

HERDSA

news

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The magazine of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia



Inside

A teaching standards framework, National Teaching Fellows, Meanderings, The importance of fonts, Structured storytelling, Postcard from Vietnam, Reviews, Corrosion of university ideals, Design based research, Call for nominations



From the Editor

Maureen Bell

Reading over this edition of HERDSA NEWS caused me to reflect on the professional generosity of our HERDSA members and the higher education community more generally. As we call for nominations for the HERDSA Executive and for HERDSA Life Members our President Allan Goody reflects on the importance of service to the profession. Former HERD Editor *Barbara Grant* says farewell from the HERD editorial team after several years of outstanding service to the journal and to HERDSA. Newly appointed editors *Craig Whitsed* and *Wendy Green* introduce their team and their thinking about HERD directions. Highlighting further service we introduce the new Director of Ako Aotearoa, Stanley Frielick and our new regular column by Sally Male on science, technology, maths and engineering (STEM).

Our *FEATURE* writer Denise Chalmers is developing a teaching standards framework through her National Senior

Teaching Fellowship and seeks discussion and insights from the community on her work. As always, much food for thought is generated by our *PERSPECTIVES* writers. Bob Cannon meanders through the corrosion of university ideals noting that while Alastair Summerlee's hamster may not be dead (see previous edition) it is certainly quite unwell. Roger Atkinson manages to make the importance of choosing the right font into interesting reading. Our globetrotting academic Owen Hicks pictures up the University Olympics in his second Postcard from Vietnam.

Our *REVIEWS* section includes our regular review of an article from the HERDSA Review of Higher Education, *Evaluation of teaching* by Denise Chalmers and Lynne Hunt. We also take a look at two useful resources: *A Teaching philosophy workbook* by Stuart Schonell et al and the *First in Family* website.

HERDSA *SHOWCASE* highlights the pedagogical value of structured storytelling as explained by Lynne Hunt who discusses generating insights and themes by engaging learners. Kate Thomson explains the use and value of design-based research methods to design, develop, and evaluate websites and other educational artefacts. Our *COMMUNITY* section presents two more HERDSA members who are National Teaching Fellows. Alas we farewell two respected members of our HERDSA community.

I am keen to highlight interesting practices in our *SHOWCASE* so please get in touch if someone you know is developing practice that should be shared.

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Save the date!
HERDSA Conference,
Sydney, 28-30 June 2017





From the President

Allan Goody

In between bursts of thinking about and jotting down notes about a theme for this column, I noticed one of those delightful 'Facebook memories'. Three years ago I was travelling to chair my first HERDSA Executive meeting. My new academic manager had told me that HERDSA work was not important and questioned why I was going. I went of course but that employment relationship didn't end well. With elections for a new HERDSA Executive to be held early in 2017, I think this an opportune time to reflect on that little memory and question why individuals, including myself, volunteer their service to community groups, professional, technical and learned societies. Voluntary usually means unpaid, and that includes the role of HERDSA President, and service in many organisations attracts little recognition or workload allocation from employers, as in my own case three years ago. I would guess that for a number of the members of the HERDSA Executive and branch committees, their contributions to HERDSA would not be seen as core business and much of their service would count for little.

Of course there are many managers who wholeheartedly embrace service and I have been the beneficiary of that too. Yet why do some managers not see service to the profession as important? Is it ignorance? Maybe even a sense of inadequacy in themselves and their

contribution? Why is a teaching and learning professional society seen differently to any other discipline society? Whatever the reasons, it is a very short-sighted view and counter-productive to the enhancement of teaching and learning. Given that this unsupportive environment might be the situation for individuals, why do they continue to engage and serve their organisation of choice?

Without wanting to deter members from nominating for the Executive or branch committees I want to reflect on the reasons why we serve, the challenges and the benefits. And some of my own personal reflection might trigger some thoughts for you. Volunteering for me has always been a family thing spanning at least four generations, in particular through local community. I have carried that through to my professional life. Also I have benefited immensely from colleagues who have mentored me into a number of professional societies. These colleagues saw service as an integral aspect of their work and so for me it is giving back in the same way. Recognition, as in employment advancement has rarely been a motivator, although it has helped in some instances no doubt. It has been more about professional fulfilment, a sense of belonging to a community. Recognition can also be interpreted as creating a presence for yourself within

the profession and hence professional, advancement. Serving on a committee broadens your opportunities in the sector, expands your profile and it might provide you with an escape from the sometimes insular environment of your institution or specific work context. Committee work might also provide an outlet for your ideas that might not be possible in your work context. Learning through networking expands your knowledge of various aspects of higher education. Those opportunities are multiplied in HERDSA because we cover a large and diverse membership base including cross national borders and tertiary education systems. Many members cite networking opportunities as a main reason for maintaining their membership and attending conferences and so it is the same with serving on committees. The vast geographic area which HERDSA serves also provides challenges to effective committee work.

Another great benefit is the development of a range of leadership and committee work skills that might not be provided in your work environment. A major commitment comes from members who sign-up to convene or serve on the organising committee for our annual conference. That truly is service to the Society.

Taking the step up to be the President of a voluntary society provides opportunities for additional skill development and leadership as well as pitching plenty of challenges your way. Leading a volunteer organisation is quite different to leadership in an employment situation. There is a great amount of trust placed in you by the wider membership. On the Executive you are working with individuals, many of whom are driven by self-reward and professional opportunity rather than recognition. But of course you might still have to deal with those managers who sign your travel forms.

Nominations for the 2017 – 2019 HERDSA Executive are still open. If you can see benefits for you personally and professionally and feel you have something to contribute to HERDSA, then we welcome your nomination.

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Inhibiting creativity or supporting quality? A teaching standards framework

Denise Chalmers

The global tertiary education sector is experiencing significant changes and challenges with uncertain funding models, an increasingly diverse student cohort and a dynamic workforce. In Australia and New Zealand, as elsewhere, providers of tertiary education are expanding rapidly with not-for-profit, and for-profit private providers actively competing with the public university providers for students. It is critical to have a shared understanding of excellent teaching to maintain our standing as a world-class higher education system that provides a distinctive and high quality learning experience for students.

Despite this, institutional commitment to quality teaching, along with the recognition and reward of teachers, is sporadic with research still seen as more prestigious than teaching in the eyes of academics and leaders. Australian and New Zealand teaching academics have demonstrated long-term commitment to quality teaching through

embracing the four Boyer scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching and learning. Yet despite this, teaching is still perceived to have less prestige than research and not contribute on a par with research for promotion and career progression. While there are some outstanding examples of whole-of institution support for up-skilling teachers, and recognition and reward of effective teaching, it is more typical to find pockets of good practice within institutions. Evidence of sustained commitment to supporting and enhancing teaching quality remains elusive in the higher education sector.

In Australia, significant advances have been made by many institutions in the provision of clear teaching criteria and in the elaboration and specification of evidence required for performance review and promotion. However, the extent to which the expected performance standards are detailed, embedded and enacted in policy,

processes and systems – particularly promotion – remains highly variable.

The adoption of teacher standards in education is not new. Examples for school teachers include the Australian National Teaching Standards and New Zealand's Practising Teacher Criteria. While not national standards, the Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards framework has been used by over 25 Australian universities and several international universities to inform the development of their teaching criteria and standards to support the career development and progression of teachers.

It has long been argued that there is a need for better recognition and reward of teaching in Australia, including the possibility of the accreditation of tertiary teachers against external standards. However, this is an empty argument without an agreed Australian tertiary teacher standards framework. Indeed, the recent uptake of the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) accreditation and recognition process by some Australian universities may be seen as a response to the absence of an Australian framework. Ako Aotearoa New Zealand identified a similar gap in 2012. The UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for higher education were developed in 2006. Institutions apply the framework to their professional development programs and activities to demonstrate that professional standards for teaching and supporting learning are being met. The HEA accredits educational institutions' professional development programs for teachers, providing external confirmation that their professional development programs are aligned with the UKPSF. HEA accredited institutions have the authority to award HEA Fellowships to eligible staff. To date, three Australian universities have established an agreement with the HEA to accredit their professional development programs with others working through an individual assessment process to achieve recognition as fellows of the HEA. A number of other institutions have funded individuals to access mentoring and assessment against the UKPSF.

Australia does not have a professional tertiary teacher standards framework.

It could be argued that the UKPSF has gone some way to achieve the purpose of standards, namely: to professionalize the work of educators and to contribute to system-wide improvements in teaching and learning. So the question is: Should we develop an Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards (APTTS) framework for tertiary education? If so how might it encompass the distinctiveness of Australian higher education in an international context?

The Australian higher education regulatory environment ensures that quality assurance in teaching and learning is administered by TEQSA, which accredits and evaluates the performance of all higher education providers against the Higher Education Standards (HES). Institutions will be able to demonstrate in multiple ways that they meet the standards, but in the absence of an Australian tertiary teacher standards framework which encapsulates criteria for the scholarship of teaching, it could be argued that it makes it more difficult for Australian institutions and individuals to review and benchmark how they are meeting these HES standards.

An APTTS framework developed and endorsed by the many stakeholders in the sector can provide an external reference point for institutions and individuals to review and benchmark their teacher standards which will facilitate institutions' articulation of the ways in which they support and meet the HES. A sector initiated and developed APTTS will demonstrate ownership of and responsibility for agreed criteria and standards of teaching quality.

New Zealand have used the UKPSF and contextualised it in Maori values and principles, in recognition of the need for all standards frameworks to embody their context and environment. An APTTS must reflect Australia's unique environmental and cultural context because teaching and learning quality cannot be separated from the context or environment in which it takes place. Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples of Australia are the inheritors of the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world and

remain the traditional owners and custodians of Australia. In particular, Australian higher educators have a responsibility to develop indigenous cultural competence for themselves and their students. This involves developing knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Australian cultures, histories and contemporary realities and awareness of Indigenous protocols, combined with the proficiency to engage and work effectively in Indigenous contexts congruent to the expectations of Indigenous Australian peoples. This uniquely Australian environment requires that the educational standards be responsive to the current and future challenges and opportunities that such diversity presents.

I have developed a draft APTTS, drawing on the definition, principles, literature and research on teaching that positively impacts on student learning and engagement. It is presented as an Australian standards framework that represents the qualities and elements expected of a teacher in the Australian tertiary education context. Three domains serve as the structural organisers for the APTTS:

Environment - which supports teaching, provides services and support for students and staff, and engages in a wider cultural context.

Professional practices - which include the effective design of curriculum and course content, a variety of learning experiences based on evidence of how students learn, soliciting and using feedback and effective assessment of learning outcomes.

Attributes and capabilities - inclusive of personal, relational and professional qualities.

There is broad agreement on the value of an Australian Professional Tertiary Teaching Standards framework to facilitate the reward and recognition of excellent teachers. Such a framework could build the capacity and capability of individuals and institutions. Yet while some have argued that standards in education lead to reductionism, destroy professional autonomy, and lead to performativity, with teachers

compelled to demonstrate observable and measurable standards of practice that are narrow and shallow in their interpretation of effectiveness, such critiques fail to distinguish between 'process' and 'product'. The 'product' of standards can be applied in ways that facilitate or inhibit educational improvements and teacher creativity. It is not standards that are the problem, it is the way that they are used that matters. Cautionary notes are important, but they are not an argument against standards as such. Rather, the importance of such critiques is that standards should be developed with an understanding of the complexity of teaching. The implication is that processes for the assessment of achievement against the standards should recognise complexity, diversity and local contexts.

An Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards (APTTS) framework developed and endorsed by the many stakeholders in the sector can provide an external reference point for institutions and individuals to review and benchmark their teacher standards which will facilitate institutions' articulation of the ways in which they support and meet the HES. A sector initiated and developed APTTS will demonstrate ownership of and responsibility for agreed criteria and standards of teaching quality.

I welcome your critique and comment on the draft framework.

Denise Chalmers is Professor Emeritus, University of Western Australia in the field of higher education teaching and learning. She has initiated and led several national and international initiatives related to the standards and indicators of quality in higher education. She is a National Senior Teaching Fellow. Her Fellowship program is titled Recognising and rewarding teaching: Australian teaching criteria and standards and expert peer review. denise.chalmers@uwa.edu.au

Links

The Australian Professional Tertiary Teacher Standards framework is available at: www.recognisinguniteaching.edu.au
Australian University Teaching Criteria and Standards framework: www.uniteachingcriteria.edu.au



Who's who in HERDSA

Stuart Schonell

I am Interim Associate Dean Learning and Teaching and Senior Teaching Fellow at the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics. My academic work focuses on teaching, quality assurance, and strategies for learning transfer from higher education to work.

My main role in HERDSA relates to TATAL. I have been a facilitator of three HERDSA TATAL workshops, the lead author for the TATAL Teaching Philosophy Workbook and am involved in three TATAL discussion groups.

HERDSA means being part of an important Australasian network of educators whose focus is student centric and the improvement of student learning; instead of the narrow, siloed approach to research we are witnessing at many Australian Universities. I think that the importance of HERDSA to Australasian higher education cannot be measured.

More than the TATAL workbook I feel my best achievement in HERDSA is the teaching conversations – the reflection, critical discussions and sharing of teaching and learning experiences. After each HERDSA conference I feel that I come away invigorated about teaching and learning and contented to have both learned from others and shared my own stories. I would like to support HERDSA in the future by joining the HERDSA executive.

My greatest personal achievement is the post university success of my students. When students come back and thank me because a class I taught helped them achieve success I feel as though I have achieved something memorable.

I am reading a research monograph by Graeme Tonks and Mark Dibben called *Wrest Point: The life, the times and the people of Tasmania's hotel*. I am also reading a science fiction novel by Alastair Reynolds called *Revenger*.

I am passionate about education and ensuring we as educators have as positive an impact as possible on students. Our influence on future generations' capability to lead and shape communities and society is a tremendous responsibility which I take very seriously. We are too focused on rankings and unimportant, unimpactful measures.

The quality I most admire in others is people that give more than they receive. If I could have dinner with two well-known people I would choose Bob Brown, a tireless worker for the betterment of society and future generations; and Ita Buttrose, an incredibly successful businesswoman.

One thing that might surprise people is that I SCUBA dive and try to incorporate diving in most overseas holidays. Away from HERDSA I like fine food, fine wine and travel. Preferably all three at once.

NEW SCHOLARS

Consulting research for new scholars

Deb Clarke

When we think of 'new scholars' we often focus on those academics who have encountered the traditional academic pathway through to a doctorate. Increasingly, however, new scholars are professionals recruited from high status positions with extensive industry and business experience.

So how can these new scholars use this expertise and experience to best advantage when the academy calls for links with external agencies in the form of funding and partnership projects? It is these new scholars who are best positioned to source and liaise with outside agencies in the search for grant funding, consultancy opportunities and research partnerships.

Consulting involves a faculty member providing a professional or technical service to a client however it is increasingly possible to link research and consulting to create consulting research. This type of research creates explicit links between professional, industry or business problems, and traditional research. Consulting research aids both the academic and the industry partner as it proposes solutions to professional problems experienced by the industry and creates new knowledge for the academy.

A new scholar who is well versed in a particular profession or type of organisation may have extensive industry links across companies or businesses and insight into an industry's functioning, structure, needs, and motivations.

So if you are a new scholar with professional expertise and experience, consider the opportunities posed by consulting research. You are a credible entity in your industry with the insider knowledge, so search the consulting advertisements in your professional area, compete for the grant, and start pursuing consulting research.

Around the branches



Across Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong our branches continue to offer added value to HERDSA members. HERDSA Branch Chairs are shown above, from left to right: Gesa Ruge (ACT), Anna Siu Fong Kwan (HK), Rebecca Sealey (QLD), Sharron King (SA), Tracy Douglas (TAS), Elizabeth Levin (VIC), Melissa Davis (WA).

ACT

Chair: Gesa Ruge

ACT welcomes new members Dr Craig Applegate, Associate Professor Sally Burford, Dr Michael de Percy, Mrs Hai Wei Fan, Mrs Jacqueline Gellatly, Dr Habib Khan and Mrs Linda Kirk. Congratulations to HERDSA ACT Associate Fellow Colin Simpson, who recently commenced his Fellowship journey.

ACT Branch held a successful seminar: *A national, open access learning and teaching induction program for staff new to teaching.*

The Australian Catholic University and University of Canberra are collaborators with OLT Fellow Associate Professor Kym Fraser in developing a national Learning and Teaching Induction Program. Workshop Facilitators are Dr Peter Copeman, Adjunct Professor Coralie McCormack, and Marie Fisher.

ACT TATAL celebrations were held at the end of the year.

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Hong Kong

Chair: Anna Siu Fong Kwan

Hong Kong Branch was established in 1997 as a local HERDSA chapter. To celebrate the 20th Anniversary, an awards scheme and a symposium with the theme Redesigning the

student learning experience in higher education are being organised to share local examples of student-centred, student-initiated, future-orientated teaching and learning experiences which could engage and empower students and directly meet their future needs in a meaningful manner.

The awards scheme invites local undergraduate students to conduct projects on university change related to their needs, ideas and views of university education processes. Up to eight awards are provided for open competition. The selected teams will be invited to share their experience and ideas in the symposium in August 2017.

HERDSA members who are working in or visiting Hong Kong are most welcome to HERDSA HK activities.

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HERDSA website: <http://herdsahk.edublogs.org/>

South Australia

Chair: Sharron King

The 2018 HERDSA conference planning is proceeding well. We are also pleased to announce that Dr Christina Hagger from the Flinders University School of Medicine and Dr Don Houston from the Flinders University Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching will present a workshop called *Value adding for your students: Developing a knowledge exchange mindset in the contemporary PhD*. The workshop will outline the national/international climate for knowledge exchange and why this mindset is critical for the contemporary PhD and will precede our Annual General Meeting.

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Tasmania

Chair: Tracy Douglas

We congratulate branch members Dr Tina Acuna and Dr Raj Eri who were recognised for their excellence in learning and teaching when they received OLT National Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning in September 2016.

Some HERDSA TAS members are organising and/or presenting at the annual University of Tasmania *Teaching Matters* conference at the end of the year. Three HERDSA branch members will present a workshop on the scholarship of learning and teaching. This community of practice is investigating ways to work with branch members and colleagues to enable professional development.

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Victoria

Chair: Elizabeth Levin

Following two successful fora on *Authentic assessment* and *Assessment @ scale*, our third focused on *Academic and Assessment Integrity*. We had three presentations from three different perspectives. Wendy Sutherland Smith shared the results of her study on contract cheating from the perspective of academic advocates. Judy Sheard opened our eyes to issues relating to integrity for non-text based assessments, comparing views on integrity for text-based assessment. The third presentation by Fiona Henderson related to processes, policies and implementation issues. A vibrant and engaging panel session followed the presentations.



In December 2016 we teamed up with the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and Monash Education Academy for *HERDSA/ACEN Rekindled*. We had sixteen presenters across four key themes of: collaborations and connections – students higher education, industry and community; enhancing students' professional and employability skills; student engagement and learning; and contemporary issues in workplace industry learning.

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Western Australia

Chair: Melissa Davis

Congratulations to four new HERDSA Fellows from Curtin University – Dr Susan Blackley, Dr Rachael Sheffield, Dr Judith Dinham, and Professor Craig Zimitat. We also welcome new members including Craig Zimitat and Romy Lawson who have relocated to Perth this year. Our Annual HERDSA Rekindled mini-conference in November is an opportunity for Perth academics who were unable to attend the national conference to hear the presentations of their local colleagues. A new initiative for the 2017 conference will invite collaborative peer feedback from members on abstracts prior to submission. We hope that this will encourage new scholars to attend HERDSA 2017 and further promote the strong collegial culture amongst our members.

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FELLOWS COLUMN

What value the Fellowship?

Lee Partridge

Thankyou! To all the HERDSA Fellows and Associate Fellows who shared their thoughts about the HERDSA Fellowship in a recent survey. With the rapidly changing higher education landscape the issue of development and recognition of teachers is as topical as ever. So the HERDSA executive felt it was an appropriate time to ask Fellows what they thought of the program and what, in the light of schemes such as the UK Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship entering the Australasian sector, the future of the HERDSA Fellowship might or should be.

There is currently some debate around whether there is still a place for the HERDSA Fellowship given the increasing popularity and uptake of the HEA Fellowship in Australia. More than half of HERDSA Fellows and Associate Fellows responded to the survey and a strong commitment to the Fellowship was evident both quantitatively and in the comments supplied throughout the survey. Space prevents a detailed analysis of the results here but suffice to say that the responses were very supportive of a continuing and invigorated Fellowship community. If you are interested in the detailed survey results feel free to contact me.

Indeed, the HERDSA and HEA fellowships are very different, and perhaps we have not done as

well as we might in articulating those differences. The HERDSA Fellowship remains unique, offering a mentored development opportunity open to teachers at almost any stage of their career. It is the belief of the Fellowship community that there is a place for both schemes with a positive synergistic relationship existing between them.

At a recent HERDSA executive meeting, discussion around a way forward led to a number of resolutions being made. To increase awareness and a stronger sense of community, the Fellowship will be more visible at the annual conferences. Keep an eye out for the dedicated sessions at the Sydney conference. As usual there will be the Fellows dinner to which all current Fellows and Associate Fellows will be invited. Assessors will be compensated for the work that goes into providing feedback on portfolios.

To improve communications a new email address has been established. It is fellowships@herdsa.org.au and should help facilitate timely responses by minimising double handling of Fellowship related correspondence. Dedicated pages on the HERDSA website will be developed and enhanced. It is hoped that this is just the beginning of a reinvigorated phase for the HERDSA Fellowship.



HERDSA NZ

Barbara Kensington-Miller

I woke up this morning to the news that there had been a 7.5 magnitude earthquake again in the South Island. At a time when everyone is ridiculously busy as we head towards the Christmas period it gives us pause. In New Zealand, in higher education, the last main event on the calendar for 2016 is the annual Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand (TERNZ) conference. This year it is being hosted by Otago University in Dunedin, with Rob Wass the convener.

With all the media attention lately on the United States and big changes ahead for that country it's hard not to be thinking about change and what is ahead. What does change mean and what are the ramifications? We hear about change everywhere and what is happening locally and/or globally. The effects are either immediately evident, as on Nov 9th when unhappy people started rioting across different states, or slowly transformative. Change is challenging. How we respond to it affects not only our work but also our personal lives. Resist, and change can become destructive; embrace it, we can move forward.

For higher education in New Zealand, there has been noticeable change

occurring in our tertiary institutions. Many factors are responsible. First, demographics are shifting as our population grows. In Auckland for example, our largest city, there is a housing crisis. Families are moving further and further out from the inner city in order to buy houses they can afford. However, for many of these families, university becomes out of reach for their children as physically attending can be prohibitive. Public transport is poor and regular use of buses or trains, if they exist, can be unaffordable. Secondly, as the economy in our country fluctuates, families move to where the jobs are, so attending university is even more costly when accommodation is required. Thirdly, school numbers are declining as the number of children per family has decreased and statistics indicate that more school leavers are going directly into jobs. The collective effects are seen directly as enrolment numbers in tertiary education have begun to tumble, particularly in certain courses. As a consequence some disciplines are struggling to survive.

The increase in international enrolments is another significant change, particularly in postgraduate education. The competitive nature of procuring and

then securing these students is fierce. For me personally, it is no longer the norm that the majority of my Masters and PhD students are local, and this is not unique. I have students from Ghana, China, Vietnam, Iran, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Malaysia. I love the richness they bring in terms of culture but it changes how we teach.

Another change is the increasing emphasis on technology. With pressure to keep ahead of the pack and the latest software packages being introduced more courses are now being delivered fully online or blended. At my university recorded lectures are a requirement in most faculties for any course having more than 100 students. The backlash of this is that analytics are recording an alarming drop off in numbers attending classes, on average two-thirds less than the number enrolled. This affects how we entice students to lectures in the way they are presented and how we can best support them. The pressure on teachers to change their pedagogy means a shift away from the traditional. Many of our students are working part-time, struggling to cope with the costs of study and living, and so online courses are popular allowing more flexibility for attendance.

In New Zealand we have a word in Māori known as 'ako', the concept meaning both to teach and to learn. They are not separate entities but are intrinsically entwined. In higher education, encouraging teachers to reflect on their pedagogy and to consider the learning that is occurring alongside the teaching they are doing can be a significant shift for some. As the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning research grows and new ways are introduced we are seeing some fabulous New Zealand teachers leading the way.

On that note I shall close on a positive tone that as we head towards a new year good things are happening in higher education in New Zealand.

Links

Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand (TERNZ): <http://www.herdsa.org.nz/ternz/2016/>

AKO AOTEAROA Stanley Frielick

Greetings from Ako Aotearoa, the New Zealand National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, and many thanks to Peter Coolbear and Barbara Kensington-Miller for their kind words of introduction in the previous edition of HERDSA News. As the incoming Director I have had to step down from my position on the HERDSA Executive but I look forward to staying on as a member and contributing this regular column.

Ako Aotearoa is somewhat unique in its wide reach across the entire tertiary sector in New Zealand. While I'm familiar with academic development and learning and teaching in the university and polytechnic areas, I am now spending time getting to know our Wānanga (Māori universities), industry training organisations (VET), adult and community education, and private tertiary institutions. One common thread of course is that learning happens everywhere, and there is much that the different areas can learn from each other – especially in matters of general concern such as digital capability, employability, literacy, numeracy, and the need for ongoing and effective innovations that enhance the student experience at all levels and contexts.

In the first ten years since its establishment in 2006 Ako Aotearoa has established a strong presence as an advocate for teaching excellence and promoter of evidence-based good practice across a rich variety of learning settings. There are some challenges ahead – particularly in relation to possible new models of tertiary education emerging from the current Productivity Commission inquiry into new models of education; and ongoing debates about standards frameworks for professional recognition of tertiary teaching. I will write more about this in the next column. However, I look forward to continuing the good work of supporting all tertiary teachers and institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand to ensure the best possible outcomes for all learners.

<https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/>



Science, technology, maths and engineering = STEM

Sally Male

Welcome to our first STEM column in HERDSA NEWS.

The term STEM is used to promote the enhancement of teaching and learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. We all know how important these disciplines are – to meeting society's needs and wants, addressing global challenges, and of course to the economy. Yet STEM subjects are insufficiently popular among students and often considered excessively difficult. Female students in particular are under-represented in STEM subjects. This new column will explore and report STEM initiatives and progress. I hope it will be of interest to readers not just from STEM disciplines but to all HERDSA NEWS readers.

Recently I participated in one of three engineering education workshops at The University of Queensland. The free discussion on the topic of disruption, or dramatic step changes, in engineering education demonstrated the strength of extended discussions of truly diverse groups for curriculum planning, development, and review. The conversation revealed misplaced currencies. Academics sometimes struggled to gain support to implement change such as involving students in research. University rankings often influenced students' enrolments without good reason, and students often avoided great learning opportunities because they did not wish to risk their high marks. Employers wished to employ graduates who had stepped up to challenges but they could not see this on academic transcripts.

At least two of us have since shared how this discussion inspired and informed us in reflecting on our own teaching. A small change I plan is to adjust assessment to better reward leadership in the form of supporting team mates, and demonstrated attributes such as commitment to safety. We can intentionally design learning activities and assessments to prioritise the learning outcomes that we value. The challenge is to model the cycles of practice and reflection, individually and with diverse others, that we encourage in our students, to realign curricula with our goals.

Sally Male is Senior Research Fellow, School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering, The University of Western Australia, a Fellow of Engineers Australia, and Executive Committee Member, Women in Science Australia.

Links

Engineering education workshops:
www.civil.uq.edu.au/road-2016-ove-arup-foundation-workshop



Recognising outstanding service

A number of HERDSA members have been awarded National Teaching Fellowships by the former Office for Learning and Teaching, Australia and we have featured some in previous editions of HERDSA NEWS. Here we highlight two more National Teaching Fellows and HERDSA members, John Willison and Wendy Green. In the next edition we will highlight Associate Professor Jo Coldwell-Neilson and Associate Professor Lisa Tee.

National Senior Teaching Fellow

Dr John Willison has lectured in School of Education programs for the past 12 years at the University of Adelaide. He has coordinated the graduate Certificate of Higher Education and Masters courses including Curriculum and Assessment Design, Reflective Practice and Neuroscience and Education. John's research includes exploration of how academics develop their students' research skills and led, in collaboration with Kerry O'Regan, to the conception and development of the Research Skill Development (RSD) framework. John has received funding from ALTC/OLT for two projects and an OLT National Teaching Fellowship on the RSD. From the RSD frameworks John has developed the Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching (MELT) framework. MELT provide opportunities for Educators in Universities, as well as Secondary and Primary education, to share a conceptualisation, adopt

language appropriate to their context and understanding, and adapt as is appropriate.

John's National Senior Teaching Fellowship is titled: *Putting student research mindsets to work for a coherent higher education*. Australian higher education has increasingly used researched-based-learning in undergraduate study and coursework Masters due to substantial potential benefits. However, learning-through-research may be distant from many commencing international and domestic students' skill bases, risking attrition and decreasing student enrolments. The Fellowship uses the RSD to foster the growth of a community of educators and students with a shared understanding of and language for the educational enterprise, especially the development of research skills. This will enable students to graduate with research mindsets fit for the world of study and world of work.

The fellowship will deepen established Australian state-based networks, as well as emerging New Colombo Plan (NCP) country networks, that have adopted the RSD framework. This will accelerate Australian universities' momentum towards a systematic approach to developing discipline-specific, undergraduate, Masters and PhD student research skills that are useful for study, life and employment.

The Senior Teaching Fellowship will host I-MELT, the International conference on Mobilising Engaged

Learning and Teaching, at the Adelaide Wine Centre in December 2017.

Seminars and workshops on MELT are being held in each state and territory in a variety of universities. Ultimately, the aim is to enable educators to put student research/problem solving/clinical reasoning/ critical thinking/evidence-based decision making mindsets to work for a coherent higher education and in graduates' employment.

National Teaching Fellow

Dr Wendy Green is a Senior Lecturer in Teaching and Learning, Higher Education in the Tasmanian Institute of Learning and Teaching at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). She is responsible for leading the scholarship of learning and teaching and internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) across UTAS. Her research and teaching have centred on the impact and implications of increasing globalisation for universities, with a particular focus on engaging students and academics in IoC. Her research is published widely, appearing in A* /A ranked journals as well as a range of open access media.

Wendy has focused on developing international, intercultural and global capacities in a range of contexts, from undergraduate and postgraduate coursework, to research higher degree supervision, and accredited and non-accredited university teaching programs. She has received Awards

for her contribution to the development of an embedded, inclusive approach to developing English Language Proficiency. She is convenor of the IoC special interest group of the International Education Association, Australia. She holds visiting fellowships at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation CHEI, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy, and the University of Groningen, Netherlands.

Wendy's Fellowship, *Engaging students as partners in global learning*, recognises that engaging students as partners in global learning will enhance their employability in the interconnected world of the 21st century. Although internationalisation of the curriculum is prioritised in the National Strategy for International Education and is

widely supported by university policies, little attention has been given to students' experiences of, and outcomes from IoC. An internationalised curriculum, as it is understood, intended and enacted by academics can be understood and valued very differently by students. Many students fail to recognize and engage in opportunities for global learning within the formal curriculum, while others are disappointed with its narrow interpretations in their courses. The Fellowship will both engage with, and broaden the focus of IoC-related scholarship, from its current focus on engaging academics, to include students as partners in global learning. Fellowship activities will focus national attention and develop expertise on engaging students with academics as co-designers and co-producers of globally-relevant curriculum.

The International Conference on Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching (I-MELT)

4th - 6th December 2017
Adelaide Wine Centre

Conference themes:

- Engaging Students and Enhancing Teaching
- Curriculum and Assessment Design
- Work Integrated Learning
- Researcher Education
- Broad MELT implementation
- Critiques of any or all of the MELT

Keynote speakers include:

- Emeritus Professor Mick Healey
- Associate Professor Jifo Vanualilalai, Director of the Research Office at the University of the South Pacific
- Associate Professor Sylvia Tiala, University of Wisconsin Stout
- Professor Phil Levy, Pro Vice Chancellor Student Learning, The University of Adelaide.

Call for short papers - May 1, 2017

Submission deadline for short papers - July 1, 2017

www.adelaide.edu.au/rsd/i-melt/

Farewell

Mary Melrose

Mary Melrose, who died recently in Auckland, was the HERDSA NZ branch chairperson for many years. Under her leadership, in the Auckland area particularly, HERDSA NZ was active hosting regular seminars with local and visiting experts. Mary kept things going in the days when it was very much an Auckland thing – with a bit of Waikato input – and was instrumental in pushing beyond that to make the branch more national. She was also a HERDSA Executive member for a long time and was made a Life Member in 2010.

Mary worked in staff development at Auckland University of Technology University (AUT). In fact she was there long before AUT became a university and had been in the polytech tutor training organisation, having been a very successful school science teacher. Her husband John, who survives her, taught engineering at Manukau Institute of Technology in Auckland and was also a NZ branch committee member.

Larry Smith

The HERDSA community acknowledges with sadness the passing of HERDSA Fellow, Professor Larry Smith. Larry has had a long association with HERDSA — most recently being on the board of assessors for the HERDSA Fellowship scheme.

Larry's distinguished academic career included working at both Central Queensland University and University of New England. He was International Expert Consultant to the Ministry of Higher Education for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to the World Bank review of the Higher Education sector in Vietnam. Larry was Deputy Chair of the Academic Advisory Board for the Australian Institute of Management; International Expert Consultant for the review of Masters courses at the Open University of Sri Lanka; a member of the Board of Directors of the National Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia; and Chair of the Queensland Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority Research Committee. In addition to being a HERDSA Fellow Larry was a Fellow of four other professional bodies. His scholarly contribution will be missed.



Meanderings

Robert Cannon

Clark Kerr was a highly regarded professor of economics and President of the University of California from 1958 to 1967. Apart from his significant contributions to the literature of higher education, one of Kerr's legacies was his wit. After writing *The Uses of the University*, Kerr remarked that the ideal university provided three important things: sex for the students, sporting facilities for the alumni and parking for the faculty. And, after being fired by California's then Governor and future President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, Kerr is reported to have said that he left office as he had begun – “fired with enthusiasm”.

Students of organisations will recall a fascinating finding from Kerr's research: since the year 1530 some 66 organisations that existed then still existed in the Western world in recognisable form. These 66 were the Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the parliaments of Iceland and the Isle of Man and 62 universities. Kerr observed the remarkable continuity of universities that had been less changed than other social organisations.

What would Kerr have to say about universities today? Recognisable? Yes, you will still find, as American historian Shelby Foote observed, universities as a physical collections of buildings gathered

around a library. But how far away can these buildings be? Some universities have buildings at remote campuses at the four corners of the Earth. Here in Adelaide, University College London's campus is a prime example. “Our antipodean campus” they may well be saying in London. Is this a university?

Today we have campuses in far away places that make nonsense of the geographical names attached to some universities. How long will it be before we have a campus of the University of the Sunshine Coast in the frozen darkness of the Australian Antarctic Territory? Ridiculous? Consider that we already have one campus of the University of Central Queensland in Adelaide and two of the University of Tasmania in suburban Sydney, so why not? Are they are just businesses, no longer places of learning? What should we call these new institutions – busiversities? If not businesses, why would they be scattered around the world?

One change is especially distressing. It is becoming common to find media reports of the failures in our education system generally and of some universities too; of corruption, academic malpractice, and the shutting down of free speech or failure to defend it. Evidence can be found in academic publications too, something I will get to a little later.

According to Woody Allen, the good news is that if you're not failing every now and again, it's a sign you're not doing anything very innovative. So shouldn't we be rejoicing in the progress that is being made?

Our journal, Higher Education Research and Development together with HERDSA News, presents positive insights into the advances, insights, achievements and happy experiences of progress in our field of academic work. The last edition of HERDSA News demonstrates this in its positive reports of the 2016 Perth HERDSA conference.

On the other hand, the same edition of HERDSA News has Conference keynote speaker Alastair Summerlee's feature article. This arrests our attention with a dramatic declaration: “I am deeply and profoundly concerned that higher education has lost its way”. Alastair laments that teaching has become a surrogate for learning, that we produce graduates from a ‘factory line’ and that many teaching paradigms are pedestrian, locked in theory and devoid of practice.

His jolting aphorism, “the wheel is spinning but the hamster is dead”, makes me think he is on to something here. I feel really sorry for those working in our education systems – the spinning wheel.

According to Australia's National Tertiary Education Union, barely one-third of employees in higher education now have ongoing employment. One third! Dedicated and insecure teachers must look on with despair as the corrupt get away with their ill-gotten millions through legislative and regulatory loopholes in Australian educational support programs ranging from childcare to vocational education and training. On top of that, their own universities spend squillions on expenses ranging from eye-glazing salaries for senior executives and on institutional self-promotion. How can university leaders credibly cry poor to government and promote themselves in expensive mail-outs to alumni for donations on the one hand, yet spend so much on financially rewarding themselves and on decorating their campuses and city thoroughfares with banners and bunting?

How painful this must be for those who have worked so hard and for so long to build their academic careers in universities and for those who have faith in the ideals of universities.

Sadly, the corrosion of university ideals occurs in teaching and learning as well, as the Sydney Morning Herald pointed out on the 6 June 2015. An article claimed that medical students at Sydney University had invented patients, falsified records and even ‘interviewed’ dead patients. It is understood that at least 70 students from a class of about 200 were involved. Equally depressing is that the academic e-news service, The Conversation, has published at least seven separate articles on academic dishonesty in Australia in the past year or so (see links below).

Sydney academic, Richard Hil has written two books on these themes. One, *Selling Students Short: Why You Won't Get the Education You Deserve* (Allen and Unwin, 2015) is about the conditions facing students at Australia's corporatized universities. This is a follow up to his previous and delightfully titled book, *Whackademia: An Insider's Account of the Troubled University* (New South Books, 2012). This book examines the corporatized and bureaucratised university dominated by marketing imperatives rather than academic goals. Hil criticises universities for their vacuous marketing slogans and mottos.

All this is so very dispiriting. Am I being cynical? The eminent academic Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline*, had me worked out years ago: “Scratch the surface of most cynics”, he said, “and you find a frustrated idealist, someone who made the mistake of converting his ideals into expectations”.

Two very different academic papers suggest that, just maybe, I am not being so cynical after all. But caution! Readers are warned that the following material contains vulgarities that may offend.

One paper in the November 2015 issue of the journal *Judgment and Decision Making*, really caught my eye: ‘On the reception and detection of pseudo-profound bullshit’.

But first, an older paper from PLoS Medicine, August 2005, reputedly the most downloaded technical paper from that journal, has the discombobulating title ‘Why Most Published Research Findings are False’. Among other arguments the author, John Ioannidis, reports that simulations show for most study designs and settings it is more likely for a research claim to be false than true. His work is based in the biomedical sciences.

What might Ioannidis say about educational research? His paper raises the reasonable question “are educational research findings bullshit?”.

The first step in answering this question is to examine the central intellectual concept here. The work of philosopher Harry Frankfurt is helpful in this task. In his book *On Bullshit* (Princeton University Press, 2005), Frankfurt defines bullshit as something that is designed to impress but is constructed without concern for the truth. Bullshit, he argues, is quite unlike lying. The bullshitter is the greater enemy of the truth because people who tell the truth and people who tell lies are working with the truth in mind. But the bullshitter ignores the truth altogether.

A pertinent review of *On Bullshit* was published in the Oct 2015 issue of the journal *Performance Improvement*. It is pertinent because it touches on some of the work educational developers do, for instance, working from accurate description of reality to develop interventions that help improve individual and organizational performance. “It is the ultimate responsibility of the instructional or performance technologist to dig through the bull that prevents organizations from reaching desired performance”, this review asserts. University strategic plans, marketing slogans and mottos, perhaps?

Finally, back to ‘On the reception and detection of pseudo-profound bullshit’. This paper is likely the first empirical investigation of bullshit. It focuses on what the authors describe as ‘pseudo-profound bullshit’. This consists of seemingly impressive assertions that are presented as true and meaningful but are actually vacuous. The researchers find

that some people may be more open to bullshit than others and that detecting it is not only a matter of scepticism but rather in picking up the deceptive vagueness in otherwise impressive sounding claims. But a warning! These authors quote an old saying that ‘It pays to keep an open mind, but not so open your brains fall out’. For their work on bullshit, the paper's authors won the 2016 Ig Nobel Prize in the Peace category for ‘achievements that first make people LAUGH then make them THINK’. So, take advice. Think about it... A Peace Prize?

A major worry is that so much bullshit survives out there and gets deeper by the hour. This phenomenon was theorised in 2013 by Alberto Brandolini as the Bullshit Asymmetry Principle. This states that: “The amount of energy needed to refute bullshit is an order of magnitude bigger than to produce it”.

Finally, readers may be interested to know that the common belief that bulls are excited by red is bullshit. This was reported in a 1923 study with the evocative title, ‘The Color Red, and the Anger of Cattle’ in the journal *Psychological Review*. Yet, as the Bullshit Asymmetry Principle tells us, the common belief that bulls are excited by red continues almost a century later.

‘The wheel is spinning but the hamster is dead’ aphorism seems to need some fine-tuning. Is the hamster dead? Maybe, but if not, then it is quite unwell. The solution for dispirited academics is implied in this old hamster joke: ‘Why did the hamster run away? Because it didn't have a wheel!’

Robert Cannon is an evaluation adviser to USAID in Indonesia. Recently, he worked with the USAID-funded Palestinian Faculty Development Program. Robert was formerly Director of the Advisory Centre for University Education at the University of Adelaide.

Links

The Conversation, articles on academic dishonesty: <http://tinyurl.com/zb6dk7>



Does mobile friendly work for you?

Roger Atkinson

This musing arose earlier in 2016 from some email discussions after a meeting of a conference organising committee, which included these observations on fonts:

... it may no longer be necessary to have submissions in the Times New Roman font. We almost exclusively use Calibri here and I have noticed this trend elsewhere. It appears no one is using Times New Roman anymore.

So I started to unpick the observations, “We almost exclusively use Calibri here” and “no one is using Times New Roman anymore”. In this unpicking process I reflected upon fonts that are prominent in computer operating systems, in popular tools for document creation, and in academic publishing. From that I ended up with a slightly grumpy summation of the most important recent influence that I perceived, namely ‘Does mobile friendly work for you?’

Beginning with “We almost exclusively use Calibri here”, it is not surprising that use of this font has expanded in recent times, given Microsoft’s choice of it as the *MS Office* default font since 2007. Presumably changing to a new default font helped to differentiate their new version of *Office* from previous versions. An understandable marketing

tactic, but I’m sceptical. It reminded me of an observation from my childhood in the early 1950s, when Holden used to change the car radiator grill every year or so and proclaim it as the new ‘modern look’ model. So I was not surprised to find this explanation from Joe Friend, one of Microsoft’s developers for *Office 2007*:

At the time [2003-2007], *Office* was looking to modernize the look and feel of documents created by the *Office* applications. They hadn’t changed substantially since the early 90s. Among many other improvements, the introduction of the new fonts had a big impact on the modern look. The use of sans serif Calibri as our default body font (instead of the old standard Times New Roman) was one of the more controversial changes (Friend, 2013).

“Modernize the look and feel of documents”? Perhaps many users of *Office* were resentful as they regard ‘look and feel’ as their prerogative, not Microsoft’s. *Office* is only a tool! I am the creator! At the time, and continuing even now, ‘how to change default font in Word’ became a popular search topic, with many answers appearing online. Many users of *Office* seem to be in the categories ‘don’t know how to change to a different font’; ‘it is too difficult to

change’ (I agree, it is difficult to change the default font); or ‘I don’t care’; or even ‘I am happy with Calibri as default font’. Usually, receivers of an *Office* document will not notice whether the creator changed *Office* defaults, or did a simple global change to obtain the desired or specified font.

However, if you are receiving documents for copy editing prior to publication in a journal, then you do notice. To illustrate, I did counts on the last 44 *Word* documents I have received as copy editor for *Issues in Educational Research (IIER)* comprising all 2016 acceptances except one, and the first five for 2017. In 28 cases the creators had not changed default font from Calibri, whilst in 16 cases the creators had changed the *Office* default, from Calibri to Times New Roman (TNR) (11 cases), or to the *Office* default serif font Cambria (2 cases) or other serif font (3 cases). *IIER* does not specify a font for submission of accepted and revised articles, the specification is simply ‘please use Normal style only’. However, in all cases except seven the authors or creators submitted in Times New Roman, with the exceptions being Calibri (3 cases), and serif fonts other than TNR (4 cases). As default settings are stored within each *Office* document, it is relatively easy to ‘spy’ upon the authors or creators – open their document, select the style ‘Normal’, then ‘Modify’, and the defaults will be displayed. Often I see the *Office* default that is the most grump provoking, namely ‘Line spacing: multiple 1.15 li’. How silly, single spacing and double spacing we all understand, but what the heck is a 1.15 line spacing?

Turning now to “no one is using Times New Roman anymore”, my interest centred upon ‘no one’, that is a consideration of the various groups that we may envisage within ‘no one’. The anecdotal evidence outlined above suggests that authors and creators prefer Times New Roman (TNR), or perhaps some other serif font, but what practices are adopted by the major academic journal publishers? My working hypothesis is that publishers seek pages that ‘look like’ pages in the most influential and prestigious academic journals. So I undertook a

small scale investigation, using two sources to identify ‘the most influential and prestigious’ in education research, firstly John Lamp’s record of the ERA’s 2010 ranking of journals (the infamous ‘Tiers’ rankings), and secondly from the *SCImago Journal and Country Rank* website. This became a rather large data table in TNR 9 point, a little tedious in the compilation because for nearly all journals I had to search for an open access article in order to ascertain practices at the article text level, in contrast to the table of contents and abstract only level. (The poor representation of open access articles in ‘the most influential and prestigious’ is a topic outside the scope of the current musing). Here it will suffice to state my conclusion that amongst the most prestigious journals and the major publishers, we are seeing the recent emergence of ‘dual version’ online publication of research articles. As I have not yet found good names from my reading about academic publishing trends, I’ll use labels that reflect my perception of the principal purpose for each of the ‘dual versions’ (or perhaps ‘twin styles’), namely ‘prestigious’ and ‘mobile friendly’.

‘Prestigious’ is the easier to illustrate, probably being more familiar to both novice and experienced academic writers. Typically, ‘prestigious’ journals are older, established well before online publication was enabled by the new technologies, and they retain and perhaps emphasise a ‘look and feel’ that indicates a long standing, superior reputation, and a closeness to a paper printed version that uses a serif font such as TNR. HERDSA’s *Higher Education Research and Development* (HERD) is a good example. For many years its online version for articles has been PDF files only, using TNR font. Recently HERD’s publisher, Taylor & Francis, added HTML versions using a Calibri-like font, OpenSans. The HTML versions deliver a number of additional features, including ‘pop-ups’ that show details of a citation (so that the reader does not have to scroll down to the References section, and then back again), and links to related articles, citations, and article metrics. Other major publishers such as Wiley (e.g. *British Journal of*

Educational Technology) and Elsevier (e.g. *The Internet and Higher Education*) have introduced similar innovations. However, whilst these innovative purposes or services are helpful, desirable and ‘cool’, I characterise the principal purpose of the HTML version as delivering the ‘mobile friendly’ attribute. The main ‘mobile friendly’ features are use of a sans serif font, a large size such as 18 point, good readability, and a relatively wide line spacing.

My selecting ‘mobile friendly’ as a characterisation of the current wave of

“technological advances and infrastructure investments ... have enabled mobile ICT devices and services to become so user friendly”

innovation amongst academic journal publishers was triggered in part by some catchy examples, including these two which related to conference travel:

Have journal will travel...

All Oxford journals now have mobile optimized sites offering streamlined display for small screens and low-bandwidth networks. This allows you to access our journals quickly and easily via smart phone from virtually anywhere (Oxford University Press).

Mobile-friendly Editors’ Choice website allows you to share ‘Top 5’ articles

... a new direction for Editors’ Choice, which began as an app for conference attendees in 2012... website has been crafted to provide an optimal viewing experience – easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling – across a wide range of devices, from mobile phones to desktop computer monitors (Elsevier).

‘Mobile friendly’ in my thinking is tightly linked to ‘friendly mobile’, that is to say linked to the technological advances and infrastructure investments

that in recent years have enabled mobile ICT devices and services to become so ‘user friendly’ and ‘must have’. In particular, with special implications for publishers, we have enjoyed an incredible rate of progress in screen display technologies and manufacturing technologies which has flooded the market with ever higher resolution screens, a great range of sizes and functionalities to suit a wide diversity of ways of using, and of course, as we have come to expect, seemingly always more attractive prices. One of the most noteworthy of the many impacts is upon the matter of legibility of fonts. In

earlier times with lower resolution screens, sans serif fonts were generally better at giving ‘crisp’ or ‘sharp’ displays of each letter, compared with serif fonts which were more liable to ‘fuzziness’. Nowadays, all screens are high resolution, including mobile devices.

So, if the ‘mobile friendly’ feature of a sans serif font such as Calibri is not for you, and you prefer ‘prestigious’ with a serif font such as TNR, you may so choose. Even on your tablet computer or smart phone, and now, increasingly, you may so choose for your journal reading.

Roger Atkinson retired from Murdoch University in 2001. His current activities include honorary work on the TL Forum conference series and *Issues in Educational Research*. Website: <http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/> Contact: rjatkinson@bigpond.com

Links

See <http://www.roger-atkinson.id.au/pubs/herdsa-news/38-3.html> for this article in HTML, including links to numerous references for this topic.



FROM THE HERD EDITORIAL DESK

The carnival is over. Farewell from the HERD editorial team

Barbara Grant

In the beginning, six years seemed like a long time. But more quickly than imagined, we have completed our term as HERD's editorial team. Along the way, some of us have changed jobs, lost parents, navigated illnesses, become grandparents, passed milestone birthdays, and one of us has had a wedding and a baby. In amongst all that, there was editing the journal – a source of sustaining collective stimulation and enjoyment. There is much to recommend collaborative academic activity such as this: it lifts your gaze from the sometimes dismal horizons of institutional life and directs it toward more interesting and creative matters.

We set out on the shared project of editing HERD with many ambitions. We wanted to prompt the field of higher education (HE) research to scrutinize itself. The field had a history of several decades with a broad international and methodological basis. This suggested a maturity ripe for critical self-reflection

We also wanted to push the field's boundaries to broaden its theoretical and methodological scope. In this vein, we planned to seek out more historical and philosophical work, more critical policy analyses and more work co-authored by scholars from different national sites.

Alongside these core intentions we wanted to: strengthen the Australasia-wide focus by engaging more with the Pacific and Asia; encourage stronger research-oriented scholarship of teaching and learning; and foster critical engagement with current assumptions in the discourses of HE. We sought to educate the next generation of HE researchers through select special issues and professional development opportunities; and provide a forum for left-field commentaries to prompt rethinking of HE research priorities and assumptions. A key aim was to improve HERD's international rankings.

We worked hard to realize our initial ambitions. Looking back, we are proud of several achievements. First, we are delighted with the special issues we commissioned to extend the field in various ways – through critical reviews, or by opening up thought about methodologies, or by drawing attention to new conceptual resources. We are grateful, too, for the services of several guest editors who brought their expertise to benefit the journal. And we are pleased that we managed to pull together a long-planned symposium on Southern theories and higher education.

We also strengthened HERD's international profile by inviting

eminent scholars from more countries and with more diverse interests to become members of the Editorial Advisory Board. And we expanded the international spread of Associate Editors. As a result of this and other considerations such as our healthy Impact Factor, the journal now receives, and publishes, high-calibre submissions from a wider range of countries.

A large project in the first half of our tenure was to critically consider the robustness of our reviewing process. Our response was to establish an international College of Reviewers, members of which are vetted to meet a particular standard, and a set of reviewing criteria. As a consequence, HERD now has the infrastructure crucial to more vigorous and reliable reviewing.

More prosaically, we oversaw a significant increase in manuscript submissions – from 316 in 2011 to around 500 by the end of 2016. To reduce time from acceptance to publication and protect reviewer workloads, we adopted tougher pre-review screening; implemented advanced online publication; and increased volume size and number. Together with more robust reviewing and final decision-making, this led to a steady baseline of 20% acceptance overall.

Our combined efforts have gradually led to a stronger international reputation for HERD as evidenced by the growth in submissions from around the globe, GoogleScholar's ranking of HERD as third in the top 20 HE journals, and a wide range of anecdotal feedback.

In closing, we want to thank our Managing Editor, Diana Nicholson, who holds the journal together, as well as our sterling team of Associate Editors and our Board, several members of which are particularly active. The volume of work HERD generates is considerable and, without these dedicated colleagues, no editorial team would be big enough. We wish Wendy, Craig and their team well – may they enjoy editing HERD as much as we have.

Barbara Grant, Bruce Macfarlane, Catherine Manathinga, Fran Kelly, Mark Barrow and Tai Peseta.

ESSENTIAL READING

HERD Points for Debate Editor Tai Peseta provides her pick of an article from Vol 35(6).

Understanding how change happens at the meso-level of universities seems to be a hot(ish) topic. Barman and colleagues' paper 'How education policy is made meaningful, (full title below) addresses the issue of how groups of university teachers organise themselves amidst a climate of regulation.

In this piece, we get a glimpse into how nine university teachers from a Swedish Health Sciences department encounter each other over a year. Drawing on Lave and Wenger's writing on communities of practice we see how these teachers inhabit spaces; what they argue over and how they seek resolution; how they step up for each other; deal with the policy and institutional politics of curriculum renewal; and create artefacts which express their desire for teaching and curriculum informed by evidence about learning.

While the article gives a distinct feel for the banality of teaching, learning and curriculum change, it properly reminds you that those basics mean something important that is often missed in institutional efforts at pedagogical change. If you're a fan of the scholarship of folks like Paul Trowler and Katarina Martensson, this companion piece focuses the mind on why we need more compelling research that delves into the wonder and mystery of academic micro-cultures.

Linda Barman, Staffan Josephsson, Charlotte Silen & Klara Bolander-Laskov, 'How education policy is made meaningful – a narrative exploration of how teachers show autonomy in the development of teaching and learning'. HERD 35(6), 2016, pp. 1111-1124.



FROM THE HERD EDITORIAL DESK

A new team at HERD

Craig Whitsed and Wendy Green

It might be considered odd to introduce the new editorial team of HERD with a reference to the work of the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch, commonly known as the philosopher of hope, but we feel there is wisdom in his work for us as we look to the future. For Bloch 'hope' is not a merely fanciful wishing. In his 1982 work *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch*, Wayne Hudson characterised Bloch's understanding of hope as being "the most militant expectation affect: the functionaire of what has never been which summons [people] to stand at the front and to work for the realisation of what is home-like. It is an act of a cognitive sort which indicates a 'where-to': a direction in which something is intended and must be experimented for".

It is no exaggeration to say that Barbara Grant and her team of Mark Barrow, Frances Kelly, Catherine Manathunga, Tai Peseta and Bruce Macfarlane, during their tenure, had a significant influence on higher education as a field of research. This influence came through the intellectual contribution of the journal, the professional development opportunities they facilitated, and their participation in and contribution to HERDSA. Their team has encouraged and inspired many to hope: that is - to 'stand at the front,' and they have, over the past six years, pointed the way and provided direction.

As we and our team reflected on their accomplishments we were struck by the quality of their leadership, their professionalism, and capacity to identify significant issues that need to be experimented for. These are values and attributes that we as the incoming team aspire to follow.

It is a great pleasure to introduce the members of our team. Wendy Green, University of Tasmania, and Craig Whitsed, Murdoch University replace Barbara. Our co-editors are Amani Bell, University of Sydney; Bernadette Knewstubb and Stephen Marshall, Victoria University NZ; and Ly Tran, Deakin University. Deanne Gannaway, University of Queensland, is the books review editor and the special issues editor is Kelly Matthews, University of Queensland. Following the example of the outgoing editorial team, we have maintained a strong cross-Tasman partnership and our team has disciplinary and methodological breadth: we have backgrounds in the humanities, social sciences, STEM disciplines and education, and a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Taking our cues from Bloch and the outgoing editorial team, it is our hope that we can continue through the work of the journal to stand at the front, indicate where-to, and to experiment for and work for the realisation of what is home-like.

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POSTCARD FROM VIETNAM

The world of the learner

Owen Hicks

Inadvertently, when typing up a draft of this postcard, I hit a key that switches my keyboard to Vietnamese text. About to make the correction, it struck me as appropriate to keep it as it was: the ‘world of’ of the learner. Of course ‘world of’ is not Vietnamese for ‘world of’ but rather the meaningless but pronounceable ‘words’ that appear when the keys for w, o, r, l and d and o and f are struck on a Vietnamese keyboard setting. It provides a trivial but insightful perspective on just how much can be lost in translation as we attempt to take something previously unknown into our sphere of understanding. How do we see our world? Does it make sense to us? Does it make sense to our students? What meanings do we have of their worlds?

The theme of this postcard is engagement with students. It highlights a rather amazing weekend I spent recently with students at a ‘University Olympics’ event in a remote border-crossing city in the far north of Vietnam. I share it to prompt your reflection on similar experiences you may have had with students in your world.

Seven universities and colleges came together for this four-day biennial event. The inaugural event took

place back in the mid-1990s. My university’s contingent totalled around 100, mostly undergraduate students but also about twenty staff including the three most senior leaders of the institution. Five small buses and three or four cars transported us in convoy over a four-hour journey. The buses, brim full – beyond Australian legal limits – of students and staff, luggage, and equipment needed for events, all somehow managed to get there and back. Some other universities travelled twice our distance.

As Vietnamese protocol dictated, my wife and I were allocated what our fellow passengers considered the most prestigious seats in our bus, near the front and with a bit of leg room not already occupied with other cargo. My role was to be my university’s judge of the English speaking contest, one of a panel of five resident foreigners (three from the US, one from Brunei and myself from Australia) drawn from the competing institutions. The conversation in the bus was fast and furious, mostly in Vietnamese. Any of the students on the bus who could speak English took the opportunity to talk with us, particularly our entrant in the English competition. The University had made a

block booking of a hotel from which we looked across the river to China. Meals were provided, seating arranged in clusters of teams for the various events. Staff acted in support/chaperone roles for teams and events related to their discipline. We bused together to and from the venues on the campus of the host institution.

I reflected on inter-varsity competition in Australia as I learnt more of what was to happen over the four days. Sporting events played a significant part, eg. women’s and men’s soccer, volleyball, badminton, and the incredible traditional game of shove stick (see photo p. 19 bottom left). This involves two players standing in a circle of about four metres diameter each holding the end of a stout pole. They attempt to shove their opponent out of the circle. Various academic areas such as mathematics, informatics, pedagogics (!), and English also engaged in the competition. In discussion with our mathematics entrant, limited by the insufficient common languages of Vietnamese, English and mathematical, I ascertained she undertook a two-hour essay writing exercise involving expounding on various aspects of calculus and matrix algebra. The pedagogics entrants, predominantly primary school teacher trainees, were quizzed on various teaching methodologies and were required to resolve assorted case study scenarios. The English competition required three English presentations by the students. The first introduced their institution. The second labelled ‘talent’ required them to display a particular ability and use English in some way in their presentation. Some sang English songs, another danced briefly then explained the significance of the dance. In addition they each gave inspirational and impassioned speeches on topics such as the dangers of the internet, cyber bullying and youth suicide. A third major component of the Olympics comprised cultural and artistic performances where each evening competition revolved around music, singing and dancing. To a full house in a large hall, traditional musical instruments were played, the most notable being a virtuoso performance on a wooden flute from a young student from our university.

Cultural and patriotic singing and dancing in ethnic dress provided wonderful entertainment, replete with brilliant colour, special lighting effects and an over-used smoke machine! While in the front row a panel of judges had assessment tasks to complete, the audience behind were both rapturous and raucous in supporting their own team and the opposition.

As a judge of just part of this melange of activity, I was confronted by the potential impact on the students of judgement being passed as they gave their all. I was challenged by expectations relating to scoring a student from my own institution against students from elsewhere, and curious about the criteria (presented to our judging panel by the organizers at the last minute). I was particularly bemused by the rapid but copious arithmetic needed by a fellow judge – who turned out to be a mathematician – to arrive at her scores.

Eventually, the English competition score sheets were submitted, scores aggregated, and winners announced. The institutions rather than the individuals were acknowledged. Universities and Colleges were considered as separate groups. In each group a winner was announced and the rest awarded equal second place. What appeared to matter most was the opportunity for engagement and the incidental learning that took place.

Ultimately, by some masterstroke of melding, scores for all events were combined into a single score and at the closing ceremony, with little fanfare and no trophies, scores were announced and a winning institution recognised with applause.

The closing ceremony was preceded by a large party with ample food, assorted drinks, deafening music, and students dancing, forming conga lines, waving hands in the air. A tiny bit of over-indulgence in the local spirit on the part of a few students and at least one senior staff member (not from our institution) might have been observed. A very enjoyable time was had by staff and students alike.

Students from a cluster of institutions had seen new places, shared a wide range of interests, demonstrated or observed excellence, gained new insights, formed new friendships, and interacted in a more holistic way with their teachers than normally available in student-teacher interactions on campus.

On returning from the trip, I posted to facebook a short note in English and a small selection of photos. Within a couple of hours I had received over 200 ‘likes’ and a bundle of comments from students and staff.

How differently does student engagement manifest itself in universities across the world?

Owen Hicks, UWA Emeritus Professor and formerly responsible for the institution’s academic staff development, is a HERDSA Life member and a past national and WA branch president. As a Senior Consultant for the Australian Learning and Teaching Council he engaged with a wide cross-section of academics. More recently he has enjoyed volunteer assignments in East Timor, China and Vietnam, returning to Vietnam in 2015 for eighteen-months at a provincial university halfway between Hanoi and the Chinese border.
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Top left: Student Olympics here we come! Bottom left: Simple rules - squat and shove your opponent out of the circle! Top right: Song and dance blend colours and cultures. Bottom right: The University’s crest held aloft in finale.



Evaluation of teaching

Denise Chalmers and Lynne Hunt

University teachers often ask why teachers and teaching need to be evaluated? After all teachers are always revising their teaching to ensure they are doing the best for their students and an increased focus on data collection has not yet led to any tangible increase in the quality of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, university teachers are being targeted for ever-increasing external scrutiny by government quality agencies interested in judging the quality of teaching. Chalmers and Hunt (2016) argue that this is a consequence of higher education becoming a mass education system which relies on significant levels of funding from the government budget. This, in turn, has led university administrators to implement greater levels of internal examination of university teachers as they respond to the external demands for evidence of teaching quality.

For Chalmers and Hunt the question that should be asked is not whether the evaluation of teachers and teaching should be done but, how can we turn the normal processes of observing and judging teaching performance into a process that improves decision making about teaching? To answer the more important second question Chalmers and Hunt argue we need to make a distinction between evaluating teachers and evaluating teaching. The evaluation of teachers happens on almost a daily basis, mostly by students in the classroom. Evidence used to evaluate teaching is normally at the level of courses, schools or whole of institutions.

These are the evaluations that can be compared nationally and internationally because they are an aggregation of proxies for teaching quality.

Chalmers and Hunt caution that teaching evaluations are open to misinterpretation and misused, such as student feedback surveys collected at course or institutional levels being misapplied to evaluate individual teacher performance. Still, some evidence, like student achievement in the form of completion, progression and attrition rates or external expert peer reviews of promotion applications, do provide part of the complex picture of teaching quality.

While self-assessment plays a large part in preparing for external teaching quality reviews, Chalmers and Hunt do not see the same focus on holistic evaluation by university teachers who would want to be recognized and rewarded for the quality of their teaching. Here they see an opportunity being presented by the shift to teaching being carried out by sessional academics, who can be responsible for up to 80% of undergraduate teaching. These are university teachers who have little access to professional development, are rarely involved in curriculum design, and almost paradoxically, have little, on-going contact with students. It is these teaching-focussed staff who Chalmers and Hunt argue ought to focus on evaluation from the perspective of teachers. In return for taking a more holistic approach to evaluating their teaching they will receive additional

benefits in improved student learning, better curricula and more satisfying academic careers.

To explore the evaluation of university teaching from the perspective of teachers, Chalmers and Hunt describe four sources of evidence—student input, peer review, student achievement and self assessment—which can be combined with each other to reduce any inherent methodological weaknesses in any single source of evidence. While the four sources of evidence have been used to judge teaching for many decades, each has individually been criticised in terms of its validity, reliability and suitability. From Chalmers and Hunt's perspective it is not a question of the source of evidence but how the evidence is used.

The purpose of teacher-owned evaluation processes is to demonstrate a professionalism in university teachers so that institutions can be confident when asked to recognise and reward university teachers. With the renewed focus on teaching created by having teaching-focused academic positions there will also be an opportunity for university teachers to shape local policies and influence the methods by which we evaluate teaching.

About the Authors

Denise Chalmers is Professor Emeritus, The University of Western Australia. She is currently a National Senior Teaching Fellow investigating the recognition and rewarding of university teaching.

Lynne Hunt is Professor Emeritus, University of Southern Queensland and has worked in a number of senior leadership roles in universities around Australia. She has won the Prime Minister's Award for Australian University Teacher of the Year.

About the Reviewer

Dr Peter Kandlbinder is Executive Editor, HERDSA Review of Higher Education and Senior Lecturer, Institute for Interactive Media & Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Photo Patrick Halloran

Evaluation of teaching.
Chalmers, D., & Hunt, L. (2016).
HERDSA Review of Higher
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TATAL Talking about teaching and learning: Teaching philosophy workbook

Stuart Schonell et al

The TATAL Workbook is designed to provide a base for higher education teachers to reflect on their practice, share stories with other TATAL participants, and assist them in developing and expressing their teaching philosophy. The TATAL workshop process is distinct from the teaching tips approach to education development, such as can be found in *101 Things you can do in the first three weeks of class*.

A wealth of experience in teaching and, of course, experience in TATAL: Talking about teaching and learning is brought to the authoring of the TATAL Workbook. Authors include established academic developers and current teaching fellows with a variety of discipline backgrounds.

While the TATAL journey works from involvement in teaching and learning practice, it leads to reflection on theoretical underpinnings of teaching to promote development of a teaching philosophy.

Being able to articulate a teaching philosophy has a value in the academy. It can be used in demonstrating a considered understanding of the teaching element of academic work in applying for positions or for promotion, as well as in reviews of academic performance. It can be a valuable component of applications for teaching awards or fellowships. And of course it provides a process and a platform for critical reflection and the scholarship of teaching.

The TATAL Workbook can be used individually, with a mentor, or by a group, in a workshop setting or in ongoing practice. The Workbook provides the framework for a staged process of launching into TATAL through to obtaining the best value from the outcomes of the process. It

starts with the basics for establishing a TATAL group or community. In good constructivist fashion, it starts from you as a practitioner and from your current understandings before launching into theory. Theory here refers both to theoretical underpinnings of the reflective process and to theory relating to learning from the practice of teaching. In the Workbook, the authors dissect the elements of reflection, including, importantly, the value of reflecting on unexpected outcomes and the recognition of gaps in understanding. They point to characteristics of TATAL that distinguish the reflective conversations that TATAL involves from ‘congenial’ conversations. Here the big value is focusing multiple sets of eyes on teaching experiences; providing the possibility of different interpretations and options for action.

With a focus on developing your own teaching philosophy, is there a risk of TATAL practitioners reinventing the wheel? Philosophers for centuries, indeed millennia, have proffered educational philosophies. Why not pick up a prefabricated one? To do so would imply a transferability of understanding of the educational endeavour that lies outside the ontological underpinnings of TATAL. TATAL proceeds from an understanding that, whether or not there are consistencies in the educational process and resulting outcomes, all that is available to us is an informed, logical interpretation based on our observation of educational processes conducted in a social context. This understanding is dynamic both because the elements of the context – teachers, learners, teaching situations and desired learning outcomes – change and because the understanding of the educational process involved are a subjective construction that is open to reconstruction. Working

from this understanding, Kolb’s experiential learning model, referred to in the TATAL Workbook, provides for both construction of an understanding and for reconstruction. In the reflective stage of Kolb’s cycle, the TATAL approach contributes to the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of understandings that emerge in the particular social context.

As the TATAL Workbook works toward expression of a teaching philosophy, participants need to engage in the process of reflection on their motivation for teaching and the rationale for their practice, as well as on procedures that they employ. Critical to the end task, the TATAL Workbook provides alternative models for drafting a teaching philosophy. It also offers suggestions about how participants in the TATAL workshop might continue the process; that is keep up TATAL.

Talking about teaching and learning is an essential component of professional practice for teaching academics. The TATAL Workbook provides a structured support mechanism for this activity.

About the Reviewer

Peter Ling is Adjunct Associate Professor, Learning Transformations Unit, Swinburne University of Technology. Co-editor Methods and paradigms in education research, IGI Global, due January 2017. pling@swin.edu.au

Stuart Schonell, John Gilchrist, Robert Kennelly, Coralie McCormack, Maria Northcote, Gesa Ruge, and Geoff Treloar. (2016). *TATAL Talking about teaching and learning: Teaching philosophy workbook*. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.

Links

The TATAL workbook is available under publications at: www.herdsa.org
For information about the TATAL process and/or ways to use the Workbook as a professional development activity with associated slides contact: stuart.schonell@utas.edu.au



First in family

Sarah O' Shea, Cathy Stone, Josephine May and Janine Delahunty

The First in Family website is based on a research project by our colleagues from the University of Wollongong, Newcastle and the Open University, Australia. The website is designed to provide information about tertiary studies to current and intending students who are first in their immediate families (FIF) to study at tertiary level. The site also provides information for family members and resources for staff. In this field, most of the literature and online information have come out of the United States. As a researcher in this area, I have yet to come across a website in Australasia that is dedicated to FIF students and, more importantly, one as comprehensive as this website.

The website is easy to navigate. The homepage has images of students from diverse backgrounds and the excerpts from their interviews make the site interesting to a wide audience. The layout has information for learners, teachers and family members of students. Advice is based on what students say about their experiences together with institutional information and suggestions for how families can support their students. From the outset, one gets a sense that it is definitely possible to study and succeed, even if you are first in your family. This is a very strong message that can act as a catalyst for change in many of our FIF students' lives.

The six subheadings namely Stories, Success, Kids, Family, Teaching and Support, and QLT Fellowship are logically ordered for what a prospective audience might search for in a website based on FIF students. I especially like that the students are central in this website through their narratives and the researchers' insightful use of their students' experiences are part of the 'top tips' for study and survival.

The students' experiences are in the Stories section- where each one is a 'real story'. The stories are authentic and tell of each student's journey giving practical study tips and information for other students such as: persist, you'll get the hang of it; how to fit everything in; and it turned out better than I thought, to name a few. For example, Nona's story resonates with those who are migrants. When I read her story it reminded me of my late grandmother who did not complete primary education but had an insight into what she could do to support me. Nona's joy of seeing her grandson study at university, and how she supports him, is very heart warming and her advice is very practical.

I use the term 'real stories' as they are realistic and by no means glossed over. There is a sense of the reality of what FIF students experience in higher education, that is, it is not easy at times but it is definitely achievable

with the help of family, together with the understanding and support of the institution.

Under the Success section are a number of study tips for different groups of FIF students such as undergraduates and those studying online, as well as enabling students. Again this is a comprehensive cover of the diverse FIF student body. The list of Useful University Terms and What I Wish I'd Known Before are both very valuable, especially for FIF students who may find their new environment overwhelming. The Kids section is child-friendly and I can see young children reading it and getting an understanding of what it's like to have a parent who is studying. The survival hints under the Family section are on point and very practical.

Missing from the website are FIF students of Indigenous backgrounds that is, Aboriginal descent. I see their participation in this research as critical for the development and progress of their families and communities. Their stories remain untold and are missing in what we know about FIF students.

Finally, I applaud the project team for framing the website from a positive perspective. Each story is informative and at the same time encouraging to FIF students. They should also be commended for recognising the important role and contribution of significant others such as family members and community groups, to FIF students' success in tertiary study.

About the Reviewer

Ena Wolfgramm-Foliaki is a lecturer at the Centre for Learning & Research in Higher Education, University of Auckland. She is lead Principal Investigator with Associate Professor Lorri Santamaria of a Worldwide Universities Network project, *Widening Participation: First in the Family Students Succeeding at University*.

The First in Family website. An OLT funded project. Project leader Sarah O'Shea.
www.firstinfamily.com.au/



Engaging learners through structured storytelling

Lynne Hunt

Structured storytelling is an empowering process that enables participants to analyse work-related stories and to apply insights to their own practice. Its strength lies in the engagement of participants in structured reflection that leads directly to action. It is a powerful tool in workshops because it enables members of reflection circles to draw their own conclusions in a targeted, time-efficient manner. It can be used in teaching, professional development and in conflict resolution because it focuses on solutions to dilemmas and on practical outcomes. Students particularly enjoy the process because it helps them to analyse issues of relevance to their own lives and to extrapolate out from personal stories to understandings of broader theoretical import. This showcase presentation also serves as an introduction to subsequent papers that will apply structured storytelling to matters associated with teaching evaluation and government and university support for teaching.

Use of the term storytelling in the context of higher education is contestable because it suggests distinctions between knowledge generated by stories and the evidence-based knowledge that informs academic discourse. However, such distinctions have been deconstructed, in part, by the introduction of traditional knowledges into the academy, as Michael Christie

and Christine Asmar explain. They note that Indigenous knowledge is founded in the routine practices of daily life. They describe it as 'performative - something that you do rather than something you have'. This means that learning to be an Aboriginal knower involves knowing how to construct, rehearse, implement, perform and celebrate knowledge collectively and in place. This sounds remarkably like constructivist theories of learning and reflects well-known educational processes such as Friere's conscientization strategies that formed part of his transformative educational practice in South America. It accords also with feminist consciousness raising groups and Wenger's description of community of practice processes. All such approaches build on the analysis of stories about individual and shared experiences.

I first learned about the structured storytelling process from Canadians Ron Labonte and Joan Feather at a public health conference in the 1990s. It was immediately apparent that the process is widely applicable as a teaching strategy that facilitates constructivist learning. It is based on useful stories that illustrate good or bad work practice, contain a problem, or have beneficial lessons. The stories should reflect experience and be chosen for a purpose that fits with learning objectives. The important thing is that they facilitate description,

explanation, and reflection. The focus is on the outcome of the process: the point is to make the point - otherwise storytelling becomes a mere gabfest.

The reflection circle, or listening group, includes a facilitator and a scribe and the process maximises listening skills because people speak one at a time and there is no dialogue until everyone has spoken. The facilitator generates structured dialogue and analysis through four questions:

- What's happening? (Description)
- Why is it happening? (Explanation)
- What might be learned? (Synthesis)
- What can be done? (Action).

Each member of the reflection circle responds to each question before the group moves to the next one. Participants are not obliged to speak. If they do, it is within a strict time-limit, normally about two minutes. The scribe records the discussion and, when all questions have been answered by those choosing to respond, the scribe reviews the notes to remind participants of main points. Given that there could be as many answers to the questions as there are respondents, the aim of the ensuing discussion is to develop two or three 'insights' for each question. An insight is something that is important to work practice. Each insight is recorded on a separate sheet. Assuming that there is more than one reflection circle in a workshop, the insights associated with each question are clustered to generate collective 'insights' or themes that provide a practical written outcome related to the purpose of the story-telling session.

Emeritus Professor Lynne Hunt, USQ, is a HERDSA Fellow. She won the 2002 Prime Minister's Award for University Teacher of the Year and a 2009 Australian Executive Endeavour Award. She is co-author of the textbook 'University Teaching in Focus'. Her publications may be found at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lynne_Hunt/contributions

Photo Patrick Halloran



Achieving consistency

Kate Thomson et al

Our challenge: Use design-based research methods to design, develop, and evaluate a mobile website for professional development to provide academics with timely and relevant support.

We drew on design-based research methods, which focus on continuous cycles of design, enactment, analysis, and redesign within education. This involves participant collaboration as well as iterative design and implementation to advance educational theories and practices. Researchers must generate evidence-based claims related to learning. We were able to incorporate feedback from academics, the intended users of the mobile website, during each of the iterative phases of design, analysis, and redesign. We used a design-based research framework as a way to understand how academics participate in formal and informal professional development, engage in assessment, and learn from student feedback.

We utilised three phases of data collection. Phase 1 focused on the design and development of the mobile website following an iterative, user-centred design process. Early versions of the

website were tested in focus groups and individual interviews. This iterative prototype testing allowed for the elimination of usability issues, ensured that the website addressed academics' needs, and provided opportunities for collecting qualitative feedback.

In Phase 2 the mobile website was made available online and academics were invited to participate in a semester-long trial. This phase involved a pre-study survey to collect background information about participants and their familiarity with mobile technology. Data from this survey helped us to understand the demographics and profiles of our participants, which was used to explain observations made during the trial.

Phase 3 involved post-trial interviews with academics who had used the mobile website in Phase 2. The interviews allowed us to collect in-depth qualitative data about the helpfulness and utility of the mobile website and how it was used.

The design framework we used focuses on the construction and evaluation of educational artefacts. When designers construct artefacts, they include features that they believe will positively influence the way that users think and

work. Features can reflect, support, and potentially prescribe the intended use of an artefact, however they may not be taken up as affordances by users. Affordances are what users see as the positive features of an artefact. For instance, some of the website's teaching resources such as case studies and videos included contact information from academics. We built this feature into the artefact with the intention that users would contact the academics directly however users did not necessarily perceive this as an affordance.

The next aspect of the design framework is evaluating the consequences or outcomes of the design. Here, we considered what features of the mobile website were taken up as affordances to determine how effective our website was in meeting our original intentions. In our case, although academics did not avail themselves of the opportunities for peer interaction as intended, the website did provide timely and relevant support through personalised and digitally-mediated resources. Our evaluation can be used to inform future designs of the website or other artefacts with similar intentions.

The authors work for the University of Sydney. Kate's research interests include academic development and work integrated learning; most recently, she has focused on facilitating student and staff learning through informal conversations, tailored online resources, and systems of peer support. This work was supported by the Office for Learning and Teaching (SD13-3295, EX15-0186).

Links

Mobile website for professional development:
<http://askcharlie.co/about/>

Design-based research and the framework:
Barab, S., & Squire, K. (2004). Design-based research: Putting a stake in the ground. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*.

Halverson, R.R. et al. (2010). The design framework: An organizing artifact for enhancing the fidelity of educational research, implementation, and assessment. *9th International Conference of the Learning Sciences*.

Call for nominations

HERDSA Executive

The HERDSA Executive is a supportive and collegial group who work collaboratively to support and further the work of HERDSA and HERDSA members. The Executive Committee is elected every two years and is supported by an administrative office and a number of Officers of HERDSA who serve as editors of the various HERDSA publications.

The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia is a scholarly society for people committed to the advancement of higher and tertiary education. If you can see benefits for you personally and professionally and feel you have something to contribute to HERDSA, then we welcome your nomination.

Nominations for the 2017 – 2019 HERDSA Executive are now open. All persons accepting nomination should attach a statement (one page max) about themselves (including full institutional/business address). The statement could include description of work undertaken, areas of interest, relevant past experience, the nominee's potential contribution to the Executive and reasons for seeking a position on the Executive. The statement must accompany the nomination.

Persons nominated, proposers and seconders must ALL be financial members of HERDSA at the time of nomination.

HERDSA Life Membership

HERDSA Life Members are individuals who have made a substantial, prolonged contribution to HERDSA through their service to the Society and/or have made a distinguished contribution to higher education. We are pleased to count many significant contributors in our list of life members.

The HERDSA Executive is now calling for nominations for new Life Members. The Executive will review nominations and elect up to two new life members who will be recognised at the 2017 conference.

To nominate an outstanding individual for HERDSA Life Membership, please forward a short statement detailing the following:

- Name and email of nominee
- Name and email of proposer
- Statement of outstanding Contribution to HERDSA and/or higher education (500 words max)

Please forward to office@herdsa.org.au by **Friday February 10th, 2017.**



Photo Patrick Halloran

HERDSA GUIDES SALE

For a limited time HERDSA Guides are on sale for the reduced price of \$30.

HERDSA Guides can be purchased from the HERDSA web site at:

[www.herdsa.org.au/
publications/guides](http://www.herdsa.org.au/publications/guides)

The usual member discount of \$5 still applies to all HERDSA members who log in to make their purchase.



Visit Sydney for the JUNE 2017 HERDSA conference



I-MELT

International conference on
Models of Engaged Learning & Teaching

4-6 December 2017, National Wine Centre, Adelaide
www.i-melt.edu.au

This international conference will use the Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching as conceptual centrepieces, so all presentations will use, adapt, connect or critique one or more of this family of frameworks:

- Research Skill Development (RSD and RSD7) frameworks
- Work Skill Development (WSD) framework
- Clinical Reflection Skills (CRS) framework
- Critical Thinking (CT) pentagon
- Optimising Problem Solving (OPS) pentagon
- Research Mountain (for children)

Keynote Speakers:

Emeritus Professor Mick Healey (Higher Education Consultant and Researcher, UK)
Associate Professor Jito Vanualailai, (The University of the South Pacific, Fiji)
Associate Professor Sylvia Tiala (University of Wisconsin Stout, USA)
Professor Phil Levy (University of Adelaide, Australia)

Information

query@i-melt.edu.au
<https://reskidev.wordpress.com>
#i-melt
Conference Committee: John Willison & Said Al-Sarawi
The University of Adelaide; Nayana Parange, University of South Australia; & Lyn Torres, Monash University.
I-MELT is a culmination of Willison's National Senior Teaching Fellowship, supported by the Australian Government, Department of Education and Training.

Short Papers

- 1500 to 2000 words
- submissions from 1 May to 1 July, 2017
- draw on one or more of the MELT
- address one or more conference themes:
- Engaging Students and Enhancing Teaching • WIL
- Curriculum and Assessment Design across programs
- Research-based learning • Implementation models
- Transitions across formal education • Researcher Education

