HERDSA NEWS

The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia

FEATURES

REGULAR ITEMS

NOV 1978

Editorial

A new editor and a new format for the HERDSA Newsletter. While editorializing will not be a feature of future editions, I thought I would take this opportunity to outline my own views on the role and function of this publication. The key role is to be responsive to the needs of HERDSA members, and so all the views which follow are open to change in the light of feedback from members.

The Newsletter is not a journal in the usual sense, and although there is no journal which currently acts as a forum for higher education research and development in Australasia this is no substitute. I see it as means for communication amongst members. In an area the size of Australasia the opportunities for direct contact between states or across the Tasman are limited, and the annual conference is often the sole mechanism for the sharing of information. First and formost HERDSA Newsletter acts as an information exchange between members. To this end we include items of news, reports of developments elsewhere, information on conferences, abstracts of Australasian literature, book reviews and overseas items of interest.

The second and complementary aim of HERDSA newsletter is to maintain the quality of debate about all aspects of Higher Education in Australasia. While there are other arenas, many of them are explicitly political and many of them are the repository of vested interests of a non-educational kind. HERDSA is a non-political body representing those committed to the promotion of higher education research and development — it exists as a group of skilled professionals dedicated to educational ends and wishing for all the support it can get in this task. The encouragement of debate is the main aim that I wish to foster in my term as editor. I want to include short articles of opinion which aim to raise issues, question policy, challenge current practices and address important issues of an educational nature. The present issue is a move in this direction and continues the excellent work of my predecessor, Peter Sheldrake, in these matters. The increase in size allows more room for debate and permits of a more readable format — because of the technicalities of printing, the increase in production costs is marginal.

DAVE BOUD

Tertiary Teacher Training — One Option

"... most Dutch universities have accepted the argument that trained teaching staff are more effective and efficient teaching staff, and have therefore specifically financed training."

Almost all Australian universities have a Higher Education Research and/or Development Unit which may run training courses for academics in teaching skills. One of the problems encountered by many of these Units is the need to strike a balance between research (on which the careers of any academic staff depend) and development (which would include tertiary teacher training courses) in a time of limited funding. To the extent that a Unit devotes most of its (fixed) funding and staff time to development activities that Unit also signals the end of academic advancement for most of its staff. Time spent on development is time taken from research; research leads to publications and publications are the only road to advancement. Perhaps this is the reason that so few universities in Australia (or C.A.E.'s, for that matter) have a well-developed and well-documented series of training courses in teaching methods for academic staff.

While on study leave in the Netherlands last year I found that the universities (there are no large C.A.E.'s there) had the same funding problems as in Australia — little or no real growth. Nonetheless training courses for teaching staff were very much a growth area.

How could this be?

It seems that most Dutch universities have accepted the argument that trained teaching staff are more effective and efficient teaching staff, and have therefore specifically financed training. They have not (of course) taken the logical final step in encouraging good teaching — regular and systematic promotion of good teachers — but we can't expect perfection, can we?

An interesting example, both in its mode of financing and in the courses developed, is the teacher training system at the Institute for Research in Higher Education (IOWO) at the Catholic University in Nijmegen.

Two courses have so far been developed, one on lecturing and one on test construction. These courses are developed by funding a person for perhaps two years to get a course going, to develop it and to try it out and evaluate it. It is expected that if the courses evaluate favourably, then the person will take charge of running the two courses, as a production enterprise and IOWO will thus retain an extra staff member.

The lecturing course is a very interesting one which Australian universities would well think about adopting. It is designed to minimise the amount of time that the IOWO staff member has to spend with people being taught. The course is run for dyads of people, that is pairs of people, and it's a course which is run on a contract basis. Two people, from either the same discipline or very closely related disciplines (they insist at IOWO on cognate disciplines) contract with the Institute to improve their lecturing. A member of the Institute meets with the two lecturers and discusses the training with them; they are given a book on lecturing to read, before they meet the staff member again. They then videotape one lecture by each lecturer, and each individual looks at his own lecture, in company with the staff member of the Institute. The two lecturers look at each other's lectures, and then they discuss individually, and later together, with the Institute staff member, what improvements they wish to make in their lecturing. They then make an individual contract between the two of them and the Institute as to how they are going to do this. The basic pattern for these plans is that the two lecturers will attend each other's lectures from time to time, offer comment and discussion to each other, act as sounding boards for each other, and may, if they wish to, call upon the Institute to videotape their lectures from time to time. Should either or both of the lecturers wish to consult with the Institute staff member in the course of this improvement process, this is welcomed. In fact, moderately regular meetings seem to be the norm. IOWO staff say it takes about 40 hours of Institute time per dyad to run the course, that is 40 person hours.

When the two lecturers are agreed that they have achieved their objectives their lectures are then videotaped again, and they play back both the new example and the old example to themselves, and in company with the person running the course. They then decide whether they still believe that enough has been achieved and, if so, that is the end of the course. If not, they then make further plans as to what they should do to improve further. One obvious option is to continue (or restart) the training course.

The reason for running the course in dyads from cognate subject areas is quite simple. It means that the lecturers understand each other's lectures, at least to some extent, and therefore understand each other's difficulties. Also each person doing the course has some sort of moral support in his own department or in a closely related one.

The second course is a rather more conventional one on test construction treating reliability, validity and the use of tests — mainly objective testing and multiple-choice questions. Participants work on their own testing. Therefore IOWO try to give this course to subgroups within departments. When they have offered it to individuals they have found that there is no change in the department's behaviour. They believe it is important that anyone taking the course gets support within his or her department. The course consists of eight half day sessions at weekly or fortnightly intervals.

To be developed are courses on giving seminars, which will be modelled on the lecturing one described above and one on grading, which will be modelled on the test construction course.

I like very much the system of funding that IOWO have managed to organize for themselves in order to take on more than they would otherwise be able to do. The system of developing courses and evaluating them before they are adopted, with the reward in terms of extra staff if they are in fact adopted seems a very sensible one. Notice that there is nothing essentially Dutch about this set up . .

It would not take much to set off the rapid growth of tertiary teacher training in Australia; one university or C.A.E. embarking wholeheartedly on course development could well supply the necessary impetus.

Here is a funding strategy and a not-too-labour-intensive course plan. Will anything happen . . . ?

Geoff Isaacs,
Tertiary Education Institute,
University of Queensland.

"Self-Directed Learning in Tertiary Education"
A Workshop conducted by Malcolm Knowles

Self directed learning — a tantalising dream or a practical possibility for tertiary students? This was undoubtedly the shared question for the 60-odd participants who attended the first — and shortest — of Knowles' three Sydney workshops. And perhaps the second question may have been: what can I get from a workshop that I couldn't get from his book? (Knowles, M. *Self-directed learning: a guide for teachers and learners* A.P. Follet, Chicago, 1975).

Is self directed learning a practical reality in the undergraduate tertiary sphere? Knowles' concept fits comfortably into that stream of contemporary thought which desires education to be learner based rather than teacher based, experiential rather than coercive. Where his idea is perhaps novel is in the degree of freedom apparently given to the learner in identifying his learning goals, and in the process whereby a learning contract may be drawn up between the student and the teacher. Briefly, Knowles' process involves:

1. Diagnosis of learning needs by the learner (using an essential competencies model);
2. Specifying learning objectives which are derived from the perceived needs in step 1;
3. Specifying learning resources and strategies by which the objectives of step 2 can be accomplished;
4. Specifying evidence of accomplishment;
5. Specifying how this evidence will be validated.

In one sense this is not so far away from the Mager model of specifying behavioural objectives, but the essential difference is that in Knowles' scheme it is the individual student, not the teacher, who specifies learning objectives, and thus in Knowles' sense the resultant learning is truly "andragogical" rather than pedagogical.

But is this feasible at the undergraduate level? Knowles' teaching commitment at the North Carolina State University is on the topic of adult education, and is at the master's and doctoral levels. In this area and at these levels his self directed learning model seems a rational and indeed enlightened approach to the question of how best to allow the individual learner to determine, direct, and take responsibility for his own learning. It is much more difficult to see how this model could be realized in undergraduate education, particularly of a technological and professional nature, in a way that would allow the individual student any genuine flexibility of choice and direction in his learning — and that, after all, seems to be the raison d'etre of the model.

However, to implement self directed learning at the undergraduate level is obviously not impossible and may indeed be desirable in some areas of Arts and Humanities courses, where material is not sequential and it is realistically impossible for all individuals to cover the entire syllabus. But, while we still retain norm referenced systems of assessment the problems associated with some of the more technical aspects of assessment would be forbidding. On the other hand, within a criterion referenced system the processes involved in self-directed learning would be appropriate and facilitating. It need hardly be said, of course, that self directed learning by the student involves an extraordinary dedication of effort and time on the part of the teacher or facilitator — it was very clear from Knowles' anecdotes that this was continuous and unrelenting. Clearly also the reward for Knowles was the satisfaction of seeing his students truly self-directed and responsible for their learning.

There is a further and perhaps more fundamental reservation about the model for this participant: how *truly* self directed can any learner's learning be when he cannot know what he needs to know before he knows it? While Knowles would counter this by saying that the process of consultation between student and teacher should be extended to include peers, specialists and other resource people so that eventually the competency model of whatever it is that the student wants to learn or acquire will be as full and accurate as possible, nevertheless the competency models we used during the workshop (of the learning facilitator, of the program developer and facilitator, and of the consultant) were given to us, not developed by us. I recollect no discussion of the listed competencies as such, and I suspect that it might be irresistable, if not actually necessary, for the specialist to draw up the competency models in advance, *within* which students could self directedly devise their learning objectives and proceed to plan their own programs.

However such criticism may quickly become carping. One may not be able or willing to go all the way in implementing Knowles' model but it is probably true that any step taken in this direction (i.e. in the direction of allowing learners the dignity of choice, of direction and of responsibility for their own learning) — no matter how small — is a movement in the direction of allowing adult responsibility to adult learners and of decreasing that authority-dependence that seems such a hallmark of Australian education at all levels.

Briefly, who go to the workshop when the book is available? Not to have gone would have entailed missing the experience of being with, listening to, and working with a remarkable person. Knowles came across as a genuine, warm and caring person, willing and happy to share with us his insights, recollections, anecdotes, and his great experience and expertise in adult learning. Not the least of his gifts was the ability to make a group of 60 feel as involved as a group of 12 would feel under his leadership. Of course one can and must learn from books; but the learning that occurs when people interact is different and no less valuable.

Jackie Lublin
NSWIT

"... any step in [the] direction ... of allowing learners the dignity of choice, of direction and of responsibility for their own learning ... — no matter how small — is a movement in the direction of allowing adult responsibility to adult learners and of decreasing the authority-dependence that seems such a hallmark of Australian education at all levels."

REVIEW

Students in Australian Higher Education: A Study of their Social Composition Since the Abolition of Fees

A report to Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee, Education Research and Development Committee, Conference of Principals of Colleges of Advanced Education

Anderson, D.S., Boven, R., Fensham, P.J. and Powell, J.P.

The year 1974 saw the last of the major Federal Government initiations in the field of tertiary education, at least for the next decade. In the immediate post World War II period, Australia had witnessed a massive growth in the numbers enrolled in institutions of higher education, and government funds committed to their recurrent expenditure and capital growth. The final act in this involvement was the abolition of tuition fees, the assumption of full financial responsibility for tertiary education by the federal government, and the establishment of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme under which grants became available to all students (subject to a means test) who were accepted for tertiary study at an appropriate tertiary institution.

The curtain was lowered on tertiary education in 1975 with the abolition of triennial funding and the introduction of a "no growth" or "steady state" philosophy. A quarter century of growth, if we are to believe the pious statements of the present Minister for Education, was to be replaced by a return to quality from an excessive concern for quantity in presumably both the production of graduates and research activity.

The impact of one aspect of the final federal initiative, the abolition of fees, on the social composition of students in Australian higher education is the concern of Anderson et al's monograph. in their introduction the authors suggest that "these two changes — the abolition of fees and the principle of universal student allowances — seemed to provide a radically new prospect for the Australian public concerning tertiary education. The only sector of public education that had required substantial fees was now apparently as open on economic grounds as primary, secondary and technical education" (p.vii).

They go on to note that the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee considered this situation worthy of systematic investigation and determined that a study of the effect of fee abolition on the universities be undertaken. A pilot investigation focussing solely on eight universities was carried out in 1974. The project was expanded in 1975 and continued into 1976 and 1977. In 1976 all universities except Melbourne and Monash which were carrying out related studies of their own, were included in the survey. In 1977 data were collected from those universities and included in the analysis described in the monograph. Data was also collected from a large number of metropolitan and country colleges of advanced education.

"Over the years there has been some change in the socio-economic composition of the student population, but this has meant a slight increase in the proportion from lower middle class backgrounds. The population from working class backgrounds has remained stable and small for a quarter of a century."

In all, a total of 5,080 university students, 3,466 students attending metropolitan colleges and 1,417 students attending country colleges, were surveyed. An appendix to the monograph provides a detailed discussion of the sampling procedures. It notes that data from certain universities and colleges were not considered because of low response rates (less than 40 percent) and that external, post-graduate and higher degree students were not included in the study. It concludes that the university sample was representative of the population investigated (internal undergraduates), that the metropolitan college sample was not as good, and that the generalisations from the non-metropolitan college sample "to the Australia wide population" cannot be safely made. The authors deserve commendation for the careful account of their sampling procedures which this Appendix contains.

The core of the book is contained in chapters two, four and five. The first of these reviews earlier studies of students in universities and colleges and concludes that in both types of institutions, the student population is "exclusive" when compared with the population at large. Over the years there has been some change in the socio-economic composition of the student population, but this has meant a slight increase in the proportion from lower middle class backgrounds. The population from working class backgrounds has remained stable and small for a quarter of a century.

"... one might argue that a consequence of the decision [to abolish fees] has been that working class groups now, via taxation, subsidize the higher education of those more advantageously placed economically."

To what extent did the abolition of tertiary fees affect this situation? The short and substantially accurate answer is in the short run virtually not at all. In chapters four and five the investigators compare the socio-economic characteristics of the 1976 student intake in the universities and colleges of advanced education they were surveying with the socio-economic characteristics of an age cohort of the population (40-59 years), which could be presumed to contain the students' parents. The differences are striking and point to the elitist character of students of tertiary education in Australia. Two examples will suffice: while 50 percent of Australian fathers in the age cohort cited are manual workers, no more than 19 percent of the universities entrants were; the population fell short of 25 percent for the colleges as well; secondly, while no more than 5 percent of the fathers in the age cohort were classified as upper professional, 19 percent of university entrants were from this background, as were 11 percent of college students.

(Continued on page 15)

The first lecture

What should students hear in their very first lecture in the university? This was a question which formed the starting point for an investigation recently completed by Chris Wieneke and her colleagues at the Tertiary Education Research Centre, The University of New South Wales. A number of observers attended the first lecture for first year students in a wide variety of disciplines. Their findings will shortly be published by TERC, but one of the outcomes has been the construction of a check list for lecturers who will be giving first lectures. This is reproduced below:

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN PREPARING THE FIRST LECTURE

1. *How should I introduce myself?*
   Should I write my name on the blackboard/overhead projector?
   Does my name appear on a handout that I can refer students to?
   Do students know my function in the School, e.g. Head of School; course director; lecturer-in-charge of the course;
   Should I give students my room number and directions on how to get there?
   Should I tell them when I am available for consultation?

2. *Should I ask other members of staff teaching in the course to be at the first lecture?*
   Should I ask the Head of School to be present?
   Should I introduce these members of staff to new students?
   Should I ask them to address the students?

3. *Should I welcome students to the School/University/Discipline?*
   Has this been done during orientation week?
   If so, should I repeat the welcome in the first lecture?

4. *Should I cover administrative matters in the first lecture?*
   Should I arrange students into tutorials?
   Should I talk about formal requirements of the course?
   Should I talk about tutorial preparation and participation?
   Assessment?
   Attendance at classes?

5. *Should I introduce students to the nature of the discipline in the first lecture?*
   Should I devote the whole lecture to this?
   How can I best do this?
   Should I use audiovisual material?
   Should I talk about the areas of research relevant to the discipline?
   Should I talk about the work that graduates of the school engage in?

6. *Should I alert students to the sort of problems they might face in first year?*
   Which problems should I tell them about?
   Should I indicate who they should go to with problems?
   Should I talk about the sort of problems that students have had in previous years?
   Should I alert students to the numbers who fail this course?
   Should I encourage students to come and talk to staff even if they don't have problems?

7. *Should I talk to students about using the library?*
   Should I arrange a library tour?
   Should I invite someone from the library to talk to students in class?

8. *Should I prepare a handout for students?*
   What information should I include?
   Should I outline the aims of the course?
   Should I give a list of textbooks or references?
   Should I outline how and when they will be assessed?
   Should I include some information on study skills, e.g. how to write an essay?

9. *Should I invite students to participate actively in the formal and information activities of the School?*
   Should I tell them about staff-student committees?
   Should I invite a representative of the student society to talk at the first lecture?
   Should I encourage students to participate in social activities?

It is rare for the HERDSA Newsletter to include long articles, but a special exception has been made for the following one by Ernest Roe. Earlier this year Ernest Roe was invited to address a conference at the Australian National University for Senior Academics and Administrators on Australian Tertiary Education in the Aftermath of Expansion. His theme was Improving Teaching and Learning and he took this opportunity to articulate some of the debate which is taking place in many institutions on how they should respond to the aftermath in such a way that the quality of teaching and learning does not suffer, or, indeed to use the opportunity for no-growth to make some much needed changes in our practice. Readers are invited to respond to any of the issues raised by Professor Roe.

Improving Teaching and Learning in the Aftermath of Expansion*

Lack of interest?

Few tertiary institutions, I suspect, yet see the improvement of teaching and learning as a response they might make to the situation described as the aftermath of expansion. Perhaps the problems to be overcome in effecting such improvement are too daunting.

Where the improvement of teaching and learning has in the past been a matter for concern, that concern may have already been expressed by the establishment of a research-and-development unit. Perhaps indeed the establishment of such a unit three or five or ten years ago has led to a *reduced* concern, in the institutions as a whole, for the improvement of teaching and learning. The correct gesture has been made; in the case of more recent units, the recommendation in the 5th A.U.C. Report, repeated and reinforced in the 6th Report, has been noted and made effective; the unit exists, it is the conscience of the institution as far as teaching is concerned, and everyone else can comfortably leave it to them — that is, the staff of the unit.

Such a summary is probably unfair to many tertiary institutions. It is simply there to make the point that an institutional response *can* be mere lip-service, or an evasion rather than a positive action. We are, in this case, talking about a response which is yet to be made, rather than one which already exists to any significant extent. If improving teaching and learning has merit as a response to the aftermath of expansion, the important questions are: is the improvement of teaching and learning a concept in which tertiary institutions are likely to be seriously interested? Is the change in the situation of tertiary institutions, from expansion to its aftermath, of such character or dimensions as to promote or facilitate increased interest in the improvement of teaching and learning?

To date — and here is another of those unavoidable but dangerous generalisations — there has not been much serious interest.

Causes of lack of interest

The first and most obvious cause is that there is little reward for improving one's teaching — reward, that is, of the kind on which most academics set their sights — promotion either within one's own institution or by successfully competing for a higher position in another institution. (I should note here that I am referring to universities; perhaps the rewards are better in other tertiary institutions.) I need not traverse this very familiar territory; there is much lip-service to the importance of teaching but in practice it takes a place, if any, a long way beyond the counting and weighing of publications.

Even if it were true that a promotions committee did rate teaching skill highly, some dramatic demonstrations of this would be needed before academic staff generally changed their present view. The crucial fact is that staffs in universities do not believe that teaching matters much, as far as their personal advancement is concerned. It is this belief, or lack of it, which is central to the status of teaching in the institution.

A second cause for lack of interest in the improvement of teaching is embedded in the foregoing argument. It can be identified by a question: *why* do promotions committees devalue teaching? The usual answer is that there is no satisfactory way of measuring an individual's teaching competence. By contrast, his research-and-publications competence is easily judged.

There are again very familiar issues here which I will leave aside. I think there are serious questions about the ways in which academics succeed or fail by their publications, and that judgments about research competence are not always so simply made. But while not accepting the typical view of promotions committees that teaching competence involves the nebulous flavoured with the intangible and more than a dash of "we can all teach anyway, there's nothing to it, so why make a fuss about it?", I nevertheless agree that the assessment of teaching is a difficult problem and I sympathise with those who want to dodge it.

A third reason for lack of interest in the improvement of teaching is the most basic of all. There is a lack of interest because, generally speaking, nobody's interested! It is not a live issue. The attitudes of promotions committees are well-founded in the communities of which they are a part. Staff are not very exercised about the improvement of teaching — they have more important concerns; students are apathetic, and, apart from an occasional protest or minor disturbance, they put up with the teaching they get, whatever it is like; and the wider community is much more concerned about the immoral lives, the dangerous political views, the excessive salaries, the endless holidays of academics than about whether or not they can teach.

A fourth possible reason which I should mention for the sake of completeness is that people believe teaching

**an edited version of a paper which is to appear in* Academia Becalmed: Australian Tertiary Education in the Aftermath of Expansion *to be published in early 1979 by ANU Press. Reproduced with permission of the editor, Grant Harman.*

and learning are not in need of improvement. That would be the simplest reason of all for lack of interest in improvement. Even if some academic staff believe that about their own teaching, they are unlikely to have such complete faith in the standards of teaching and learning of their institution as a whole.

I have deliberately painted the past and present situation in somewhat lurid colours, because the difficulties in the way of tertiary institutions responding to the aftermath of expansion by improving their teaching need to be fully appreciated. We lack, in universities at any rate, a tradition that teaching skill really matters. And the teaching development, research-and-development units, by various names, even where much more than a twinge of institutional conscience, have had little hope of stimulating fundamental change, because of the formidable difficulties just outlined.

". . . there is little reward for improving one's teaching . . ."

". . . staffs in universities do not believe that teaching matters much, as far as their personal advancement is concerned."

Prospects for increased interest

In the aftermath of expansion it seems unlikely that teaching will be rewarded any more than it is now, by becoming a passport to promotion or better jobs. Indeed, the expectation is that rewards of this kind will be very few, with much diminished promotion opportunities and even fewer chances for new jobs. In a perverse way, the fact that even research and publications might not do much for one's advancement may increase the relative status of teaching and teaching may be less obviously the poor relation.

Speculation can go a little further, however. A question already familiar in some overseas tertiary institutions is increasingly being asked here: How is the young academic, getting his first appointment, say, in his mid-twenties, to get 'job satisfaction' in the same job for the next 40 years? One possible answer is a series of exciting and absorbing research projects. Another is a commitment to the insoluble ever-changing problems of teaching and learning — which could be as exciting and absorbing as research for many academics; for far more academics, one might guess, than in the days of expansion, because the incentive to neglect all else in order to concentrate on publication and promotion is likely to be considerably weaker.

Such developments would not by themselves make teaching into a live issue. What are the chances of institutional support for academics who are more concerned than before about teaching efficiency? That ominous word "accountability" can lead to cautious optimism. What will make our institutions accountable? The concern of academic and administrative staff to demonstrate our worth and to present a good case to governments and public is part of the answer. As evidence of that concern we shall be scrutinising ourselves conscientiously and will want to be seen to be doing so; so that includes scrutinising our own teaching and learning operations.

". . . the fact that even research and publications might not do much for one's advancement may increase the relative status of teaching and teaching may be less obviously the poor relation."

Student attitudes

Another factor in our accountability is the attitude of students. Will they, for example, become increasingly militant about the quality of their tertiary experience? At the moment, it seems unlikely that student demand for better teaching will become significant, unless in some way it becomes official and effective student policy. The present situation is not without its ironies. Tertiary institutions are very anxious to keep up their student numbers since their funding is dependent upon their doing so; *within* institutions, departments are both subtly and blatantly competing for students; this means that students have enormous power which is unused. If there were demands from students for better teaching, the chances of a hasty and positive response would be high. No doubt here and there it does happen. But so far students appear to see little cause for complaint, since pass rates are high and most are thereby getting the most important thing they want from our institutions.

From recent overseas reports, however, it seems that students are taking an increased interest in the processes of teaching and learning, and rather less in the outcomes.

In the editorial of the most recent issue of *Studies in Higher Education,* Professor Becher begins by saying: "There is . . . a long way to go before the majority of academics will come to regard it as a proper part of their job to think as hard about their teaching as they do about their research . . ." Then this ". . . Students are no exception to the trend towards consumerism in society at large. Like medical patients or parents of primary school children, they have begun to see themselves not merely as passive beneficiaries but as active clients. Instead of remaining duly grateful for their privileges, they have inconveniently started haggling about their rights." He concludes that "as far as demands for accountability in higher education are concerned, the main emphasis is likely to fall on the means of justifying the quality of teaching and learning processes rather than on the methods of maintaining the standards of academic products."[1] Maybe in our tertiary institutions too, with a degree no longer so significant a job ticket and with increased democratisation of tertiary institutions (even if student power is so far generally limited to being consulted about assessment procedures), students will become more critical, more constructively critical, and concerned with the improvement of the quality of the academic side of their own tertiary experience.

". . . How is the young academic . . . to get 'job satisfaction' in the same job for the next 40 years?"

[1]Tony Becker, Editorial, *Studies in Higher Education,* 3, 1, 1978, p. 2.

Barriers to rapid progress

Yet in many respects students are even more conservative than staff, and there is unlikely to be any immediate challenge to some of the present outmoded practices in tertiary teaching. In particular, the formats we use — tutorial, practical class and especially the lecture, tend to persist irrespective of whether they are appropriate to particular teaching/learning needs, indeed even when they obviously are not. The following snatch of dialogue, authentic I assure you, illustrates the kind of barrier which blocks improvement:

> Student (indignant): "You can't set us an exam question on that — you haven't done it in lectures!"
>
> Lecturer (placatory): "But it's in the textbook as well as in the duplicated notes."
>
> Student (unappeased, genuinely upset): "But you haven't told us about it in lectures!"

Other barriers include widespread staff defensiveness about teaching. Sermons on the responsibility of academics to teach well have not been notably successful in the past, and even rational arguments that a new job satisfaction can be obtained from teaching in the future may not carry all before them. There will inevitably be a special problem with older staff, whose ways of doing things are well-established, who are on a long comfortable downhill slope to retirement 10, 15 or 20 years away, who may be in many ways valuable and effective members of staff, but who will possibly be oblivious to the exciting future prospects in teaching.

"Tertiary institutions are very anxious to keep up their student numbers since their funding is dependent upon their doing so; *within* institutions, departments are both subtly and blatantly competing for students; this means that students have enormous power which is unused."

Defensiveness will get in the way of receptivity to agitation (however gentle) about improvement; it will also affect the acceptability of whatever advice, help, or (a more alarming word) training is provided by the institution; and the credibility of those who are doing the helping or training. This last is an important problem to which I will return shortly.

Role of R&D units

How, in the face of a great deal of discouragement, could an institution best tackle the improvement of teaching?

Many research-and-development units have the improvement of teaching as part of their brief. Its priority, among the diverse activities of units, varies a great deal. The approach is probably much the same everywhere; private consultations with staff members who seek help; a variety of seminars, workshops, small and large courses, some open to all, others directed towards a single department, some of these attempting a wide coverage of teaching activities, others concentrating on a single topic such as running tutorials or clinical assessment; the publicising through pamphlets and newsletters of teaching problems and solutions from a variety of Australian and overseas sources, and the circulation of home-made material, from practical hints and guidelines to more theoretical discussions of teaching. As a general policy, units work *with* and *through* faculties and departments rather than *for* them, and in this way often achieve a great deal with relatively meagre resources.

I have not done justice to these units in sketching their improvement-of-teaching activities so briefly. But it is enough to introduce some questions. If (in the aftermath of expansion) such a unit is going to implement, or indeed to embody, an institution's improvement-of-teaching policy, should it continue to do what it is doing now? What difference, if any, does the change in the situation of the institution make to the approaches and procedures to be followed by a unit? What else could it do?

The first possibility is to mount a full-scale course of teacher-training for academics. These do already exist in some institutions by various names such as Diploma in Tertiary Teaching. I shall not attempt here to comment on the actual or possible content or method of such courses. They are inevitably labour-intensive and many units do not have the necessary resources. It would not, however, be surprising if some departments and faculties of Education relieved some of their present or future embarrassment about their spare capacity by moving into this area. There is a problem of persuading academics to submit themselves to such a course; and there is the problem of whether their actual teaching behaviour is permanently changed for the better if they do take such a course. Such problems raise many other issues concerning both the nature of academics and the nature of teacher-training courses, but I shall have to leave them aside.

Units could make their expertise go further by a deliberate policy of training/instructing selected (but willing) individuals from a number of different departments, equipping them to act as supervisors, helpers and similar kinds of human resource within their own departments with respect to the improvement of teaching. This could be still more effective if material to assist staff to improve their own teaching was partly self-instructional, with the key person in each department or group equipped to supervise his colleagues and fill in the gaps for them.

"There is a long way to go before the majority of academics will come to regard it as a proper part of their job to think as hard about their teaching as they do about their research . . ."

The notion of recruiting such key people from a variety of departments is important for other reasons. The influence, even the credibility, of a research-and-development unit in its improvement-of-teaching role or indeed any other of its roles is likely to be enhanced if it develops a network of committed and active supporters scattered throughout the institution it serves.

Units can become too preoccupied with teaching and too neglectful of learning. That point is not demolished by an assertion that teaching and learning are the two faces of the same coin. Instructional skills are important, and how to lecture, how to run small groups and practical classes and similar attempts to improve teaching have been and are useful. But ultimately more important is equipping teachers to facilitate learning by students. Units need to concern themselves with the skills and knowledge students need if they are to be efficient and self-reliant students; and then to help staff to develop those strengths in their students.

"The influence, even the credibility, of a research-and-development unit in its improvement-of-teaching role or indeed any other of its roles is likely to be enhanced if it develops a network of committed and active supporters scattered throughout the institution it serves."

This implies a shift from instructional *method* towards the management of teaching in the interests of learning; in particular, the management of *resources*. It means greater attention to the resources from which students learn, instead of a major preoccupation with what the teacher actually says and how he says it, in formal classes, and with staff-student interaction.

The significance of external studies as a method of learning which may be appropriate for internal students is also relevant here; the emphasis is on the skills needed for individual learning rather than on the receipt of mass instruction.

Activities to improve teaching and learning need to be discipline-based rather than global. With assistance from units it may be possible to develop individuals as experts in the teaching and learning of particular disciplines, with special emphasis on expertise in the resources of each discipline.

If the climate in an institution was highly favourable to the improvement of learning, more radical steps in these directions might be taken, at least experimentally. Every student could spend his first term or semester in a tertiary institution acquiring the skills needed to be an effective student in whatever disciplines were going to be his major preoccupation; learning how to learn physics or history or psychology or engineering; perfecting discipline-based study methods, information retrieval techniques, getting familiarity with the appropriate resources. Objections that courses with heavy content could not afford to give up a term for this kind of activity can be countered by suggesting that students with improved learning skills would be more effective students and easily make up the "lost" time.

There are indirect as well as direct means to facilitate the improvement of teaching. Research is such a means. Some units are active in descriptive or illuminative investigations; their purpose is to demonstrate what is actually going on in the institution as far as teaching and learning are concerned; and the findings of such studies provide evidence which units (and individuals in the institution) can use to emphasise existing strengths and weaknesses and point to needed improvements. Another important though less tangible effect of such research is that it helps to create a climate in which improvement is a more acceptable concept. I think the creation of the right climate is going to be extremely important and units will need to explore and use all possible means towards that end.

"Every student could spend his first term or semester in a tertiary institution acquiring the skills needed to be an effective student in whatever disciplines were going to be his major preoccupation . . ."

Evaluation of teaching

My final comments on possible changes in research-and-development units arise from speculating whether tertiary institutions, if they officially adopt 'the improvement of teaching' as a policy which is to be actively pursued, will take a greater interest in the evaluation of teaching. At present units are careful to maintain a clear distinciton between helping and evaluating. If unit staffs are to be acceptable as guides, helpers, even instructors of academic staff, they cannot be inspectors. They may evaluate the teaching of a staff member, at his request, privately, for his personal edification. They will not report to others, and that includes a promotions committee, on anyone's teaching competence. They are wary of anything that smells even faintly of compulsion. Perhaps it's the ultimate nightmare for a director of a unit to find a staff member on his doorstep saying "The Vice-Chancellor sent me to get my teaching fixed up." Of course, no Vice-Chancellor or head of department would do any such thing — I said it was a nightmare.

But if our institutions begin to put pressure on staff to pursue teaching improvement, they might also move towards more systematic assessment of teaching competence. If, in the future, academics have to be more accountable for their teaching, research-and-development units may find it increasingly difficult to resist involvement in evaluation of teaching. I used 'involvement' but the word which naturally came to mind was 'contamination'. I cannot see how a unit can become even a very little of an inspectorate without being fatally contaminated.

"If unit staffs are to be acceptable as guides, helpers, even instructors of academic staff, they cannot be inspectors."

If tertiary institutions in the future do want some kind of inspectorate as part of the process of internal evaluation, such an inspectorate should be entirely separate from units concerned with the improvement of teaching. Altogether, however, this is a more subtle and complex problem than it sounds in this brief treatment of it.

There are few signs in Australia as yet of moves towards the institutionalised evaluation of teaching by students, which is quite common the U.S.A. It has been argued that University-wide procedures for the automatic or regular assessment by students of the teaching they experience are preferable to random or sporadic use of such assessment because academic staff more readily accept it. If everyone is "suffering" alike, nobody need feel victimised and overall staff become less defensive about their teaching. Counter-arguments often refer to the personal nature of teaching, to the uniqueness of each teaching/learning event, and to doubts about the validity or reliability of students' judgments, as well as to the difficulties of identifying both satisfactory criteria and appropriate measuring instruments for those criteria.

It is impossible to pursue this controversial matter in detail here. However, if increased concern about efficiency and accountability in tertiary institutions does mean increased concern about *teaching* efficiency and about how to ensure it, systematic approaches may have an appeal. Although research-and-development units continue to avoid sitting in judgment on individual staff, they may increasingly be asked to assist in the development of evaluation procedures; and they may even find themselves acting as consultants to student unions which actually run the evaluations.

"The Vice-Chancellor sent me to get my teaching fixed up."

Credibility of units

In all the future possible or desirable activities for units, there is a crucial question of the credibility of the units themselves. It is a problem for units now, at least at some times, with some of their potential clients, the academic staff of the institutions. (The doubters are those who have never been clients, rather than those who have been.) If the improvement of teaching and learning does increase in significance, voices querying the competence of unit staff to foster or bring about such improvement are bound to be raised.

There is no simple answer to this problem. Staff of units, by any relevant objective criteria, may fully deserve credibility but that is no guarantee that they will have it. Units begin as an act of faith by their institutions; that faith can be strengthened if the unit establishes its presence, earns respect for what it does, and, most important of all, if its staff are respected and trusted. It is peculiarly difficult in that the major achievements of units are intangible or, even more ironical, their greatest achievement is to stimulate or otherwise make possible some improvement in, say, an academic's teaching so that he is unaware of the source and believes that alone he did it. That is the ideal situation — that a unit should facilitate self-help and not be credited with it!

". . . the major achievements of units are intangible or, even more ironical, their greatest achievement is to stimulate or otherwise make possible some improvement in, say, an academic's teaching so that he is unaware of the source and believes that alone he did it."

Need for institutional backing

In general, I believe that considerable advances are possible, if we use the ancient but valid principle that one must begin where people are, not where one would like them to be. "Improvement" means the translation of what has been added to an individual's knowledge, skill or general competence, through some kind of formal or informal "training" experience, into his/her own normal, daily, teaching procedures. Teaching is not improved when receptive academics have accepted assistance; only when their actual teaching behaviour is permanently changed for the better.

But if the improvement of teaching and learning is to be a significant response by an institution to the aftermath of expansion, the notion will need strong and explicit institutional backing. Units may need to be strengthened in the sense of additional human or material resources; but the strength they most need is the backing of the institution, and this would be a major contribution to the creation of the right atmosphere, referred to earlier.

In fact, such backing is needed at the national as well as the institutional level. It is noteworthy that there is a variety of means whereby support is given to research in tertiary institutions; through, for example, A.R.G.C., N.H.M.R.C., and E.R.D.C. There is no similar body which provides funding or any other support for teaching and learning in tertiary institutions. The establishment of such a body could do a great deal to encourage academic staff to innovate, to experiment, and generally to improve teaching.

The endorsement by the A.U.C. in its 5th and 6th Reports of the establishment of research-and-development units (which it called Teaching Research Units) undoubtedly had an effect. What is now needed are strong statements, from the Tertiary Education Commission, the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, and other such bodies that in the aftermath of expansion tertiary institutions have a responsibility to improve teaching and learning. Similar policy statements should be made by the senates, academic boards, and other senior committees *within* institutions. The need for such statements is crudely realistic. Most academics would probably agree that the improvement of teaching and learning is a laudable objective; but most need a strong lead before they will pass from agreement to action; or to a proper receptivity to the attempts for improvement made by others on their behalf.

". . . if the improvement of teaching and learning is to be a significant response by an institution to the aftermath of expansion, the notion will need strong and explicit institutional backing."

The problem is very familiar to anyone who compares the *enrolment* at workshops and seminars on the improvement of teaching with the actual *attendance.* We all often intend to do something, we have a conscience about it, we feel that we should. But we don't do it, or we keep postponing it, because, when it comes to the point, we are not willing to give it a high enough priority among our personal concerns at that time. This is why the strengthening of a favourable atmosphere in the institution is so important. It can provide that significant extra incentive.

Nevertheless, no unit could cope with too many academic colleagues passing suddenly from good intention to action. But that problem can wait until it is encountered.

Conclusion

I hope I may be forgiven for concluding on a moralistic note. A recent study with which I have been closely involved has brought home to me very forcibly something about tertiary institutions of which I suppose we are all aware but which mostly we allow somewhat uneasily to sleep. It is the extent to which the decisions we make *within* institutions are political (in which I include economic), expedient, convenient, and the extent to which they are *not* based on educational considerations. I know there is a score of excuses for this. Indeed when this kind of issue comes up for discussion people say that we are engaged in a struggle for survival, or, to be less dramatic, a struggle for the equitable distribution of scarce resources.

(Continued on page 14)

Abstracts

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

The *Abstracts* attempt a complete coverage of current publications in Australasia-Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Publications describing research, teaching, administration, staff and students in higher education are abstracted.

Authors or editors who would like abstracts of articles, books or monographs to be included are invited to send a copy of their work to the *Abstracts* editor.

HERDSA is most grateful to its abstractors and the co-operation of the editors of a number of journals abstracted in this issue. The *Abstracts* are edited by Robert Cannon, Advisory Centre for University Education, the University of Adelaide.

A GENERAL

Hore, T., Linke, R.D., and West, L.H.T. *The future of higher education in Australia.* Preface by Clark Kerr, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1978.

The twenty three contributions to this book are arranged into four major sections.

Section 1 "External factors influencing tertiary education" is concerned with such influences as secondary education, employment opportunities and economic circumstances.

Section 2 "Reactions of interested groups" reflects the views of government, the tertiary institutions, academic staff, employers and students.

Section 3 "Changing emphases in the role of tertiary education" considers teaching and learning, research and the role of universities as sources of social criticism.

Section 4 "Effects on tertiary institutions" is divided into sub-sections which look at ways of coping with new students, the curriculum and ways of mediating change through staff development and educational research.

(RAC)

B ECONOMICS AND MANPOWER

Higley, J., Smart, D., Pakulski, J., with Deacon, D. The education of Australian elites. *Education Research and Perspectives,* 4, 2, December 1977: 52-62.

A sample of 370 people identified as 'top position holders' in the largest or most strategically-located corporations or organisations in Australia were interviewed. During each interview considerable information was obtained on each respondent's educational background.

It was found that 55% of the 'elite persons' hold at least one university degree and one quarter hold postgraduate degrees. University graduates are statistically over-represented in this sample by a factor of 18 to 1.

More than half of the elite persons who attended Australian schools attended private (Catholic and non-Catholic) schools; this is twice the frequency which applies for the whole population.

These figures are considered in the light of their social origins.

(RJMcD)

C ADMINISTRATION

Davis, D.J. and Hermann, G.D. The role of multipurpose CAEs: the institutional and staff perspectives 1974-1975. C.A.T. Education Monograph No. 24. Sydney, Macquarie University, 1978. 93p., appendix.

This report presents the results of a study undertaken to investigate the attitudes and ideologies of staff and institutions concerning the role of the multipurpose CAEs in tertiary education. Questionnaires were completed by about four hundred staff members from the four areas of civil and mechanical engineering, architecture and building, commercial and business studies, and chemistry within eleven metropolitan CAEs. The views of institutions and co-ordinating bodies were gained from eleven completed responses to a questionnaire similar to the staff questionnaire. The report analyzes and discusses the responses received, with numerical data included in the appendix.

(NSP)

Harmann, G.S. The North American Community College and Australian Higher Education. *The Australian Journal of Education,* 22, 2, 1978: 113-130.

This paper discusses the development of community colleges in the United States and Canada, outlines some of their key distinguishing characteristics and the main models that have developed with regard to student entry to higher education and student transfer between institutions, and attempts an evaluation of the community college idea looking at both strengths and weaknesses. The paper then explores the possible relevance of the community college for Australian higher education today.

(Author abstract)

Harrison, N. *Centres for the development and improvement of learning and teaching in technical institutes.* Wellington, Wellington Polytechnic, 1977. 40p.

This is a record of the proceedings of a two-day seminar, held in August, 1977 at Wellington Polytechnic. The aims of the seminar were to:

- review the needs of NZ technical institutes and community colleges for centres for the development and improvement of learning and teaching;
- review the work already being done in existing NZ centres;
- review plans being made by other NZ technical institutes to establish such centres;
- define the issues on which policy decisions should be made by the NZ Department of Education in consultation with technical institutes and tutors.

Twelve recommendations, each with summaries of the relevant discussion, cover the purpose of such centres, their staffing, physical requirements and administration, and regional and national co-ordination. Appendices include a list of seminar participants, details of existing centres at Auckland Technical Institute, Central Institute of Technology, Christchurch Technical Institute, Otago Polytechnic, Technical Correspondence Institute, and Wellington Polytechnic, and some comparisons with centres in NZ universities.

(DCBT)

Hore, T. Crisis Management. *Notes on Higher Education,* No. 13. Melbourne, Higher Education Advisory and Research Unit, Monash University, 1978. 4p.

This issue of *Notes* raises implications for tertiary education in Australia of 'steady state' conditions, where additional funds are not being provided to promote growth and/or development. The author looks at problems which institutions are currently facing, particularly the lack of funds and lack of staff mobility in tertiary education. Proposals which institutions in Australia and overseas have either suggested or implemented are described, and implications for administrators and academics are presented.

(NSP)

D HIGHER EDUCATION IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS INCLUDING CURRICULUM

Nade, S. Higher medical and surgical degrees in the University of Sydney. *Medical Education,* 12, 3, 1978: 226-229.

Of 326 candidates receiving higher medical and surgical degrees from the University of Sydney between 1883 and 1977, 209 addresses of graduates known to be living were found. This report discusses the responses of the 193 who replied, and additionally looks at the pattern of degrees awarded in Medicine at Sydney University since its inception. The role of higher (and intermediate) research degrees is raised, with particular concern expressed about the personal benefits derived from such study and recogniton of the additional qualification.

(NSP)

Tidmarsh, B.G. Mastery Learning Strategy applied to a preclinical course in endodontics. *Journal of Dental Education,* 42, 2, February 1978: 83-89.

The author provides a rationale for the application of mastery learning (ML) strategy to a course in clinical endodontics, previously taught by lecture/demonstration methods. A description of the ML course is provided, which includes verbatim copies of the handout used to introduce students to the course and two sample study guides. A novel feature of the course administration was that faster students acted as proctors to those of their peers who progressed less rapidly. Data is presented on the rate of progress of 62 students through the course, and on students' responses to a post-course questionnaire. The development of resource material, testing methods and the changed role of the teacher in ML techniques are discussed.

(DCBT)

E TEACHING METHODS AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Eley, M.G. A behaviourally based alternative to the university lecture. *Australian Educational Researcher,* 5, 2, 1978: 52-59.

Keller's Personalized System of Instruction offers a real alternative to the traditional lecture method. The method transfers the university teacher's time away from the presentation of course content toward the evaluation and direction of student learning. Recent evaluation of the method in teaching education students at the University of Tasmania has focused on unit completion and grade earning. Making grade credit directly contingent upon superior, as opposed to just minimal performance can substantially improve the overall level of that performance.

(RAC)

Findlay, T.J.V. and Lark, P.D. The use of the Keller Plan in physical chemistry. *Chemistry in Australia,* 45, 7, July 1978: 219-220.

A description of a variation of the personalised system of instruction as originally described by Keller, in teaching physical chemistry at second year level. Subject matter is divided into relatively large units, the overall time available is fixed (one semester), and assessment is based on the number of units completed and the grades obtained in each.

(RJMcD)

Haddad, P.R. Effective lecture slides and overhead transparencies. *Chemistry in Australia,* 45, 4, April 1978: 109-112.

A guide on the legibility, format and colour of slides and overhead transparencies.

(RJMcD)

Stanton, H.E. Dyadic discussion as a teaching method. *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 2, 1977: 99-107.

The disadvantages of the conventional small group teaching method are discussed and two procedures designed to overcome these are outlined. Both procedures are variants on the single theme of dyadic interaction in which the two participants ask questions of each other. The writer's own experience with dyadic interaction as a teaching approach is outlined and a modification to the basic format is suggested. Use of the technique as a means of 'breaking the ice' with a new group is also discussed.

(Author abstract)

Stanton, H.E. Self-concept change through a microteaching experience. *British Journal of Teacher Education,* 4, 2, May 1978: 119-123.

Thirty two Diploma of Education students took part in a microteaching course of 12 weeks duration. Each student taught two, 10 minute micro-lessons to groups of five secondary school students, their performance being observed by their fellow trainee teachers and recorded in videotape. After the micro-lesson had been completed, the student teacher viewed his taped performance and made the decision whether to use it with his colleagues and the pupils he had taught in a discussion group format. In all cases this was done. Students completed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale before and after their microteaching course, their scores being compared with other Diploma of Education students who had had no such experience. Results indicated that self-concept change in a positive direction was facilitated by the microteaching experience.

(Author abstract)

Stanton, N. Self-concept and the 'self-enhancement' group. *Australian Journal of Adult Education,* 17, 1, April, 1977: 2-7.

A description of the activities which are likely to occur in a 'self-enhancement' group, i.e. acquaintanceship exercises, success fantasy and success sharing, group fantasy, self-image projection, success visualization, meditation techniques, the nourishing game, the trust circle, trust cradle and trust walk and the achievement of peak experiences.

(GPM)

F STAFF

Powell, J.P. A note on staff-student contact in an Australian university. *Education Research and Perspectives,* 4, 2, December 1977: 74-78.

This paper presents the results of a questionnaire on staff-student relations, completed by 57 out of a hundred staff surveyed at the University of New South Wales.

Although most out-of-class contact between staff and students concerned matters arising from teaching activities, almost half of the staff had had at least one contact with a student 'in the last fortnight' on the basis of friendship. 87% of the staff felt that out-of-class contact was 'essential' or 'of considerable importance' to students.

The main obstacles to increased staff-student contact were said to be student reticence and staff lack of time.

(RJMcD)

Shannon, A.G. United Kingdom fellowships: implications for Australian education. *Unicorn,* 4, 2, July 1978: 160-163.

This note describes an engineering fellowship project for school teachers which was initiated in 1977 by the UK Institution of Mechanical Engineers. The scheme has been developed to enable teachers, whether from the sciences of the humanities, to experience at first hand what industry is all about so as to enrich their subsequent teaching. The project organizers also feel that the teachers should then be better placed to advise on careers and to act as a focal point for liaison between education and industry. This raises the question whether such a scheme would be worthwhile in the Australian context. If so, would it be viable, how could it be started, and what features peculiar to Australia might be incorporated?

(Author abstract)

G STUDENTS

Aveling, H. Asian Studies in Australian education. *Unicorn,* 4, 2, July 1978: 130-134.

This paper considers the growing role of Asian Studies in Australian education, now that Australia is trying to re-orient itself outside the realm of traditional English learning. It suggests some of the reasons for the success of the teaching of Asian languages at a time when language learning is generally considered to be on the decline and examines critically the new aims of social studies in intercultural exploration, through specific reference to publications of the Intercultural Studies Program of the University of Sydney. The paper argues throughout that Australian students need to learn not just facts about Asia, but also a deep emotional commitment to the concept of cultural relativity and respect for the worth of other ways of life. The paper suggests that literature, despite the difficulty of teaching literature as new means of communication are implemented, remains a vital tool for this deep-level identification and understanding.

(Author abstract)

Mellor, W.L. and Begum, Z. Bangladeshi students in Australia — some background. *Unicorn,* 4, 2, July 1978: 142-156.

Almost 100 students from Bangladesh are working towards qualifications in Australian post-secondary institutions. This paper is concerned to raise the consciousness of Australian educators about these Asian students and to indicate points of leverage at which educators may begin to adapt the educational system to better meet the needs of all students. The following questions have guided research and the construction of this paper:

1. From what kinds of backgrounds do Bangladeshi students come?
2. Why do such people choose to study here?
3. What major contrasts do they perceive between their own educational system and ours?
4. How can Australian educators be more responsive, if necessary, to the special needs and characteristics of their international students?

(RAC)

Wicks, P. Asian students in Australia: policies and issues. *Unicorn,* 4, 2, July 1978: 135-141.

Many thousands of young Asians have come to study in Australian educational institutions during the last three decades. The author of this paper draws on scholarly literature and extensive personal experience in order to examine significant aspects of Australia's involvement in international training programmes. He emphasizes the role of the Australian community in determining the success or otherwise of these programmes.

(Author abstract)

H STUDENTS — SELECTION AND PERFORMANCE

I STUDENTS — CHOICE OF SUBJECTS AND CAREERS

J FURTHER AND ADULT EDUCATION

Carr, N. Community self-help: a university extension program. *Australian Journal of Adult Education,* 17, 1, April 1977: 12-18.

With changing economic conditions, educational priorities might begin to be shifted from primary emphasis on the young to offering learning opportunities for people of all ages. The Department of University Extension, University of Otago, New Zealand, has developed a 'Group for Community Learning Centre' (GCL) as a neighbourhood co-operative extension office. The objectives for the university in GCL are to evolve new models for com-

munity service, to provide a field research laboratory and student training centre and to develop a cross-disciplinary programme. The objectives for the community are to provide lifelong learning opportunities, to obtain access to university expertise, to involve residents in community efforts and to facilitate planning for community development. The establishment, organization and financial arrangements of GCL are described. The heart of the programme is the specific learning opportunities or 'Learning/Action' (L/A) groups. The objectives, characteristics and evaluation of the L/A groups is described.

(GPM)

Research Branch, Commonwealth Department of Education, Recurrent Education in Australia. *Australian Journal of Adult Education,* 17, 1, April 1977: 27-31.

A supplementary paper to the document 'Project: Recurrent Education — Australia' prepared for OECD/CERI. The paper surveys some of the provisions made for mature-age students in universities and CAEs. Educational leave and some of the provisions of the NEAT scheme are also discussed.

(GPM)

Sommerlad, E. and Cockburn, D.M. Is quantification of continuing education desirable on social grounds? *Australian Journal of Adult Education,* 17, 2, July 1977: 18-25.

The first part of the article (pp. 18-22) by Sommerlad argues that compulsory recertification is undesirable on social grounds since its main impact may be to reinforce professionalism and to contribute to the increasing mystification of the professional's expertise and his claim to be all-knowing in his field. Before educational resources are directed to refresher programmes, opportunities should be provided to review the role that the professions may play in the future. This may entail re-orientation of initial training, development of alternatives to certification and greater lay participation in professional matters.

In the second part of the article, Cockburn argues that mandatory continuing education is desirable on social grounds provided that it is cost effective, that it is applied to professions which have a high intrinsic value to society and a potential for serious loss in the event of inefficiency and that society, rather than the profession, agrees that mandatory participation is not an unjust imposition.

(GPM)

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Workshops and Conferences

RATIONALISATION IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: THE TASMANIAN EXPERIENCE

Date 6 — 8 February 1979
Details This conference will be of interest to senior administrators, senior academic staff and members of governing bodies of universities and colleges; academic staff of Faculties or Schools of Education and Educational Research Units from universities and colleges; senior officers of Commonwealth and State Government Departments of Education and related Statutory Bodies.
Further Information Mr P Hanson, School of General Studies, Tasmanian CAE, PO Box 1214, Launceston, Tasmania 7230. Tel. (003) 26-1244

THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TERTIARY EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

Date 13-15 July 1979
Place University House, Australian National University
Format The conference will feature prominent speakers, case studies, an equipment display and a poster session.
Further Information Mr Peter Kowald, Royal Military College, Duntroon, ACT 2600. Tel. (062) 66-6922.

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date 13-16 May 1979
Place Currie Hall, University of Western Australia
Further Information Dr Miles Nelson, Churchlands CAE, PO Box 131, Doubleview, Western Australia 6018.

(From page 11)

It seems to me, however, that a serious concern in tertiary institutions for the improvement of teaching and learning would be a response to the aftermath of expansion which would emphasise proper educational considerations, even if, by emphasising our desire *to be seen* to be accountable, there were also expedient overtones.

"What is now needed are strong statements, from the Tertiary Education Commission, the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, and other such bodies that ... have responsibility to improve teaching and learning."

Finally, I am reminded of something David Riesman once wrote which I have proposed on previous occasions as an appropriate motto for those who live every day with the challenges and ambiguities of research-and-development units:

> One must live on two levels, that of practical reform and that of utopian vision, and in the dialectic between these levels, activity on the one may accompany temporary defeat on the other.[2]

It may be that in some of the large areas which have been explored in papers at this conference we shall have to console ourselves with utopian visions. But something will be achieved if we concentrate a share of our attention on practical reform — on putting our own house in order with respect to teaching and learning. ★

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[2]David Riesman, *Constraint and Variety in American Education,* New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958, p. 16.

(From page 5)

These findings are a good example of Robert Merton's famous dictum concerning the unanticipated consequence of social action. Presumably one of the intentions behind the Labor Government's decision to abolish university fees was to make tertiary education more available to those from working class backgrounds. In the short run, this did not occur and one might argue that a consequence of the decision has been that working class groups now, via taxation, subsidize the higher education of those more advantageously placed economically.

Despite the relatively privileged position of Australian tertiary students, the great majority of them, over 80 percent, are what the authors call "first generation" students, in the sense that they come from homes where neither parent has had any form of tertiary education. This is an interesting comment on Australian society as such, and the place education assumed in it until the end of the second world war.

The data indicate clearly, too, that there are two prestige faculties in the universities: medicine and law; and three which attract a disproportionately high number from working class backgrounds: commerce, arts and education. The first of these findings was totally predictable as numerous studies have attested to this fact. They further suggest, however, that the two professions of medicine and law are likely to remain in the control of established wealth and privilege for some time to come. The attraction of schools of education to working class groups is equally well-known and the attraction of Arts is not surprising — it is a forerunner for education for many. The appeal of commerce comes as something more of a surprise — perhaps its relatively lowly status means that competition for entry is not great.

The rest of the monograph is something of a curious mixture. There is a chapter on the period between school and the present enrolment in higher education. A chapter on type of involvement — full-time or part-time, and type of residence during term, a juxtaposition which in my view does not fit comfortably. A further chapter on the students' assessment of the effect of fee abolition, on their enrolment in which the predictable relationship between socio-economic background and the likelihood of deferring or not enrolling was found. There is also a very short chapter on choice of higher education.

". . . the two professions of medicine and law are likely to remain in the control of established wealth and privilege for some time to come."

While undoubtedly a valuable study, and one which could usefully be replicated in around five years, the report is somewhat uneven, reflecting a lack of coordination between the authors responsible for the different chapters. I am completely in favour of group and even multi-disciplinary research, but if the product is not to resemble the famous committee designed horse then tight editorial control of the final product is required. ★

John Western,
University of Queensland.

Steady State for ERDC

Earlier this month the ERDC announced the majority of its research grants for 1979. Its budget remains approximately the same as 1978 in real terms, an increase from $975 000 to $1 040 000.

HERDSA Newsletter has so far received details of the allocation of $417 112. The following grants in the area of higher education have been announced.

NEW GRANTS

Professor J. Biggs — *Development of Study Process Questionnaire, secondary and tertiary versions.* University of Newcastle, $6000.

Dr G Harman — *A study of academic staff in Australian universities and CAEs.* ANU, $5000.

Dr R McDonald and Mr J Gough — *Audio tapes in external study.* Deakin University/Murdoch University, $1882.

Mr K Parkinson and Mr B Stanford — *Motivation for student enrolment in external studies.* Department of Further Education, SA, $6900.

Mr P Sheldrake — *Deferment of entry and its implications.* Flinders University, $5000.

RENEWAL GRANTS

Dr A E Dugdale — *Interactive teaching of problem solving using a computer.* University of Queensland, $2000.

Mr G Isaacs and Professor E Roe — *Study of Mature-age unmatriculated students.* University of Queensland, $12 500.

Dr D I Newble — *The further development of a problem-based criterion referenced test of the clinical competence of medical students.* University of Adelaide, $10 300.

Professor J Western and Professor E Roe — *A sociological study of the origins and early years of a new university.* University of Queensland, $16 000.

SMALL GROUPS NEWSLETTER (AUSTRALIA)

A national information service for people involved in: small groups, holistic health, personal growth, human relations, body/mind therapies, counselling methods training, etc. The newsletter aims to provide information on: programs being offered throughout Australia, organisations involved in these fields, resources and their location, overseas resources and it intends to act as a clearing house for the expanding human potential networks around Australia.

The first issue was published earlier this year. The annual subscription is $3.

Further information: Small Groups Newsletter, School of Social Work, Preston Institute of Technology, Plenty Road, Bundoora, Victoria 3083.

Coordinating Learning in Experiential Education

The importance of 'field experience', 'work placement', 'clinical education', or whatever term is used in a particular discipline, has been recognised as an essential component of any course that is not purely academic. The most crucial problem for people who plan such experiences is to design them in a way which provides a valid educational experience as well as simply an opportunity to work.

A joint project has been established between a group of secondary and post-secondary teachers in New South Wales and the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in San Francisco to develop training materials for staff whose role is to supervise students placed in settings outside educational institutions. The term *experiential education* has been used, following common US usage, to describe experiences which have an educational purpose, but which take place in the community.

Training materials were developed at the Far West Lab and were subject to extensive reviews by a panel of Australian educators.

John Pascoe of Sydney Teachers College introduced the project to Australia and established the reviewing panel. Following his initiative the Australian Consortium on Experiential Education was formed to provide support for people involved in experiential education, now defined in its wider sense of involving the whole person in learning, and to help to break down some of the artificial boundaries which are often formed in vocational and professional education.

Field trials of the learning coordinator materials will start early in 1979. Anyone, in secondary, technical, tertiary, continuing, or professional education, who is interested in the project or in using the materials to train staff who supervise practical experiences is invited to contact: John Pascoe, TTE Division, Sydney Teachers College, PO Box 63, Camperdown 2050, NSW, telephone (02) 20922 ext. 2291.

Collaboration between education units

At a time when the costs and benefits of higher education are being increasingly scrutinized, it is inevitable that higher education institutions will look to the question of obtaining increased returns to their existing investment in resources. Two units in Western Australia have recently looked to this question themselves and following discussions have entered into a formal collaborative arrangement to enable them to share the resources that they have.

The two units are the University of Western Australia's Media Services Unit and the Educational Services & Teaching Resources Unit of Murdoch University (which has a media services area). The Vice-Chancellors of both universities have agreed that for a trial period of one year the two units may freely transfer staff, equipment and resources between them at the discretion of the directors of the two units. This has already had a number of advantages; for example, the flexible use of accommodation, manpower and equipment has enabled peak demands to be met in both Universities more easily than could otherwise have been done. Joint production of taped materials and joint contributions to workshops and seminars are being planned for the future.

The collaborative arrangements will be closely monitored and a comprehensive review undertaken after a year's trial.

Further information is available from the directors of either unit: Mr Frank Charmer (UWA) or Dr Rod McDonald (Murdoch University).

Adelaide Director 'Lapsed'

The University of Adelaide has recently announced that the post of Director of the Advisory Centre for University Education has lapsed. The future structure, functions and organisation of the Centre will be the subject of a further report to the University.

COMING IN THE MARCH ISSUE

Teaching-Research Units Under Threat
Your letters
News
Short articles of general interest

You are invited to contribute

Deadlines for copy for 1979 HERDSA Newsletter

March issue: 1st February
July issue: 1st June
November issue: 1st October

Editor	Dr Dave Boud, Tertiary Education Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Kensington 2033 NSW
Layout	Ian Dunn
Cover Design	Carole Griffin
Printed by	The Clarendon Press, Kensington, N.S.W.