



Holding On and Letting Go: Maintaining Good Teaching in Troubled Times

Jane Stein-Parbury

The central aim of this article is to stimulate thinking by presenting a perspective on maintaining the quality of teaching in the current higher education climate in Australia. As a committed teacher I have had the occasion to consider this view over a number of years. At risk of sounding naive or like a Pollyanna, I present an assessment that is hopeful, perhaps even upbeat, knowing full well of the fear and gloom that pervades Australian academia at present. One way to gain this positive spin, this optimistic outlook, is to carefully consider choices about what to "hold on" to while the current climate is forcing us to "let go" of some of previous practices. I begin by presenting a brief overview of the all too familiar challenges facing academics at present in relation to quality of activities directly related to teaching and learning.

The Current Climate

The words "cost" and "quality" capture the fundamental push in relation to teaching and learning in higher education at present. The pressure for greater quality of teaching and learning has never been greater, and the use of performance indicators, such as CEQ results, is well established. There are rumours of the possibility of a teaching quantum linked to performance indicators, along with continual reminders of limitations and reductions in available fiscal capital. The potential for the commodification of education looms, and is fuelled by a push toward a market driven delivery of higher educational services.

Enrolments in higher education have expanded dramatically in the past decade, while current government funding is contracting. Improvements in quality are easy to imagine and implement when there are plenty of fiscal resources. However, the juxtaposition of demands for increased quality and the contraction of finances creates tension. The push is to do better and more with less and less, along with other challenges in the Australian academic scene are converging to create a climate of crisis.

I carefully use the term crisis because of an understanding of human crisis that I have developed as a nurse and as an academic. Simply put, crises place demands on people that exceed their perceived abilities for meeting those demands. Demands that are unmet lead to increasing levels of anxiety, faulty and even harmful attempts to cope, along with disorganised and random attempts to problem-solve. If left unattended and/or unresolved such circumstances will lead to breaking point and something snaps, for example, a person's mental and physical health. Not a pleasant scenario, and one of the reasons that crises are commonly viewed as unpleasant and negative.

However, crises are not entirely pessimistic. Inherent in a crisis process is an impetus to grow and to learn. There are opportunities to meet the demands of the situation through developing new ways of coping. Crises offer prospects for mentally re-framing a situation, thinking about things differently, and developing new perspectives and alternative ways of knowing and being. The positive side of crises is clearly illustrated in the two characters that represent crisis in the Chinese language. One character depicts danger, the other opportunity. By its nature, successful resolution of a crisis results in new ways

Holding On and Letting Go: Maintaining Good Teaching in Troubled Times	1
From the President	2
From the Editor	3
In Search of graduate capabilities in Milwaukee: The Alverno College experiment	6
Tertiary Education Election Issues in New Zealand	8
New Honorary Life Members of HERDSA	10
News of HERDSA Life Members	11
HERDSA/ASET 2000 Conference	12
'Remembering and Knowing: the student learning experience	14
Postgraduates perspectives on Cornerstones, the HERDSA '99 Conference	16
Group Mentoring	19
Systematic Curriculum Design?	20
EIDOS Idea Dossier No.10	23
Teaching and Scholarship	25
Book Reviews	26
Research in Progress	28
Special Interest Groups	30
News of HERDSA Branches	33
Letters to the Editor	34

continued page 3

HERDSA Executive

President Angela Brew	NSW
Secretary Simon Barrie	NSW
Treasurer Barbara Black	WA
Guides Editor Kym Fraser	VIC
Journal Co-Editors	
Peter Ling, Elaine Martin, Mike Prosser	VIC
Newsletter Editor Roger Landbeck	QLD
Gillian Boulton-Lewis	QLD
Carol Bowle	QLD
Di Challis	VIC
John Dearn	ACT
Reynold Macpherson	NZ
Mary Melrose	NZ
Janice Orrell	SA
Alex Radloff	WA
Izabel Soliman	NSW

HERDSA Office

Administration Officer Coral Watson
Membership & Publications Officer
Heather Koch
PO Box 516, Jamison, ACT 2614, Australia
Phone +61 2 6253 4242
Fax +61 2 6253 4246
Email herdsa.office@effect.net.au
Website <http://www.herdsa.org.au>

HERDSA News

Editor Roger Landbeck
32 Monash Road, Tarragindi, Qld 4121
Phone +61 7 3848 0589
Fax +61 7 3892 5502
Email landbeck@ozemail.com.au
Editorial Committee
Christine Bruce & Linda Conrad
Issue Dates: April, July, November
Contributions for the next issue must reach the editor by Friday 17 March 2000. They should be sent to Roger Landbeck at the above address.
Research in Progress reports should be sent to coral.watson@effect.net.au.
Advertising rates. Full page \$300, half page \$150, quarter page \$75. Inserts \$80.
Views expressed in HERDSA News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of HERDSA. Written material from HERDSA News may be reproduced, providing its source is acknowledged.
Designed by Liz Wilson.
Printed by Instant Colour Press, Canberra.

From the President

Executive meetings

The Executive will be meeting in Sydney on 12th – 14th November. Items for discussion include the implications of the introduction of a GST for HERDSA finances, the possibility and the desirability of having different categories of membership, consideration of the current portfolio groupings and their effectiveness for the work we are currently doing and continuing discussions on the accreditation of university teachers.

One of the things the Executive Committee is coming to terms with is the fact that we are increasingly having to pay our way where previously institutions were able to foot the bill for our activities. So each of the six Executive portfolio groups has been preparing 'business plans'. This means that we are having to demonstrate when we want to do things on behalf of our members where the money is coming from to do it!

The Executive has set up a Web discussion forum to facilitate discussion between meetings. We shall be trying this out in the next few months.

The HERDSA Constitution and Incorporation in the ACT

In order to fulfill requirements for incorporation in the ACT (the site of the HERDSA Office) changes to the

Constitution are necessary. The Executive also wishes to use the opportunity in the revised Constitution to include recognition of indigenous cultures. Changes are currently being drafted and will be presented to members prior to the Annual General Meeting in July 2000.

New editors for HERDSA Occasional Publications

To fulfil the tasks previously undertaken by the Guides Editor Kym Fraser, and to have a little more flexibility in the types of publications produced in the future, the Executive has sought expressions of interest from people who would be editors of HERDSA Occasional Publications. At the November meeting, time is being allocated to an exploration of possible new types of publications for the Occasional Papers. The Executive would welcome your views on what these should be.

The minutes of the Executive meetings can be found in the member's section of the HERDSA Website at <http://www.herdsa.org.au>

Copies are also available on request from the HERDSA Office.

Angela Brew
HERDSA President

International Conference

Offshore Education & Training – Boom or Doom?

22-24 November 2000
Canberra Australia

Organised by Centre for Research in International Education/University of Canberra

Conference Web-site
www.canberra.edu.au/education/crie/offshore.html

Enquiries to: Offshore@con-sol.com

From the Editor

The Australian Government Green Paper on research in higher education, 'New Knowledge, New Opportunities,' has raised a series of questions and issues that go right to the heart of the nature of a university and the traditional role of an academic. Does it spell the end of the teaching-research nexus? Will some academics be no longer able to conduct research and spend most of their time teaching and what will the consequences of this on job satisfaction and on student learning? Will the developments result in the scholarship of teaching becoming better defined, practiced and then recognised by management? In the light of all these uncertainties it is good to read the article by Jane Stein-Parbury reminding us of what to

hold onto and what to let go so that we can maintain good teaching in troubled times.

There are those who see these times as exciting and challenging and others who have real concerns at what seems to be being lost. There is a danger that the two groups do not enter into discussion about the issues and, what is even more concerning, because of the pressures people are reluctant to take time to reflect and dialogue since they feel that such activities take valuable time away from the 'real tasks.' This issue has been taken up by Eidos in relation to academic staff development and also in the recent discussions on the ADSIG list.

In these crucial times it seems to me that HERDSA could play an important role, indeed it is well placed to do so. For example, in leading the discussion and producing position papers about the nature of scholarship in teaching and how it can be both encouraged and recognised. Another issue that could be explored, maybe through national seminars, is the

nature of the PhD degree, which must change, given the limited time for which students will be funded in the future.

Our New Zealand HERDSA colleagues have taken a lead in becoming politically involved by inviting party leaders to address a series of dinners for members to hear their various positions on higher Education leading up to the forthcoming general election. A report of the speeches is included in this edition.

We look back to the very successful Melbourne conference with a variety of reflections and reports and look forward to the conference next year. This will be a conference with a difference, as it is a joint conference with colleagues from the Australian Society of Educational Technology. We look forward to sharing ideas and experiences with them.

Finally congratulations to the three new HERDSA life members whose achievements we salute.

Roger Landbeck

Holding On and Letting Go

continued from page 1

of coping and the development of novel methods for meeting demands in future situations.

Another significant aspect of the climate in higher education today in Australia is the disempowering effect of the "crisis" on university staff members. It is not uncommon to hear of the ways in which academic staff members feel defeated and demoralised by funding cuts, lack of sources of new income, and increasing pressure to gain competitive research and development funding. These, coupled with the continual demands of keeping up to date with knowledge and contributing to the scholarly advancement of a discipline, result in enormous strain that is expressed through overwhelming feelings of frustration and powerlessness (not to mention the physical exhaustion of working harder and longer hours!).

Again, I draw on my understanding of disempowerment from my nursing background. Anybody who has been in need of health care can attest to the potentially disempowering nature of that experience. Disempowerment is not simply an individual matter of personal capability and authority. For example, hospitalised patients can be equipped with extensive knowledge of their health status (personal power), yet unable to exercise any influence because their knowledge is unrecognised or disregarded. Disempowerment frequently stems from structural or organisational arrangements that limit people's influence over what happens to them rather than from a lack of personal power. That is, personal power is strangled by systems that are disempowering. A critical aspect to the process of empowerment is the alteration of structural/organisational arrangements that enable people to exert influence and choice over matters that affect their lives.

Effects of the current climate on teaching and learning

The current climate in Australian higher education could easily create a situation whereby the importance of teaching may take a back seat to other endeavours. As Boyer (1990) points out in his timely call to rethink what it means to be a scholar, "teaching is often viewed as a routine function, tacked on, something almost anyone can do" (p 23). In laying claim that legitimacy should be made for the full scope of scholarship, Boyer explains the scholarship of teaching as the bridge between teachers' knowledge and students' understanding. He asserts that the scholarly work of the academic becomes "consequential only as it understood by others" (p 23).

Although Boyer's central thesis hinges on the need to move beyond the "tired debate" about teaching versus research, tough economic times and the need to do more and better with less can result in a devaluation of the scholarship of teaching. Academic activities that bring in fiscal capital through research

grants, development funding and consultancies may tend to assume higher status than teaching. While high scores on the good teaching scale of the CEQ may build good course reputations and serve to attract more students, the ability to count this in real fiscal terms is difficult.

In addition, teaching hours, as face to face contact with students, are often under threat as they are easily counted when tallying academic activities. It is tempting to reduce face-to-face teaching contact as a tangible way of demonstrating a reduction in cost. (I say so in full recognition and appreciation that that amount of time teachers spend with students does not directly equate with the depth or breadth of student learning.) Academics who pride themselves on their good teaching practices may be forced to consider "cutting corners" in an effort to save money.

Now what does this have to do with "holding on" and "letting go"? More importantly, what is the connection to the maintenance of good teaching practices in higher education? I propose that the core values that undergird good teaching are fundamental and that to which we must cling if we are to survive and thrive. Freely choosing the values and holding on to them creates a sense of empowerment for academic staff. Alongside this is "letting go" of past practices as we meet the challenges that are confronting us. Nevertheless, while the world is transforming in relation to how we do things, the values that anchor us as teachers need not, indeed I would argue should not, change. We must "hold on" while "letting go".

"Holding on" to values that underpin good teaching

No matter how varied the teaching practices, for example, face to face or electronic on-line interaction, or how much they change, for example, the movement toward flexible delivery of courses, there is a set of values that underpin good teaching. No matter if we teach engineering, physics or social science the values that are inherent in good teaching remain. Awareness of and focusing on these values enables us to plant our feet firmly on the ground, to hold tight, even while in the active process of changing what we do. It is the seeming paradox of holding on while simultaneously letting go.

What are the values that are deeply

embedded in good teaching? First and foremost a **passion for learning** reflects the value of interest in and inquiry about the world in general and one's discipline in specific. The passion for learning enables teachers to engage with students in sharing a journey of discovery. It is what enables good teachers to remain knowledgeable about developments in their field.

An effort to arouse the imagination and engage learners actively reflects a **concern** and **compassion** for students' experiences as learners. This compassion

"No matter if we teach engineering, physics or social science the values that are inherent in good teaching remain"

enables good teachers to relate effectively with students by understanding their concerns. However the main concern of the teacher is students' learning. A generosity of spirit with students, along with openness toward them and availability to them reflect an inherent **respect** for them as people and learners.

Teaching methods and practices that embody these values are both reflective and reflexive. Reflective in the way that any and all encounters with students are considered and assessed within a framework of the quality of learning. Reflexive in the sense that the relationship between student and teacher is based on shared control of learning and is focused on enabling the student to learn, not on demonstrating how much the teacher knows.

Reflective teachers seize every available opportunity to consider the quality of learning. For example, when assessing student's work care should be taken to consider whether the assessment methods are enabling students to demonstrate what they have learned. If students do not demonstrate adequate learning, then the first consideration should be an evaluation of the teaching methods. If students have not understood the subject matter then a new approach to teaching should be considered and undertaken.

Reflexive teaching makes an effort to meet students where they are before inviting them to embark on new ways of

thinking and being. Meeting them where they are is more than simply accounting for prior learning. It involves engaging with students in order to discover how they might link familiar ideas with new ones. It means that a teacher attempts to view the world through the eyes of students before attempting to extend or alter their conceptions.

"Holding on" to these values promotes empowerment. Evaluating processes and procedures for dealing with students in light of these values, promotes questioning of structural arrangements that disable students (an ourselves) from having legitimate voice in their own learning. Institutions that reflect these values are empowering places to be.

The core values presented here are evident throughout research work into good teaching (eg, as reported in Ramsden, 1992; Glassick, et al., 1997; Trigwell, et al., 1999, to name a few). The list of values is by no means exhaustive and is presented here as an impetus for considering other values. What are your core values in relation to the scholarship of teaching?

"Letting go"

The inevitability of change along with current forces in higher education means that teaching practices need to be altered. The push for flexible delivery and the use of information technology to enable learning are but two examples of innovations and alterations that abound at the moment. We are letting go of outdated and outmoded teaching practices that simply do not engage students or promote optimal learning. However, this entails letting go of ways of doing, not our ways of being, as the latter is a reflection of core values of good teaching.

Another obvious practice that needs to be let go is an attempt to constantly "cover the content" in an attempt to share with students all that we know. "Covering the content" leads to practices that are not engaging and usually not interactive. A move toward implementation of the sound processes of learning will assist in this endeavour, but first we must let go of a need to cover the content.

I also believe we need to let go of the notion that the only resources at our disposal are financial in nature. There are other resources that are human, such as, goodwill and empathy that abound in the light of good human interactions. Good teaching need not always drain the teacher's resources; not only can it

reward but also it can re-energise.

In conclusion

At the outset of this article I issued a warning that I may appear to be a bit of a Pollyanna in my approach. However, I find the opposite position to be disabling. As academics it is important that the pushes and pulls of the current system do not disempower us.

In thinking about this article I was reminded of the research work of Susan Kolbasa in the mid seventies. In her study (Kolbasa, 1979) she explored why some managers in a large public utility company remained healthy under stress of what some would say is an untenable position of being in middle management, while others became ill. Those who remained healthy were those whose orientation was termed "hardiness" by Kolbasa. The healthy managers were challenged by change, felt a sense of control and were committed to a core set of goals and values.

I am suggesting that we adopt the position of hardiness in meeting the

challenges of the current climate and seizing the available opportunities that a crisis situation presents. One way to do this is to "hold on" to the values of good teaching, as they are the values of scholarship. Holding on offers hope of maintaining a sense of wholeness and integrity in troubled times.

References

- Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Carnegie Foundation: Princeton, NJ.
- Glassick, C. Huber, M. & Maeroff, G. (1997). *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*. Jossey Bass: San Francisco.
- Kolbasa, S.C. (1979). Stressful life events, personality, and health: An inquiry into hardiness. *Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1-11.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*. Routledge: London

Trigwell, K., Prosser, M., & Waterhouse, F. (1999). Relations between teachers' approaches to teaching and students' approaches to learning. *Higher Education*, 37, 57-70.

Jane Stein-Parbury is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Health at the University of Technology, Sydney. She has been a recipient of a UTS award for excellence in teaching and is a Finalist in the 1999 Australian Awards for University teaching. She appears in the video series *Teaching Matters*, produced by the UTS Centre for Teaching and Learning and distributed internationally. She is best known in nursing for her textbook, *Patient and Person*.

Email contact:

Jane.Stein-Parbury@uts.edu.au

IMPRESSIONS '99

I asked several people who attended the Melbourne Conference to write brief impressions of the conference. These impressions are scattered throughout this issue. **Editor**

From a first time attendee Bill Richardson Melbourne

Having had a great time the previous week at a conference in my discipline, catching up with many people I knew from my dozen or so years in the discipline, it was with some trepidation that I arrived at my first ever HERDSA conference. But I soon felt amongst friends, or at least people who could talk with a passion about something interesting.

What can you say about such a variety of papers? Certainly one that gave a lot to think about was that by Tom Angelo on classroom research. How nice it would be to be able to discuss experiences and develop ideas for the classroom with more than one or two colleagues.... A Scholarship of Teaching? I'd like to see that in my department.

Bill Richardson is a lecturer in the Department of Accounting & Finance at the Caulfield Campus of Monash University.

Impressions '99 from a Nottingham Pom Liza Pybus

Unsurprisingly this was my first visit to a HERDSA conference and I hope it will not be my last. The atmosphere was friendly, helpful and honest. I felt quite at home with many of the issues discussed - it was strange to travel so far to hear the same cries of, 'not enough funding, too many in our classes and the Internet MUST have some of the answers'. I felt overwhelmed by the huge choice of papers but found many of the sessions I attended interesting and informative. Highlights for me were: finding out that Aussies share the same sense of humour (the debate was hilarious) and forging some links with Australian Universities that have already progressed, (in September Steve Barratt from Uni SA will be presenting at our Business School Teaching & Learning conference). Thank you for a memorable conference!

Liza Pybus is a Senior Lecturer in Information Systems at Nottingham Business School (Nottingham Trent University) who also works across the Business School encouraging teaching and learning initiatives.

In Search of Graduate Capabilities in Milwaukee: the Alverno College experiment

John Dearn

Milwaukee, home of Miller Genuine Draft and the Harley-Davidson, also happens to be the location of Alverno College - for some the holy grail of outcomes-based undergraduate education.

Outcomes-based education is not new, of course, but Alverno is unique in that it has pursued an abilities-based higher education curriculum in a way unmatched by most other institutions. Moreover, it has developed an approach to educational outcomes that avoids the narrow skills-based approach to competencies that most academics find inappropriate for a university education.

I had come across Alverno College in my reading many times over the years and a visit to the USA in June provided an opportunity to participate in their annual week-long *Assessment-as-Learning Workshop* which attracts a large number of people from around the world.

So, what is so special about Alverno? Its most notable feature is that the students systematically develop and demonstrate eight abilities which Alverno has deemed necessary if they are to be able to apply their knowledge or, as they express it, put knowledge to work:

- communication;
- analysis;
- problem solving;
- valuing in decision making;
- social interaction;
- global perspectives;
- effective citizenship; and
- aesthetic responsiveness.

Most universities have a set of generic skills similar to the Alverno abilities which they claim their students develop during their courses. What distinguishes Alverno is first, that the abilities are translated into the context of each discipline or professional area rather than being left in the typical generic skills form. Second, they are each described at six developmental levels which students must progress through during their course, giving the educational programs a strong developmental focus.

However, the social context that learning takes place in at Alverno is probably as important as the curriculum. It is small, about 2,000 undergraduates, though this is not atypical for the private liberal arts colleges that are found in the USA. It is also a women only institution, again a feature of some small private colleges and one that for many women provides a powerful learning environment. However, it would be wrong to characterise Alverno College as an elite institution. Despite being private, it attracts a high proportion of working class and mature age students from the local area and emphasises practical courses like nursing and business.

The small class sizes, high staff/student ratio, dedicated teaching-centred staff and an emphasis on liberal education and development of the whole person make it difficult to directly translate the Alverno approach to an Australian context. However, there are features of the Alverno model which could be implemented, at least in theory, at any institution:

- assessment is based on mastery learning with no grading;
- cumulative portfolios are developed and maintained by students over their entire course;
- curricula are structured around the eight abilities with explicit public assessment criteria; and
- external public assessments are conducted involving assessors from the local community.

More problematical, at least for traditional research orientated universities, is that as well as belonging to professional/discipline Departments the academic staff belong to one of eight Departments each focused on one of the Alverno abilities in order to ensure the integration of learning outcomes across the College.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of Alverno College is that its educational programs are based on a well thought through philosophy with a focus on assessment. Central to this philosophy is that knowledge and its application are inseparable and that the abilities that students develop are a complex integration of knowledge, attitudes, skills

and self-perceptions. There is a strong emphasis on communication, interpersonal skills and "performance" and certainly the students appeared extraordinarily articulate and self-assured. Not surprisingly Alverno graduates are very highly regarded.

Another feature of the educational approach is that feedback and self-assessment are central to learning. The academic staff facilitate learning by articulating explicit outcomes and criteria for successful performance and all assessment incorporates structured feedback and self-assessment. The emphasis put on students learning to self-assess their own work distinguishes Alverno from most other institutions.

Certainly the Alverno approach addresses many of the concerns commonly expressed about undergraduate education in Australia:

- the lack of development of a capacity for self-directed learning;
- the inability of many students to apply knowledge especially in new contexts;
- the lack of evidence about what students have actually learned;
- assessment that only addresses a narrow range of abilities; and
- fragmented academic programs that are not developmental or integrated.

What Alverno College has achieved is very impressive. If I have any reservations they would relate to the structured nature of the program, a view nurtured by spending time in the company of a group of refreshingly sceptical academics from the University of North London to whom the wholesome idealistic approach to American college education sat a little uneasily.

The highly integrated courses, compulsory class attendance and the assessment and self-assessment of everything students do are central to the developmental outcomes-based approach. Nevertheless, this somewhat behaviourist approach will undoubtedly sit uncomfortably with many university academics who would see a lack of student freedom and agency.

However, the concerns addressed by the Alverno program are widely shared in our universities in Australia and the Alverno approach, albeit it controlled, regulated and somewhat intrusive, challenges many of our own assumptions about higher education. When the alternative is students developing only a narrow range of abilities, unable to apply what they have learned and not developing that most central of abilities, the ability to be self-directed learners, then the Alverno model is worth a very close look.

While many of us pay lip service to the notion of graduate abilities and capabilities, Alverno College has gone ahead and ensured that their students develop them and has provided us with a model of what this type of educational experience might look like. It may not suit everybody but I am sure there are some students who would flourish under the nurturing environment provided by institutions like Alverno. It represents a marked contrast with what many students see as the increasingly alienating and lonely environments of our large universities.

Staff at Alverno College have put a lot of energy into researching their own approaches to education and producing a range of booklets and guides. Details of these can be found at their Web site:
www.alverno.edu/educators/e_publications.html.

John Dearn is Director of the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship at the University of Canberra and President of the ACT Branch of HERDSA.

4th Pacific Rim

FIRST YEAR IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE - "Creating Futures for a New Millennium" 6 - 7 July, 2000

This conference follows immediately after the HERDSA 2000 conference – with transport being arranged between the venues! A great opportunity to get maximum input for minimum cost.

Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

You are invited to attend this conference hosted by QUT to provide a forum to address a wide range of issues connected with First Year Students in Higher Education. Keynote speakers include

- Prof Charles Glassick - Senior Associate and Interim President of Carnegie Foundation, USA
- Prof Penelope Boumelha - Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) University of Adelaide
- Prof Ian Lowe - Professor of Science, Technology and Society, Griffith University
- Dr Sohail Inayatullah - UNESCO Chair, Centre for European Studies, University of Trier, Germany, Professor of Future Studies, IMC.

WORKSHOPS INCLUDE

- Certificate in Future Studies - Using Future Studies: methods and visions
- Working Effectively with International Students
- CSHE Research on First Year University Students, Doing more with less - managing yourself in a high stress environment
- Managing Transition from High School.

TOPICS INCLUDE

- Course design/concepts helping students to be more successful learners

- Attrition and progression - schemes and systems for monitoring and improving retention rates
- Developing community learning
- Responding to cultural diversity and internationalisation issues
- Orientation and bridging programs
- Counselling strategies and perspectives
- Teaching innovations examining issues related to academic's substance and excellence
- Peer mentoring and peer tutoring strategies
- Learning support strategies and language support programs
- Students' perspectives and students with special needs
- Summer school

Call for Papers closes 29 February 2000

A 10% discount is being offered to participants who attend both the HERDSA/ASET conference and this First Year in Higher Education conference.

For more information contact the conference Secretariat: Brett Coates, QUT

b.coates@qut.edu.au

Website:

<http://www.qut.edu.au/daa/asdu/fye/home.htm>

Tertiary Education Election

Issues in New Zealand Revealed

Reynold Macpherson

New Zealand is to hold its elections November 27. Mixed Member Proportional representation at the last election handed the balance of power to the 'minor' parties and ushered in a period of very unstable coalition politics. Predicting the outcomes of the coming election for New Zealand higher education is difficult.

HERDSA New Zealand recently held some dinner meetings in Auckland at which politicians from all parties were invited to explain their policies in higher education. The speeches revealed some common ground but also marked policy differences between current National Minister of Tertiary Education, Mr Max Bradford, and the Labour Opposition Spokesperson on Tertiary Education, Steve Maharey.

Both are concerned with the development of a system to deliver required outcomes but they differ on primary purposes to be served. Bradford seeks a system that will help to "sustain and improve prosperity". Maharey stresses people as the outcome, "people that can participate effectively in society and build the nation."

Both share a view that while New Zealand's traditional commodity base is failing, knowledge-based industries are growing and indicate the path forward. In the former case it is towards prosperity, in the latter case it is towards prosperity and a new social consensus. And while they agree that the Government, as the major funder, must reprofile outcomes to ensure the mix of skills required, they see the situation in tertiary education very differently.

Bradford holds that, in a greying nation, with a small economy in a global environment, TE is "central to economic re-engineering." Since market-only solutions are proving too slow at generating structural change in TE, "we will need to review governance." Above all, he notes, "silo thinking is preventing cross-sectoral synergies between

government, providers and business."

Maharey, in contrast, argues that the Government must "empower students' with choice", and give institutions incentives to reprofile. Quality will be, he says, "an obsession" with the incoming Labour government at the institutional level. He argues that cooperation is essential with economic and social objectives in mind. Hence the need to "invest in equity, provide pathways for Maori, and remove interest from student loans." He calls for "a return to the vision of Dr Beeby and Peter Fraser."

The differences become even more marked when they describe their key strategies. Bradford offers five steps to prosperity. Boost the knowledge base and capture intellectual property for NZ. Focus government research and development dollars on sectors that will return economic benefits. Encourage capital to help get innovative products to market. Reduce compliance costs on enterprise and entrepreneurs. Finally, transform social attitudes to risk taking and to success. These strategies are to replace the now-defunct White Paper, which proposed new national qualifications, quality assurance, governance, funding arrangements and capital charging, but which "did not go far enough."

Maharey has six strategic priorities. Establish strategic directions for the whole system. Empower students to make choices. Empower institutions to both cooperate and specialise. Establish a Tertiary Education Advisory Commission, alongside the Ministry of Education, to broaden the consultative base to policy proposals. Provide incentives for institutions to reprofile curricula and cut student costs, and for industry to invest in research. Finally, further massify access to tertiary education.

When questioned further, both Bradford and Maharey agreed that competition alone had provided inadequate governance in the tertiary sector. While Bradford promised

leadership that would further consult, refine proposals, and then purchase outcomes from TE to help generate prosperity, Maharey saw leadership as building confidence in policy and capacity in nation building. Both indicated substantial degrees of intervention.

Bradford claimed that the next National government would slow the over production of law and accountancy graduates. It would boost numbers in bio-science, technology and engineering. Only two universities would be funded for research at internationally competitive rates, with some centres of excellence. Such changes, he said, had been impeded by the current governance relationships. It was crucial, he said, to "remove unnatural constraints to competition in world economy." And at home, this "pluralistic nation needs a growth strategy and choice."

Maharey promised a new Tertiary Education Advisory Commission to boost nation building and help create a culture of policy debate, particularly that concerned with resource allocation. Instead of further competition between providers, participation would be targeted through banded enrolments and annually adjusted \$/EFTUs, incentives, and rolling plans. While EFTS would be split between teaching and research, all institutions teaching degrees would continue to get research dollars. Business would be encouraged to invest in tertiary education through research trusts, cooperative education, such as apprenticeships, and to 'wire' NZ.

The 'Minor' Party Platforms

Brian Donnelly, New Zealand First, Liz Gordon, Alliance, Tau Henare, Mauri Pacific, and Mike Steeneveld, ACT, clarified their tertiary education policies at another HERDSA dinner. Their differences could redirect national tertiary education policy, depending on post-election coalition arrangements.

All four want a system that better delivers required outcomes. They differ

sharply on the primary ends to be served and the best means. In essence, ACT wants tertiary education to boost prosperity and cater to individualism, and to be reorganised as a business system where outcomes are fully commodified and regulated by routing public investment through consumers. Mauri Pacific wants tertiary education to deliver outcomes favourable to the collective prosperity of Maori and Pacific Islanders, and argues for government support in the form of incentives for participation and joint ventures with business. New Zealand First wants the tertiary system to boost employment, exports and the quality of life in the provinces. It wants to adjust current

structures, encourage institutional rationalisation, and better target research. The Alliance wants to offer free tertiary education to boost the quality of life and nation building, and expects a National Commission will develop national policies that will value high technology, high skills, high pay and social capital.

The extent to which each of these sets of promises will be pressed successfully will, of course, depend entirely on the coalition arrangements reached after the election. And, since the policies of the two major parties have been clarified (*NZ Education Review* (p. 7, 10.9.99), the range of potential policy effects that will follow particular partnership arrangements can now be

mapped in broad terms. That task will have to be addressed elsewhere.

Reynold Macpherson is a professor and Director of the Centre for Professional Development at the University of Auckland. He was recently elected to the HERDSA Executive Committee.

NOTE Reynold supplied a very detailed report on the positions of the Minor Parties. Unfortunately for space reasons it had to be edited. However the full version is available on the HERDSA website.

Impressions '99 from Rosanna Breen, Oxford, UK

One of my most immediate impressions was of the underlying similarities of central concerns in HE in Australia to those in the UK. For example, of particular interest to me was the shared issue of the 'nexus' or 'link' postulated to exist (or by some, not to exist) between two central values in HE, those of teaching and of research. Interesting positions emerged, such as the idea that the pursuit of a link between these two concepts is not, in fact a valued goal for HE and that instead it is the link between research and learning with which we should concern ourselves. At the same time, parallel debates ensued as to what is meant by research, teaching and learning in the first place. Variation in definitions of the key terms used in this debate led me to think about my values in HE, how I would define them, and to consider the nature of the links between them.

Both socially and intellectually, I also felt a strong sense of openness from the delegates I met. This, coupled with the enthusiasm with which people discussed the nature of debate in HE research with me, helped to open up totally fresh perspectives on issues which it would simply not be possible to develop as a result of reading the literature alone. The way in which researchers from different research traditions were prepared to unite in the pursuit of the research question being discussed in a session, is a pervading example. It is my impression that much of the HE literature segregates people into 'camps' divided by their alliance to methodologies and philosophies. These boundaries, which I really do feel exist, were unofficially broken down for me at the conference as I discussed with others, the importance of advocating combined perspectives, as opposed to defending the merits of one perspective over another. Two research traditions that I think are particularly complementary in my research are those of phenomenography and cognitive psychology. As a result of the HERDSA conference I return to my studies with more confidence in their compatibility.

The winner of the 'new researcher' prize, Debra Herbert and I welcomed the opportunity that the sociable lunch-times provided to talk at length about where we see our individual niches in Higher Education being formed in relation to our evolving research questions. The 'new researcher' competition denoted the value of our journey by those further along in their careers in Higher Education. The public award of the prize to

Debra at the conference dinner served to enhance this message. Di Challis took further measures to ensure that new delegates were welcomed. Citing an unpleasant first-time experience of a HERDSA conference as her motive, a small, but effective innovation was the allocation of special name badges sporting Australian flags for new delegates accompanied by a strict message to all at the beginning of the conference that these people must not be ignored!

Lastly, the conference debate deserves a mention. The three-a-side debate comprised one team fighting for a radical approach to the future of HE and a second team arguing for the value of adaptation. It was unlike anything I had expected of a conference debate as it seemed to be more oriented around providing some good entertainment! Eloquence, lively enthusiasm and lots of elaborate metaphors, describes the presentation of their views. I surprised myself by voting for adaptation as opposed to radical change (although I'm still not sure how seriously I was meant to take it!).

Rosanna Breen is a PhD student in Psychology at Oxford Brookes University in the UK. She also conducts research into student learning for the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development; also within Oxford Brookes. Her specific research interests include the influence of disciplinary knowledge on undergraduate intellectual development and identity.



New Honorary Life members of HERDSA

It is a rare for the Society to confer Honorary Life Membership. The Constitution provides for the Executive to elect honorary life members from people who have made a distinguished contribution in teaching in higher education, in the study of learning, teaching and policy in higher education, or because they have served HERDSA well over a significant period. Honorary life members have voting rights but are not required to pay prescribed fees.

At the Annual Meeting of the Society, held during the Melbourne Conference, the outgoing President, Owen Hicks, conferred honorary life membership on Professor Ingrid Moses, Associate Professor Jackie Lublin and Associate Professor Peggy Nightingale. Their citations read as follows:

Professor Ingrid Moses



Honorary life membership is being conferred upon Professor Ingrid Moses, in recognition of her long and distinguished service to the Society and in recognition of her outstanding commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning and the quality of academic work in higher education. Ingrid served on the Executive for ten years, from 1981 to 1990, and convened the Conference of 1983. She was Secretary from 1982 to 1985 and editor of *Higher Education Research and Development*, the Society's journal, from 1986 to 1990.

Professor Moses' publication record in the field of higher education is nothing short of stunning. To note HERDSA contributions alone, she wrote *Green Guide No. 3 Supervising Postgraduates* in 1985, *Green Guide No. 9 Heading a Department* (with Ernest Roe) in 1989, edited *Research and Development in Higher Education Volume 6* in 1983 and edited *Higher Education in the Late Twentieth Century: Reflections on a Changing System. A Festschrift for Ernest Roe* in 1990. These publications are 'just the tip of the iceberg'.

While recognising HERDSA as a

very important professional home for her while working in academic development, Professor Moses has since moved into Senior Executive roles. She served as the first Chair of the Australian Government Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development, was Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Canberra, and currently holds the position of Vice-Chancellor of The University of New England. Internationally, Professor Moses has been re-elected for a second term as the Chair of the Council of the United Nations University, an institution developed in 1969 to promote international scholarly cooperation, undertake problem-oriented multidisciplinary research on urgent global concerns, and to strengthen research and training in developing countries.

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Society, to confer Life Membership on Professor Ingrid Moses.

Associate Professor Jackie Lublin



Honorary life membership is being conferred upon Associate Professor Jackie Lublin, particularly in recognition of her long and distinguished service to the Society. As one of the early members of the Society she served on the

Executive from 1973 to 1985. During this period she served as Secretary for two years, 1979 to 1980, and as President for four years, 1980 to 1983. She was convenor of the HERDSA Conference in Sydney in 1984 and editor of *Research and Development in Higher Education, Volume 7*. Her work for the Society also included active involvement the generation of policy submissions to bodies such as the Australian Commonwealth Tertiary Education. Her *Green Guide No. 6, Conducting Tutorials*, was published in 1987. It has proved to be one of the most popular of all the Green Guides and is still in demand both in Australasia and elsewhere.

As Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of Sydney, Associate Professor Lublin made a distinguished contribution to teaching and learning in higher education. In more recent years, her work to improve the quality of teaching in universities has been recognised through a range of consulting opportunities in Australian universities. She has encouraged HERDSA to give serious consideration to the issue of accreditation of university teachers, initially promoting discussion of the issues across the sector, then working on the preparation of a HERDSA discussion document. During a recent visit to the United Kingdom she monitored developments in this area on behalf of the Society. Most recently Jackie acted as a consultant for the Society, with a brief to prepare a strategy document outlining a way forward for the 'HERDSA recognition of courses for university teaching' initiative.

In my brief time as President of HERDSA, Jackie has been there quietly in the background, willing to provide advice and assistance and continually supportive of the primary purposes of the

Society. It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Society, to confer Life Membership on Associate Professor Jackie Lublin.

Associate Professor Peggy Nightingale

Honorary life membership is being conferred upon Associate Professor Peggy Nightingale, in recognition of her long and distinguished service to the Society and in recognition of her scholarship in teaching and learning in higher education. Peggy served on the Executive for a period totalling ten years, from 1984 to 1990 and then again from 1994 to 1997. From 1985 to 1990 she was editor of HERDSA News. In 1991 she became Editor of Occasional Papers for the Society, a position she carried for a number of years. Peggy held the position

of President of HERDSA from 1994 to 1997, a period during which the Society undertook a major revision of its Constitution and established an office in Canberra with a permanent staff.

As Director of the Professional Development Centre at The University of New South Wales, Associate Professor Nightingale made a distinguished contribution to teaching and learning in higher education. Peggy published in writing and also in audiotape, videotape and on-line. Her publications covered areas such as quality assurance in teaching and learning, gender issues in higher education, postgraduate student supervision and student assessment. In 1986 she contributed HERDSA *Green Guide No. 4. Improving Student Writing* and in 1994, *Green Guide No. 17 Considering Gender* (with Cathy Sohler).

More recently she led a Committee for the Advancement of University Teaching commissioned project resulting in the publication, with others, of *Assessing Learning in Universities* (1996). Her contribution to higher education was not restricted to Australia. Peggy contributed to a number of publications of the Staff and Educational Development Association in the United Kingdom and consulted and delivered workshops in many countries including New Zealand and South Africa.

It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Society, to confer Life Membership on Associate Professor Peggy Nightingale.

Owen Hicks

Dated this 14th day of July 1999.
President

News of HERDSA Life Members

John Powell

(President of HERDSA 1977-80)

Upon retiring early (thankfully) from UNSW in 1988 John had established a so far unbroken record as Acting Director of the Tertiary Education Research Centre. He has taught in a wide variety of institutions: Sunday School (three hours only), army education, The College of the Sea, primary school, technical college and five universities. His career provides a case study in re-training both on and between jobs. Originally trained to teach English and Horticulture he subsequently taught Irish educational history, experimental psychology, philosophy, sociology, comparative education and staff development programmes.

During the past decade he has been managing Deerubbin Press, a boutique publishing enterprise awaiting an acceptable take over from Rupert Murdoch, and running a local environmental group and an historical society. He is currently writing an autobiography.

His comment on the current state of higher education - 'The full catastrophe.'

Editors Note: A typical response from John, he has not lost his sense of humour. He says he still uses a steam-driven pen, good on him.

Ernest Roe

(President of HERDSA 1983-85)

Professor of Education, University of Papua New Guinea 1967-72; Professor & Director, Tertiary Education Institute, University of Queensland, 1973-85; Foundation Member of HERDSA, President, 1983-85, made life member in 1985; wrote (with Alan Prosser) in 1993, "HISTORY OF HERDSA'S FIRST 20 YEARS. Professor Emeritus since 1985.

Main research interests were role of libraries in education, evaluation of academic performance, departmental heads and chairs.

After retirement in 1985, the winding-down, finishing-off process took several years. But I now write autobiography (to inform and entertain my family) and fiction to amuse myself. I retain a keen interest in gardening, food and wine (no order of priority implied). I enjoy cryptic crosswords. I read a lot. I watch TV. I go to films and the theatre.

Marjorie and I moved to South Australia, next to the McLaren Vale Vineyards and 45 minutes' drive from Adelaide, in 1992. This was in response to persistent pressure from family - half our grandchildren are in Adelaide, the other half in Melbourne. We don't like S.A. winters, so spend most of June-August at Byron Bay.

I don't wish to comment on the current state of higher education in Australia, but ...my colleagues and I in our various institutions had a difficult time in trying to promote the improvement of academic performance; a few were receptive, most were indifferent, a few were hostile. Since I retired, accountability has become more respectable and much greater resources are devoted to it. On the other hand, the climate has become materialistic, dominated by money-saving and money-making to an extent I would not have enjoyed. Perhaps only a geriatric has the luxury of such views. But on the whole I'm glad I retired 14 years ago.

Ilma Brewer

Ilma spent most of her working life in the Department of Botany at the University of Sydney. Her research concerned the ecology of coastal areas of New South Wales and now at the age of 84 she is seeking to publish some of the quantitative analyses of vegetation from her D Sc thesis (degree awarded in 1942) and in comparing the change in floristic composition of particular sites in 1941 with the current flora.

In the area of teacher and learning Ilma is best known for her work in

establishing an audio-visual learning centre in the Botany Department at Sydney University, and she published several papers on the method she developed, known as SIMIG (Self - Instruction by Modules followed by Interaction among Groups during discussion). There were no lectures in the programme; students worked in carrels through a self paced audiotape with a study guide to lead them through each weekly programme combining theory with practical work. In the week following each program 8-10 students met with a tutor in a purpose built seminar room, with double projection

facilities for anatomy slide transparencies, on which interactive discussion was centred. Self assessment, using procedures designed specifically to test cognitive skills beyond recall and the development of problem solving skills were highly effective and were improved each year.

In 1985 Ilma published a book 'Learning More and Teaching Less' (SRHE & NFER-Nelson, Guildford, Surrey) which would, given the present situation, bear a close examination. It seems that many of her ideas were ahead of her time.

On the current state of higher education she notes with satisfaction that interactive teaching and learning has been embraced by the Botany School at Sydney University for the last thirty years.

Two life members remain to be featured in HERDSA News, Don Anderson and Ian Dunn (long time treasurer of HERDSA), but so far I have been unable to get them to send me their stories. Would someone like to try persuading them?! Editor.

HERDSA/ASET 2000 Conference

The Year 2000 conference of HERDSA is being organised in association with the Australian Society for Educational Technology (ASET). The conference will be held at the campus of the University of Southern Queensland in the beautiful garden city of Toowoomba on the edge of the Darling Downs. The campus with its residential accommodation and great facilities, with nearby hotels and motels for those who do not want to stay on campus, is ideally suited to our purposes, and is easily accessible from Brisbane Airport by regular bus services.

The conference will begin in the afternoon of Sunday 2nd July 2000 and end in the early afternoon of Wednesday 5th July.

This timing will permit delegates who wish to attend both the ASET/HERDSA 2000 Conference and the Pacific Rim Conference to be held in Brisbane beginning on the evening of Wednesday 5th July to attend both events.

The conference will be based around the theme: **Flexible learning for a**

Flexible society and this theme will embrace four strands:

- Changing learning contexts
- Changes in the workplace
- Supporting change
- Changing research paradigms

As educators we are continually required to be flexible and respond to change in new and dynamic ways. Flexible teaching and flexible learning have become the mantra of the educational community. In this conference we will examine new conceptualisations of flexibility in relation to the myriad of educational contexts which exist in our society. Participants will have opportunities to explore and discuss the challenges of change from a variety of perspectives, in four strands that reflect different dimensions of change, all of which are important for education, as we enter the first year of the new millennium.

In *changing learning contexts* we will reflect on the ways in which students, teachers and curricula have changed in terms of aspects such as the impact of new information technologies, location, time and the characteristics of students.

Changes in the workplace will look

beyond schools and universities to the locations where we, as members of society, make a unique contribution to lifelong learning and the well being of the nation in a variety of ways.

In a climate of change we need to be aware of ways in which *supporting change* will benefit all stakeholders. This strand will explore strategies to support change from a personal to the systemic level.

Finally, our decision making should be informed by high quality research that links theory to practice. This will require new ideas and *changing research paradigms* that will assist us to reconceptualise practice and develop more effective teaching and learning strategies.

Each of the strands will include, but are not limited to the following topics:

A fascinating array of keynote speakers has been approached, but further information on their identities will have to await their approval! It is guaranteed that they will be interesting, provocative, informed and fun!

Papers will be due with the programs and publications committees by the end of February 2000. This date will enable us all to enjoy a well earned Christmas

Changing learning contexts	Changes in the workplace	Supporting Change	Changing research paradigms
• New environments for learning • Virtual institutions/classrooms • Characteristics of teachers/learners • Teaching and learning contexts/strategies • Authentic activity/tasks • Roles and responsibilities of teacher & learners • Student/teacher roles & interactions • Diversity of students • Harnessing new technologies to improve the quality of education	• New skills for new work • Life long learning • Redefinition of role of work/worker • New forms of communication • Focus on collaborations for learning • New information technologies • Outcomes based performance evaluation • Digital & non text information • Development of industry/education partnerships	• Staff development • Preparing students for the new millennium • Extension of graduate outcomes • Innovations in teaching to support learning • Personal development and change • Creating partnerships for learning • Understanding the Information Society • Changing curricula • Adapting assessment techniques • Models for successful programs	• New research methodologies • Investigations of impact of teaching and learning in context • Role of technology • Investigations of students lives as full time/part time on site/remote • Policy for change • Investigating classroom/home and workplace learning • Linking learning institutions – national/international

break while the technology gurus in our institutions sort out any Y2K problems which may occur. This is in keeping with the theme of flexibility in learning and society.

To ensure that you are on the list to receive a flyer and/or the web address for registration, please email your request to Joy Pugh at University of Southern Queensland on pugh@usq.edu.au

The organising committee here in Brisbane looks forward to welcoming you all to Toowoomba in July 2000, Far from the Madding Crowd!

John Lidstone

on behalf of the Organising Committee

ASET

For HERDSA members unfamiliar with ASET the following information has been retrieved from their web site (<http://cleo.murdoch.edu.au/gen/aset/>)

ASET commenced in April 1975 in Adelaide and has grown to become a national organisation with chapters in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. There

are also many members in other states and overseas.

The objects of the Society are:

- To foster thought, theory, research and standards of practice in the field of educational technology.
- To provide leadership in promoting the principles and practices of educational technology, its application and outcomes in various educational and training environments.
- To provide for a fellowship of persons with interests in educational technology and a forum to exchange, question and promote ideas or practices within the field of educational technology.
- To act as a clearing house for the collection and dissemination of information, ideas and research into educational technology.
- To support the publication of materials.
- To co-operate with international, interstate and local bodies with similar objects to those of the Society.

Journal

The Australian Journal of Educational Technology (AJET) is published twice a year. AJET includes refereed items and papers covering the application, policy and theory of educational technology. The journal also highlights issues which can be shared among colleagues to increase their understanding of how communications and information technologies can be used in learning. AJET is available online and in major research libraries across Australia.

Email List edtech-aus

Edtech-aus provides a forum for discussion and the exchange of information by people who are professionally interested in educational technology and related areas. To subscribe to the list email the following message from your normal email handler:

To: majordomo@cleo.murdoch.edu.au

Subject: (leave empty)

Text: subscribe edtech-aus

Best Paper by a New Researcher 1999

'Remembering and Knowing: the student learning experience'.

In 1999 HERDSA established a prize to be awarded to the author of the best paper by a new researcher at the annual conference. The first winner was Debra Herbert. The editor asked her to write an account of her research for the News.

I am a postgraduate student and tutor in the School of Psychology at the University of Queensland. I am currently writing my PhD thesis, which examines the student learning experience from both cognitive psychological and educational perspectives, and adopts a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods. In my session at the 1999 HERDSA Annual International Conference, I presented a paper entitled **'Remembering and knowing: The student learning experience'**. This paper comprised three studies conducted as part of my PhD research. In this report, I will provide a brief overview of this research.

To begin with a quote; after presenting his theory of memory systems and memory awareness, Endul Tulving (1985) stated, "...understanding consciousness...its role in human intelligence and in human affairs, can only come...at the end of a very long scientific journey. What I have tried to do...is to discuss some of the steps with which the journey might begin." What I have attempted to do in my research is to continue this journey by applying Tulving's ideas to the naturalistic setting of university learning.

My work has been driven primarily by a recent paper by Martin Conway and his colleagues in the UK (1997), which examined student learning in the university context using theory from cognitive psychology, in particular, that of Tulving's. They propose that when new knowledge is acquired, memory is initially represented in a way that supports recollection of the specific learning episodes (e.g., a lecture). As learning proceeds, the underlying memory representations may change so that they no longer primarily involve recollective experiences, but instead are so highly familiar that they are simply 'known'. This process reflects a shift from students predominantly using

episodic memory to then using semantic memory, which is shown through the investigation of the memory awareness experienced when students are required to recall information. 'Remember' awareness is linked to the episodic memory system, and 'just know' awareness is linked to the semantic memory system. This shift from remembering to knowing is also proposed to reflect the process of schematisation of knowledge.

I extended this work in three major ways. First, while Conway et al. proposed that the shift from use of episodic memory to use of semantic memory follows the process of schematisation, there was no direct measure made of the students' schematisation. To address this issue, I included with multi-choice questions and memory awareness judgements, a short answer question that was coded qualitatively using the SOLO taxonomy, developed by John Biggs and Kevin Collis (1982) to measure the quality of student learning from tests requiring understanding of meaning.

Second, as the amount of 'remembering' and 'knowing' experienced by students may reflect the level of learning they achieve, this relationship was further investigated through examining students' approaches to learning which are suggested to reflect either good or poor quality of learning. This was conducted using the Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) developed by John Biggs (1987) which assesses three approaches to learning; surface, deep and achieving. The surface approach is described as being based on extrinsic motivation, where study is viewed as a means to an end and students tend to limit their work to the essentials, such as rote learning selected details. Conversely, the deep approach is based on intrinsic interest in the subject matter and students tend to focus on the meaning of the material in order to maximize their understanding. Like the surface approach, the achieving approach is also based on extrinsic motivation. However, these students tend to compete for high grades, and are

focussed on organising time, work space, and coverage of course material in the most efficient way.

Finally, in order to fully explore the ideas proposed by Conway et al, it was considered important to investigate learning from the students' perspective. For example, if when new knowledge is acquired, memory is initially represented in a way that supports recollection of the specific learning episodes, do students really 'remember' particular learning episodes (e.g., from a lecture)? If so, what kind of episodes do they remember, and do these recollections actually help students in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the material? These issues were explored in a series of student interviews, in small groups of about 4 to 6 students, which followed a similar qualitative approach used by researchers such as Paul Ramsden and Ference Marton (in Marton, Hounsell & Entwistle, 1997).

The studies I have conducted have supported the ideas proposed by Conway and colleagues, that students are more likely to perform well in examinations and have a higher quality of learning (as indicated by SOLO level) if they initially 'remember' more from lectures, but then 'know' more later in the learning process. This pattern is more pronounced for higher achieving students and is also affected by the type of course or material. For example, students in introductory courses that were content focussed and covered many different topics tended to take longer to make the shift and it was less distinct. Conversely, students in courses with a more practical orientation, focussing on one or few major knowledge domains, tended to make the shift more quickly and it was more pronounced.

While not conclusive, the patterns that emerged from analysis of the students' SPQ responses, indicated that students using a surface learning approach were less likely to perform well on examinations, experience 'know' awareness, or have accurate recall when 'remember' awareness was experienced. However, students using a deep learning approach were more likely to perform

well on examinations, experience 'remember' awareness and have accurate recall of material when experiencing 'remember' awareness. Finally, students using an achieving approach to learning were more likely to perform well in examinations, experience 'remember' awareness and have accurate 'know' awareness. These results are consistent with the logic behind the surface, deep and achieving approaches to learning, whereby the surface approach is indicative of poor learning outcomes, but the deep and achieving approaches tend to lead to good learning outcomes.

What is perhaps most interesting in terms of teaching are the findings from the student interview study, particularly when considering 'flexible delivery', and the move away from more traditional learning formats in tertiary education. Apart from relevant and interesting examples, students saw personal interactions between themselves and the lecturers as not only memorable but also helpful in developing a deeper understanding for the material presented to them. For example;

...you know the lecturer who just studies the brain, which is really boring, but his lectures are really interesting with the case studies he uses.

I'm doing a political ideology subject for government and I think if you can come out of that lecture arguing with the guy next to you over an ideology then I think we've both learnt something about it and I'm more likely to remember it than if I'd come out after just taking down lecture notes for an hour or two!

Students also reported that a lecturer could invoke interest and inspire them to gain knowledge and understanding if that lecturer showed his or her own interest in the subject and shared personal experiences with the class. For example;

The...lecturer can inspire you to learn...having an admiration for them and their knowledge...like, yes, I want to know that, to do that.

So, if episodic memory is important in learning, particularly in the early stages of schematisation, then it may be desirable to encourage all students to 'remember' more and hence, students may also be likely to 'know' more in the future. It seems that experiencing to-be-learned material presented in a novel, interesting and personally meaningful way is not only going to enhance episodic memory for the material but also the student's learning. Furthermore, the change in these memory representations from being episodic to semantic in nature will most likely be encouraged if students have a deep and strategic approach, rather than a surface approach to learning. As Vivien Hodgson notes in her report in the book "The Experience of Learning" (1997), the vicarious experience of relevance that students may encounter through the lecturer's own interest and personal experience can create a shift in their approach to learning, from being surface oriented and extrinsically motivated to being deep oriented and intrinsically motivated. Surely this is a change all educators would value, and view as an important goal for their students.

References

- Biggs, J. B. (1987). *Student approaches to learning and studying*. Hawthorn, Vic: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Biggs, J.B. & Collis, K.F. (1982). *Evaluating the quality of learning: The SOLO taxonomy*. New York: Academic Press.
- Conway, M.A., Gardiner, J.M., Perfect, T.J., Anderson, S.J., & Cohen, G.M. (1997). Changes in memory awareness during learning: The acquisition of knowledge by psychology undergraduates. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 126, 393 – 413.
- Marton, F., Hounsell, D., & Entwistle, N.J. (Eds.) (1997). *The experience of learning*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press.
- Tulving, E. (1985). Memory and Consciousness. *Canadian Psychology*, 26, 1-12.

Contact details:

Debra Herbert, c/- School of Psychology, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, 4072.
Ph. (07) 3365 6723,
email: debra@psy.uq.edu.au

**HERDSA now has
its very own website address:**

<http://www.herdsa.org.au>

The previous address will still get you to HERDSA's website.



Postgraduates perspectives on Cornerstones, the HERDSA '99 Conference.

At each annual conference HERDSA provides two scholarships to enable postgraduate students to attend the conference and give a paper. Afterwards the students are invited to write an account of their experiences for HERDSA News. This year the awards went to Peter Hosie, from the University of Western Australia and Melanie Purcell, from the University of Newcastle. These are their accounts.

Peter Hosie

There was certainly ample space and structure for provocative thinking (surely education's most fundamental competitive advantage) at HERDSA's pre-millennium edugabfest. In the last issue of the *HERDSA News*, Peter Karmel observes that 'recent trends in public policy have placed emphasis on market solutions and the minimisation of government expenditure.' Not surprisingly, the lack of funding for higher education took centre stage at *Cornerstone*. Presenters were pre-occupied with the **Dark Forces** at work in government (economic rationalisers) who should be gravitating towards the **Light** (noble educators). This post-modernist duel has placed higher education in rather a 'tight corner'

But what can be done to combat the fiscal demise in education? For mine the answer is to take the fight up to the Force of Darkness. Quite simply the only language an economic rationaliser will respect is based on finance. During the 1996/7 financial year Australian higher education generated \$3.18b in export revenue for the Australian economy, 8th behind bauxite.

Why would any right-minded economist seek to undermine such a "good little earner" by indiscriminately slashing its funding? Even a Canberra-based mental midget will appreciate that denying the educational enterprise the very funding that is responsible for developing an exportable service is counter-productive. So put up you dugs. No longer is it acceptable to use this

revenue to subsidise the local higher education. We deserve more of the action as reward for such exceptional economic performance! This will be achieved by turning the Darth Vader's dark energy back onto Empire. Ultimately, Light must triumph over Darkness. But *who will emerge as higher education's Luke Skywalker* (aka Sir Lancelot)?

My paper, prepared with Tim Mazzarol, was entitled 'Should Australia and New Zealand be competitors or allies in marketing international higher education?' and considered the strategic marketing issues in international higher education. Traditional allies in many aspects of international activity Australia and New Zealand have begun competing to attract overseas students. Australia's international education industry has grown substantially since the mid-1980's and is now a significant generator of export revenues. New Zealand has entered this industry somewhat later than Australia, but is moving to increase its market share.

The international education market may be maturing and competition for students will become increasingly tense. Australian and New Zealand higher education institutions have no significant differences between their marketing orientations. New Zealand institutions appear to lag behind their Australian counterparts in terms of market share and degree of forward integration. A question also exists over whether the two countries should view each other as competitors. Some prospects for future cooperation between the two countries were examined.

You can read the rest of the paper on the HERDSA website

Peter Hosie is a doctoral candidate at The University of Western Australia's Graduate School of Management. He is investigating the relationships between perceptions of managers' performance and their job-related affective well-being.

Contact address hosie@ecel.uwa.edu.au

Melanie Purcell

As a recipient of the HERDSA post graduate scholarship, I was honoured to attend what was really a remarkable conference. In the present climate of political and economic "rationalism" we find perhaps the most destructive deconstruction of social resources occurring nationally for some time. Ironically this process of "rationalism" seen through the eyes of a predominantly materialist culture is blinded by the philosophical constructs from which it acts, rendering it inept at predicting future outcomes and impotent at tackling the fundamental issues that are intensifying the stresses that society is affected by. Education is not only one of the most affected of social structures, but I would suggest the most important social structure concerning the future of this country and its place within the global environment that surrounds us.

One of the most focussed issues expressed at this conference, was the need to address the macro issues that generate what has become a completely stressed environment for employees and a dysfunctional environment for students.

The three keynote speakers opened each day of the conference with striking and heartening information and attitudes, poignant ideas that are tools for consideration and illuminations concerning the very imperatives needed to allow this transformative period that is fraught with deep complexities and difficult constraints, the room to recreate itself anew.

Peter Coaldrake suggested that universities are leaving the twentieth century with a "crisis of identity". The decay of such ideals as the "dedication to the pursuit, preservation and dissemination of disciplinary knowledge" where universities were once led by academic scholars that are "free from external interference" has meant that whilst politicians recognise the need for mass public education, they have not realised that without such ideals being upheld, the quality of education is reduced.

The transformations that have occurred globally particularly with

information technology have vastly affected universities and the reduction of funds have caused great stress amongst academics who have had to bare the brunt of pressures caused by such issues as over enrolment, understaffing and lack of funding. The trend toward management of universities as businesses where such language as client or consumer identifies the student, and product identifies a skilled individual who is capable of tasks required by whatever environment is vocationally considered, are areas considered as apparent shifts in the current temper of institutions. The influences from the local environment, from industries and businesses and the potential for corporate sponsorship are similarly considered as aspects of the changing face of the institution.

Due to these more global trends and shifts in the nature and perception of work and information generation, Coaldrake considers that academic work has become "more complex and fragmented and resources and status have been shifting from full-time academic staff to the broader university community" and calls for "diversity in institutions and research in areas concerning alternative career and employment models".

In summary Coaldrake considers the need for a "reconceptualisation of what comprises academic work, allowing and supporting the traditional notions of freedom to pursue development of knowledge within disciplinary frameworks, but also giving prominence to the formation of partnerships among academics and the outside world".

The second Keynote speaker, Ference Marton, the founder of phenomenography, discussed what he considered to be primary aspects of university learning and teaching. He suggested that the paradox of all formal education is that educators are preparing learners for the future which is increasingly unknown, with instruments that are well known. Using what is known to prepare for what is unknown reveals a paradox central to the contemporary problems of our rapidly changing world. Ference argues that we do not realise the identity of an object through an understanding of all things that are the same as the object. It is only through the comparison of different things that identity is revealed.

He used an example from anthropological research and recounted a story about an Egyptian village where all of its inhabitants suffered from the same stomach parasite. As there were no examples of individuals who did not have

the parasite, the villages were not aware that there was anything wrong with them. It is only through difference that the identity of an object may be known. In this respect, and drawing from a Gestalt shift between figure and ground Marton reveals that underlying reality is the entanglement of opposites that complement each other by providing extreme relationships of difference. In this way the dynamics of learning and teaching become entangled, differences being as important to the identity of an object as are the similarities. To know something is to know what it is not as much as what it is and therefore to enable the discernment of something is to provide an environment where it is revealed through its absence.

The last of the keynote speakers, Veronica Brady, stressed that the 'engine' of higher education is in danger of breaking down and is in need of some "new dynamic that goes beyond mere economics", and like Coaldrake, suggests that it requires a new sense of what the tradition of learning has been and needs to be in the future. In a similar way to Marton's notion of the figure and ground, she suggested that it is often what is considered completely useless today that will be remarkable in the future and with this in mind, careful assessment is needed before moves are made that destroy environments of learning that are perhaps considered unproductive or inconsequential.

It is often considered that the humanities provide knowledge that is of little use in a world driven by corporate business and vocational persuasions. The creative arts in this materialist society of ours is reduced to a mere leisure activity that is considered unable to provide critical insights into the world that we are involved with. Such dangerous intimations are born out of a hierarchical structure that judges the knowledge bases that are predominant in our institutions with their effective current use, through the eyes of a paradigm that has suffered serious critique over that past twenty years but remains persistently clinging through that which has invested in it. Through this hierarchical perception we find scientific and technological environments being given priority over others and complex issues being raised through the comparison of fields like creative arts with mathematics. Such comparisons are ridiculous as there can be no way to judge the importance of a play in comparison to a scientific report. The social effects of each can not be determined accurately and depend upon a

complex set of criteria. One discussion concerning critical thinking explored the variety of approaches and material necessitated by the diversity of disciplines.

We are undoubtedly aware of the lasting effect that Shakespeare has on humanity. We are also aware of how fashionable scientific theories can be, and if we consider the amassing of theoretical criticism concerning the 'house of cards' that science is built upon (John Horgans, "The End Of Science" and the fifteenth Nobel Conference proceedings of the same name come to mind as well as the work of many of the postmodern and feminist theorists) we must tread with caution in this present climate of revision and transformation.

Certainly Veronica Brady emphasised such caution being necessary. She also suggested as did Marton the need to address problems of difference. How does one deal with cultural difference in a hierarchical structure? How does one attempt to embrace the spiritual practices of indigenous peoples when they are so different from the token religiosity that reveals an absence of deeply spiritual values in our society at large.

Veronica suggested that perhaps an exploration of philosophical thought would provide us with more tools for dealing with the various problems that this society has thrown up and she pointed to a lighthouse paper given by Lee Andresen, concerning the work of Harvard historian and theologian, Thomas Berry. The main emphasis of this paper was that there is no way that the complex array of problems concerning institutions that face us today can be addressed successfully unless the fundamental macro problems concerning the contemporary situation that humans find themselves in on this planet are faced.

Calling for "the most radical reform ever proposed in the history of western universities" Andresen focuses upon Berry's conception of earth ethics, that "challenge fundamental assumptions about planetary existence, that human and other life forms are distinct, non-continuous; that everything exists solely for humanity; that ethics addresses human welfare alone." Heavily criticising the Western supremacist, colonialist, materialist perception of reality, western institutions are described as "Complicit in moral autism... [due to] blind anthropocentrism [that] threatens planetary survival"

Andresen suggests that universities must be prime movers in deep, far-

reaching cultural reconstruction. This would not only grossly effect all curriculums taught in all institutions, but would effect the entire structure of institutional relationships with business and local industry, from a position of compliance to that of ethical persuasion and positive influence. We would be working not from a hierarchical structure of judgement, dominance, and supremacy, but would look towards a structure that was more cyclic in orientation. This allows for difference to be considered from the perspective's of cultural, environmental, religious, social, temporal and geographical influences. This shift may well influence the necessary ability to reconcile oppositional cosmology's as apparent between the Indigenous panpsychic perceptions of reality and the Western materialist perspective. This was the topic of my own paper which fortuitously followed Andresen's.

As an example of an area that often seems devoid of any practical application, I put forward a thesis concerning a strange mathematical topology that exhibits paradoxical associations such as being single sided and therefore having a surface that is continuously both inside and outside the structure. It is a Klein Bottle. The reason for presenting such an obscure shape is that contrary to hierarchical structures that see importance given to environments judged of greater value than others, the Klein Bottle presents no such distinction but reveals extreme difference to be simply another environment of the whole. *There is no exclusive domain which marginalises that which does not fit the decided criteria. It is not based on a linear progression of value judgements.*

Locating the history of this shape in many cultural and religious contexts through a variety of methods I have shown evidence of its use as an archetypal symbol concerning the spirit of the universe, Jung's Mercurious, and processes of manifestation. This research not only suggests that there is a need for transdisciplinary approaches to research, but that our perception of the contemplative traditions and of cultures that believe in a panpsychic reality needs to be revised. Through the comparison between indigenous/ panpsychic and ancient cultures, with that of the prevailing dominant perception of reality,

I show that a re-enchantment of science (to use a phrase of David Ray Griffin), based upon the "Bohmian", holographic paradigm, is necessary to allow for a holistic cosmology of our world and universe that is not in conflict with all other traditional, ancient, and indigenous perceptions of reality.

Many papers called for an attempt to address problems of cultural difference and some concerned themselves with problems of gender. The issue at task here is predominantly the reconciliation of opposites and addressing the hierarchical structures of patriarchal, supremacist persuasions that marginalise difference based upon value judgements that rely upon a monist physicalist perception of reality. The question which really effects the entire fabric of our contemporary reality, is whether or not we concede to a perception that sits purely within a dimensional reality of physical materialism, or do we open our hearts to the variety of vibrational frequencies that sound out the music of the spheres and unify the physical and spiritual as antithetical aspects of a single grand entity that is paradoxically one and all, monist and pluralist. An infinitude of dynamic oppositions that express the diversity of this extraordinary fractalisation of all that is in the complexity of our world, our universe, and the universe of our minds, where matter and spirit are entanglements of different vibrational frequencies.

One thing that struck a resonating chord in me whilst I sat in on various papers was the very linguistic associations of the word university. We are dealing with universes, the universe of ones mind and its potential interconnection (panpsychically speaking) with the universes (or mind) of all other particles (and conglomerations there of, a very Leibnizian perspective). Universes within universes, an infinity of fractionalisations the detail of which is phenomenal (our contemporary cosmology identifies such physical realities as stars giving birth to new universes all the time, and on the quantum level we are still searching for the smallest particle, paradoxically chasing the infinite to see whether it exists!) We are dealing also with cities. Cities of thoughts and similarities and dialogues that coalesce to become organisms of their own design as the

knowledge replicates and gives birth to new memes and new cities, disciplines and thoughts.

We are all engaged in the many/ uni voices /verses. The many voices are the infinitely different perspectives that each one us bring to illuminate the picture of the whole that we are forming. We cannot exclude any part of that picture or make grand assumptions that spirit is not real or that we can really be objective and removed from things as if we are dead (if there is such a state?) and rotted and not transmitting the odours and effects of our perceptions!

The university, a city of many voices, a universe of infinite minds, is an environment where learning should not be constrained by prejudice of any description, be it cultural, social, religious, creative or philosophical. Perhaps our heresies have persisted for reasons beyond rationality. We need to embrace that which has been marginalised from our exclusive domains and explore the otherness that we have avoided, a choice that has caused us to flounder in our attempts to know the whole picture of our reality. Until then, we have little chance of knowing all we can of the Ultimate Reality that we are involved with, or of changing anything at all. We would remain in the "Faustian" dilemma from where we now stand, destroying our world as we seek to know it.

Note. Melanie's paper 'Imperatives for unbiased holistic education' can also be found on the web.

Melanie Purcell is a PhD student in the Philosophy Department, University of Newcastle. Her general focus concerns the reconciliation of opposites and the principle of complementarity which has taken her into such diverse areas as quantum physics, comparative religion, esoteric spirituality, alchemy, Jungian psychology anthropology and comparative cosmology. As a consequence of this project she has become very interested in the limitations that are currently experienced in universities and the need for an opening up of transdisciplinary environments.

Contact address:

plmcp@alinga.newcastle.edu.au

Group Mentoring

Valerie Clifford

I had been an academic of one sort or another, on and off, for twenty years, and in this incarnation, full-time for ten years. I was still trudging up the, then thirteen point lecturer's scale. I was well into my forties. One day my new boss asked me about my career plan. Where did I see myself in five years time? I cringe now at the typical 'female' reply I gave him, that I was pleased to have a job and had inadvertently given up my career sixteen years previously when I gave up my tenured lectureship in Sociology to follow my husband's career. Well, it took very little mentoring for me to start thinking and seeing things around me in a different light and that strategic plans were not just something for institutions. It was about time I got on planning my own life and being strategic about it! Seven years later I am about to take up an Associate Professor post running my own centre.

Successful mentoring stories such as this abound but their main characteristic is that they are informal, chance relationships. Formal mentoring programs, where people are paired by program co-ordinators, have been shown to less successful. Sixty percent of such relationships failing for a myriad of reasons: incompatibility; little training; lack of clarity of purpose of the relationship; lack of time commitment; dependency etc. When you add gender into the equation the situation is even more gloomy. There are few senior women in universities to mentor junior women and cross-gender mentoring means that women are being mentored into the male culture and that sexual tensions, in one guise or another, have to be sorted out.

Over the last few years there has been a ground swell of demand for mentors from women in universities as they see their male colleagues receiving mentoring and advancement. Studies show clearly that men get encouraged to do research, join project teams, apply for grants, attend conferences, apply for promotion and study leave and many women do not. I have tapped a few, already overburdened, senior women on the shoulder

and asked them to become mentors, provided them with what little support I could, and encouraged them to meet together and support each other, but this was not enough. The model of group mentoring became more and more appealing as the request list got longer.

At the University of Canberra an enthusiastic Equity Committee agreed to meet half the cost of a Group Mentoring Program for Women, with the faculties funding the other half. Six facilitators received two days training and then ran a three day residential workshop with the 36 women recruited to the Program. Three groups settled down to meet fortnightly with co-facilitators establishing the groups and the group process. A Management Group oversaw policy and organisational matters and a Project Co-ordinator (10 hours a week) attended to daily business.

At the end of our first year we are now conducting a full evaluation of the Program and gearing up for another round next year. As Chair of the Program I am moving on, leaving the UC Program in very capable hands. My new institution has already expressed an interest in the Program and I am wondering if I want to do it all again?!

It is an enormous amount of work and a heavy time commitment for everyone involved: the Management Group, the facilitators and the participants. However, I never mind working hard if I believe in the project and fulfilling the potential of women is high on my agenda! From experience of groups I also know that the old adage that 'you get out what you put in' is very true and groups don't hang together if they don't meet regularly. Fortnightly meetings are a bottom line. Some of the participants have found the Program a wonderful experience and others haven't. A number of the women have left the university to go to better jobs elsewhere (which we see as success!)

Where we did get bogged down in our first year was in a lack of clarity about the concept of group mentoring: what did it mean, how do you do it, what was the purpose of the meetings. The groups were formed from women across the university (academic and general staff), of all levels. This mix meant that there was a wide range of skills and knowledge of the university available to the women as they supported each other in planning and progressing their

professional development. The meetings were for the women to plan their professional development and work on some part of it, gaining feedback and assistance from the group members. As this was a work-based program the women's professional development activities were to be seen to work associated. This was another concept that proved difficult as the word 'project' was used and some participants started to devise grandiose plans for time-consuming projects in the workplace. The idea was for them to develop skills and knowledge relevant to their careers, enhancing their potential to move into other areas (whether horizontally or vertically). This might mean taking some computer courses, learning how other areas of the university organise their administration, getting your first journal article published, getting elected to a university committee, things that could be a natural progression of their current work.

Yes, I will do it again, but I will work with a smaller group of women. I will spend more time early on clarifying the concept of group mentoring and the purpose of the meetings and put the focus on the personal, professional development plans. I also wouldn't move without some dedicated flexible time for a Program Co-ordinator, the amount of work involved cannot be over-estimated. I am also awaiting the outcome of our final evaluation to hear the individual voices of the participants as the recipients of the Program and what worked and didn't work for them.

I would like to thank everyone involved with the Group Mentoring Program at UC this year, for their time and their dedication. We have all learnt heaps and that is what it is all about! I would be happy to talk to anyone thinking of starting a Group Mentoring Program.

Val Clifford is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Scholarship at the University of Canberra. In December she moves to the University of the South Pacific to become an Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

Contact until mid-Dec:
vac@cts.canberra.edu.au,
after mid-Dec clifford_v@usp.ac.fj

Systematic Curriculum Design?

Peter Karuso

Systematic curriculum design is a reductionist approach to education which seeks to impose rational planning on the steps involved in curriculum design. Aims, objectives and goals lie at the heart of the planning process and provide the criteria for decision making. These should be made explicit as only then can they be examined, criticised, tested and improved. Educational objectives have evolved from behavioural objectives which are the most rational and well thought out method of bringing educational outcomes in line with the intentions of the educator. This short essay looks at where course objectives come from, factors directly affecting their enunciation and finally questions their suitability as a global approach to tertiary education.

In the area of curriculum design, there is no one reference that provides a template or fully documented rules for the development of a new course. However, among the common references, eg Cox (1994), Posner (1994), Toombs and Tierney (1994), Davies (1976) and Ramsden (1992), there is a surprising consistency on the recommended approach one should take in the design of a new curriculum. This, I would say, forms the current paradigm in curriculum design that has ruled for the past 2 or 3 decades and is encapsulated in the concept map shown below. This concept map shows a "feed-forward" approach in which the context determines the objectives which in turn dictate the design and execution of the course. This should then be followed by some form of evaluation. The latter can then form a "feed-back" loop for further refinements of the course. Central to the course design are the aims goals and objectives and without firmly establishing these, the whole process is in jeopardy. A useful metaphor from Davies (1976) is that the *aim* is a starting point and specifies the direction for a journey. The *objectives* are signposts or milestones along the way and the *goal* is the final destination that will not necessarily be achieved but indicates an ideal to work toward. Once these are established, the teaching methods would be influenced primarily by the aims and goals and the assessment linked to the objectives rather than factual

content (as generally occurs).

CONTEXT

Motivation

Students have various motives for enrolling in a particular course which may be intrinsic or extrinsic and range from vocational to academic, personal or social as elaborated by Taylor, Morgan and Gibbs (1984). A quick survey of these can be useful in determining the content, aims and goals of the course. This information can be obtained by asking students to briefly introduce themselves and state why they are doing the course. Their motivation can, of course, change during the semester but in either case, this information would come too late to have much effect on the course but the information gained may be used in subsequent years. Another limitation would be that the technique can only be used on small lecture groups or in tutorials. A solution for large lectures might be the inclusion of a question concerning motivation in the end of semester student evaluation. However, aims, goals and objectives should usually be determined well ahead of time but the type of information gained from the students can be used to modify or clarify the objectives during the course.

Prior Knowledge and Prerequisites

Good teaching recognises that students bring with them a diversity of prior experience and knowledge that may be relevant to any course. The amount of diversity can be high for a first year courses with no or few prerequisites and much less for senior courses courses where there is a tight prerequisite structure and students have a much more homogeneous background. In any case, every course outline should contain a statement of assumed knowledge and a list of supplementary material/reading lists for those who feel they may be deficient in one area or another. Other options like remedial classes, personal tuition or streaming raise questions of equity and are likely too expensive in the current grip of economic rationalism. As with the motivation issues, the students can be asked to identify what they do not understand either in class, by dropping a note in a box anonymously or through an

electronic bulletin board.

If an objective defines what a student will be able to do after the course then a prerequisite should define what they can do before the course. Prerequisites are distinct from prior knowledge as the former is a requirement whereas the latter adds depth to the class dynamics.

Both prerequisites and prior knowledge are related to the student's concept of learning, Harvey, Hunt and Schroeder (1961), and strategies for learning, Entwistle and Ramsden (1983). These may, in turn, impinge directly on content (by building on prior knowledge and avoiding an overloaded curriculum which encourages a surface approach), on teaching methods (to emphasise process and concepts rather than content and specifics) and assessment (by avoiding questions that encourage rote learning). Assessment should be tied to the objectives, not the content (Fig. 1).

Resources

Resources available for a course include the lecturer(s), tutors and, in the case of the Sciences, the laboratory demonstrators. In addition the secretarial, administrative and technical staff play vital roles in the establishment and running of any course. There is also printed material, the library, lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, labs, equipment and consumables to consider. A shortage in quality or quantity of any of these items must affect the aims, objectives and goals as far as the logistics of the course are concerned.

Relationship with degree program

Just as the prerequisites for a new course influence, to some extent, the objectives, then if another course is going to use the new course as a prerequisite, they should use our objectives as a statement of their prior knowledge. In an ideal world, Departmental and University politics would have no bearing on course design but in reality they may effect directly the resources at our disposal or affect the aims through having to accommodate what others feel the course should teach.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES and GOALS

The "education by objectives" approach, which attempts to translate the aims of any course into a set of behaviourally testable actions or competencies is based on behavioural theory. This gained credence in education during and just after World War II where there was a need to train soldiers as quickly as possible in the operation of complex machinery. Its acceptance has increased to the point where it can legitimately be described as a current paradigm in educational theory. According to Burton (1996), behavioural theory is also the basis for educational innovations such as teaching machines, computer assisted learning, competency-based education, minimal competency testing, situated cognition and social constructivism. Proponents of this approach, such as Baume and Jones (1974) regard the general aim of tertiary education to be found in changing students but insist that these changes are to be exhibited or observable in a set of specific activities which the students are enabled to perform as a result of the successful completion of the course. Ramsden (1992) is less dogmatic while Miller (1987), writing from a perspective of an Australian University, also warns against "over-emphasis on behavioural objectives". However, on closer inspection, even Ramsden (1992: 128) asks:

"What will students be able to do ... that they could not do before?"

This is a clear statement of behavioural objectives. Ramsden (1992: 129) goes on to criticise educators who are unable to articulate precise quantifiable objectives as not having properly defined the aims and goals of their course and in having an "administrative" conception of education. Behavioural objectives make it possible for the educator to communicate his/her intentions more clearly to the students and their colleagues. This makes the intentions of the educator more transparent, reveals possible ambiguities and helps expose hidden agendas but most importantly, the students have a clear idea what is expected of them. This has a concomitant effect on assessment as this must reflect the objectives, not just the factual content. This puts an emphasis on concepts and abstraction, rather than factual recall. Clearly, most University level courses transmit large amounts of factual material and this is necessary to form the basis from which

principles and concepts are enunciated. The point that should be made is that there is no place for courses that only transmit factual material. Finally, only when criteria become public can they be improved, tested and criticised i.e. be held accountable.

The systematic approach (Fig. 1) clearly has aims, goals and objectives at the heart of the planning process and aims to make education more effective, accountable, and to bring outcomes in line with the intentions of the educator. Behavioural objectives are the most rational and well thought out method to achieve these goals. They force the educator to think of specific terms and not vague ambiguities. They help the course to operate by ensuring that the educator, his/her assistant(s) and the students all know where they are starting from and where they are going to. Thus each course from a Department or even the University can form part of an integrated whole, one linking in to another and so on. They are also a useful starting point for design of the content and the assessment as Ramsden (1992: 134) notes the objectives must be "forcefully" connected to all learning activities.

So, since behavioural objectives have been in existence for some 90 years and have been widely adopted (even by authors who claim otherwise) for the past 30 years, then why are the outcomes of education still at variance with the idealised pretensions of the educator?

To answer this important question, let's look first at: Where do objectives come from?

Ramsden (1992: 131-7) gives us general guidelines for articulating objectives and examples of common traps. These include; stating the obvious by reiterating the content rather than linking objectives to what the students should be able to do; being too vague or too narrow. Miller (1987) also specifies that objectives should be unambiguous, contain conditions of performance and contain standards. Here we uncover a serious defect in the case for behavioural objectives - the translation of broad aims (tentative general objectives such as "think creatively and independently about...") into precise quantifiable instructional objectives is frankly hilarious as the change required must be left to intuition and common sense, exactly those features that "systematic design" is trying to avoid.

Another problem is language. Language is inherently ambiguous and to address this, Miller recommends the use

of words like "list", "describe", "state", and "identify" rather than "know", "appreciate", "believe" or "understand". The later words are certainly more ambiguous, Deno and Jenkins (1969) and the former more specific. However, if all the objectives of a 100 level chemistry course were to be stated to this level they would run in to the hundreds or even thousands of individual objectives. Another consequence of being more specific entails becoming more trivial. Clearly, trivial aims are the easiest to state in behavioural terms. This is recognised by Ramsden as a common "mistake" and suggests that the trivial objectives should be weeded out. This then leaves us with nothing or, at best, trivial aims that are just less trivial than others. With these few, less trivial (but none the less trivial) objectives as milestones on our journey from aims to goals, we are left with a rather impoverished and inflexible view of knowledge. The use of objectives as milestones also assumes there is only one way through the web of knowledge in a subject area. This puts perhaps too much power in the hands of the educator to define this path and denies that different courses may be appropriate to different students. Alternatively we are left with vague untestable objectives that Ramsden and others warn us against.

An important point then is that lists (such as a list of objectives) cannot adequately represent the structure of knowledge except in an impoverished and inflexible view of education.

Predetermined educational objectives are also less suitable to subject areas that require the development of judgement (such as organic synthesis) or taste and criticism (fine art). If a student is expected to exhibit predictable behaviour to comply with objectives then this must be self defeating.

An educator's style may also preclude the use of specific objectives. Such "voyages of discovery" where the educator has no clear idea of how the course will develop, the imposition of objectives constrains creative choices. Any educator who values flexibility and the grasping of opportunities as they arise can only be stifled by having to conform to predefined objectives.

CONCLUSION

While the case for strict educational objectives as a guide for curriculum design has recently become "unpopular" there are none-the-less strong elements of this philosophy to be found in all the modern authors. This requires a close

examination of the case for and against objectives which I could only briefly survey. It is clear that systematic curriculum design has many advantages but its biggest failing is the undeniable reliance on the articulation of more or less trivial educational objectives.

There are undoubtedly elements of systematic curriculum design, incorporating ambiguous objectives that can be used to help plan a new course. However, I hope I have been able to show that the case for behavioural objectives as a panacea for curriculum design is severely flawed if taken to its logical extreme. There is a place for academic intuition and we should not be afraid to use words like "know" and "understand" in our objectives as, until learning and knowledge are better understood, we run the risk of trivialising higher education.

References

- Baume, A. D. and Jones B., "Education by objectives". London: NELPRESS, 1974.
- Burton, J. K., Moore, D. M., Magliaro, S. G., "Behaviorism and Instructional Theory", in *Foundations for Research in Educational Communications and Technology*, Jansson (ed.), 1996.

Cox, B., "Practical Pointers for University Teachers", London: Kogan Page, 1994.

Davies, I. K., "Objectives in Curriculum Design", Maidenhead McGraw Hill, 1976.

Deno, S. L., and Jenkins, J. R., "On the Behaviourality of Behavioural Objectives", *Psychology in the Departments*, 6, 18-24, 1969.

Entwistle, N., and Ramsden, P., "Understanding Student Learning", Croom-Helm, London, 1983.

Harvey, O. J., Hunt, D. E., and Schroeder, H. M., "Conceptual Systems and Personality Organisations", Wiley, New York, 1961.

Miller, A. H., "Course Design for University Lecturers", London: Kogan Page, 1987

Posner, G. J., "Course design: a guide to curriculum development for teachers", 4th Ed., New York; 1994.

Ramsden, P., "Learning to Teach in Higher Education", London: Routledge, 1992.

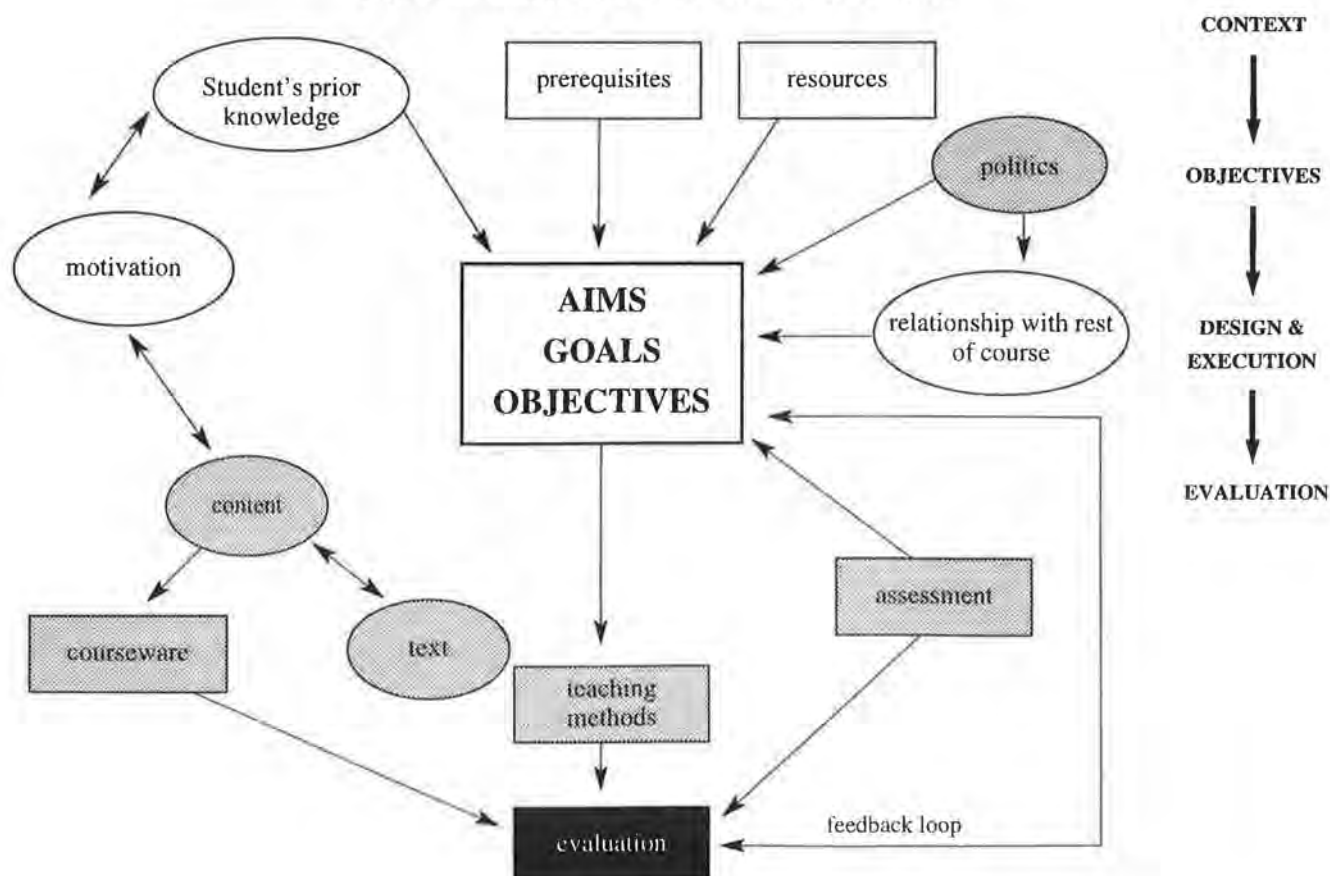
Taylor, E., Morgan, A. R., and Gibbs, G., in "The Experience of Learning", Marton, F., Housell, D., and Entwistle, N., (Eds), Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1984.

Toombs, W., and Tierney, W., "Meeting the Mandate", ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 6, 1991.

Dr Peter Karuso is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemistry, Macquarie University, having obtained his PhD in the Department of Organic Chemistry, Sydney University in 1985 and a Certificate in Higher Education from Macquarie University in 1997. He teaches Organic, Biological and Medicinal Chemistry using a student centred approach and has designed curricula for the BMedScs, BSc (Advanced Chemistry) and BTech degree programs and several new courses in Medicinal and Organic Chemistry.

Figure 1. A concept map of idealised curriculum design. The factors in white box directly influence the aims, goals and objectives of a course. These in turn affect the design and execution (grey box). An evaluation step (black box) can be added to provide an efficient feedback loop to modify the objectives in future offerings.

Figure 1: CONCEPT MAP OF UNIT DESIGN



No more a-roving?

In an old ballad the minstrel sings "We'll go no more a-roving, so late into the night ..." On one reading, the sentiment is said to indicate a state of post-coital exhaustion. Having achieved his pleasant goal (maybe multiple goals) he now needs well-earned rest. But come tomorrow night and he'll be a-roving again.

Not long ago an old and highly esteemed Academic Development unit was laid to rest. It was, I understand, a distressing event by any measure. Sadness at breaking up a long, close working relationship was exceeded only by disgust at the inept and callous orchestration by the *powers that be*. There'll be no more a-roving. *Requiescat in pace*.

Such an event calls for serious examination of the "Academic Development" phenomenon. Dare we account for this seeming tragedy merely in terms of the idiosyncratically bombastic frenzy of one VC and his cohorts? Or does "forty years on" carry a broader signal? Does the demise of some old AD Units signal the demise of AD itself (or, at least, of AD 'as we've known it')?

Building bridges

I originally titled this piece "Building Bridges" or maybe "The Un-Abridged University?" Because as I look back on its history it seems to me that an apt metaphor for Academic Development is bridge-building. Evidently believing enough of the old bridges have now been built, some universities are paying the workers off and sending them home.

Maybe the old days of bridge-building are over, and universities of the future will prefer to remain un-bridged. Academic Development, in its forty years, may have even failed to ever conquer the art of bridge-building anyhow. If so, few of the old bridges will stand, and those that do will be historical relics.

We could, of course, be less pessimistic and ask whether the "bridge-building" metaphor can help us

appreciate the disturbed (and disturbing) present state of Academic Development? Perhaps present and future bridges are of a different kind to the old ones, and hence AD still has a future?

In my recollection of the 'sixties and early 'seventies the bridges built then were mostly between students and administration. Discontent, rebellion and anarchy were worryingly filling the gap that had been allowed to develop between the student body, its needs and interests, and a self-indulgent, complacent academic administration.

Those early Developers built bridges across discontent. They researched student disillusionment; studied drop-out rates; appraised archaic courses; advocated personalised teaching methods; monitored novel teaching approaches; and ran student-staff conferences on the hottest topics - generally assessment.

The evidence that SOMETHING WAS BEING DONE probably saved the scalp of many a VC and Registrar. And it restored a degree of standing to terrified lecturers caught in the middle. Whether or not we like to admit it, AD in its historical inception was a highly politicised role.

Phases 1 and 2

We might now take a few historical liberties and call that period the "First Phase". Over the next two decades (into the 'nineties) Developers of the "Second Phase" have in the main built bridges between teaching staff and students. There were two clear trajectories.

One group, the least prestigious, worked with students and built bridges from their side. How to study, take notes, understand academic standards, cope with examinations, all took the academic position as (relatively) "given". Bridges were built across which students could step towards success.

The higher status, dominant trajectory became working directly with staff. This perspective took the student position as (relatively) "given", and bridges were built over which lecturers could travel and engage more profitably with learners.

Phase 2 culminated, I think, with the

rise of phenomenography. The phenomenographic "bridge" has proved perhaps the most powerful structure for taking academics (in some disciplines anyhow) across the comprehension gap previously dividing them from their students. It led to a new way of understanding or appreciating what both 'to learn' and correspondingly 'to teach' might mean.

Some Developers managed to heroically follow both trajectories. Some of them built four-lane highways, heroically bringing students across the gap into academic awareness *and simultaneously* taking academics across the gap into appreciating students' learning needs.

Phase 3?

Nowadays I sense palpable sense of foreboding amongst the bridge-building trade. Across an increasing number of institutions, Developers are being required to build bridges of a new kind. Enter Phase Three.

In one meeting recently the following two conversations followed within half an hour. I report them as remembered - not verbatim.

1. "Since I began Directing this Centre twenty years ago, one policy has remained intact and will continue as long as I am here. Whenever one academic walks through that door and expresses a need we can meet or a concern we can attend to, we obey one overriding duty. It's to see that, when he or she eventually leaves, they take away something they will be grateful for. That's why we're here. Nothing else really counts."
2. (different person and institution). "Our job is to implement institutional policy (regarding teaching and learning) at Faculty and Departmental level. We're part of Central Administration. We help staff collectively understand current policy and how it can be implemented. We support them (again collectively) in doing it, then monitor and evaluate the implementation. We do consult with staff to ascertain their needs and concerns. Feeding that information

upwards helps administration tailor policies, achieve clearer articulation and smoother implementation. If individual academics have problems (personal lack of information or skill) we bring in people from outside to sort them out."

A new kind of bridge-building? It is certainly a direct response to the new kinds of universities being run. And it's significantly different from predecessors in Phases 1 and 2. It's based on ethical premises and role-assumptions inconceivable by earlier Developers, demanding a way of relating to academics often vehemently repudiated by them.

Yet the jobs of an increasing numbers of Developers, particularly in "Post-Dawkins" institutions, are now defined as building bridges between administration and academic staff (collectively). Students enter the equation merely as customers who purchase what the institution sells at a profit. There is now no embarrassment at defining the purpose of today's AD bridges in terms of increasing institutional productivity.

As Academic Development's response to a new university order, none of this need be surprising. It is not for us to either deplore or celebrate, simply to accept and do the best we can with. Roll with the times. Be where the action is.

But what about the old-style bridges? Are we to regard them (students and staff, students and administration) merely as artifacts of a past age? Having no enduring significance? No contemporary relevance? Museum pieces of Development history?

Bridges of the past

Was I naïve, at the time, to imagine that those bridges were responses to *enduring* aspects of student and teaching, to *permanent features* of the educational process? Because it seems we no longer believe them necessary.

I'd like to think there do remain bridges of those kinds still needing to be built for every generation. But— in a Phase 3 situation - who does the building? It seems to be implied that they'll build themselves. Or did a whole generation of academia magically learn something previous generations didn't know? Nice if it were the case, but where's the evidence?

Maybe (my cynical alter-ego whispers) that old idea of "Academic Development" was actually a vain and offensive "do-gooding" presumption from the start. If so, it was a dead-end track, and that's what has inevitably come to pass.

Time to return to our raunchy opening imagery. Is the current demise of AD (as some of us knew it) just a temporary pause between amorous exploits; a recuperative holiday during which we can recharge our batteries? Or does it signify that Development has permanently given up the task, lost the passion, and now needs putting out to graze?

Phase 4

I hope that those colleagues now being compulsorily put out to graze, after their Units have been disbanded, will not lose their passion. Because even if student-to-staff and students-to-administration bridgebuilding is never again to be done through "units" or "centres" (as we once knew them) surely (my better self tells me) it *still needs to be done*.

I've always argued that *within* a department is one place a Developer might be able to REALLY make a difference! HERDSA visiting scholar Anne Kerwin's stories of her work as "itinerant philosopher" in a Medical School convinced me I was right on that one.

Dare we then hope that the growing diaspora of Developers from disbanded Centres, some of whom go to work as "ordinary academics" within Departments, will imaginatively reinvent Academic Development? Perhaps creating its Fourth Phase? I'd like to see that.

Phase Four may even see multiple, parallel and innovative forms of Academic Development emerging. One contemporary instance of AD re-creating itself occurs every time a Developer is moved out of the comfort of a "Unit" and into the diverse and challenging mix of staff in Centres of Flexible Delivery and/or New Technology (often the same thing). That's happening nowadays, too.

Once part of a team of Developers, they're now appendage to a team of technologists. Probably the only non-technologist, working with people instead of machines or software. And there, perhaps, they're able to continue constructing those old-style bridges that (if I am right) need to always be built. In addition they're building a brand new kind of bridge also desperately needed - between technology and teachers.

Development from within

Developers, particularly if full members of a particular Faculty, can work with academics on joint curriculum design. That's a "bridge" once tried in Australia but which eventually

disappeared. Maybe it's time to look at it again - particularly with Developers today being dispersed into Faculties when Units disappear.

The "Ponderosa Project" at Northern Arizona University is yet another Post-Development-Unit scenario. It's an outstanding case study of staff-initiated academic development, and has broad institutional reform also on its agenda. Read about it at <http://www.2nature.org/programs/programs.nsf/>.

Northern Arizona University takes seriously the Talloires Declaration (1990), that "... universities bear profound responsibilities to increase the awareness, knowledge, technologies and tools to create an environmentally sustainable future". In 1995, after several faculty had attended workshops on environmental sustainability sponsored by "Second Nature", a core group established a development program aimed at helping faculty across campus revise their courses. Selected faculty were invited to take part in this first project. Faculty who did and who revised their courses received a stipend of \$1000 when they submitted their revised syllabi.

Two-day workshops were held off-campus, during which a group of twenty faculty met with outside resource experts and worked with small groups of colleagues to consider how they might alter their courses. To meet the needs of faculty from a broad range of disciplines, resource experts were employed who represented broad interests. In the first year topics included environmental justice, biodiversity, economics and the environment, and forestry in Northern Arizona. Subsequent years saw themes and topics varied, and other faculty were attracted by advertising broadly across campus.

Faculty are brought to think about sustainability in relation to their discipline, to their own expertise, to the content they choose to teach, and to the pedagogy they employ. They rethink their work in relation to a larger university context and mission aimed at addressing issues relating to the environment and sustainability. There is no program, no a plan, to suggest to faculty what they should do. The purpose is to see what faculty can do with the information they are given. The result was enthusiastic and energetic responses to the workshops, and implementation of impressively creative changes within their courses.

Two dangers

With just a little imagination, there are so many different conceptions available for what Academic

Development's "Fourth Phase" might comprise. But if any form of Academic Development is to survive, I'd suggest there are two dangers it should try to avoid.

First, whatever its form, Development will fail unless it actively and comprehensively remains open and responsive to what Academics themselves say they want and need. It is doomed to

futility if it intrudes with an outside, a priori view to impose on them.

Second, Development will fail unless it offers Academics, from within their practice, effective means and adequate opportunities for critiquing (using the best scholarly tools) both their own work and the entire mission of the university. If it fails there, it is doomed to being (correctly) perceived as intellectually and

imaginatively second-rate.

Considering both scores, I'm skeptical about the prospects for Phase 3. It seems to be progressing (in some places anyhow) with no regard whatever to either of these principles. If I'm right, Phase 4 may be upon us much sooner than many of us expect.

Eidos

Jacob's Musings on Meanings Teaching and Scholarship

Our occasional contributor, Jacob, popped up with these musings on two articles which appeared in the August News.

The juxtaposition of the interview with Paul Ramsden and the report by John Bowden in the last News (Aug 99) caused me to return to 'musing'.

It might be a bit unfair to hold folk to comments they make in interview - but there it is in print; so:

While I heartily agree with most of what Paul has to say he left me musing as to whether there's a distinction between three terms/ideas relating "scholarship" and "teaching": scholarly teaching; demonstrating your scholarship through your teaching; and scholarship of teaching. AND which of these corresponds to scholarship IN teaching; or is that yet a fourth distinct idea?

When I first heard of the second of these ideas (demonstrate your scholarship ...) from Cal (University of California, Berkeley) it sounded like an attractive approach to the problem Paul raises about "narrowing the divide between university research and teaching". As I understand the idea it goes like this: we are all scholars and demonstrate our scholarship through a range of functions, including research and teaching, but to which we could add a range of more specific activities like commenting on and analysing research in our field; 'popularising' research achievements; developing curricula and curriculum materials; reviewing curricula and teaching; and even service of various types to the internal or external communities. You can probably add to the list.

Note that this hasn't solved the problem until we can clearly identify, and validly evaluate, what is involved in demonstrating scholarship through teaching (and the other things on the list including, of course, research).

This still leads us to Paul's call for, and warnings about, performance indicators. I'd have liked more emphasis on finding indicators that relate to performance in activities that can be demonstrated to enhance the desired outcomes. I'd also have liked a clearer statement of the danger that performance indicators can prompt staff to emphasise the activities that are rewarded - even if they are potentially counter productive in isolation.

Oh well, I guess you can't have everything in a page and a half.

But I was a bit concerned at Paul's apparent equation of scholarly teaching with scholarship of teaching which I interpreted, at the extreme he was drawing, as research into teaching and learning - or did I get that wrong?

Performance indicators and the status of teaching linked nicely to John Bowden's report of the ATN TALC (don't you hate acronyms?) project on improving judgments about university teaching.

Am I just too cynical in asking, yet again, "what's new?"

While I think the project is great (give or take a couple of comments below) I really do wonder at how little we've "achieved" over the last quarter century. On some ways, in spite of the new gee wizz technology we seem to have moved quite a bit backwards.

John's report brought back memories from one of our Post Dawkins new regional universities. In order to implement (and legitimise?) their procedures the institution contracted an external consultant to run their promotion rounds for a couple of years.

As their procedures required external

members on their promotion panels, the logistics ruled out workshops for the panels. So the consultant had to rely on written comments circulated beforehand; a brief session at the start of proceedings; and frequent review and reflection sessions throughout.

Three parts of the process followed by the consultant are missing from John's description. That doesn't, of course mean that they don't go on in the individual institutions.

Firstly the need to have the panels clear about the things that they can legitimately make judgments about and the things that they have to rely on judging the judgments of others (referees; Department Heads; students; and even the candidates themselves). Where necessary panels have to be reminded of the distinction.

Secondly was the surprisingly necessary advice the consultant had to ask the personnel office to send to referees: please tell us why we should listen to you in this area; how do come to know the candidate?; and what's the basis of what you've got to say about the candidate? Even then they still got many "Bloggs' a good bloke" references!

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the consultant ran workshops for staff before the rounds, helping them learn how to document their achievements (particularly in teaching) as well as running post round seminars in addition to the required individual consultations for unsuccessful applicants.

I wonder how they do things there now? - cynical old B.

Jacob

Book Reviews

Understanding Learning and Teaching: The Experience in Higher Education

by Michael Prosser and Keith Trigwell. Buckingham: The Society for Research into Learning and Teaching and Open University Press: ISBN: 0-335-19831-7 (pbk) 194pp. Includes index. AUD\$55

Reviewed by Christine Bruce

In *Understanding Learning and Teaching* Prosser and Trigwell have drawn together a range of outcomes from research into higher education learning and teaching, and organised them into a coherent model. In creating and defending their model the authors have drawn largely on the work of Ference Marton, Noel Entwistle, Paul Ramsden and John Biggs, as well as their own extensive body of scholarship into the experience of learning and teaching in science and other fields.

Prosser and Trigwell suggest that John Biggs' 'Presage-Process-Product' model of student learning can be viewed from a range of epistemological and ontological positions; and that it can be usefully viewed from a relational or constitutionalist perspective. This latter perspective is the authors' preferred position, and it is through this lens that they construct their 'Constitutionalist model of student learning' and interpret the range of research upon which they draw. This research includes what the authors describe as both 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' studies taken mainly from the UK, Sweden and Australia. While such studies are not necessarily incompatible, arguably, the research that is used in the explication of Prosser and Trigwell's model was conducted from various theoretical perspectives; and the extent to which these are compatible is likely to be subject to ongoing debate.

While this may not weaken their model per se, the resulting picture has an eclectic flavour.

Each chapter in this book illuminates some component of the constitutionalist model. Chapter one affords an introduction to the ideas, showing how students in the same learning situation can experience learning in very different ways. It also introduces the book's dual focus on teaching and research. Chapter two discusses the constitutionalist model of student learning comprised of five elements (representing the students' learning situation) within the broader learning and teaching context, and some of the relevant underpinning theory. Four of the model's elements – students' prior experiences, their perceptions of their situation, their approaches to learning and their learning outcomes are each treated in detail in chapters three, four, five and six. Chapter seven explores teachers' experiences of teaching in higher education. The final chapter reviews the whole and summarises the authors' argument that '...both students and teachers form certain perceptions of their situation.' (p164) and that '...their (students') variation in perception – was systematically related to their previous experience of studying in similar topics, the way they approached their learning and the quality of their learning outcomes.' (p165)

In each of chapters three to seven, Prosser and Trigwell provide detailed examples of studies revealing various aspects of students' learning situations, and of teachers' experience of teaching. While the examples of research are selective, key studies are included, as are examples from a wide range of disciplines – computer science, mathematics, music, economics, sociology, chemistry, nursing. Of particular interest in these chapters are the many strategies suggested for improving teaching and learning based on the principles espoused, and for engaging in classroom research. Readers will find these accessible and practical.

Like the select number of other books adopting a relational approach to teaching and learning, this one is both challenging and inspiring. If you belong to any one of the authors' target audiences, that is if you are interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning, if you are a university teacher or if you are interested in developing research into your own teaching, then beg, borrow or...oops... buy this book.

Christine Bruce is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Information Systems at the Queensland University of Technology

Reviewing your Teaching.

Edited by Kate Day, Ruth Grant and Dai Hounsell. Edinburgh: Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, The University of Edinburgh. Price £16.00 plus £3.00 for post and packing. Order through Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency Sheffield, UK, email: uscosda@sheffield.ac.uk

Review by Roger Landbeck

This is a very comprehensive handbook to enable academics to review all aspects of their teaching including postgraduate supervision.

The introduction draws a useful distinction between feedback on a unit, course or programme and individual teaching expertise. It is the latter with which the book is concerned.

Chapter two considers the review process and this provides a helpful way of moving thinking about the review of teaching way beyond the use of student questionnaires. Then follows a series of chapters reviewing lecturing, group-based learning, laboratory and fieldwork,

project and dissertation supervision and assignments and assessment. There are many examples of pro-formas and questionnaires appropriate to different situations. Each chapter concludes with useful references for further reading.

Teaching by flexible and distance modes is not considered, which is an important omission, since these modes of teaching are developing rapidly. No doubt when the book was published in 1998 this was less of an issue but it would be helpful to include suggestions for review in a subsequent edition.

The final chapter reminds us that reviewing our teaching is always

unfinished business, an unending search for ways to help students learn effectively.

All the pro-formas and questionnaires can be down loaded from the website, www.tla.ed.ac.uk/ryt.html, with the proviso that the source of the material is fully and appropriately acknowledged. While you are browsing through these pages have a look at home page of the Centre as well for further useful resources.

At a time when teaching seems likely to become subject to scrutiny this publication is a timely addition to resources for academics.

SUCCESSFUL LEARNING SKILLS.

Your guide to tertiary studies through open, distance and flexible learning

Edited by Alex Radloff, Allan Hermann and Robert Fox. Published by Bobby Graham Publishers.

Review by Gail Wilson

The Introduction to the text says it all: 'Take charge of your own learning' and that message is clearly illustrated throughout this handy guide for adult students entering tertiary studies in a distance mode.

The three co-authors bring fine credentials to the writing of this book. Alex Radloff has an extensive adult education background and at the time of the book going to print was Associate Professor in the Centre for Educational Advancement at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Western Australia. A second co-author Allan Hermann has twenty years experience in open and distance learning with a focus on the development of study materials for adult learners. The third co-author, Robert Fox is currently senior lecturer at the Centre for Educational Advancement at Curtin University and has research interests in use of new technologies in distance

education and independent study. Clearly with three authors as experienced as these, the book should bear out its promise of guiding adult learners through the major hurdles in distance and open learning.

The book itself is divided into 5 major chapters: The distance mode; getting underway; Yourself as a learner; Learning; Reading, and Writing. A set of references are provided. Chapter 1 assists the reader to undertake a personal study program analysis and addresses the perennial problem of personal time management. Chapter 2 addresses the learner himself – asking the reader to examine the reasons for study, identify obstacles to learning and consider time allocated to study. Chapter 3 addresses the characteristics of successful learning and gets the reader to identify personal learning goals. Chapter 4 examines the purposes and techniques of reading. Here

the reader is directed to seven steps to successful study. Chapter 5 overviews the nature of the writing activity and cleverly provides a writing model that can be adapted to any type of writing task.

The book assumes a workbook format in several chapters with opportunities for the reader to answer questions, jot down ideas and record results of brief, but practical self-reflection activities.

This book would be useful as a pocket guide for tertiary students returning to study or new students whose self directed learning skills need to be honed.

Recommended.

Gail Wilson is Dean of Studies at The Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School, Leura NSW, and also lectures in Employment Relations and Planning and Managing Change.

Research in progress

Conceptions Of Learning Held By Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander University Students

This phenomenographically inspired, longitudinal research is investigating the conceptions of formal learning held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university students. Information has also been gathered concerning their informal learning experiences, the strategies they use to learn, and their reasons for studying. Attrition rates for Indigenous students are higher than any other group of students; determining their conceptions of formal learning and related areas may illuminate factors that contribute to the high attrition rate.

The students come from three Queensland universities and have varied experiences of study and work. Results have shown that they hold conceptions of formal learning that are similar to those of other university students and while they go about their learning in much the same way as other students many hold conceptions of learning that do not match the strategies they use to learn. There was also a moral dimension to studying in that some of the students hope to work with their 'own' people to try and improve their conditions. Additionally it was apparent during the second year of the study that while the students' conceptions of formal learning were more or less the same as first year, they were living and experiencing learning somewhat differently.

Researchers

Gillian Boulton-Lewis, Ference Marton, David Lewis, Lynn Wilss

Key words

Conceptions of learning, formal learning, informal learning, learning strategies, aboriginal and torres strait islander students

Contact

Gillian Boulton-Lewis; g.boulton-lewis@qut.edu.au

Monitoring and evaluating user behaviour in information seeking and use of information technology and information services in United Kingdom Higher Education: a qualitative longitudinal monitoring of electronic information services use.

The impact of IT networks and electronic information systems (EIS) and sources on academic users is potentially enormous, whether in support of research, teaching, publishing or communication. The reliability of networks, the variety of access procedures to services, acquiring the necessary skills and access to support when required all present challenges to users before they can exploit the potential of IT networks as part of the overall academic endeavour. The project seeks to provide a unified approach to predict, monitor and characterise user behaviour, influenced as it is by ongoing change in higher education. This change impacts in turn on the delivery and take-up of EIS. The project findings will inform future strategic decision making and investment in EIS.

Researchers

Joan M. Day, Linda Banwell, Pat Gannon-Leary

Key words

Information seeking, electronic information services

Contact

Pat Gannon-Leary; patricia.gannonleary@unn.ac.uk

Postgraduate students- research into conceptions of and approaches to learning.

A multicultural study looking for variations and potential dissonances in research approaches and outcomes in order to develop supportive programmes and supervisory practices.

Researchers

Gina Wisker, Julian Thomas, Jillinda Tiley et al

Key words

Postgraduates; student learning; enabling programmes

Contact

Gina Wisker; g.wisker@Anglia.ac.uk

Discipline based research- how undergraduate students learn

How undergraduate students learn and whether/whether they know they have achieved the learning outcome of their disciplines- Law, English, Social Work, Creative Writing, Womens Studies, Computer Skills for Linguists.

Researchers

Gina Wisker, Julian Thomas, Jillinda Tiley et al

Keywords

Discipline, student learning, learning outcomes

Contact

Gina Wisker; g.wisker@Anglia.ac.uk

Working as a rural academic

The work of a rural academic shares aspects of the work of metropolitan colleagues but also has distinctive features. While there have been academic studies of regional institutions and their students and of other rural professional groups, there is a dearth of literature on the subject of the academics themselves. Using in-depth interviews of both rural and metropolitan academics and a larger survey, this investigation will help to fill the gap by exploring the implications of being a rural academic and the distinguishing features of rural academics' work, highlighting the perceptions of rural academics held by themselves and by others. It will identify the knowledge, attitudes and skills that they bring to their work within the university context, highlighting the contributions rural academics make to their institutions, to academia in general and to their communities.

Researchers

Bronwyn Ellis, Maureen Dollard, Janet Sawyer, Dianne Boxall

Key words

Rural and regional academics; higher education

Contact

Bronwyn Ellis;
bronwyn.ellis@unisa.edu.au

Evolve or die: New Zealand Technical Institutes search for a new identity.

This project looks at the way New Zealand Technical Institutes are responding to changing environmental forces

Researcher

Lyn Murphy

Key words

Technical Institute New Zealand

Contact

Lyn Murphy; lmurphy@manukau.ac.nz

Student and supervisor perceptions of supervision and thesis writing

Using both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) methods, we are exploring three major aspects of postgraduate (doctoral) studies. A model of self-regulation which includes goals, expectations, feelings, strategies, and metacognitive thinking serves as a framework for the study.

The three aspects are:

1. Students' perceptions and experiences of writing relating to all aspects of their doctoral studies, with an emphasis on

the cognitive and affective processes involved in writing, rather than on activities. Supervisors' perceptions of their role in the writing process are also being gathered.

2. Students' perceptions of the affective components associated with postgraduate studies; how they feel about writing, the research process, and their theses. Although affect has been recognised to be important in postgraduate study, not much is known about students' feelings in regard to their research work.
3. Students' and supervisors' perspectives on supervisory practices, especially in relation to writing, and the extent to which these perceptions accord with a self-regulatory model of supervision which we have developed.

Researchers

Irene Styles, Alex Radloff

Key words

Postgraduate, writing, self-regulation, affect, supervision.

Contact

Irene Styles;
styles@central.murdoch.edu.au

Evaluating and Enhancing the Effectiveness of a Teaching Skills Development Programme.

This study is designed to examine the effectiveness of the Teaching Skills Development Programme offered at

Massey University. Fourteen newly appointed staff members are being interviewed at three time intervals during the first year of their appointment at Massey. The interviews focus on the development of the staff members as teachers in response to their experiences throughout the year. The results will be compared to the model proposed by Ramsden (1992, pp.111 - 116. i.e. "Theory 1; teaching as transmission, Theory 2; Teaching as organising student activity, Theory 3; Teaching as making learning possible).

Content and thematic analyses of the interview transcripts will be undertaken using the qualitative data analysis tool "NUD.IST" to identify any changes in the teachers knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices, in particular changes resulting from participation in the Teaching Skills Development Programme. The results will be used to inform the university of the key issues affecting the development of newly appointed academic staff, and for further refinement and enhancement of the teaching skills programme.

Researchers

Gordon Suddaby, Alison St George, Claire McLachlan-Smith.

Key words

Teaching, Effectiveness; Development; Teacher beliefs; Massey; Evaluation.

Contact

Gordon Suddaby;
G.T.Suddaby@massey.ac.nz

Check out the calendar members section of the HERDSA website

for you to enter details of visits, or to collect details of visits to your area.

Special Interest Groups

The following Special Interest Groups are currently alive:

- Academic Developers Special Interest Group (ADSIG)
- Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM)
- Language and Learning (UNILEARN)
- Student Learning

For details of convenors and email lists see the HERDSA website, www.hersda.org.au

News of activities.

ADSIG

(Academic Developers Special Interest Group)

REPORT OF ADSIG MEETING AT HERDSA CONFERENCE, JULY 1999

The ADSIG group had a meeting at the Melbourne Conference on Monday 12 July, 5-6 pm. About 14 people attended, with some apologies. At the meeting, we talked about a range of issues with the following outcomes:

1. Convenorship 1999-2000:

I said that I was happy to continue for at least one more year and that was accepted.

2. List ownership:

Erika Martens said she would continue to own the list, so list queries should go to e.martens@latrobe.edu.au.

3. Seeded discussions:

It was agreed that they worked well in 1998-1999 and several people nominated themselves to seed several further discussions. Roger Landbeck has agreed to keep circulating Eidos (as

long as it keeps being written) to ADSIG prior to publication. Stanley Frielick is going to contact Erika re archiving the seeded discussions so list members can visit them at a later date if they wish to. The archive would only be open to list members though.

4. Symposium at HERDSA 2000:

We discussed having an ADSIG symposium at HERDSA 2000 (which is going to be in Towoomba) and decided to leave this idea until early 2000.

The symposium could take any of the following forms:

- a group of related papers (if we do this model, we need to decide at the time conference papers are called for);
- a chaired discussion around a theme of broad interest to academic developers;
- a panel of speakers taking up an extension of a seeded discussion.

Chris Trevitt talked about an interesting two-day working symposium he attended in Brisbane in early July (which was reported on by Peter Taylor at

the Melbourne Conference incidentally). This could be a model ie a day's meeting before the conference for academic developers – similar to conferences in the past.

5. ADSIG input into HERDSA News:

We thought an article might come out of one of our seeded discussions.

6. ADSIG website:

We talked about this and decided it was hard to see good reason to set up an independent website when many of us have sites associated with our workplaces and some individuals have their own ones. We did decide however that we would investigate the development of an expanded sub-site of the HERDSA website, with a view to listing current research projects for instance. Peter Kandlbinder agreed to follow this up with Coral Watson.

Barbara Grant (Convenor)
Centre for Professional Development
The University of Auckland
P Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand
Tel 64 9 3737 599, ext 8160
Fax 64 9 3737 474

HELM

(Higher Education Leadership and Management)

The Special Interest Group meeting at the HERDSA Conference was once again a useful vehicle to bring together a group of about twenty people with a common interest in leadership and management issues in the university. We swapped teaching and research interests and contact details and also discussed the future of the SIG. The current Web page was considered a great idea but nobody

had time to put information on it! It is being linked to the HERDSA web page to make its location easier and it was suggested that people put their own web page links in it rather than repeating information. We still need people to put their links in for the web page to be useful!

It was agreed that even meeting once a year was very useful for networking and we request that the conference organisers go back to a dedicated spot for SIG meetings as many people missed out because of competing papers.

To join the email listserv for the group send message to:

listproc@listproc.anu.edu.au

Leave subject line blank

In message type:

subscribe:siglead@listproc.anu.edu.au

yourfirstname yourlastname end

This is an automated system so if you type anything else it will not accept your subscription!

Val Clifford, Convenor

Email: vac@cts.canberra.edu.au

Student Learning

The group presented some papers at the Melbourne conference, for details see the website www.hersda.org.au/vic/cornerstones/table_of_contents.htm

UNILEARN (Language and Learning)

Some 36 members of "language and learning" units from universities around the Sydney region took part in the HERDSA Language and Learning Special Interest Day meeting at University of Western Sydney Nirimba Campus on Friday 17 September 1999.

SESSION 1

"Integrating 'learning development' within on-line university courses"

Carolyn Webb, Stephen Sheely and Deborah Veness, University of Western Sydney, Hawkesbury

In introducing this session which focussed on the challenges confronting language and learning staff within on-line learning environments, the team outlined the strategic approach being adopted within UWS Hawkesbury, and the role that their Centre is playing in creating the infrastructure for on-line teaching through Hawkesbury WISE (Web Interactive Study Environment), through the combined efforts of the Centre's three units: the Academic Development Unit, the Flexible Learning Unit, and the Staff Development Unit. The team provided an overview of approaches being adopted by faculty staff in on-line teaching representing different conceptions of teaching, between "teaching as the transmission of information" and "teaching as the facilitation of learning". Samples of some teaching materials being produced for on-line environments were used to exemplify these extremes.

In order to tease out some of the issues likely to confront language and learning staff, groups were asked to discuss two stages of a hypothetical scenario about a lecturer's move to offer an existing subject in an on-line mode. In this scenario, the lecturer was seeking language and literacy support for the subject. The discussion of this scenario probed issues in three main areas:

1. General pedagogical issues associated with on-line subject provision, for example:
 - Why was this subject going on-line?
 - What were the advantages for student learning in this subject going on-line?
 - How would students' engagement in on-line learning situations be encouraged?
 - Is there a danger that faculty staff, in grappling with their own learning of

the new technologies, will forget to include language and learning perspective's within their subject designs?

2. More specific issues associated with the language and learning demands for students, for example:
 - How were students to be prepared for the language demands of using computer-mediated interactive tools (elements of speech and writing combined)
 - Students may avoid taking part in the interactions because of a concern with having their more dynamic and spontaneous interactions recorded as writing and analysed
 - Students who lack confidence as writers but not as speakers may be reluctant to join on-line discussions
3. Operational issues associated with language and learning support for students, for example:
 - Should students be encouraged to send their written work electronically?
 - Should language and learning staff work directly on students' electronic files?
 - Is there an increased danger that language and learning staff will be swamped with email requests for individual support?

SESSION 2

"Integrating 'learning development' within flexible university courses"

Jan Skillen and Neil Trivett, Learning Development, University of Wollongong

Learning Development staff at Wollongong have been working with subject lecturers to integrate literacy into flexibly-delivered subjects, some of them on-line subjects, some of them on-campus subjects. The presentation provided examples of integrated literacy instruction for one subject offered as part of the on-line Bachelor of Business Administration and for core subjects in a standard 1st year Biology course in a Bachelor of Science degree. In the online subject, literacy instruction in the form of an online study guide forms an integral part of the subject's curriculum. It contains essay writing guides on topics such as 'analysing the essay question' and writing in an academic style, reading guides and how-to-study guides and is tailored to the content, readings and assignments of the course. It is also constructed in a sequence relevant to the

courses, weekly schedule of topics and tasks. The guides are provided as downloadable PDF files.

In the on-campus subject, Biology, the provision of instruction in discipline-specific literacy took the form of classes, peer marking and staged assignment tasks as well as instructional resources within the subject's website, giving more flexibility in terms of learning than a standard on-campus subject. Instructional resources were based on the each subjects, marking criteria, reading and assignment tasks and they used annotated exemplars as a major teaching methodology. Detailed assessment of each student's development using a revised version of Massus (the literacy diagnostic tool developed by Sydney University) was made throughout the year by peers, and by subject markers as part of normal assignment marking guidelines. Research into the effectiveness of the integration showed statistically significant improvement in students' skills over the course of the year.

It was noted that by next year two degrees will be offered by Wollongong as on-line programs, with core subjects in those degree programs required to have literacy instruction integrated into curricula. There are already, however, a number of on-campus subjects at Wollongong in which the addition of online literacy instruction has added flexibility to the teaching and learning of subjects and discipline-specific literacy.

SESSION 3

"Mainstreaming peer mentoring"

Sandra Gollin and Lyn Armstrong, University of Western Sydney Nepean

UWS Nepean is mainstreaming peer mentoring and has listed mentoring skills amongst the core attributes of Nepean graduates. A comprehensive overview was provided of the types of mentoring programs currently practised at Nepean. Some aim to facilitate the socialisation of students, others aim to assist with subject-based knowledge. In this presentation, small groups broke off to discuss definitions of mentoring, the different roles played by mentors, processes for quality assurance of mentoring programs, mentoring and its relationship to motivation, and how to implement mentoring programs.

Both Lyn and Sandra would welcome any relevant information about mentoring programs in other universities. Sandra has offered to collate all contributions and provide a summary for Unilearn.

SESSION 4

Planning for future meetings

In discussion led by John Grierson, University of Western Sydney Macarthur, it was agreed that, despite our interest in on-line learning, there was a shared sense of the value of continuing with face-to-face meetings periodically throughout the year. It was considered important to retain the friendly, informal opportunities to keep in touch and trade ideas. It was proposed that two sessions would be organised next year with a special focus, plus an end of year session. In an effort to meet our country colleagues and to respond to requests, we agreed to try and have one meeting next year outside Sydney, possibly in Canberra.

BOOKS TO NOTE

Several excellent books have arrived for review recently and they will be reviewed in the next issue of HERDSA News. Meanwhile here are some brief descriptions to whet your appetites and put them on your Christmas list.

Teaching for Quality Learning at University by John Biggs. Buckingham, SRHE/OU Press. \$49.95.

Available through Allen and Unwin, Australia, contact
academic@allen-unwin.com.au

John Biggs tackles how academics can improve their teaching in today's circumstances of large classes and diverse student populations. His approach is practical but not prescriptive. Teachers need to make decisions on teaching and assessment methods to suit their own circumstances. In order to do that they need a conceptual framework to inform their decision making. Such a framework is clearly described and exemplified by this book. University teachers can readily adapt the ideas here to their own subjects and teaching conditions. (From cover description.)

Changing Academic Work by Elaine Martin. Buckingham, SRHE/OU Press. \$49.95.

Available through Allen and Unwin, Australia, contact
academic@allen-unwin.com.au

Changing Academic Work explores the competing tensions in contemporary work: the need to balance individualism with collaboration; accountability with reward; and a valuing of the

past with preparation for the future. The aim is to help staff build a contemporary university which is as much a learning organization as an organization about learning. Elaine Martin develops a set of simple but sound principles to guide academic work and, through case study material, she provides engaging and convincing illustrations of these principles in action. She offers insight and guidance to academic staff at all levels who wish to make their working environment more satisfying and productive. (From cover description.)

Managing your Academic Career, Strategies for Success, by Royce Sadler. Sydney, Allen and Unwin. \$24.95

This very useful book is written mainly for someone beginning an academic career but it would be useful for anyone. It covers all aspects of academic life for example, climbing out of a teaching rut, coping with career interruptions, analysing an editor's rejection and converting your thesis into a book. Each chapter is written in the form of a letter which makes for a very interesting and absorbing read.

Owen Hicks, past President of HERDSA, wrote that the book has 'a refreshingly personal style and sound advice is a hallmark of this book.'

CONCERNED ABOUT ASSESSMENT?

Visit the web site for the 4th Northumbria Assessment Conference

held in September 1999. You will find many useful papers at

www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations/assessment/index.cgi

News of HERDSA Branches

QUEENSLAND

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 23 November 1999 (arrival time 7p.m. going on 7.30 p.m.) at 29 High Street, Toowong, Brisbane. This restaurant offers a specialised range of dinner menus.

For catering purposes, it is essential that you notify the Secretary, Mr Harry Thompson, if you intend to be present, by 16 November 1999.

Please telephone (07) 3875 5643. Meals will be menu choice. Special dietary arrangements should be advised so that the restaurant can be notified. Members are invited bring partners to the evening.

The meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. sharp, prior to the commencement of the meal.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The SA branch held its AGM by email over the period 13-17 August.

Several members commented on this approach to the management of the Society's business along the lines of "This was the most enjoyable AGM I have ever attended."

Gerry Mullins was elected Convenor and Jan Orrell Treasurer.

On 17 August Dr Lee Andresen ran a workshop for more than 30 SA members and guests on "One Highway to Departmental Renewal: Making Teaching Community Property". The following day Lee worked with academic development staff from the three South Australian universities on strategic approaches to the challenges facing academic development units.

VICTORIA

As readers will be aware, HERDSA(Vic) has been concerned for the past eighteen months with the 1999 International Conference. Now that is over and we have celebrated its success, our attention is turning to the Branch itself and to organising activities that are responsive to members' needs.

Given the conference, the executive decided to postpone the AGM from its traditional mid-year spot to the end of the year. We have decided that our final AGM for this century will acknowledge communications technology and be handled by email. We intend to use this opportunity also to canvass members in terms of their ideas for Branch activities as well as their willingness to lead and organise.

If you are a member of HERDSA(Vic) please don't hesitate to contact either Judy Lyons, our Secretary,

(email: JLyons@florence.nu.rmit.edu.au) or myself (email: diana@deakin.edu.au) with your ideas.

Dr Di Challis

Manager, Academic Professional Development Centre for Academic Development [DCAD]

Deakin University

Geelong Waterfront Campus

Tel: 03 52-278192 Fax: 03 52-278099

http://www2.deakin.edu.au/dcad/who/diana_t.html

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In August Lynne Hunt, an Edith Cowan University nominee for the national awards on good teaching, presented a session on the experience of being nominated and going to Canberra for the Awards night. Richard Fuller reports that she was pretty critical (rightly so) of some of the processes that are used - the system has a few built in discourtesies which are quite unnecessary, and their presence probably tells a story about the attitudes and arrogance of some of the organisers.

For more details of the branches see the HERDSA web site www.hersda.org.au

Find out the latest in Australian Government policies on higher education. Visit the DETYA web site.

For details about industrial relations see

www.detya.gov.au/highered/programmes/workplace_reform.htm

For details about the 1999 ARC grants see

www.detya.gov.au/highered/research/outcomes.htm

For the Green Paper on funding research in Australia see

www.detya.gov.au/highered/otherpub/greenpaper/index.htm

Letters to the Editor

The special issue of HERD : Learning – centred Evaluation of Innovation in Higher Education. June 1999

Well done John: a second volume of HERD that I read straight through, from cover to cover - the previous one was the volume on phenomenography. As with that earlier one, the issue of evaluation is a particular interest of mine and when that is combined with the use of technology in teaching and with some projects focussed on problem based learning how could I resist?

And it wasn't just that I'm interested in the area, but that I found the approach of the volume so compatible with my own beliefs' and, more than that, it challenged those beliefs as well.

While I've been prompted by a wide range of thoughts by the volume I'll confine myself to a brief comment on the encouraging, but in some ways slightly

depressing, final paper in the volume: Carol McNaught and colleagues' paper on "Systems Not Projects".

How encouraging to see a decent longitudinal study AND see an institution prepared to learn from the study rather than just ignoring it and letting the innovation suffer the common fate of just slipping away!

Why slightly depressing? No, not because of the findings of the study but because they seem to have been unexpected. So I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised at absence of reference to the volumes edited by Dave Boud or to that by edited by Christine Alavi on problem based learning.

I'd have thought that Vet scientists wouldn't have been put off by the nursing context of the latter.

I don't think I've ever been in a problem based learning discussion or presentation where the question of the

viability of doing a little bit of problem based work within a traditional programme wasn't raised.

When that question is posed to me, it really puts me on the spot. I try to be encouraging and urge the questioner to go ahead and have a try - but I feel that I have to warn about the conflicts students (and staff) will face between the demands of problem based learning and traditional instruction and assessment, as well as warning about the inappropriateness of traditional assessment procedures for problem based learning and the troubles that that can cause.

Oh well, we've always done a lot of wheel reinventing in education, so what's new?

Bob Ross
Higher Education Consultant.

THE HERDSA WEBSITE

NOW FEATURES A HERDSA MEMBERS SECTION.

When you visit our members section, you will be asked to enter

a USER NAME:

Enter your Surname

a PASSWORD:

Enter your four digit HERDSA membership number which is found on all correspondence sent to you, including the label to this News.

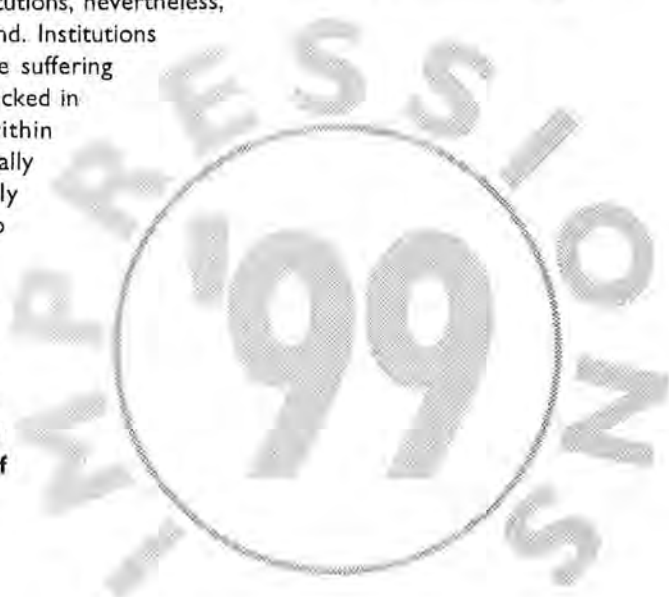
Check out the calendar members section of the HERDSA website
- for you to enter details of visits, or to collect details of visits to your area.

Impressions '99 from Matt Smith, South Africa

Overall the conference was a fascinating glimpse into the lives of academics and how they are coming to terms with the changes in higher education. From a South African perspective it was heartening, in a disturbed sort of way, to hear how institutions of higher education in Australasia were struggling with institutional change. South African institutions appear to be ahead of their counterparts in New Zealand and Australia in terms of political transformation (e.g. equity and democracy), but are way behind in terms of educational transformation (e.g. curriculum restructuring). Changing the "core business" of institutions, nevertheless, has been much more difficult and a fraught experience all round. Institutions from around the globe reported that many of their staff were suffering from "transformation fatigue". The "fed-up factor" has clearly kicked in and it will be interesting to observe how this plays out within different institutions. Time will tell if the changes fundamentally transform higher education or whether the changes simply become illusions which we forget are illusions (with apologies to Professor Brady).

Matt Smith is completing a Ph.D at Syracuse University on a Fulbright Scholarship. As part of the research for the thesis he is managing the Transformation Indicator Project for the Centre for Higher Education Transformation, a national study sponsored by the Ford Foundation to measure the transformation of institutions of higher education in South Africa.

Contact: msmith01@iafrica.com



Effective Courses/Effective Teaching at University

Conference held at the University of Queensland 1-2 November 1999

A useful conference with lively thoughtful keynote addresses
and many interesting papers.

Although it is over you can still catch up with the papers
on the web site so click onto

http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/conferences/teach_conference99/

Forthcoming Conferences

HERDSA Conference Grants for Postgraduate Students

Two grants (one of \$500 for a local student and one of \$1,000 for a student incurring significant travel costs) are available to assist postgraduate students to attend and participate in the conference. To apply for a grant, see the Conference Website at

<http://www.herdsa.org.au/2000conf.htm>

HERDSA Prize for the Best Paper by a New Researcher

A prize of \$500 will be awarded to a new researcher or researchers who produce the best conference paper making a significant contribution to research in the field of higher education. Further information is available on the Conference Website at

<http://www.herdsa.org.au/2000conf.htm>

Impressions '99 from Morag Paxton Capetown.

Herdsa 1999 !! For me this stood for contrasts...tremendous contrasts in architecture on the Melbourne campus – the splendid turn of the century magnificence of Ormond College versus the very nineties metal and glass of the conference headquarters; then there were fascinating contrasts between the macro and the micro pictures presented in both the parallel and the keynote sessions of the conference eg. Peter Coaldrake's critical overview of institutional change in Australian higher education set against Ference Marton's spellbinding dissertation on learning through discerning variation. Inevitably as one of many overseas guests, I noticed the contrasts and the similarities between yours and ours and came away feeling that South Africa and Australia have a lot to learn from each other. Thank you HERDSA and Probat Milton and her team for an inspiring and well-organised conference!

Morag Paxton is a Lecturer in Language Development and part of the Centre for Higher Education and Development at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Impressions '99 from the U.S.A by Bill McKeachie

I had asked that the International Conference on Improving University Teaching be scheduled the week before HERDSA because I knew that there were many excellent researchers in higher education in Australia and New Zealand and wanted to find out what they were doing. HERDSA more than met my expectations. The sessions were invariably interesting and the discussions stimulating. I was happy that I could arrange to attend.

Professor McKeachie is a distinguished researcher in higher education from the University of Michigan. He is well known for his book 'Teaching Tips,' now in its ninth edition.

