at the annual education conference of the Australian Council of Deans of Science (ACDS) in July 2011. That was a month before our OLT funding arrived, but nine months after we had formally started assembling ten key players from around the country into the project’s steering committee (including former ALTC grant holders, associate deans, known SoTL scholars, and “rising stars”). The forty delegates at the ACDS conference

assessed an initial draft of our application form for action-learning projects. That provided valuable input and alerted these stakeholders, mostly associate deans (education), about our initiative.

SaMnet was formally launched at the national Australian Conference for Science and Mathematics Education in Melbourne in September 2011, being presented in a plenary session to more than 100 delegates. That venue enabled members of SaMnet’s steering committee to answer questions about SaMnet and the action-learning projects. A formal call for proposals for action-learning projects followed presentation of SaMnet to the annual general meeting of the ACDS in mid-October 2011. By early December 2011, we had 21 successful proposals for projects involving 85 academics nationally across 15 universities.

These projects are based in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart, Adelaide, and Perth. They range from building links between mathematics and biology subjects in which that mathematics is to be employed to changing first-year laboratories in physics to a more inquiry-based approach.

Members of SaMnet’s steering committee have provided constructive advice in response to the project proposals. Each one has also selected one or more projects for which they will serve as a “critical friend,” a form of mentoring meant to represent an occasional “light hand on the tiller”. They will thus be using their expertise where it can add the greatest value though they will not be driving the project. Leadership of the project remains within the action-learning team, which enables more individuals to gain capacity in day-to-day leadership, in handling the hurdles that often arise when seeking change within a school or department.

Our workshop series has begun, as noted earlier. The morning of each workshop focuses on having teams develop the next step in their project. It also addresses approaches to publishing on their efforts, such as considering research methodologies. The afternoon introduces insights on leadership from experienced leaders of change in university science, such as a former Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). We also provide a first taste of principles of leading change from the management literature, such as Kotter’s eight essential

steps to implementing and embedding organisational change. These principles are presented in a form translated for an academic setting. Participants are asked to complete worksheets to determine the principle's or model's relevance to their own project initiative.

Workshop activities are designed to have members of a single team practice working with one another, to have members of different teams compare their approaches, rationale, and experiences, and to enable members at the same level (e.g., senior academic mentors) to be able to talk with one another. Workshop activities are predominantly participant-centred; no PowerPoint slides are employed during the day.

Conclusions

Formulating our multi-pronged effort has been a learning experience in itself. Each element has needed to support agendas ranging from the micro – such as existing educational interests among innovative lecturers – to the macro – impending government regulation and changing student demographics. We are seeking collaboration among people in similar roles in the same discipline as well as in different roles in order to extend capacity within project teams. We see the sciences and mathematics as having disciplinary differences but also common aims and challenges. For the individuals involved, we are drawing on altruistic values for serving students through wider adoption of effective teaching practices. We are also drawing on more personal drives for garnering the rewards of promotion, feeling a sense of belonging to a larger community, and enhancing one's capacity for taking on more satisfying work.

Our project evaluator has suggested that we should consider the project successful in stimulating 21 action-learning projects without providing funding for teaching relief or administrative support to the teams. An insight here is that there is already a notable measure of trust and good will in the science and mathematics teaching community and a certain readiness to "front up" and put in effort toward improving teaching as part of a national initiative.

The SaMnet effort to date has involved a time-consuming process of "ramping up," as the mutually supporting strategies that we are employing take some consideration,

and illustration, for participants to comprehend fully. As with many such initiatives, we continue to wrestle with how best to implement the next step and how to articulate these steps amongst the demands of seasonal academic terms, e.g., identifying when we can get attention to review a proposal, to talk with a "critical friend", or to submit an abstract for a conference presentation. One might conclude that we are not only aiming to enhance the leadership capacity of innovative lecturers, we are seeking to develop our own leadership capacities. In addition, we need to systematise the process of leading SaMnet so as to make it self-sustaining, essentially to find the resonances between the concepts of "succession" and "success." In this pursuit, we welcome your advice and your participation.

More information at: <http://www.samnet.edu.au>

Contact us at: SaMnetAustralia@gmail.com

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- Biographical note:** *The authors are members of the steering committee for the Science and Mathematics network of Australian university educators (SaMnet). They include ALTC Scholars in science, former ALTC grant holders, and associate deans (education). They are from the U of Sydney, QUT, La Trobe, Monash, UTas, Curtin, Charles Sturt, UQ, and the U of Adelaide. Assoc Prof Sharma is the project leader, and Assoc Prof Rifkin drafted this article.*
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Researching Higher Education Symposium, Auckland, New Zealand, September 2011

By Neil Haigh

In 2010, the New Zealand Branch of HERDSA held an inaugural **Researching Higher Education Symposium**. The very positive response to that event made our decision to offer a second symposium inevitable. So, in September 2011, we gathered again at AUT University and Auckland University. The “we” represented 50 participants, who included 3 Australian colleagues and one from Hong Kong. We were delighted to attract this number because we were competing against Rugby World Cup events and the associated demand for accommodation in Auckland. The number also helped ensure the occasion was relaxed, relatively informal and intimate – i.e. a boutique affair!

The overall format for the one and half-day programme remained largely the same as for 2010. On Thursday 15th, we began the day with a round of introductions which also gave us an appreciation of our wide-ranging research interests, activities and needs. This was followed by a session on *Walking the talk of paradigms* in which AUT university teachers presented two case studies of their current higher education research.

Nicola Westberry, Sue McNaughton and Helen Gaeta: Teachers’ thoughts and practices in relation to video conferencing.

Dallas Nesbitt: Learning and teaching strategies for the Japanese Kanji Classroom.

This was a sequel to one of the most popular sessions in the first symposium on *Diverse Paradigms for Higher Education Research* (presented by Lynne Giddings and Barbara Grant). This time the researchers had the brief to not only describe and reflect on their research: they also talked about their paradigm positioning and how it informed and was manifest in their research. The session helped bring to life the notion of paradigm positioning and what may be involved in thinking about this matter when conceiving new research projects.

Six workshop sessions were offered over the course of the day. *Designing and implementing surveys* (Tony Harland, Otago University), *Troubling words: Foucauldian discourse analysis in higher education* (Barbara Grant, University of Auckland); *“And so betwixt them both”: bringing humanities research into higher education*; (Ian Brailsford, University of Auckland); *Validating mixed methods research: a matter for debate* (Lynne Giddings, AUT University); *Writing for HERD: A variety of genre* (Barbara Grant and Tai Peseta, HERD editorial team members); *Mixed methods research* (Amanda Gilbert, Victoria University).

Interspersed was a plenary session by Bruce Macfarlane (University of Hong Kong) on *A voyage across the seascape of higher education research: forerunners, pathfinders and pathtakers*. Deploying the notion of a seascape as a metaphor and image, Bruce identified “islands” within which the research activities and associated publications of these three categories of HE research voyagers might be located. He concluded that higher education scholars are currently mainly located on either “policy” or “learning and teaching” islands and that there are challenges to getting people to move between these islands. Bruce’s session provided an invaluable broader context for the focus of the workshop sessions and anticipated the forthcoming special issue of HERD on The Development of Higher Education as a Research Field.

As a concluding session on the first day, participants had the opportunity to think about and share their learning during the day and its implications for their on-going research.

On Friday, most participants came back for a mentored working session on their on-going research projects. Initially, they spent time individually thinking about particular aspects in the light of their day one experiences. Then, in groups that included

an experienced researcher, they reviewed what they had been thinking about and invited feedback and suggestions. This process took up most of the morning which culminated on a report back on what had been the immediate benefits of this work. This part of the programme was again appreciated and valued

Project development format is fabulous

and the overall format for the two day programme continues to be well received.

Keep the current structure – just the right amount of activity on the first day and the second more intense personal research day was invaluable

I think it is great as it is – and I have been recommending it to others as a model for research development as something to come along to next time. I find the first day is inspiring and informative, and the second day is extremely practical and helpful.

When seeking feedback, we asked participants to identify topics that they would like to have repeated (even with the modest-sized group, there was some understandable frustration about clashing sessions). It is notable that all of the topics addressed in the two symposia have come up as requested repeats. And, we will have no difficulty constructing an agenda for the next session given the helpful suggestions for new topics including Kaupapa Maori research (unfortunately postponed this year), interdisciplinary research, collaboration in HE research, focus groups, developing and managing new research relationships, the history of methodologies and methods for HE.

While we are understandably pleased with the continuing very positive response to the two symposia, an underlying concern which is also shared with the organisers of the Tertiary Research in New Zealand (TERNZ) conference is that we hold on to the ambience that we currently have. Participants echo this view and concern.

I also understand why you might like to advertise more widely to attract more people but I think one of the strengths of the Symposium is its size. It's small and intimate enough to get to talk to most people, which is particularly helpful in light of the sharing that happens on Day 2.

“Keep it small, friendly, and a great resource for contact, help and inspiration.”

With such advice and encouragement, we are looking forward the Researching Higher Education Symposium 2012.

*Neil Haigh, AUT University, On behalf of
the Organising Committee.*

Note: The resources provided during the symposia are available from the HERDSA New Zealand WNEW site at <http://www.herdsa.org.nz/course/view.php?id=8>

The Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand (TERNZ) Conference 2011

By Amanda Gilbert

(TERNZ) 2011 conference was held at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), New Zealand in November 2011, with the theme of learning in higher education. Organised by Amanda Gilbert from VUW, Tony Harland from The University of Otago and Stanley Frielick from AUT University, the conference focused on teaching and learning research in higher and tertiary education and was open to academics from all disciplines. Sixty people attended; most were from around New Zealand with a few coming from Australia and further afield. TERNZ 2011 was sponsored by Ako Aotearoa – the NZ National Centre for Tertiary Training Excellence, HERDSA(NZ) and Victoria University of Wellington.

TERNZ has been held annually in NZ Universities since 2002 and since 2009 has been linked to HERDSA NZ (Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia) as its annual NZ conference. Its philosophy is different from most academic conferences in that *“it is based upon the view that we as academics, just like our students, learn most effectively in an interactive setting in which our own experience is valued. It aims to promote the idea that the most valuable kind of research into learning and teaching is that which draws directly upon our work as teachers and learners from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds.”* (<http://www.herdsa.org.nz/Ternz/2011/>).



A word cloud created by one host group at the end of TERNZ 2011

The conference is structured around a series of “host group” sessions which are interspersed between streamed research presentation/discussion sessions. The research sessions generally last between 45min and one hour, of which only about 15 minutes is spent in formal presentation. The remainder of the session is used for discussion or participation in an activity based on the work presented. Delegates then return to their host groups to feed back on their experiences of the different sessions and to explore common themes that have arisen throughout the conference. The conference concludes with a final plenary where groups present their conclusions and

ideas. Plenary presentations are often quite creative and provide a relaxed conclusion to a very inspiring and intellectually stimulating two days.

TERNZ 2011 opened with a reception which included the launch of a report published by ACER and Ako Aotearoa entitled “Student engagement in New Zealand’s universities”. This report, edited by Alex Radloff, is the culmination of collaborative work undertaken by ACER and staff from New Zealand universities investigating data collected from the AUSSE 2009 survey. The aim of the project was to improve understanding of the results and to



Contributors to the ACER/Ako Aotearoa Publication (left to right) Keith Comer of University of Canterbury, Stephen Marshall of Victoria University, Erik Brogt of University of Canterbury, Ineke Kranenburg of AUT University and Malcolm Rees of Massey University.



Linda Leach and Nick Zepke are presented with the TERNZ medal by Amanda Gilbert, TERNZ conference organiser

advance follow-on initiatives for increasing student engagement throughout the sector. The report can be downloaded from the Ako Aotearoa website (<http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/student-engagement>).

This year's programme included a wide variety of interesting peer reviewed presentations on all aspects of tertiary education research. Some papers had a uniquely New Zealand focus, asking participants to consider the needs of Māori academics or describing how responses

to Associate Professor Nick Zepke and Dr Linda Leach of Massey University. The following are excerpts from their nomination for the award.

"As their publication record ... shows, they have been particularly prolific over the past ten years but this has been built on career-long productivity. Their work arises out of an intense interest in adult learning and more recently this has encompassed the broader area of student retention, engagement and learning."

in the aftermath of Christchurch's earthquake affected students' learning. Others looked at interesting and creative methodologies for educational research, such as the use of visual ethnographic data collection (in the form of collages) or the use of design thinking to address complex educational challenges. There were also a number of discussions on curriculum design and development. In many cases the presentations were based on work in progress rather than necessarily reporting empirical findings allowing scope for feedback and development of ideas through discussion. The full programme for TERNZ 2011 can be found on the TERNZ website (<http://www.herdsa.org.nz/Ternz/2011/>).

The conference dinner, held at Te Wharewaka o Poneke on Wellington's waterfront included the presentation of the TERNZ Research Medal for sustained contribution to the research environment in New Zealand

"They are teachers who embody the essence of the teaching-research nexus enshrined within the NZ Education Act through their research-led and informed teaching, reflecting adult learning and student engagement theory in practice, and through the inspiration they have provided to a generation of students and colleagues who work in the field of tertiary teaching in Universities, ITPs, PTEs and Wananga."

The closing plenary also included a closing address by Professor Stephen Rowland from the Institute of Education in London. Stephen acted as a rapporteur for the conference by attending sessions and discussing the ideas with participants throughout. His closing address was based on his experiences and discussions and was therefore of particular relevance to the delegates. He also raised challenging questions for the sector as a whole, pointing out the importance of a strong learning and teaching community in today's challenging educational environment.

The next event to be co-ordinated by HERDSA New Zealand is a one day Graduate Attributes Symposium: Academic Freedom and Critical thinking to be held in Wellington on May 15th 2012. Further information about this event can be obtained by contacting the HERDSA NZ committee chair, Tony Harland (tony.harland@otago.ac.nz).

Amanda Gilbert is a lecturer at the Centre for Academic Development at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Originally from a psychology background, she is particularly interested in the development of discipline knowledge, particularly in the sciences. At VUW she co-ordinates the tutor training provision of the university and also provides support for those who work with tutors in their courses. She is currently co-editing a book (with Fran Beaton at the University of Kent, UK) entitled "Developing Effective Part-time Teachers in Higher Education: New approaches to Professional Development" (Part of the SEDA series) due to be published by Routledge in September 2012.

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Loving to Learn Day

By Mark Morton



Loving to Learn Day began in 2006 at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. I had recently started a new position in Waterloo's Centre for Teaching Excellence (where I still work as Senior Instructional Developer), and it struck me that while there was an incredible amount of learning taking place on campus, there weren't many opportunities for students to pause and reflect on the joy of learning. The situation was perhaps analogous to eating: in our busy lives, eating sometimes becomes a mere means of getting fuel into our bodies, rather than a pleasure to be savored. The so-called "Slow Food" movement emerged, in fact, as an antidote to our hurried approach to food, and Loving to Learn Day was likewise intended to be a counterpoint to the tendency to see learning as a product rather than as a joyful process.

Since prizes are a good way to get people's attention, I created a contest that served as the focal point of the very first Loving to Learn Day. That inaugural contest, if I recall correctly, simply asked people to come up with an original "education quotation" – that is, a short and snappy statement that captured that person's perspective about learning. My favorite entry to that particular contest was one submitted by a grade-six student named Tommy Hunkeler: "If you keep your mind open, stuff will fall in." In subsequent years, I devised other contests for Loving to Learn Day. In 2010, for example, the contest invited people to write a paragraph describing a mentor who had changed their lives. One of the most moving submissions to that contest was the following, written by a student at the University of Waterloo:

I came to this university from a homeland where a history of wars and conflicts have made it a challenge for much of the populations to achieve even basic literacy. Like most of my friends, I might have quit school early in my years, and the school would not have even noticed. But I knew that my grandmother would notice such a truancy, and I dared not to provoke her fiery opposition. She made it clear to me that she believed an education was the only way to help myself, my family, and my country. She had not had the chance of a formal education herself, as a child,

so she would not let me throw away mine. Every week, when my parents and I visited her, she would ask me what I had learned at school, and why it was valuable. If she was satisfied with my response, she would nod and tell me to study hard again the next week. On the few times when my response did not satisfy, her fierce glare was enough to motivate me for the next few months. My grandmother is no longer in this world, but her belief in the value of an education remains instilled in me deeply.

In 2011, the contest question asked people to reflect on "the best thing you've learned in the past year," and we received countless entries on topics ranging from a Canadian war hero named David Cornell (written by a grade-five student), to the benefits of being persistent (written by a grade-eight student), to a new way of teaching electromagnetic wave theory (written by a university professor). This year, in 2012, the contest invited people to imagine a library of mysterious books: each book contained all knowledge of one subject, and whichever book you chose, you would instantly and effortlessly possess that knowledge. Which book, the contest asked, would you choose? As always, the hundreds of entries were extremely wide-ranging. A grade-two student wrote about choosing a book that explained how to make cakes; a grade-twelve student wanted a book that explained the meaning of all dreams; a professor of German wrote about selecting a book that would explain how the mind learns. My favorite entry, however, was this one:

My sister passed away three years ago. So the knowledge that I would like to gain from one of the mysterious books would be, "Where is she?" I'd like to know all there is to know about life after death – whether there is such a thing, and if so what it's like. When I die, will I be able to talk and laugh with my sister once again? In the years since she died, I've read many books about these questions. But none of them gave me answers that seemed certain or satisfying. I don't feel like I have any more knowledge about the question of life after death than I did three years ago. In fact, in many ways I feel more confused now than I did before she died. Having a book to answer all these questions would be a blessing. But only if the book's answer

is "Yes, you'll see your sister again." If I were to open up the book and see written on the pages, "She is gone forever," then I'd rather leave the book on the shelf.

There are four categories in each Loving to Learn Day contest (grades 1 to 8; grades 9 to 12; university students, staff, and faculty; and everyone else who doesn't fit into one of the first three categories), but all the categories respond to the same contest question. It can be challenging, I admit, to come up with a question each year that appeals as much to a six-year-old student as to a sixty-year-old professor. My effort, however, is rewarded not just by the hundreds of thoughtful reflections on learning that are submitted each year, but by the positive feedback that the contest receives: the winners are recognised in the regional media, and that coverage always prompts supportive emails from members of the public, who appreciate an event that brings together all learners regardless of their age. Loving to Learn Day has also been successful in that it has spread to other universities in Canada, and we've also received requests from universities in other countries – including Australia – to borrow both the name of the event and also the graphic that we developed for it. (And of course we always say yes to such requests!) It's gratifying, too, to have received entries from notable experts in the field of higher education, such as Ken Bain, author of *What the Best College Teachers Do*.

As you read these words, I hope that you're beginning to think about establishing an annual Loving to Learn Day at your own institution. After all, we all became involved in Higher Education because we love to learn. So why not create an opportunity for your students and community to pause in their busy lives to reflect on their learning and, above all, to celebrate their love for it?

Dr. Mark Morton is Senior Instructional Developer in the Centre for Teaching Excellence at the University of Waterloo. He can be reached at mmorton@uwaterloo.ca or through his eportfolio at www.markmorton.ca. Winning entries in Waterloo's 2012 Loving to Learn Day contest can be read online at <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/L2L>.

Cultivating Student Support Strategies – A Bumper Crop for 2012

By Angela McLean and Carole Scott

The influx of students on the streets around campus is just one of many noticeable changes that marks the end of summer in these southern climes. A great many of these students are new: to university study, to living away from home, to Dunedin, to New Zealand. The year ahead will have many challenges; how many of these students will manage to successfully blossom during their first year?

It is timely to consider student success in first year, not only because a new academic year is upon us, but also because the issue is clearly in focus for the international higher education environment. The cover of a recent Times Higher Education Supplement (see No. 2, 037, February 16–22, 2012) illustrates this, calling for the importance of maintaining engagement with students, particularly into their first months of study.

In this report we highlight the progress of two peer support strategies at the University of Otago that enhance such engagement in the first year. Although the strategies have been in place for a while, their growth and increased student involvement is new, and we are keen to share the success.

The Student Learning Centre (SLC) at Otago has a central role in assisting the development of students' skills in learning and engagement in university life. Workshops, individual consultations and sessions tailored to different disciplines are part of the range of activities on offer. But the SLC is also central when it comes

to enhancing opportunities for students to assist and support *each other* in their study.

One of the most successful peer learning activities at Otago is the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) programme. Adopted from the University of Wollongong, the PASS programme was initiated at Otago in 2008 in the School of Business, and has been expanding ever since. Typically aimed toward first year subjects, PASS sessions are facilitated by second or third year students who have studied the subject recently and done well. PASS sessions are supplementary to lectures and tutorials and the focus in sessions is two-fold: on discipline content, and also on general learning skills. PASS facilitators are able to share their experiences of learning techniques and study advice, as well as interesting, relatable – and often memorable – ways of learning content. For example, “Survivor”-type activities and sticky notes on foreheads are not uncommon sights in the PASS sessions. These unorthodox approaches developed by PASS facilitators are underpinned by a strong emphasis on interactive learning activities. Students identify the benefits of PASS, illustrated by the following quote “one hour in PASS is worth three or four hours struggling on my own” (PASS participant, 2010).

This year, PASS has bloomed. It has now spread across the Divisions of Science, Health Science and Humanities, with a total of 17 subjects offered in 2012. PASS is also expanding off-campus this year

with the inclusion of evening sessions in more of the Residential Colleges. There are 66 PASS facilitators running 73 PASS sessions per week at the SLC, and a further 35–40 sessions per week are planned at the Residential Colleges. This means that over 50% of first year students are accessing peer learning support via the PASS programme, which equates to 10% of the total student population. Table 1 provides an overview of the growth of the programme from 2011 to 2012.

A second peer support strategy in the SLC is the Student Leadership programme. This evolving programme provides an opportunity for second or third year undergraduate students to develop their skills in leadership and mentoring. Leaders involve themselves in a variety of voluntary activities, and receive ongoing training, support and mentoring from senior students and staff to develop and enhance their own leadership style. Of the many voluntary activities the Leaders undertake, one of the most important is their role as a contact person for our “Local” first year students. The term Local is given to first year students who are not living in a Residential College. Local students might be living at home, in a homestay or flatting. These students often miss opportunities to participate in orientation activities, and can sometimes fall through the cracks of university life. Local students are invited to attend a series of orientation activities designed especially for them. This year, the Student Leaders

Table 1. 2011 and 2012 PASS figures

PASS at Otago	No. of subjects	No. of facilitators	No. of SLC sessions per week	No. of Residential College sessions per week
2011	12	37	64	11
2012	17	66	73	35–40

arranged an “Amazing Race” activity as a way of engaging our Local students. From this, Leaders have been assigned their own small group of Local students to tend. The Leaders’ role in maintaining weekly contact with each Local student is an important part of enhancing the first semester experience as they adjust to life at Otago.

Crucial to the successful propagation of these peer support programmes is a dedicated and passionate team of staff and students. The central Administrator of the programmes is an enthusiastic and committed professional who is masterful in developing the leadership and training skills of the students in the programmes. PASS “veterans”, now too far removed from the first year experience to be facilitators themselves, feature this year as mentors for the new facilitators – in this way, the principles of peer learning are extended beyond the actual PASS sessions to the training and ongoing mentoring

of facilitators new to the process. Veteran students in the Leadership programme are also a highly effective way of developing and sharing expertise amongst more and less experienced peers.

With a new Vice Chancellor at Otago, and a new focus on “academic orientation” to university life in Dunedin, these peer learning and peer support activities are gaining increasing attention. When evaluating learning support activities, issues such as impact, sustainability and equitable access are taken into account. The PASS programme and the Leadership programme stack up well with these factors in mind. These programmes are accessed by a large number of students, address equity issues around orientation and support for students and, because they are student-led, provide a sustainable “supply” of facilitators and fresh ideas. The ground in 2012 is fertile and rich; not only are we anticipating a bumper crop at the SLC, but we also hope

that seedling groups of peer support will germinate campus-wide.

Carole Scott is the Peer Learning Programme coordinator at the Student Learning Centre, University of Otago, Dunedin. She is completing her Post-Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Teaching. Her research interest is in peer learning and peer support initiatives for undergraduate students.

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Angela McLean works at the Student Learning Centre as an Assistant Lecturer. In her recently completed PhD, she investigated undergraduate students’ conceptions and approaches to feedback. She has research interests in the areas of feedback, peer learning activities and, together with Carole, is also interested in the first year experience.

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INTERNATIONAL COLUMN EXCHANGE

HERDSA/POD/STLHE NEWSLETTERS

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and a Culture of Change in the Academy

By Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, President of POD

Since the announcement of the Spellings’ Commission on the Future of Higher Education on September 19, 2005, with the report released in 2006 by Margaret Spellings, U.S. Secretary of Education, institutions have been struggling to address student performance and learning in American colleges and universities. The higher education regional accrediting bodies that hold institutions accountable for quality student learning experiences are

recognised by the Department of Education (DOE) as well as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and include the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSACS), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCACS), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Each

accrediting body promotes quality of learning, improvement, accountability and effectiveness among its member institutions. Each regional body represents a number of states, territories, and some international bodies. For example, my own institution, Dillard University, is accredited by SACS, which governs degree-granting higher education institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee,



Texas, and Virginia as well as colleges and schools in Latin America, and other international sites. In addition, many degree granting programs are accredited by a number of specialised organisations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc. (NLNAC), etc.

What is common among all of these regional and specialised accrediting agencies is the focus on student learning outcomes as a means to demonstrate institutional effectiveness and accountability. SACS' Standards 2.5 (Institutional Effectiveness), 2.12 (Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)), 3.3.1 (Institutional Effectiveness (degree programs)), 3.5.1 (College-level Competencies) and 4.1 (Student Achievement) require institutions to demonstrate continuing efforts to enhance student learning (SACS, Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, 2012 Edition). In NEASC, parts of Standard 4 (The Academic Program), require the institution (1) establish a standard of student achievement appropriate to the degree awarded; (2) develop the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning; and (3) to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program (NEASC, 2011 Standards for Accreditation). WASC's Standard 4.3 states that planning processes are informed by appropriately defined and analyzed data (quantitative and qualitative), and include consideration of evidence of educational effectiveness, including student learning (WASC, Handbook of Accreditation 2008). To support the realisation of this standard, WASC provides member institutions with an educational

effectiveness framework and a wealth of resources to guide the process.

As I travel across the U.S. attending conferences sponsored by the Council on Independent Colleges (CIC), the Southern Education Foundation's Student Learning Outcomes Institute, POD/HBCU Joint Conference, SACS and others, all offer significant numbers of workshops on how to develop, assess and demonstrate student learning. At the 2012 American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Annual Meeting on SHARED FUTURES / DIFFICULT CHOICES: Reclaiming a Democratic Vision for College Learning, Global Engagement, and Success, many of the workshops and sessions also focused on student learning. POD offered three sessions at the Annual Meeting. In the panel presentation that I co-presented with Peter Felten (Elon University), Virginia Lee (Virginia Lee & Associates) and Angela Linse (Penn State), one component was on student learning outcomes. This session highlighted the role of teaching and learning centers in forging collaborations for institutional transformation.

What I have also learned and heard in the national dialogue is the key role of faculty in addressing college student learning. Success in faculty impact on student learning will require a major shift in creating a culture of change in the academy. Faculty assert that they provide the content for learning, but how many can document their effectiveness, i.e., assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of our general education and degree learning outcomes. Although faculty already assess their work, it is the intentional improvement efforts that often fall short. Therefore, this thrust to focus on learning presents an opportunity for POD and other higher education teaching and learning organisations to

provide the training and skills faculty need to create, implement and assess student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels. It also presents an opportunity for our international colleagues, such as the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia (HERDSA), International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) and others to respond and contribute to this culture of change in the academy. We also should pair with other organisations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to promote *The Essential Learning Outcomes* and to support the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) project on *Making Learning Outcomes Usable and Transparent*.

Therefore, through our existing instructional, faculty, and organisational structures, we can collaborate with Offices of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment to develop and sustain a culture of assessment. Suggested activities might include professional development workshops on developing meaningful student learning outcomes; identifying appropriate assessments; and facilitating faculty members' efforts to enhance the student learning process. After all, teaching, assessing and student learning outcomes are the business of faculty.

Phyllis Worthy Dawkins is the current President of The Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education. She is Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Dillard University, USA.

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For more information about other Higher Education Societies

Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) Canada

<http://www.stlhe.ca/en/stlhe/>

Professional and Organisational Development Network in Higher Education (POD) U.S.A.

<http://podnetwork.org>

Making time at HERDSA 2012 to TATAL (Talk about Teaching and Learning)

By Robert Kennelly, Coralie McCormack, Jesmin Islam,
John Gilchrist and Lee Partridge

Introduction

Good teaching takes time and commitment. Few teachers would disagree with this statement which also resonates strongly in the literature (see McCormack & Kennelly, 2011). The TATAL (Talking about Teaching and Learning) workshops offer a rare opportunity for time-poor academics to devote productive periods towards their professional growth. Each workshop builds on the previous in a way that supports the participants' reflections and ongoing development. For this reason, participants who commit to participate in the workshops will commit to all of the workshops at the conference which follow the pre-conference workshop.

The TATAL workshops seek to develop cohorts of reflective practitioners, who meet regularly to enhance their teaching and the learning of their students. At the 2012 Conference, the program will begin with a pre-conference workshop and **continue with a session each day of the conference.**

Pre-conference: The three hour pre-conference workshop will introduce the program and its processes and establish a group sense of community. Participants will begin to construct their teaching philosophy statement by free writing their response to the questions: Why is being a teacher important to me? What personal experiences inform/motivate my teaching?

During conference: Participants will free write, share, reflect and rewrite responses to the following questions such as: What do I believe about teaching? What do I believe about learning? Why do I hold these beliefs? How are my beliefs about learning and teaching played out in my teaching context?

Final day: By the end of the conference, delegates who participated

in each activity will have had time (7.5 hours) to produce a draft **teaching philosophy statement** and will have received collaborative feedback on their statement.

Following the conference TATAL groups will continue to meet, face to face and/or online, to finalise their teaching philosophy statement and to prepare a teaching portfolio. The decision to commit or not to continue meeting as a group can be made by individuals following the conference. The facilitators will provide materials and initial mentoring to support the ongoing conversations.

Conference delegates prepared to share stories about their teaching and learning would be welcomed and encouraged to attend. The workshops will be limited to 40 participants. Facilitators see the HERDSA TATAL as a service to members and so there is no charge.

Aim of the Workshop and Intended Outcomes For Participants

The TATAL workshops seek to develop cohorts of reflective practitioners who meet regularly to enhance their teaching and the learning of their students and to develop a teaching philosophy statement.

On completion of the HERDSA 2012 Conference TATAL workshop participants will have:

- Established a safe collaborative environment in which to continue to investigate the challenges and successes of teaching and learning.
- Enhanced their skills and confidence in talking and writing about teaching and learning.
- Begun to articulate a personal teaching philosophy statement for use in the preparation of a HERDSA fellowship

application or a teaching award application.

Outcomes as Described by TATAL Participants Include:

My confidence in myself as a teacher has increased. I feel more willing to try to implement types of assessment that allow students to take their own risks with their learning ... I think this will help students to feel more confident too. (2010 TATAL participant)

My involvement in this group is scaffolding my preparation for a HERDSA fellowship in a way that is measured and systematic. The group provides a clear direction, purpose and helped me to clarify my own thinking behind the application. (2011 HERDSA TATAL participant)

I have found the experience of being a TATAL member as a wonderful opportunity to regularly reflect on my teaching and to make constructive and evidence-informed plans for the future. (2011 HERDSA TATAL participant)

If you are interested in participating in HERDSA TATAL at the HERDSA Conference in Hobart please include this pre conference workshop in your online registration. If you would like further background on HERDSA TATAL or the TATAL concept please refer to the articles below respectively. If you want to get more information on the plans for the HERDSA TATAL in Hobart please email Coralie. McCormack@canberra.edu.au or Robert. kennelly@canberra.edu.au

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- McCormack, C., & Kennelly, R. (2011). "We *must* get together and *really* talk...". Connection, engagement and safety sustain learning and teaching conversation communities. *Reflective Practice*, 12(4), 515–531.



Meanderings

By Robert Cannon

Long Words Bother Me (Sutton Publishing, 2004) is the revised edition of Tom Burton's earlier delightful book *Words, Words, Words*. He approaches words and their changing and regional meanings with a strong sense of history, fun and good humour. One tale he relates is about his arrival in the 1970's from Britain as a new lecturer in the English Department at the University of Adelaide. After showing him around, the Departmental Secretary assisted in providing stationery supplies – paper, biros, pencils and so forth – and then asked, "And would you like some Durex?" It must have been the shock of being offered what seemed to him – freshly arrived from Britain – to be free condoms by the Secretary that showed on his face that led her to respond: "Now don't get me wrong," she said, "I am offering you what you would doubtless call *Sellotape!*" (p. 127).

Burton, now Professor of English at the University of Adelaide, comments on the alarm about the decline in standards in the use of the English language. Such alarm, he points out, has been voiced for centuries. Nevertheless, he presents three of his own worries about contemporary standards in English. These are theories informing the teaching of English in schools, the impact of critical theory on language, and the insidious spread of the language of business management. It is comforting to know that others share my own worries.

We do not have to look too far for examples of declining standards: the daily newspapers and academic books and journals in our own field illustrate Burton's concern admirably. For example, I recently returned a new book on international education to a reviews editor because I simply could not understand the writing at all! My frustration with that text was mixed with anxieties of personal inadequacy and failure from my lack of understanding.

However, now I can thank Tom Burton for helping me see that serious scholars in

English share my frustrations and are not fooled by this kind of writing. Paraphrasing Winnie the Pooh, Burton observes: "Long words bother me, especially in the mouths of politicians and postmodernist bull artists" (p. xx). (My wife, who kindly proofread this article for me, pointed out that I had selectively quoted Winnie who actually said: "I am a bear of very little brain, so long words bother me". She asked – unkindly I thought – whether my real problem with the book review was related to my brain!)

Another scholar not fooled by long words and bad writing was the late Denis Dutton, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Canterbury until his untimely death in late 2010.

Dutton used his editorship of the journal *Philosophy and Literature* to criticise many literary and cultural theorists for a writing style that is, "no better than adequate – or just plain awful" in a piece titled "Language Crimes: A Lesson in How Not to Write, Courtesy of the Professoriate", *The Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 1999.

Dutton writes that "... in *A Defense of Poetry*, English Professor Paul Fry writes: 'It is the moment of non-construction, disclosing the absention of actuality from the concept in part through its invitation to emphasise, in reading, the helplessness — rather than the will to power — of its fall into conceptuality.' If readers are baffled by a phrase like 'disclosing the absention of actuality,' they will imagine it's due to their own ignorance. Much of what passes for theory in English departments depends on this kind of natural humility on the part of readers. The writing is intended to look as though Fry is a physicist struggling to make clear the Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum Mechanics. Of course, he's just an English professor showing off."

Dutton established an annual *Bad Writing Contest* and examples of the winners' writing efforts can be read in Tom Burton's book. However, to paraphrase Dutton,

the most revealing point is this: to ask what this writing means is to completely misunderstand what is going on. Dutton argues that this kind of writing "...beats readers into submission, instructs them that they are in the presence of a great and deep mind, and humiliates them because of their own perceived inadequacies and ignorance. But actual communication has nothing to do with it."

Being gloomy about the quality of academic writing is one thing. What is even more troubling are the voices of deep concern about the *content* of what is being written.

"We are sliding back into a dark era," said Nina Fedoroff in a keynote address this year to the Association for the Advancement of Science, of which she is president. "And there seems little we can do about it. I am profoundly depressed at just how difficult it has become merely to get a realistic conversation started on issues such as climate change or genetically modified organisms" (quoted in *The Guardian*, 20 February, 2012). This concern is also the theme of a disturbing book by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*, London, Bloomsbury, 2011. The title very adequately summarises the theme of the book.

A light-hearted quotation in their book, attributed to Adlai Stevenson, has a very serious message: "The trouble with Americans is that they haven't read the minutes of the previous meeting." This quote struck a chord as I was slowly beginning to recognise that academics in the field of educational development seemed to be doing something very similar by "not reading the minutes" of earlier work in the field. It happens too in education development projects funded by international donor bodies.

Some of today's scholars are overlooking too much of the work that had been undertaken

in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Are they simply re-inventing wheels? I have noticed this trend in many papers that I am sent for review and in recent refereed publications. Three areas of research and publication come to mind here: studies of academic development, student note-taking, and student engagement. To glance through the reference lists of some recent journal articles, you might believe that these domains of scholarship began around the year 2000, yet a considerable amount of important work was being published from at least 20 years before that time. My growing anxiety that this earlier work has been forgotten, if not lost, was partly alleviated by the publication of the excellent Special 30th Anniversary Issue of *Higher Education Research and Development* in February this year. The contents of this particular issue defy this trend.

An area of research where earlier work has been overlooked is the current fashionable concern for student engagement. Current writing does not generally reflect the substantial work on student involvement done by scholars such as Alexander Astin and published in 1984 (Student involvement: a developmental theory for higher education, *Journal of College Personnel*, 25, 297–308). I have yet to learn when and why *involvement* has re-emerged as *engagement* and would be pleased to have this gap in my knowledge filled.

Why is all this so? Clearly, older material will be replaced by more recent scholarship and this will be one factor. Other answers are suggested in an article “Electronic Publication and the Narrowing of Science and Scholarship”, *Science*, 321, July 2008, 395–399 (<http://www.pgquimica.dqi.ufms.br/~mestrado/artigo2008.pdf>).

In this paper, James Evans found that as more academic publication went online, “... the articles referenced tended to be more recent, fewer journals and articles were cited, and more of those citations were to fewer journals and articles.” Evans concludes that,

previously, the forced browsing of printed materials in libraries may have led scholars “... to anchor (their) findings deeply into past and present scholarship. Searching online is more efficient and following hyperlinks quickly puts researchers in touch with prevailing opinion, but this may accelerate consensus and *narrow* (sic) the range of findings and ideas built upon” (p. 395). These conclusions are reached on the basis of Evans’ database of 34 million articles, their citations from 1945 to 2005, and online availability from 1998 to 2005. Not an inconsiderable amount of data!

Also, given that you must pay about \$30 for an article if you do not have the rights to download it, I also wonder to what extent the freely available journal abstracts may be providing the only source of information and, as a consequence, causing the scholar to miss out on the reference list and therefore links to earlier published work. These are conclusions that we might do well to think through when we consider the quality of our research.

To be fair, I suppose some of this trend is understandable. I increasingly find my use of the Barr-Smith Library at the University of Adelaide disappointing as older volumes are taken off the shelves and placed in depositories that, although technically accessible, inconveniently require extra time and formal access requests to do so. I am also disappointed to discover that more recent editions of several important texts that most scholars would regard as central to our field are now not available at all. Is someone “asleep at the wheel” or have they concluded that anything “really” important is now online, so why bother? My guess is these changes in service standards may be common in universities these days.

Quotations from *The Shallows: How the Internet is Changing the Way We Read, Think and Remember*, by Nicholas Carr (Atlantic Books, London, 2010) underscore the issues in a more light-hearted way. When considering the use of the Internet

and computer software in our work, Carr observes that “a polemicist might put it more pointedly: The brighter the software, the dimmer the user” (p. 216) and that by relying on the Internet for information “...we risk turning into pancake people – spread wide and thin as we connect with the vast network of information accessed by the mere touch of a button” (p.196).

A humorous conclusion is called for to relieve the gloom about these developments in scholarship and writing. This frivolous piece “fits the bill” rather nicely (http://pages.minot.k12.nd.us/nansen/content/humor/education_write_good.html):

How to Write Good

- Always avoid alliteration.
- One should never generalise.
- Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
- Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
- Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.
- Contractions aren’t necessary.
- Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “I hate quotations. Tell me what you know.”
- Don’t be redundant; don’t use more words than necessary; it’s highly superfluous.
- One-word sentences? Eliminate.
- The passive voice is to be avoided.
- Who needs rhetorical questions?
- Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
- Avoid clichés like the plague. (They’re old hat.)
- Be more or less specific.

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Higher Education in the Headlines March 2012

By Peter Kandlbinder

A summary of the top stories on higher education in the Australian Higher Education Supplement (<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/highereducation/>), Times Higher Education (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/>) and the Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com) from November to March found that issues of university leadership dominated the higher education press. Other themes included: university funding, international student, student equity, student demand, quality assurance, reporting research outcomes and private higher education.

University Leadership

In November the Times Higher Education reported English universities enjoyed the greatest freedom from state interference in Europe and Australian Higher Education reported more allegations of preferential treatment at University of Queensland. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported Penn State had begun its struggle to recover from a sex-abuse scandal and it was a communication breakdown that led to a crisis of confidence in the university's leadership. In December it reported a number of questionable decisions at US universities had raised broader questions about the moral credibility of college leaders whilst the Times Higher Education outlined a report critical of mistakes made by UK universities dealing with the Libyan government. In January the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that the NCAA was going on the offensive about college basketball and the Haitian Universities were struggling to recover after the earthquake plus potential for conflicts of interest for college chiefs on corporate boards. In February it reported on a new test of leadership at Wisconsin's flagship campus.

University Funding

In November Australian Higher Education reported that the government used the

solid financial position of the sector to argue that universities could take on more debt although universities protested that the federal government exaggerated the health of the sector with students expected to bear the brunt of proposed government funding cuts. In December Australian Higher Education reported the Aust. government's funding review backed an egalitarian vision for higher education that reinforced quality across the sector. Also in December the Times Higher Education reported alarm bells over UK government plans for the Higher Education Funding Council for England and warned that a number of universities were at risk of a financial contagion crisis. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported the income gap between college presidents and professors was widening in the US and in January the Times Higher Education reported V-Cs salaries in the UK were on the increase. In February the Chronicle of Higher Education reported college groups were reacting with a mix of praise and caution at the budget announcement for 2013.

International Students

In November the Chronicle of Higher Education reported having a large proportion of Chinese students is proving an awkward fit on US campuses whereas in February it reported Asian universities were adopting liberal arts approaches to learning and men were less likely to choose to study abroad. Also in February the Times Higher Education reported British Council calls for urgent review of the student visa policy to avert damaging the economy at the same time as the Australian Higher Education reported the numbers of Chinese students were down for a second year and Indians already living in Australia accounted for most visas issued for vocational education.

Student Equity

In November the Chronicle of Higher Education reported public universities

were expanding their recruitment efforts to attract out-of-state money while the Times Higher Education reported a decrease in inter-regional movement as students opted for home fees. The Australian Higher Education reported student-staff ratios ballooning while in December it reported funding was to be shared for better university access for disadvantaged and indigenous students. Also in December the Chronicle of Higher Education reported universities were turning to data mining in the name of improving education

Student Demand

In December the Times Higher Education reported that a quarter of all new undergraduate courses failed to attract a single student. In January it reported that the Welsh were told to lower fees or lose students while in the Australian Higher Education the new demand-driven system was seen to have produced few losers with steady or increased offers to students and in February the demand in the regional universities had surged. Also in February the Times Higher Education reported institutions were counting the cost of exceeding the student cap.

Quality Assurance

In December the Times Higher Education reported uncertainty in the sector due to a lack of suitable candidates for its regulator. In January The Australian Higher Education reported a private college copied documents for its quality audit and in February training providers were caught out as Victoria raised its standards for providers eligible for state subsidies as the Tertiary regulator released the list of indicators of risk they will be watching.

Reporting Research Outcomes

In November the Times Higher Education suggested that reporting the impact of research could give science a way to keep the public onside. In January the Chronicle

of Higher Education reported that the battle over public access to federally financed research is heating up again and in February the Times Higher Education reported Warwick and Monash universities are forming a partnership to improve their global ranking.

Private Higher Education

In November the Times Higher Education reported that the UK government watchdog was worried over attempts to legislate to make it easier for private companies to take over universities and in January that plans to suspend the higher education bill would not automatically derail the expansion of

private provision although in February the Times Higher Education reported two thirds of private institutions receiving student loans funding have had no quality review.

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

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HERDSA Branch News

ACT

Chair: Coralie McCormack

Thanks to Robert Kennelly, outgoing chair, for his valiant efforts on behalf of HERDSA ACT over several years.

HERDSA ACT farewelled 2011 with a December celebration for members. Guided by ANU and UC teaching award winners, journeys into successful thesis writing, Plant Detectives and international climate change took place.

Activities so far this year have been the facilitation of the three continuing TATAL programs. TATALS aim to raise the profile of teaching and learning through collaborative reflective practice.

- Talking about Learning and Teaching (TATAL) 2008 Group: The group has met on more than 27 occasions and is now a self facilitating group. It has about 6 regular members and is looking forward to the launch of their HERDSA Guide on Using stories in teaching at the 2012 Conference.
- TATAL 2009 group: This group, also with 6 regular members, meets monthly. Two participants have nearly completed draft portfolios. Group members have submitted a proposal for a 2012 Conference Showcase titled: TATAL participants speak out about connections that enhance learning and teaching. Two members are part of the team facilitating

the 2012 HERDSA Conference TATAL workshops.

- 2011 HERDSA TATAL: Commenced at the 2011 Conference, this group of 6 academics from four universities continues to meet regularly via Skype to share learning and teaching achievements and “bumpy moments”. One member is progressing a Fellowship application. Another is a member of the 2012 HERDSA TATAL workshops facilitation team.

Plans include the June 2012 pre-conference event providing the opportunity for members to give their conference papers/showcase presentations.

July 2012 HERDSA TATAL: a free TATAL pre-conference workshop will be presented and continue with a session each day of the conference. The workshops will facilitate the development and/or refinement of participants’ own Educational Philosophy statement. Conference delegates prepared to share stories about their teaching and learning are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

In August the Branch will co-host a Showcase and Networking event at the University of Canberra linked to the *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*. In December a symposium of celebration will be held featuring OLT award winners, OLT project leaders and HERDSA Fellows.

If you are in Canberra at any of these times please join the group. The nibbles are always good and Robert Kennelly has handed over a small “stock” of excellent beverages to Coralie.

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NEW SOUTH WALES

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.

NEW ZEALAND

Chair: Tony Harland

HERDSA New Zealand held a successful 10th annual *TERNZ conference* in Wellington over three days in November 2011. This year a conference rapporteur was utilised to experience the conference and then wrap it up at the end in the form of a “keynote”. Using this strategy provided for a talk of direct relevance to the delegates and also raised challenging questions for the HERDSA community. The role was taken by Professor Stephen Rowland from the Institute of Education UK and the resulting session to wrap up TERNZ was quite inspiring. Stephen and Gillie Bolton also ran writing workshops in Auckland,



Wellington and Otago. HERDSANZ is planning an annual symposium to look at graduate attributes and will be collaborating in this project with Ako Aotearoa. The first one-day event will be held on May 15th 2012 with two keynote speakers: Associate Professor Bruce Macfarlane from the University of Hong Kong and Associate Professor Rachel Spronken-Smith (Otago). Rachel is working on an Ako Aotearoa funded research project on attributes and Bruce will talk about student academic freedom and critical thinking.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Chair: Dale Wache

HERDSA SA is proposing a varied and interesting program of events for all members for the first 6 months of 2012. This is a draft program and may change depending on availability of speakers and other factors.

April – Moderation

May – Internationalisation

June – Preparing academics for academic teaching

July – Research skills

August – peer review

September – 3D VLE

All HERDSA SA members are welcome at all events. Contact Dale for further information.

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

QUEENSLAND

Chair: Steve Drew

Queensland branch is now off the ground and planning for 2012. In November 2011 HERDSA Q co-sponsored with TEDI a visit by Ranald MacDonald at UQ. Around 16 people, including two from Southern Cross University were engaged as they tried out Ranald's approaches and ideas. Since then Queensland's HERDSA membership has been surveyed to see where their research interests lie and what sorts of activities would be useful to them. There

are a number of areas that have potential to create Special Interest Groups as the branch moves on. At Griffith University a planning meeting was held with representatives from UQ, QUT and GU. In order to be inclusive of the large number of regional universities that are at the mercy of the Queensland "tyrant" distance, electronic meeting technology has been used to gather interests from each university and an online meeting was held with several to confirm ideas and to agree on the HERDSA Queensland executive for the next 12 months. In this case the two nominees to convene HERDSA in Queensland are Dr Steve Drew and Dr Jason Lodge. Steve and Jason have been in contact with some HERDSA members in the Northern NSW area who had expressed an interest in HERDSAQ activities with the idea of including them in regional initiatives. Future events and plans will be made public in the next HERDSA NEWS and newsletter to branches.

Contact Steve Drew:
s.drew@griffith.edu.au

TASMANIA

Chair: Tracy Douglas

The Tasmanian Branch of HERDSA has been focusing on the organisation of the 2012 HERDSA conference and actively recruiting members in Tasmania. A meeting was held in early February to plan the year. There is a focus on collegial activities to support members presenting at the 2012 HERDSA conference and some staff development opportunities. Branch members are keen to benefit from some professional development activities and it is planned that one or two of these will take place at the time of the *UTAS Teaching Matters Conference* at the end of 2012. Branch members are currently investigating options for these workshops with *Writing a journal article* and *Current contemporary issues in higher education* favoured topics.

The *HERDSA Conference* is the key event for the branch in 2012. The Branch provided the opportunity for members to have their submissions peer reviewed prior to submitting to HERDSA 2012 and a peer review of accepted papers will be offered prior to the conference in July. Recruitment is a key agenda item for this new branch and members are actively encouraging colleagues with an interest in

learning and teaching to join HERDSA and the conference will also be an ideal time to recruit more members of the branch.

The branch is setting up a Google Docs site as a means for members to communicate with each other and share resources outside of formal meetings and workshops. Members of the branch plan to meet after the 2012 conference to engage in collegial discussions around the themes of the 2012 conference.

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

VICTORIA

Chair: Joan Richardson

Thanks to Di Waddell, outgoing Chair, for her work on behalf of HERDSA VIC.

The Victorian Chapter had their first meeting for 2012 where an executive was formed which represented most of the universities in Victoria. The following office bearers were appointed:

Chair – Joan Richardson (RMIT)

Deputy Chair – Gerard Grant (AHEIA)

Secretary – Liz Levine (Swinburne)

Treasurer – Judy Lyons (LaTrobe)

After reflecting on the functions held during 2011, most of the discussion centered around hot topics, scheduling of events, and hosting of activities. The first event will be in April on Teaching Diverse Cohorts in conjunction with Deakin University. Notes taken of the meeting will be available from Liz Levine upon request (eleven@groupwise.swin.edu.au)

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

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Chair: Rashmi Watson

In 2011, the HERDSA WA branch introduced a wonderful initiative to promote Indigenous Australian academics with HERDSA activities. The initiative grew after a collaborative decision between the presenters of a workshop, *Knowing Australia and Being Australian: Reconciliation, Rights and Respect for Australia's First Peoples*, and the WA branch. The interactive workshop

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was an inquiry based exploration of the principles, values and knowledge which inform being Australian. It enabled participants to discuss, consider and learn from each other as well as from history and contemporary culture, the importance of reconciliation in not only building an inclusive Australia, but critically building a respect for the rightful place of the knowledge and culture of Australia's First Peoples. Since then two Indigenous Academic staff have been invited and offered a 12 month membership with HERDSA. The membership will provide a mutual benefit for the Indigenous academic and to HERDSA members who will share in the research being conducted by individuals.

The *HERDSA WA AGM* will be held again during the annual *Teaching and Learning Forum* in 2012 (see program on website). HERDSA WA branch looks forward to seeing all members at events in 2012.

Contact Rashmi Watson:
rashmi.watson@uwa.edu.au

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

HONG KONG

Chair: Anna Siu Fong KWAN

The *Teaching and Learning Innovation Expo 2011* organised by the Centre for Learning Enhancement and Research and The Chinese University of Hong Kong was held in November 2011. HERDSA HK Branch was the co-organiser of the Panel Discussion and the keynote address.

HERDSA HK Branch invited colleagues from other local universities to join the Panel to respond to the keynote by Professor Daniel Tiong Hok Tan and share their views on e-learning.

The Expo is involved

- Opening and keynote speaker session
- Panel discussion with Sean McMinn, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; Professor Carmel McNaught, The Chinese University of Hong Kong; Daniel Tiong Hok Tan,

Nanyang Technological University; Dr Eva Wong, Hong Kong Baptist University; Peter Duffy, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

- Talks organised in parallel sessions. The talks include information talks on defined themes and formal presentations by teachers on their work.
- An assembly of poster presentations where we hope our participants enjoy a light lunch as they learn

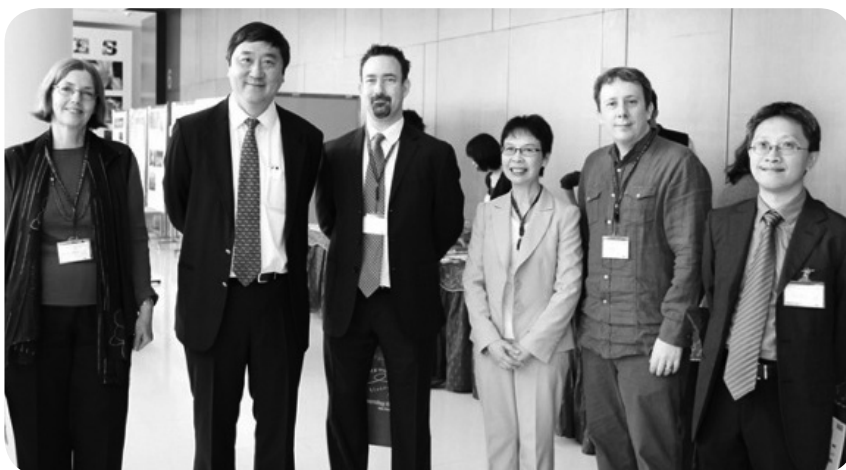
HERDSA Dinner Dialogue: *Work Experience, Work Placement & Work Integrated Education* took place on 9 March

at Champs Bar, Charter House Hotel, 209–219 Wan Chai Road, Hong Kong. Speakers were Gayle Morris, The University of Hong Kong; and Siu Yee Chan, Vocational Training Council.

All HERDSA members who are working and visiting Hong Kong are most welcome to HERDSA HK activities. Please visit the website or contact Anna for the most up to date information.

Contact Anna Kwan:
akwan@ouhk.edu.hk

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



Professor Carmel McNaught, Professor Joseph J. Y. Sung, Peter Duffy, Dr Anna Kwan, Sean McMinn, Dr Paul Lam at the Teaching and Learning Innovation Expo



Sean McMinn, Professor Carmel McNaught, Daniel Tiong Hok Tan, Dr Eva Wong, Peter Duffy, Teaching and Learning Innovation Expo panel.