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News from the Executive

With its new portfolio structure in place, the Executive is tackling a range of key issues facing the Society. These include responding to committees of inquiry, such as the West Committee and the Inquiry into the Role of TAFE in Australia; furthering the debate on the issue of accreditation of university teachers; securing agreements for reciprocal publication of HERDSA publications and publications from similar organisations in other countries; strengthening our local and international ties through involvement with bodies such as the International Consortium for Educational Development in Higher (there is a possibility that the ICED Conference in the year 2000 will be held in Australia); raising the profile of educational researchers as members of HERDSA; and, reviewing and revising the promotion and development strategies and materials of the Society.

From 4 to 7 November, the Executive experimented with an email "meeting". This was intended as the first of a series of bimonthly updates between Executive members, to further the work of the Executive between its infrequent meetings. The result was an exchange of almost 90 email messages between Executive members, from as far afield as Hong Kong, Auckland and Perth. While the model requires some fine tuning it will provide a useful and economical means of collective Executive communication. Apart from

incidental communication, the Executive has another email update meeting planned for early February and a telephone conference in March.

The sizeable membership in South Australia currently has no geographical representation on the Executive and we are seeking a **co-option from the South Australian Branch.**

At its September meeting the Executive approved the **appointment of Roger Landbeck as Editor of HERDSA News.** He will start in January, taking over from Alison Viskovic who will continue as an elected member of the Executive but with less demanding responsibilities allowing her to also address significant work-related changes as her institution plans to make the transition from a polytechnic to a university. Special thanks are due to Alison for the work she has done to date and to Roger for his willingness to take on the task.

The issue of **accreditation of university teachers** has taken up considerable time and energy of the Executive over recent months. The HERDSA discussion document was published in the July edition of NEWS, having been available on the Web for some time. Given the lateness of publication of this edition of the NEWS, the closing date for submissions was extended to mid-November. Submissions to date indicate a strong divergence of views, both for and

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Mary Melrose	(NZ)
Richard Nunes-Vaz	(ACT)
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Di Thompson	(Vic)
Graham Webb	(Vic)

HERDSA Office

Administration Officer Coral Watson
Membership and Publication Officer
 Heather Koch
 PO Box 516, Jamison, ACT 2614, Australia
 Ph: +61 62534242
 Fax: +61 62534246
 Email: herdsa.office@anu.edu.au
 World Wide Web URL:
<http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa>

Editor Roger Landbeck

32 Monash Road, Tarragindi,
 QLD 4121, Australia
 Ph +61 - 7 - 3848 0589
 Fax +61 - 7 - 3892 5502
 Email landbeck@ozemail.com.au

Issue dates: April, July, November

Contributions for the next issue must reach the editor by 9 March 1998.

They should be sent to Roger Landbeck at the above address, preferably as text only email attachments.

Research in Progress reports should be sent to coral.watson@anu.edu.au

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News from the Executive

against the notion of accreditation. There has also been considerable debate on the ADSIG email discussion list and some postings to the general HERDSA email list. The Executive is now drawing together the threads of the submissions received and aims to produce a statement of HERDSA's position on the subject.

A hard copy of the discussion document was sent to academic staff development units and to key interest groups in the sector in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, employer, union and student interest groups were asked to express interest in a meeting to discuss the issue further. To date the National Tertiary Education Union has expressed interest in such discussions and we have had some incidental communication with most of the other groups. In Australia, a copy of the discussion document was sent to the West Review and to the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development.

Jackie Lublin (currently visiting the UK) is acting on behalf of HERDSA to seek the most current information on the recent developments regarding the Dearing Report and accreditation of

university teachers in the UK. HERDSA is the only body within the sector to have produced a discussion paper on the subject and as far as we know the only body attempting to arrange a meeting of interested parties to further the debate. To this extent the Society is taking a leadership role. A number of press releases were sent out on accreditation resulting in some, but minimal, coverage of the issue in one or two Australian newspapers.

Because of the divergence of views on accreditation within the Society it will be difficult to formulate a HERDSA position.

The President received a letter from the WA Branch asking that the Executive consider the matter of [branch funding], particularly the option of a capitation amount to being returned to branches in proportion to size of their membership. This issue will be discussed by the Executive in March. Comments on this issue from any other branches, special interest groups or individual members would be welcome.

Owen Hicks, President
November 1997

HERDSA Office:

Note a slight adjustment to the phone and fax numbers:

Telephone +61 - 2 - 6253 4242 Facsimile +61 - 2 - 6253 4246

PO Box 516, Jamison, ACT 2614, Australia

Email: herdsa.office@anu.edu.au

World Wide Web URL: <http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa>

Recent updates to the homepage:

<http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa>

- Visiting Scholar Program
Tom Angelo
Seminars in most NZ and Australian regions
May/June 1998
- An index of HERDSA News articles and abstracts
- The HERDSA "Checklist on valuing teaching" and "Prompts for good practice"



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I am sad to have to tell you that this is the last time I am editing an issue of HERDSA News. When I started with the November 1996 issue I expected to be editor for two years. However, in my first editorial I said "The pressures of academic life these days make increasing demands on us all, and other people's priorities are not always in tune with my planned timetable." That has turned out to be an ongoing situation for me this year, and the rate of change in my institution (including the possibility of merger with a university) means that I really cannot do the editing job as thoroughly as HERDSA deserves.

The good news is that we have found a replacement editor - I am delighted to announce that Roger Landbeck has agreed to become editor, initially to see out the second year of my term. Roger has just returned to Queensland from his position at the University of the South Pacific, and I hope that in his retirement he will have ample time to edit the News. We are still on the lookout for an abstracts editor, and anyone interested in that job should contact Roger or the HERDSA Office.

Two new things have happened to the News during my year as editor: one is

the new style of layout, designed by a desktop publisher in Canberra; and the other is the arrival of Eidos' regular column, Ideas Dossier, which for me has been a real highlight. I would like to thank Eidos publicly for providing such a thought-provoking column - and always meeting deadlines!

Eidos' column has also been linked to the Academic Developers Special Interest Group email list for pre-publication comments, and similarly the HERDSA Discussion Paper on Academic Accreditation has also appeared on the HERDSA Website. I think the growing use of a variety of forms of electronic communication may well have an impact on the continuation of a printed newsletter at some time in the future - but not just yet!

Most submissions for the News this year reached me by email - this was clearly an advantage for the senders, but not always for me as my email system could not handle some of the forms of attachments. My computer also acquired a macro virus from one of the submissions; and for two weeks in the summer when I was finalising this issue my institution lost its external microwave link and therefore all links to the Internet. A survey among my own distance students (who are all

tertiary educators) showed that while over 90% had email and other Internet access from work, only 60% had access from home (where they did most of their part-time studies). So purely electronic communications cannot at present be guaranteed to reach all likely readers or all HERDSA members.

I hoped that this issue would have some focus on HERDSA New Zealand activities and the context for higher education in New Zealand. I was not swamped with offers, and in fact one news item and a book review are associated with my own institution, but you will also find an article from the university sector. Most HERDSA New Zealand Branch activities have occurred in Auckland this last year, and the growth of a strong contingent there augurs well for a highly successful conference in July 1998. Planning is well ahead, with an active conference committee, and I urge readers to join us in New Zealand for a stimulating conference.

My best wishes to Roger as he takes over as editor. You will find his contact details in the listings on page 2, and the deadline for the April Newsletter is 9 March 1998 - please welcome him by sending in lots of materials for the Newsletter.

HERDSA NEWS INDEX

A few years ago a founding HERDSA member, Alan Prosser, now of Caringbah NSW, was searching HERDSA News for information about the Society, and noticed some articles that were relevant to teaching issues that were on his mind. He realised that there must also be articles relevant to issues topical for other people, but they too seemed to be unaware of them. Alan says we were not using these articles because we had forgotten them and there was no easy way of searching past News issues for a particular topic. The long-term value of the articles was being lost. Later he realised that the same conclusion applied to the abstracts and reviews put together by a few conscientious members over many years.

Clearly, there was a need for a subject index covering the contents of all issues of HERDSA News. Alan saw the need and had some spare time in his retirement, so he volunteered to prepare such an index. It was then a simple matter to add an author index as well.

The subject index is an indication of topics that have been issues for HERDSA members over the years - however, not all significant items have necessarily been covered in the Newsletters.

This is the first index that Alan has prepared. Christine Bruce gave detailed and constructive advice and Alan says much of the value of the index is due to her expertise.

HERDSA is extremely grateful to Alan for the work he has done, and we hope many members can now share Alan's experience of rediscovering the value of articles and abstracts originally published in HERDSA News. The indexes have now been placed on the HERDSA World Wide Web site, and their URLs are listed below:

Article author:	http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa/authart.html
Article subject:	http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa/subart.html
Abstract author:	http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa/authab.html
Abstract subject:	http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa/subab.html



IDEAS DOSSIER

Phenomenography and Educational Relevance:

On the experience of reading the last issue of Higher Education Research and Development

It's been a long time since this couch-potato actually read an issue of HERD cover-to-cover. But Vol 16(2) on *Phenomenography in Higher Education* was out of the ordinary. Shameless glutton that I am, I devoured it all in two sittings. Don't worry if you haven't read it yourself - you'll probably get at least the drift of my comments. I may even succeed in whetting your critical appetite.

In my book it's axiomatic that worthwhile educational research must be educationally relevant (ie to what educational practitioners do). I've always considered disingenuous Ferenc Marton's long-time insistence that phenomenographers be concerned only with discovering sound knowledge, and stubbornly disregard the demands of practice. The articles in HERD clearly indicate the current mood to be otherwise, and that's a healthy sign. But what will we count as educational relevance?

Totally disregarding volumes written about that topic I'll choose six tests that appeal to me and seem to work well. I don't pretend they exhaust the question of relevance, but they seem to give it a fair hearing:

1. In the hands of its own practitioners (the researchers) educationally relevant research should possess:
 - A. Discursive Rigour (clarity of thought and ideas, consistency, carefulness)
 - and -
 - B. Intelligibility (to educators like you and me)
2. As a form of human science it should display:
 - C. Honesty ("transparency" about itself, its methods, its object of study)
 - and -
 - D. Self-criticality (a.k.a. reflexivity - having the internal resources - guts

- to turn back on itself and expose its own errors)

3. And as a potential educational resource (something we can actually use) it should be:

E. Attractive (addressing significant issues facing the educational system)

- and -

F. Challenging (extending our vision, testing the status quo, capable of taking us into the future)

I'll offer comments on how I see phenomenography scoring on each test. Space will allow only indicative references to one or two articles where each topic is raised in this issue of HERD, and I'll mention these in square brackets. Maybe, however, some really keen readers will try following these themes analytically through the whole collection.

After reading HERD's current issue, here's my personal scorecard:-

A) Rigour

Phenomenography still remains naively fuzzy about its own declared object of study. If it seeks to study people's experiences (as it claims) it appears to have nowhere attempted to problematise that very notion. What is meant by 'experience'? Where is the 'theory of experience' behind phenomenography? And who is going to bite the bullet and try to write one? [Saljo's article is central here, but appears in tension with Svensson's - who insists the object of study is "conceptions" - and the conflict is present in the six kinds of phenomenography Hasselgren and Beach distinguish. BUT - does it all arise from blundering and inept translations of the Swedish term *uppfattning*? Now, there's a tantalizing question for dinner conversation!]

B) Intelligibility

On the evidence of its instant appeal to many university teachers it has probably done pretty well on this one. One of its least intelligible claims, to me, is the one about transcending the "inner world/outer world" dichotomy, but there are also some related claims in the accompanying (seemingly endless)

discourse about "relationality" [Saljo and Svensson again have plenty to say here, some of it quite unintelligible to me, and Trigwell and Prosser continue the trend]. Am I the only idiot who's perpetually perplexed and ultimately unconvinced both by this term (relational) and by the arguments (about internal and external worlds) behind it?

C) Honesty

The issues of reliability (and eventually that of non-replicability) have to be honestly faced and I think a lot of thinking and writing will have to happen before I'm happy with this side of things. Some funny head-in-the-sand tactics seem to be around. [Sandberg's article is a MUST here - clear, cogent, analytic - the kind (and style) we need to read more of]. If phenomenographic findings are, as I suspect, to be ultimately non-replicable, someone has to explain what kind of science it represents, and stop pretending that it's some other kind of science. And this, it appears to me, is where the hermeneutical connection [see Hasselgren and Beach] enters.

D) Self-criticality

Perhaps the toughest critique of all is that phenomenography, as it currently stands, is non-reflexive - or insufficiently reflexive [a critique latent in both Saljo's and Sandberg's work]. I agree, on the evidence of the ease with which conspicuous retreats into dogmatism are presently tolerated [see, for example, the issue of "talk as data and practice", which Saljo opens up brilliantly; Hazel et al. also make good use of it]. This is difficult, not to say potentially painful, territory. But I'm heartened by the fact that it is at last being written about. And let's not forget we're dealing with a tradition in its infancy, so there's always hope for the future.

E) Attractiveness

Phenomenography scores well in this area, and the negatives arise from biases it shares with most higher educational discourse today. It seems almost obsessed with studying mainstream disciplines that are mega-concept-heavy, which happen to also represent sites of academic power [Hazel et al. score well in this connection,





approving Webb's earlier (1996, republished 1997*) critique about "reproducing the discourses in which (phenomenography) is embedded". That conservative (masculinist?) stance certainly counts in its favour politically. But I'd like to see the humanities up there, too, and - dare I mention it? - the performing and creative arts. And, in fact, any discipline where experiential learning - and the affective dimension - are central [again, see Hazel et al.].

F) Challenge

Had I written this six months ago I'd have challenged phenomenography's ineptness in glibly sliding over some questions relating to perceptions and awareness. The good news is that the words are now beginning to appear in print - not before time! [Booth opens this up in "the structure of awareness", while Trigwell and Prosser are often concerned with - if not always totally clear about - "perceptions". And I understand Ference

himself has started writing about "intuitions" - there's a research area to conjure with!]

This is all encouraging, but I'll be happier still when someone publishes a study on a case where the actual educational goal was the development of students' perceptions (or awareness or even intuitions). Mind you, "development" itself is at last getting a better treatment, too. We're seeing its use extended from that of intellectual constructs ("concepts") to more adequately contextualised notions such as "changing as a person" [a move apparently greeted with approval by Mugler and Landbeck, as well as by Hazel et al.].

One day soon perhaps we'll even see the word "imagination" appearing. Wouldn't it be a treat to read a phenomenographic article researching a case where the "outcome space" was big enough to accommodate students

imaginatively re-conceptualising phenomena? Where they were incited to question the givens, instead of merely "changing their conceptions" always in the direction of (the disciplinarily-defined) right ones!

So ... does anyone out there know of a course where someone teaches in the hope of educating the perceptive, the imaginative and the creative capacities of students? If so, will they please draw it to the attention of the nearest phenomenographer and suggest that s/he studies it? And tell them I sent you.

* PS. My attention has been drawn to the fact that a dialogue on many of these issues has also been taking place in the 1997 issues of the journal *Higher Education*, including Graham Webb's "Deconstructing Deep and Surface: Towards a Critique of Phenomenography".

Eidos

October, 1997

University Teaching - Accreditation Developments in New Zealand

In this article, Margaret Ledgerton, AUS Policy and Research Officer, discusses accreditation of teachers in the wider context of other developments in the tertiary sector in New Zealand.

The HERDSA discussion document, *The Accreditation of University Teachers*, which appeared in HERDSA NEWS, July 1997, explored the major issues related to accreditation and outlined developments in the United Kingdom and Australasia. The document is currently being considered by the Association of University Staff (AUS) AUS committees. As the document notes, while accreditation in the UK is relatively well-advanced, it is at an earlier, though accelerating, stage of development in Australia and New Zealand.

In the New Zealand context, the development of policy on the professional accreditation of university teaching was identified as a priority by the Association of University staff (AUS) early in 1997 and a discussion paper on the issue was circulated around AUS

branches during the rest of the year. (Accreditation of *teaching* is emphasised, as being one of the two components of an academic's job, the other being the requirement to be actively involved in research.) The Association has always had a heavy focus on professional, as well as industrial, issues and it allocates significant resources to that area of its activity. Many of its members necessarily maintain strong national and international links regarding current professional and education policy issues and are frequently initiators, drivers, analysts or critics of such developments.

Comment on the AUS discussion paper has been generally positive and the Association's 1997 Annual Conference in December resolved that detailed policy be actively developed during the coming year. Consequently, the Association will be holding a special conference as part of the policy-making process, in the first half of 1998. That conference will consider issues related to the acquisition by university teachers of a recognised professional tertiary teaching qualification, the process by which that is acquired, appropriate models for the university sector and a range of related

matters. A priority will be gauging the level of wider sector interest and commitment - at this point AUS has circulated its discussion paper to sector groups and held discussions on the issue with the New Zealand University Students' Association, which has expressed support. It is of some significance, however, that AUS Conference commitment to accreditation is in the context of its priority activity for 1998: the New Zealand Government's Tertiary Education Review Green Paper (TER) and related reviews.

While the major arguments for and against accreditation, the challenges it presents and the issues for debate are common to all three countries, there is at least one major difference in the New Zealand context. The West Higher Education Review Committee discussion paper, released in Australia in November, notes that: *Other options worthy of consideration include the establishment of a centre for the promotion of university teaching and the development of teacher training opportunities for academics, along the lines recently proposed by the Dearing Committee. These initiatives appear to be aimed at creating an*





academic professional body committed to teaching excellence ... [Chapter four, p.36] In New Zealand, however, there has been no apparent governmental interest in the issue and the TER, apart from a general statement regarding the need for teaching and research to be of high quality, is silent on the professional development of staff. Perhaps, given the paper's strong ideological focus, those interested in the profession and in the quality of teaching and learning in universities should give heartfelt thanks that this is the case.

The TER is essentially concerned with the finance, administration and accountability of institutions, to the exclusion of all else. Its four main headings - Resourcing of Tuition; Resourcing of Research; Regulatory Support; Governance and Accountability of Tertiary Education Institutions - reflect the Government's wish to radically accelerate ideological objectives that have permeated the sector during the last decade. Both the direction of the TER and lack of Government interest in the issue of accreditation, present a number of potential problems. The TER's general focus not only ignores issues related to pedagogy in the sector, but its proposals are inimical to the positive and unimpeded development of accreditation. Proposals for resourcing of tuition alone would significantly influence institutional planning and allocation of resources for professional development. Individual student 'entitlements', that will decrease as participation increases, and the funding of private training establishments at the same rate as public institutions - within the stated context of a finite Government financial pot - do not augur well for the institutional/governmental resourcing of accreditation.

AUS agrees with the HERDSA discussion paper's statement [p.4], that there is likely to be more agreement concerning accreditation if it is clear at the outset that accreditation is not about reducing the importance of research in

universities generally, and with its emphasis that the future success of higher education demands both high quality research and high quality teaching. The TER's proposals for the separation of the funding of teaching and research and that only postgraduate degree providers carry out research present clear problems in this respect.

Similarly, the proposal that a 'minimum quality threshold' be implemented in the sector, together with further deregulation and marketisation, appears to be designed to ensure that the focus will increasingly be on a minimum standard that can be reached through driving down costs, involving for example: low overheads; high volume student 'throughput'; neglect of necessary infrastructure; short-term employment contracts; an undermining of the quality of employment conditions of staff; and, the avoidance of costs related to such things staff development.

There are contradictions and tensions between such proposals, of course, and the Government's well-founded insistence that New Zealand's tertiary education system be internationally credible and competitive. AUS, parallel to its internal policy formation process and liaison with sector-wide groups, will be pointing this out to Government and urging it to support and adequately resource the accreditation initiative. Given the international and mobile nature of the academic workforce (perhaps particularly so in the case of New Zealand, where over 50% of academic staff are recruited internationally) and the globalisation of tertiary education, accreditation of university teaching is a development with imperatives that are highly relevant to New Zealand university staff and to the quality of our tertiary education system. AUS will need to advance this view and its policy on accreditation in what portends to be an increasingly hostile environment in 1998.

BOOK REVIEW

The New Self Help Book for Teachers

Nick Zepke, Dean Nugent and Christine Roberts (Eds). WP Press, Wellington, New Zealand, 1996. RRP NZ\$34.95

The editors and authors are all practising teachers in tertiary education in New Zealand.

This book deserves a wide audience because it excites, it challenges, it teaches. The text is designed "... to help teachers maintain, enrich and enlarge their wardrobe of professional skills." (page 1). It does that, and more.

The book is divided into four sections, each built around a theme. The development of the book is carefully planned. It starts with a focus on working with students. This is followed by a section on developing technical skills, then one on being a reflective teacher, and lastly an exploration of teaching and learning in context - institutional, in post-modern times, and in a changing world.

In the opening pages the editors spell out some of their values and assumptions. Central to these is a concern for human dignity, student-centred learning and teaching, honesty, and ownership of their ideas:

...one of the most important things I am trying to do is to help create and maintain a learning "space" where participants feel free to examine their understandings and make new connections. I have to work therefore with some idea of the importance of establishing intimacies, relationships and trust. (page 18)

The book is designed to illustrate practical skills. It can be used as a step by step manual. Newcomers to teaching have been given a baseline (lifeline?)

**Check out the HERDSA Web Site hosted by the
Australian SunSITE:**

<http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa>



resource kit. But the book is multi-layered, and intended for use by anyone interested in learning more about how and what and especially why they teach as they do. One of the authors suggests competent teachers need to both understand the consequences of their actions and be able to justify why they do what they do. This notion of accountability is echoed through the text.

At the end of each chapter there are a number of prompt questions (from the HERDSA document *Challenging Conceptions of Teaching: Some Prompts for Good Practice*), used with HERDSA's permission) to further this learning. It is this mixture of common sense techniques and challenging questions that makes this book special. There are a number of references in the text to teaching being both stressful and challenging - this book is both.

The editors argue in the introduction that "Good teaching facilitates the learning of all students regardless of sex, socio-economic background, race or ability." Gender pronouns are used alternatively throughout the work, and the statement is made that the authors want to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in their practice. Acknowledgement is given, however, to the fact that in both form and structure, the book falls squarely into the European tradition. Perhaps in the next edition, then, because surely there will be a need for one, Maori, Samoan and people of other cultures can contribute as authors, both in providing their insight, learning and techniques, and in exploring their values and assumptions.

This work is valuable for what teachers can learn about the techniques and practices of teaching - for example, about how to become a reflective teacher or use a wider range of educational media. It is also valuable for its structure and contents, its user-friendly approach, and perhaps above all, its authors' sharing about their teaching, learning from their mistakes, and their obvious passion and commitment to education.

Reviewed by marg gilling, who recently joined Wellington Polytechnic's Educational Development Department, coming back into teaching after a number of years as a social science researcher.

A NEW MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE FOR THE TERTIARY SECTOR

The Educational Development Department of Wellington Polytechnic has launched its MEd degree, and the first students start in March 1998. The MEd has been approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and builds on the prior BEd for tertiary teachers that the polytechnic has been running very successfully for several years.

"We've had lots of applications already, and people say they are enthusiastic about the special focus of this MEd - no other MEd programme in New Zealand at present offers such a range of courses related to adult learning and teaching," says Linda Leach, Programme Leader. "The initial participants come from a really wide range of backgrounds, and it will be fascinating and challenging for us to work with them."

Special Features of the Programme

The MEd is focused on the tertiary sector and provides a relevant qualification for people working as educators in post-school education and training contexts as varied as tertiary institutions, private training establishments, business and community settings.

Three curriculum themes are woven through courses in the programme:

- Adult learning in both formal institutional settings and non-formal community settings
- The problematic roles of knowledge in learning
- Multiple cultural perspectives including social, ethnic, gender and institutional cultures.

Vacation course seminars to be held in May 1998 will provide a forum to debate the influence of issues such as Tino Rangatiratanga, technology and economics on education, which all impact across the range of courses students will be studying.

The programme is available by both attendance at courses in Wellington and at a distance. Learners will be supported by the use of technologies such as Internet, email and other computer mediated communications. On-campus students

will have access to individual study carrels in the library and to computing facilities.

Assessment in the programme features grade-related profiles (a form of criterion-reference assessment) and provides learners with the opportunity to negotiate criteria, to self assess and to contribute to the decision about their final grade for each assessment event. A Recognition of Prior Learning policy provides opportunities for people to gain credit for past academic and non-academic learning.

Applications for entry to the programme are being received from people from a wide range of backgrounds - for example, university and teachers college lecturers, polytechnic lecturers, community educators and nurses.

Scholarships

Three scholarships will be offered each year for students enrolled full-time in the programme. The scholarships are intended to pay the fees of students who are successful tertiary teachers and who have the potential to contribute to the field, but who may not have completed many academic qualifications.

Programme Structure

The MEd is a two year full-time equivalent programme comprising four 30-credit courses and a major thesis (120 credits). Part-time studies may be spread over up to six years.

Courses include:

Knowledge and Power: Contemporary Critiques

Adult Learning: Myths and Realities

Cultures and Learning: Diversity in Education

The Expert Teacher: Principles and Practices

Leadership and Communication in Tertiary Education and Training

Futures in Education: Exploration and Anticipation

Educational Research: Methodologies and Applications

Special Topic - an option that allows learners to negotiate a learning contract for a whole course.

If you would like more information about this MEd programme, please contact the Educational Development Department Administrative Officer: b.mcbrien@wnp.ac.nz



BRANCH REPORTS

ACT

Contact:

Di Adams

Pb: 02 6205 5386

Email: da@isd.canberra.edu.au

Last ACT HERDSA event for the year (Nov) was Professor Frank Hambly, an adjunct Professor of the University of Canberra and previous Executive officer of the AVCC, who spoke on "The Changing University". He gave an interpreted history of universities in Australia with much informed commentary on the impetus for change and possible directions. A lively discussion followed his address with many of the audience staying on to continue the discussion over refreshments.

Previous speakers during the year included: Prof Don Anderson of the ANU who spoke on academic qualifications; Professor Ingrid Moses who gave a personal address on her academic career; Mr Roderick West, who spoke of his experiences during the review process; Mr Jack Waterford of the Canberra Times and Assoc Prof Susan Lever, who gave a joint presentation on interaction between the media and the higher education sector; Ms Helen Fullgrabe from the AVCC who analysed the UK Dearing Report and its implications for Australia's higher education future. A draft program is currently under construction for 1998.

Hong Kong

Contact:

Catherine Tang

Pb: 2766 6289

Email: etcktang@polyu.edu.hk

One of the longest-serving staff members of City University of Hong Kong, Ken Stafford, retired at the end of September. The then City Polytechnic of Hong Kong was established in January 1984 and, in April 1985, Ken was appointed as Principal Educational Technologist in the Educational Technology Centre with responsibility to support academics in their teaching roles. This contribution continued through the transition to university status in 1994. During his last

position as Associate Director of Professional Development & Quality Services, Ken was the foundation President of the Hong Kong Branch of HERDSA. A former Wallaby, Ken is looking forward to active retirement on the Gold Coast.

Queensland

Contact:

John Lidstone

Pb: 07 38643289

Email: j.lidstone@qut.edu.au

1998 Conference

The annual conference of the Queensland Branch of HERDSA will be held at Sunshine Coast University College at Sippy Downs (near Buderim) on Saturday and Sunday 20-21 June 1998.

The major themes of the conference include

- * learning and technology
- * secondary - tertiary interface
- * language and literacy and learning assistance programs
- * improving the quality of teaching and learning in higher education

Papers, posters, discussion groups and workshops will be offered in all theme areas. Keynote speakers include Associate Professor Tom Angelo (1998 HERDSA Scholar) and Professor Ian Lowe (Griffith University).

Further details about the conference will be advertised early in the new year. If you would like to be registered on the mailing list or are interested in presenting, please send contact details to 20

Dr Carol Davis
Sunshine Coast University College
Locked Bag 4 20
Maroochydore South Q 4558
email davis@scuc.edu.au 20
ph 07 54 30 1221
fax 07 54 30 1231

HERDSA Discussion List

Very nearly up and running is a discussion list on topics of interest to HERDSA members.

The list is an initiative of the HERDSA Queensland branch executive, however discussion topics will not be limited to Queensland issues and all HERDSA

members are welcome to subscribe to the list. Members for whom we have a current email address will receive a message shortly, inviting them to join the list, and giving subscription details. The more members who subscribe and participate, of course, the more valuable the discussion list will be.

Any enquires can be sent to imcalpine@hotmail.com, or to any member of the HERDSA Queensland branch.

The branch AGM was to be held on December 5th at QUT, followed by dinner in Toowong.

Victoria

Contact:

Di Thompson

Pb: 61-3-52278192

Email: diana@deakin.edu.au

The branch was pleased that its submission to host the 1999 HERDSA international conference was successful and has started planning. While details, including the theme, are yet to be decided we believe that we have a basic structure in place and the decision to underpin the conference by a consortium of Victorian institutions of Higher Education is sound.

Our annual State Conference "Academics and Universities: Partners in Business?" was held on November 20 and 21 at the Rockman's Regency Hotel, Melbourne City Centre. The conference had a varied and challenging program and included a panel discussion with His Grace, the Most Reverend Dr George Pell, Archbishop of Melbourne and President of the Australian Catholic University; Prof Barbara Van Ernst, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Swinburne University Of Technology and Mr Bob Crowley, Employee Relations Manager, Ford Motor Company, Broadmeadows.

Those who attended it spoke highly of the stimulation they achieved but we are concerned that numbers were lower than anticipated. As we needed to cancel our proposed seminar, "Assisting Beginning Research Students from Non-Traditional Backgrounds", because of lack of numbers, there is a need to look carefully at programs. As one approach we have decided that a useful way to support those who have interest and





needs in assisting research students from non-conventional backgrounds will be to publish a booklet.

Prof Ingrid Moses, Chair of CUTSD, joined us on October 22nd. She gave a most interesting talk and was very willing to devote time to questions and engage in discussion with more than 50 representatives from most of the state's universities. The branch was very pleased to host this occasion and appreciated the support from Prof Moses.

For up-to-date information, please use our Web-site:

<http://sunsite.anu.edu.au/education/herdsa/vic/>

New Zealand

Contact:

Mary Melrose

Ph: 64-9-307 9999, ext 6042

Email: Mary.Melrose@ait.ac.nz

HERDSA NZ held a dinner-seminar entitled "Novice to Expert - the Leadership Transition" where the speaker was Professor Reynold Macpherson, Director of the Centre for Professional Development at the University of Auckland. Approximately 50 staff from all the tertiary institutions (Universities, Polytechnics and the College of Education) in Auckland attended. Reynold provided a reflective and stimulating account of the development of his own "practical theories" about educational leadership, based on his life experiences and research. He also traced the historical development of different popular theories about leadership and brought us up to date on current thinking about leadership in teaching and learning. The concept of leadership expectations build on a touchstone and tested for

consequence and coherence was one which triggered lively discussion. So did the question "whose values are being served?" as this related to students, teachers, and leaders in a political and economic context.

South Australia

Contact:

Janice Orrell

Ph: 08 201 3244

Email: janice.orrell@flinders.edu.au

Western Australia

Contact:

Richard Fuller

Ph: 08 9370 6487

Email: r.fuller@cowan.edu.au

Since the last newsletter we have conducted three more seminars for Western Australia HERDSA members and anyone else who turned up!

In September Pat Kelly from QUT took us through some of the implications of internationalisation for teaching and learning in higher education. In October Craig McInnis of the University of Melbourne presented some strategies for managing and mainstreaming successful student transition and retention.

Finally, in November, Robert Loss of Curtin University looked at the move towards web-based delivery of courses - focussing on the differences between electronic and paper based literacy. All were very well attended as per usual!

The 1998 Teaching and Learning Forum is being held at UWA from 4th - 5th February and promises once again to most worthwhile. The theme is "Teaching and Learning In Challenging Times".

HERDSA Postgraduate Conference Grants

Grants are available to enable postgraduate students to attend and participate in the 1998 HERDSA Conference in Auckland, New Zealand 7-10 July 1998. Two grants are available:

- one grant of up to \$500 to assist a local student

- one grant of up to \$1,000 to assist a student incurring significant travel costs (i.e. living more than 500 kms from the conference site).

Supervisors of postgraduate students studying in relevant areas are encouraged to bring these grants to the attention of their students.

Guidelines and application forms are available from the HERDSA Office.



HERDSA

Annual International Conference

Auckland, New Zealand

7 - 10 July 1998

THEME:

TRANSFORMATION

Transformation knows no limits. Any paper which promotes research and development, or provides an insight into the issues affecting teaching / learning in tertiary education, will be considered, e.g. systems which support learning for the teacher or student or organisation.

CALL FOR

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions may take the form of:

- Paper presentations
- Workshop Sessions
- Roundtable Discussions
- Posters

Abstracts due in February 1998.

INQUIRIES / REGISTRATION OF INTEREST TO:

Barry Williams
Centre for Continuing Education
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland
New Zealand
Fax: 64 - 9 - 373 7419
Tel: 64 - 9 - 373 7599, ext. 8903
email: b.williams@auckland.ac.nz

CONFERENCE

WEBSITE:

<http://www.cce.auckland.ac.nz/herdsa98>



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Academic Developers SIG

Convenor: Di Thompson
Email: diana@deakin.edu.au

List Moderator: Erika Martens
Email: E.Martens@latrobe.edu.au

Electronic membership:
Send an email containing your signature to:
E.Martens@latrobe.edu.au.

Curriculum SIG

Co-convenors: Judith Townsend
Email: j.townsend@usw.edu.au

and Douglas McMillan
Email: dmcmillan@csu.edu.au

Electronic membership:
send your email address to Douglas

Higher Education Leadership and Management SIG

Electronic membership
To subscribe to the listserv send an email message to:
listproc@listproc.anu.edu.au
leave the subject line blank and in the body of the message put:
subscribe siglead@listproc.anu.edu.au
yourfirstname yourlastname end

Student Learning SIG

Convenor: Gillian Boulton-Lewis
Email: g.boulton-lewis@qut.edu.au

Electronic membership:
Individually subscribe by sending an email message to: mailserv@qut.edu.au
Leave the subject: line blank and write into the text area:
subscribe HERDSIG your email address

VIPASIG

The catalyst for the new Visual and Performing Arts Special Interest Group (VIPASIG, pronounced viper as in the snake).has been provided by recent developments in the postgraduate sector, including the emergence of several new M.A. and PhD programmes in the visual and performing arts, and the widespread emphasis on upgrading of qualifications for lecturers working in these fields.

There is a particular need now for academics associated with the visual and performing arts to encourage more debate on notions of scholarship as they apply to the so called "creative" fields. There is a need also to broaden the general understanding of the wider academic community in relation to what constitutes

the documentation of scholarship in these fields. Without this, it is difficult to secure contestable research funding within our institutions, and to build confidence in the work produced. More collegial dialogue will also lead to a wider and better informed pool of support for co-supervision and examination and will allow us to be better informed and able to advise our students on postgraduate options.

Convenor: Nancy de Freitas
Email: nancy.defreitas@ait.ac.nz

Electronic membership:
Individually subscribe by sending an email message to:
MAJORDOMO@AIT.AC.NZ
Leave the subject: line blank and write into the text area:
subscribe vipasig

Language and Learning SIG

Convenor: Anita van der Wal
Email: alaev@cc.newcastle.edu.au

Electronic membership:
Individually subscribe by sending an email message to: localist@unsw.edu.au
Leave the subject: line blank and write into the text area:
subscribe UNILEARN your firstname your lastname

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

An Evaluation of the Educational Experience of the Intern Year

Researcher

Sarah J Mann, Centre for Staff Development, The University of Western Australia

Funding body

Postgraduate Medical Education, Royal Perth Hospital

Description

The aim of this study is to illuminate the educational experience of the intern in order to assess the effectiveness of the formal and informal learning opportunities the Intern Year provides. This assessment will provide a baseline against which to 'measure' future evaluations of the Intern Year and will provide guidance on future directions.

For the purposes of this study, effectiveness will be defined according to interns' own self-assessment of what in the Intern Year has helped them to improve as doctors. For example, whether they see the experience as having helped them make clinical decisions; or as having supported them in learning to communicate with and gather information from colleagues, peers and allied professionals.

The study will focus on elaborating the learning milieu of the intern year; on the interns' perceptions of what was most significant in helping and hindering their learning; on critical learning incidents for interns; and on interns' needs, motivations and career aspirations.

Key words

Illuminative evaluation; intern year; postgraduate medical education; work-based learning

Contact

Dr Sarah J Mann
Tel: 08 9380 1502
Email: smann@csd.uwa.edu.au

Claims and realities of introductory psychology texts

Researcher

Helen Pennington, Psychology Department, Massey University

Description

Because the typical introductory psychology course is based on a textbook and its ancillary materials, students' impressions of the discipline of psychology are likely to be strongly influenced by these sources. Previous examinations of the content of introductory psychology texts have been sporadic and typically narrow in focus, so a more comprehensive investigation is worth conducting.

The project examines a sample of recently published introductory psychology texts, looking at both objective quantifiable features and questions of quality. The basic aims are to identify the main uniformities and differences among the texts, and to examine the depth of their treatment of





several important issues. So far, I have looked mainly at objective characteristics of the texts and their ancillary materials, and at the texts' coverage of causation and correlation.

Since the texts typically make strong claims to promote critical thinking and to emphasise issues of human diversity, I have begun to examine the way they actually deal with these areas. I am currently looking at the nature of the texts' so-called critical thinking items and their integration with other text material, as well as at common themes and variation in topics covered under headings such as culture.

The findings from this project should give teachers of introductory psychology courses a realistic view of what they can expect from a modern text package, and should help in decisions about how to supplement the text with other course material.

Key words

Introductory, textbooks, psychology, diversity, critical thinking.

Contact

*Helen Pennington
Email: H.Pennington@massey.ac.nz
Fax: 64-6-350 5673 ext. 20*

Multiple site video-conferencing: Its impact on learning and teaching

Researchers

Ann Reich, Bob Perry, Faculty of Education, University of Western Sydney, Macarthur

Description

The project has the following specific aims:

- to trial the use of videoconferencing between Bankstown and Campbelltown campuses of UWS Macarthur;
- to undertake an action research process with students in a specified subject within the Bachelor of Adult Education course in order to evaluate the effectiveness of videoconferencing as a learning and teaching tool;
- to identify the equity issues involved in the use of videoconferencing in learning and teaching;
- to identify the skills and competencies needed by teaching staff in using videoconferencing in university teaching and suggest directions for developing these;
- to identify the impact of the use of videoconferencing on the teaching

methods currently used in the Bachelor of Adult Education course and extend this to other courses.

Key words

Videoconferencing, higher education, teaching and learning, equity

Contact

*Bob Perry
Email: b.perry@uws.edu.au
Phone: (612) - 97726657
Fax: (612) - 97726639*

Action Research: A Catalyst for Change?

Researcher

Pip Ferguson, Professional Development Unit, The Waikato Polytechnic

Description

In this PhD thesis study, which is now nearing completion, I have investigated how effective action research is in contributing to the development of a research culture in a tertiary institution in transition. New Zealand polytechnics gained degree granting status in 1990. Traditionally these institutions have been known for their technical and vocational teaching, rather than for conducting research. Staff teaching on degree programmes are now required to engage in research.

I, as a staff developer in the institution, offered short (two week) courses in Action Research in an attempt to encourage staff to build on their traditional strengths in teaching, as they develop research skills.

The thesis describes my analysis of the development of technical education in New Zealand, narrowing to the development of The Waikato Polytechnic. Foucauldian tools are used in analysis throughout the thesis. The nexus between the traditional reflective practice used by practising teachers in the institution and action research is explored. Interviews with staff having completed the course are used to consider how effective action research courses have been in contributing to their learning of research skills, and the development of a healthy research culture.

Key words

Action research, reflective practice, power/knowledge, discourse, research.

Contact

*Pip Ferguson
Email: espmf@tup.ac.nz*

The Course Experience of Muslim Students at Australian Universities

Researcher

Dr Christine Asmar, Centre for Teaching and Learning, The University of Sydney

Description

The proposed study aims to investigate factors affecting Muslim students' course experience. There is evidence that students who fall into the category of a 'visible minority' are sometimes the object of discriminatory attitudes and practices both on- and off-campus. Such discrimination may be hindering them from full participation in the academic and non-academic sides of university life.

Muslim students have a strong sense of collective identity based on religious affiliation, but there is often a tension between the students' desire to publicly identify with their group and negative attitudes displayed towards them if they do so. These students seek support in their academic endeavours from a number of sources beyond traditional university services - eg family and community. In the light of findings from current research overseas regarding the significance for student learning of out-of-class experiences, there is a strong educational case for investigating the situation of this group - about which almost no research exists either in Australia or elsewhere.

The proposed study will investigate the relationship between Muslim students' experiences in and out of class, including experiences of discrimination, and their overall attitude to their university courses. Students' perceptions of their interactions with fellow-students, with staff, and with others external to the campus will all be examined for their effects on the overall perceived quality of the students' course experience. It is hoped that the findings will make an important contribution to the literature on the holistic nature of student learning, whilst highlighting more specific issues in relation to discrimination affecting minorities in higher education.

Key words

Muslim, minority, discrimination, course experience, student

Contact

*Dr Christine Asmar
Email: C.Asmar@ctl.usyd.edu.au*



Conferences

7th Annual Teaching & Learning Forum

Themes: Teaching and Learning in Times of Change. The Forum will provide opportunities for teaching staff to share teaching and learning methods, problems, projects and research with their colleagues.

Place: The University of Western Australia

Date: 4 - 5 February, 1998

Information: Barbara Black or Natalie Stanley, Tel: 08 9380 2136
Email: nstanley@csd.uwa.edu.au

UNESCO Asia-Pacific International Conference

Themes: Education for the 21st Century. The conference will address the educational needs of the participating countries from the Asia-Pacific Region, and will be a forum for those who can influence policies.

Place: Melbourne, Australia

Date: 30 March - 3 April, 1998

Information: Geoff Haw, Tel: +613 9628 4958
Email: geoff.haw@dse.vic.gov.au
<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/cis/unesconf>

International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED)

In association with the Center for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Texas at Austin and the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD Network)

Theme: Supporting Educational, Faculty & TA Development Within Departments and Disciplines"

Place: The University of Texas at Austin

Date: April 19-22, 1998

Information: Dr. Karron G. Lewis, Conference Coordinator
Email: kglewis@mail.utexas.edu
Details on webpage from 5 January 1998:
<http://iced.cte.utexas.edu:8001>

Learning Together - Collaboration in Open Learning. A Regional Forum

Themes: Adapting learning to local cultures and regional needs; International, inter-institutional and inter-sectoral cooperation; Alternative modes of delivery to ensure equity and quality; Technology and resource-based learning; Adapting business approaches to educational delivery.

Place: Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia

Date: 20-22 April 1998

Information: Up to date information is available on the World Wide Web at the John Curtin Centre home page:
<http://www.curtin.edu.au/curtin/centre/jc/>

Quality in Postgraduate Research 'Managing the New Agenda'

Themes: What is the new agenda? Who will drive that agenda? What are the implications of the West Review for postgraduate students? How does postgraduate research fit into the push for internationalisation and entrepreneurial development? What will the Ph.D look like in the 21 century? What do we need to do now to ensure the quality of the postgraduate experience in the university of the 21 century?

Place: Hilton International Hotel, Adelaide

Date: 23 - 24 April 1998

Information: SAPMEA Conventions
Phone: (08) 8229 6060
Fax: (08) 8239 1566
Email: conv@sapmea.asn.au

17th International Conference on Staff and Educational Development ISSED

Theme: Higher Education and Social Conscience

Place: University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA

Date: 5 - 8 June 1998

Information: Dr Chris deWinter Hebron
H+E Associates, 12a Church St,
Stiffkey, Norfolk NR231QJ, England
Fax: 44 - 1328 - 8303 39
Email: 106316.3622@compuserve.com

International Conference on the Application of Psychology to the Quality of Learning and Teaching

Theme: This conference aims to integrate research on learning with classroom practices. In doing so, this conference offers opportunities for collaboration and integration of knowledge from the domains of psychology, education, and academic development.

Place: University of Hong Kong

Date: 13 - 18 June 1998

Information: E-mail: mack@hkucc.hku.hk
<http://www.hku.hk/psychodp/conference>

3rd Pacific Rim Conference: First Year in Higher Education

Place: Auckland, New Zealand

Date: 5 - 8 July 1998

25th Annual HERDSA Conference

Theme: Transformation in Higher Education

Place: Auckland, New Zealand

Date: 7 - 10 July 1998

Information: Barry Williams, Centre for Continuing Education,
The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019,
Auckland, NZ
Email: b.williams@auckland.ac.nz
<http://www.cce.auckland.ac.nz/herdsa98>

10th International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education

Theme: Two purposes are: to promote awareness of current issues and perspectives on the assessment of quality in HE worldwide; and to provide presentations by leading exponents in a limited-enrolment environment designed to promote cross-cultural discussion and interaction.

Place: Penang Island, Malaysia

Date: 27 - 29 July, 1998

Information: Dr Chris deWinter Hebron
H+E Associates, 12a Church St,
Stiffkey, Norfolk NR231QJ, England
Fax: 44 - 1328 - 8303 39
Email: 106316.3622@compuserve.com

6th International Improving Student Learning Symposium

Theme: Improving Student Learning Outcomes

Place: University of Brighton, England

Date: 7th - 9th September 1998

Information: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development
Oxford Brookes University
Gipsy Lane, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP, England
Tel +44 (0) 1865 484620
Fax +44 (0) 1865 484622
Email: f.lam@brookes.ac.uk
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/>