



Discipline-Based Educational Development: A New Model for the Australian Higher Education Sector

By Janice Orrell

Origins and Characteristics of the DBI Scheme

The Carrick Institute has a mission to promote and advance learning and teaching in Australian higher education. In 2005, HERDSA was commissioned to prepare a discussion paper focusing on the place of disciplines in achieving the Carrick Institute Mission. The discussion paper, *Enabling Australia's higher education learning and teaching disciplines based activities: A scoping paper prepared on behalf of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, was prepared by Professor Shelda Debowski on behalf of HERDSA (January 2006). The scheme outlined in the discussion paper was ambitious. The Carrick Institute Board recognised that in the first instance, before considering the challenges inherent in the proposal, the development of sound collaborative relationships with Australian disciplinary leadership was essential, as was the need to seek an evidentiary basis upon which to plan. These two goals have been the primary activities of the current DBI scheme.

In 2006 an interim DBI scheme was endorsed to be developed incrementally with the following general principles. Firstly, it would provide the means for the disciplinary leadership to investigate and scope each discipline sector-wide, to identify effective practices that could be leveraged and to note and prioritise the gaps that needed to be addressed. A

second principle would be that bodies, such as Councils of Deans and DVCs and PVC Learning and Teaching/Academic groups, would be consulted to design the investigation. Where comparable discipline bodies did not exist, support would be provided to develop recognised networks for sector-wide communication and collaboration. A third principle was that existing structures, communities of endeavour and prior AUTC funded discipline initiatives would be fully utilised in the development of the scheme. In addition a process of on-going review and evaluation of the DBI strategy would be developed.

The overall goal of the DBI Scheme is to establish a sustainable system and sector-wide infrastructure for on-going, discipline-based learning and teaching curriculum development. The intention is that this development will be characterised by future orientation and stakeholder engagement at the outset.

In 2006, three pilot disciplines were selected to provide some guide as to what might constitute a sustainable DBI infrastructure. These were Science, Law and ICT. Science was selected because it represented a large umbrella discipline comprising a vast range of discrete disciplines that sometimes coalesce to form new areas of study. Law was selected because it represented a professional oriented discipline. ICT because it represented a new and chameleon type of discipline

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From the Editor

The newly elected HERDSA Executive Committee took office at the recent annual conference in Adelaide. The President, Shelda Debowski, is continuing in office and in her report in this issue writes about the achievements of the Society over the past year and outlines strategies for the coming two years. The new members of the Executive are profiled in this issue.

The work of the Executive is divided into a number of portfolios and these are listed together with a description of the work of the Fellowships portfolio. The work of the remaining portfolios will be featured in future issues.

One very important portfolio is the Societies' website, whose convenor, Gail Wilson, has been working extremely hard on redesigning the site to make it more interactive and user friendly. It should be ready to be launched shortly.

The concept of the scholarship of teaching is coming into increasing usage in higher education. However it is not at all clear if there is common agreement about its meaning. This point was made by Erika Kustra in her reflection on the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference held outside North America for the first time. The practical outworkings of the concept are explored by two contributions from the Vice-Chancellor's Symposium at the University of the Sunshine Coast. New academics should find the articles by Kathy Lynch and Kay Pozzebon very helpful.

Similarly Amanda Burrell's work on academic stage fright will ring bells with many, even those who have been teaching for many years. It would be good if funds were made available for Amanda to conduct much larger studies of this topic.

The Carrick Institute of Learning and Teaching is playing an ever increasing role in Australian higher education. Those who attended the Adelaide conference

benefited from the presence of several Senior Carrick Fellows as they shared with delegates their current projects in special showcase sessions. Carrick had a stall at the conference at which details were available of the forthcoming Carrick Exchange. This looks potentially a very useful development for all those who teach, manage and lead learning in higher education. Literature from Carrick explains that the Exchange will combine a repository function with a set of social networking services to support communication and collaboration across the national and international higher education sector. At present the exchange is still in the testing phase so it will be a few months before it will be widely available.

In the light of all these developments it is timely to have an article from Janice Orrell, the Director of Disciplines, Networks and Special Projects at Carrick describing her work.

Colleagues in New Zealand will be interested to learn that progress is being made with the establishment of a centre which is equivalent to the Carrick Institute. The centre is named Ako Aotearoa-the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. Brian Gould (ex VC Waikato University) has been appointed Chair of the Centre's Board with Dr. Peter Coolbear as Director. The Centre's website address is <http://www.nctte.ac.nz>

Finally we pay tribute to Ilma Brewer, a HERDSA life member, who passed away earlier this year. Ilma was a marvellous role model as an academic as she combined a distinguished research career with the development of innovative teaching which communicated her subject effectively to students. Unlike many innovations Ilma's work has continued though she is no longer there to keep it going.

Roger Landbeck

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that was confronting recruitment and curriculum challenges as well as having its student recruited by industry before they had completed their degree. Each of these disciplines offered a unique set of circumstances to be investigated and had a high level of buy-in by the Deans across the sector.

While these initiatives develop their investigations, all other disciplines were invited to apply for funds to:

- establish or further develop their sector-wide networks;
- identify strengths to be further enhanced and up-scaled; and
- generate a shared, sector-wide future-oriented vision for further development of the discipline.

The DBI Scheme is a largely organic in which curriculum leadership is encouraged through the provision of funding to take stock of its strengths, directions and output in terms of preparing its graduates to meet national agendas and disciplinary needs. For this initial stage it has had two companion programmes; *Higher Education Enterprise* and *Common Curriculum Issues Initiatives*.

Higher Education Enterprise

Higher Education Enterprise funding focuses on institutional programmes and activities, often underpinned by a body of scholarship, that, while not disciplines with formal teaching roles, make significant contributions to the enhancement of the student learning experience and student learning outcomes. These include academic development, student learning support, careers services, educational policy development and transition programmes.

Common Curriculum Issues Initiatives

Common Curriculum Issues Initiatives funding has been provided to scoping studies to map, examine and comment on selected curriculum issues that are commonly experienced by a number of disciplines in Australian higher education. Their goal is to conduct systematic,

effective and efficient approaches to supporting and assuring the rigour, quality and ongoing improvement of practice in the particular endeavour within institutions and across the sector as a whole.

Priority areas to be funded were identified in a national invitational forum of institutional leaders comprising DVD's (Academic), PVC (Teaching and Learning) and Directors of Academic Development. Their top priorities included cultural diversity, work integrated and practical learning and induction and renewal of academic staff in relation to their role as teachers. The initiatives funded under this scheme in 2006–2007 included: Foundations of University teaching programmes, a study of the nature of academic development required by the sector, studio teaching; honours; inter-professional learning in health; research supervision and training; work integrated learning; graduate attributes; research skill development; disability and e-learning benchmarking.

Disciplines Funded under the DBI Scheme

In addition to the three pilots, eighteen other disciplines have been selected through a proposal process to investigate and scope their field of study. The number of disciplines funded may be increased following the August funding round. Current investigations include: biotechnology; engineering; mathematics in engineering; physics; arts degrees; psychology; theology; peace education; teacher education; business; clinical exercise science; occupational therapy; paramedic education; pharmacy; speech pathology; architecture, construction management and surveying; built environment and design.

Seed funds have also been provided to facilitate the scoping, networking and dialogue on high priority issues, such as studio teaching and comparability in multi-campus programmes. Details of these initiatives can be found on the Carrick Institute DBI web site.

Conceptions of Higher Education Curriculum

As well as providing funds to sector-wide discipline and Higher Education Enterprise groups, additional support activities have been provided by the Carrick Institute. A programme of national Curriculum Issue Forums has been established to encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue on issues of common concern. The forums are distributed around the country to enable maximum sector engagement. The first was in Hobart and focused on trans-disciplinary and cross disciplinary curricular. The second will be in Adelaide on August 31 and will focus on the Teaching—Research nexus. Details of these forums can be found on the Carrick Institute web site.

To support investigation and interrogation of national curricular, a project to develop an inquiry based curriculum framework is currently being developed by Professor Owen Hicks; a Senior Consultant to the Carrick Institute. This project will identify a common language to discuss the concept of curriculum before undertaking a consultation process. The goal of the latter aspect of the project will be to generate a curriculum framework that will inform discipline and institutional leaders when they conduct their curriculum reviews. It is also intended that the framework will provide a reference point for those developing up the body of knowledge under the Common Curriculum Issues Scheme and other Carrick Institute grants, such as graduate attributes, work integrated learning, cultural literacy and technological literacy.

Project Leadership Support

Because many disciplines are unused to the methods of educational research and development a programme of project leadership support and mentoring has been developed. Following each funding round the two day workshop is provided for new project managers. A workshop on generating a future-oriented vision and on sector-wide change management for

discipline leaders will be offered early in 2008.

Networking and Information Sharing through the Carrick Exchange

A companion portfolio to the Discipline-Based Initiatives (DBI) is the Resource Identification and Networking (RIN) Portfolio which has responsibility for developing the *Carrick Exchange*. The DBI focuses on people and disciplines networks and RIN focuses networking through an on-line environment. The proposed architecture for the *Carrick Exchange* will provide an entrée for academics to the set of functions that will assist information seeking, sharing and networking across the sector. Ultimately it is envisaged that disciplines will establish honorary editorial boards and recruit and train peer reviewers who will assess and provide feedback on contributions of teaching and learning ideas and resources. Best practice relating to the process for doing this is being researched by *ascilite* as well as recognition and reward systems that will encourage the everyday academic to share their effective teaching practices, just as they would share their research achievements.

Achievements of the DBI Scheme to Date

There are two assumptions influencing the development and evaluation of the DBI Scheme to date. Firstly, to be effective in enlivening the future of discipline-based development, a strong commitment to authentic engagement of all stakeholders is essential. Stakeholders include academics at all levels, senior institutional leaders, institutional learning support professionals, professional associations and discipline academies, students and employers of graduates. Secondly, a co-production approach towards the development of the discipline-based development infrastructure is advisable to best achieve a style and mode of DBI most appropriate for Australian institutional and academic engagement and uptake.

There is early anecdotal evidence that the first stage of the DBI scheme has been successful. On-going consultation and support of the currently funded DBI initiatives have provided anecdotal evidence that some very positive and

constructive changes have occurred. Examples of the impact of this strategy include:

- It has caused curriculum and learning and teaching issues to be far more prominent in the agendas of the Deans' meetings. It has given it a constant place in their regular agenda and led to some "difficult" issues being addressed rather than remaining in the "too hard basket".
- Some Councils of Deans have altered their organisational committee structure to create curriculum sub-committees or working groups to report back on a regular basis.
- Related disciplines have negotiated to have representatives of each initiative on their respective advisory committees and have reported very positive outcomes as a result.
- Radical reorientations of significant industries towards University matters have occurred as a result of their engagement.

Where to Next?

Two strategies have been adopted to gain an evidentiary base for the next stage of development. One strategy has been to establish close ties with the UK Higher Education Academy Subject Centre leaders in order to gather information on the infrastructure model and the lessons learnt from the UK experience. Another has been to commission the evaluative study of the impact of the current schemes. An evaluation of the current scheme is underway, being conducted by Professor Mairead Brown, a Senior Consultant of the Carrick Institute. As a result it is now possible to generate an evidentiary foundation upon which to base a sustainable system that serves the needs of discipline communities.

Discipline-based Development – The UK Experience

A development model based around disciplines has been operating successfully within the United Kingdom since 1997. Consultation with independent leaders and academics in the UK indicated that this is the most successful aspect of the UK Higher Education Academy.

The UK Higher Education Academy system comprises 24 Subject Centres, 81 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and

Learning (CETLs) and an Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Group. These were first established in 1998 as the Learning and Teaching Subject Network (LTSN) and then incorporated into the establishment of the UK Higher Education Academy in 2004. A process of reintegration has been undertaken since the advent of the HEA to begin to form clusters of Subject Centres, for example, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and The Health Federation (Medicine and Health Science and Practice).

The original 24 Subject Centres were established, following a process of institutional bids. Each centre is led by a Director who is part time and is a respected leader of the Discipline. The Subject Centres (SCs) have worked largely with the enthusiasts and the classroom teachers and are characterised by a peer-to-peer approach. Each SC, while building from a common set of terms of reference has interpreted them to reflect the particular character of each discipline. They have each established their own profile and infrastructure including established their own web presence.

The SCs support enhancement of learning and teaching in the UK system and encourage wide and increasing engagement of everyday academic practitioners and departments in the L&T enhancement agenda. They are a point for authentic stakeholder engagement, providing a place for industry related champions to engage with the University sector and student engagement. The SCs also play a key role in vision generation and change agency at the discipline level. Leaders of Subject Centres reported that they provided an effective vehicle for the translation of the generic scholarship of CETLs into discipline based terms as well as national agendas into discipline specific strategies. There were also SC based programmes for recognition and reward of good teaching and, interestingly, good learning (through essay competitions).

SC Directors also reported that they believed that the centres had an important role at the discipline level in:

- Knowledge generation and management;
- Facilitation of the articulation of standards; and
- Enabling cross sector benchmarking at the level of actual practice.



Despite variability in quality and success, Subject Centres, are regarded highly in the UK as the strong feature of the UK Higher Education Academy. This was reported both by people from within the Academy and from independent sources in the sector. There was evidence to demonstrate that:

- They provide an efficient and viable vehicle for translating national agendas into usable practice and the outcomes of the Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) into resources that help academic departments and individual academics enhance the student learning experience.
- SC functions well when they adopt a peer to peer style of relating to individual academics and to academic departments. Thus they are a credible source of resources and able to support the uptake of institutional and national agendas such as widened participation, effective assessment strategies, supporting student engagement in learning and student employment readiness.
- SCs complement institutional programmes that prepare academics for their role as teachers by providing programmes that induct new academics to their role of teachers of a particular discipline.
- SCs have an impact on both practice and the development of policy.
- SCs impact is broad and deep in scope. They use existing networks and have developed their own diverse strategies that ensure penetration of input across the sector and down to the departmental and individual level.
- SCs engagement with stakeholders, especially students, keeps the focus on what is important about the Higher Education learning and teaching agenda, namely, the student experience.

While the SC model appears to be successful, there are plans for further development to enhance additional advancement of issues that have been identified. These include:

- The SCs have worked largely with the enthusiasts and the classroom teachers at the expense of working with Deans

and Heads of Departments. They are now trying to redress this;

- 24 Centres were initially established, attempting to satisfy academics desire for a high level of granularity of focus. They now recognise that the level of granularity will never be satisfied and are attempting to aggregate their SCs into a smaller number of clusters (10) to facilitate better use of resources and greater communication amongst Centres with common interests;

- Each SC established its own web presence. This has made on-line sharing of resources difficult because of diverse architecture and technical platforms. It has been difficult to work towards achieving a common architecture now that they are established, therefore a pilot of 7 SCs are redeveloping their web presence with Academy York to establish a common searchable database;

- There is not optimal uptake of the resources developed by the new Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) in the SCs although key resource personnel from HEA York have been employed to facilitate this uptake in specific fields such as employability and relearning.

Finally, while, in name they were called Subject Centres, the Directors interviewed argued that in fact they were not single subject centres. They were more like hubs for multiple subjects. It was reported that activities, events and materials would never obtain a level of granularity that will satisfy academics, neither did they believe that the level academics' desired was necessary nor helpful.

Australia is in a good position to capitalise on the UK "wisdom of experience" when developing an approach that would support the penetration of the Carrick Institute agenda of enhancing the profile and quality of L&T in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Australia has the chance to take the better ideas and avoid the pitfalls that are now becoming apparent.

Concluding Comments

The aim in the Discipline Based Initiatives portfolio in 2006 and 2007 has been to develop a disciplinary focus and presence within the Carrick Institute, to raise the profile of the DBI Scheme within the sector, and to establish relationships with Councils of Deans and communities of Heads of Department for particular disciplines. These activities, described above, have been important to both inform the sector about the DBI Scheme and to support discipline and institutional leaders to begin to consider for an evidentiary point of view what is needed to generate future-proofed curriculum visions. There has been a largely favourable response from the sector to the activities of the DBI portfolio and constructive advice has been generously provided. This advice will be used to shape the next phase of development for 2008–2009.

Editors Note: Readers may be interested in looking at the web sites of the 24 Subject Centres mentioned in this article. They can be accessed via this link:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/networks/subjectcentres.

Janice Orrell is a Director at the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. She is responsible for developing a sustainable infrastructure for on-going, sector-wide, discipline based curriculum development. The goal is that such development should be future oriented and stakeholder engaged. She is also responsible for establishing an accessible, user-friendly on-line set of services for resources sharing across the sector and for supporting the establishment of networks.

Her particular research interests are in assessment, work integrated learning, academic leadership and the preparation and renewal of academics for their roles as teachers. Formerly, she led academic development at Flinders University.

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President's Report

By Shelda Debowski

It seems like yesterday that I was writing my last post-conference report – but of course, it is another year now gone. As I realise many of you were unable to attend our excellent conference in Adelaide, I would like to provide you with a synopsis of the annual review of HERDSA which was presented at the AGM.

There is much to report! Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the work of our executive – past, present and new. As you may recall, the new executive was convened following a call for nominations. The following table lists the outgoing and incoming executive along with our ongoing Executive Officers who are not elected.

You can see that we have a slightly larger executive to assist the work of the society and a good mix of experienced and new members. I would like to convey my very sincere appreciation to the previous executive including those who were unable to continue throughout their full term. HERDSA relies very heavily on this committee and I hope you will acknowledge the contribution these members have made when next you meet them.

The 2006–2007 year has been a full and very demanding year for our Executive and the Society as a whole. To give you some idea of what has been happening, a list of achievements is listed below. These are grouped into the various portfolio areas to give you some sense of where HERDSA Executive has focused.

HERDSA Community

- *HERDSA News* continues to provide an informative, topical and newsy perspective on issues, members and new trends.
- The *HERDSA List* is an invaluable regular topical update which is also including more international news for your information.

Outgoing Executive

Shelda Debowski (President)
Mark Barrow (Vice President)
Maureen Bell (Treasurer)
Gail Wilson
Geoff Crisp
Judyth Sachs
Kathryn Sutherland
Kogi Naidoo
Margaret Hicks
Robert Kennelly (Co-opted member)

Incoming Executive

Shelda Debowski (President)
Mark Barrow (Vice President)
Kathryn Bartimote-Aufflick (Treasurer)
Deanne Gannaway
Gail Wilson
Geoff Crisp
Gordon Joughin
Janet Taylor
Kathryn Sutherland
Kogi Naidoo
Maureen Bell
Robert Kennelly

HERDSA Officers

Allan Goody
Ian Macdonald and Izabel Soliman
Jennifer Ungaro
Roger Landbeck

- A successful Perth conference attracted 240 delegates and was followed by another very successful conference in Adelaide.
- Three pre-conference colloquia were held prior to the 2006 conference in collaboration with the Australian Universities Quality Forum conference.
- The New Zealand TERNZ conference was held later in 2006.

HERDSA Presence

- HERDSA has participated in Carrick Think Tanks over the last year and has a very active presence in the development of teaching and learning in New Zealand.
- Active branches across the two nations and in Hong Kong have worked to support local networks.
- HERDSA was represented at the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED)

where international strategies to promote academic development and teaching and learning are explored.

- Collaboration with other international societies has been a high priority, continuing the good relations already established.
- HERDSA has been represented at some higher education forums in various locations.

HERDSA Publications

- 2 new HERDSA Guides were released last year and more are in progress.
- The new HERD editorial team has spent considerable time refining the editorial systems and catching up with a large increase in publications for review. They have also improved the process of monitoring the receipt and processing of new papers.



HERDSA Fellowships

- Seven new fellowships were conferred over the year and previous fellows were renewed for a further period.
- Significant evaluation and ongoing refinement of the fellowship process and the professional development scheme has been undertaken with some very good outcomes.
- Last year we introduced a Fellows dinner at the conference and this has enabled good networking across this group. This will now continue as part of the conference programme.
- (With the fellowship system now well refined, members are strongly encouraged to think about their fellowship submission. It is a very useful process of reflection and review.)

HERDSA Management

- The introduction of two additional executive meetings has been very helpful in progressing the committee's work. Most members made the trip to Melbourne in April and November to work together on new initiatives. These will be continued in 2007/8.
- President reports are now part of the *HERDSA News* to keep you updated on portfolio progress.
- A clear financial strategy has been put in place for the Society, with a fixed sum invested to cover any potential future shortfall in funding, designated operational budget funds to support the normal HERDSA business and strategic funds deployed to fund important developmental projects. Expenditure is now linked to a strategic plan which will operate over the next two years.
- New executive members received a thorough induction prior to the recent conference. This has reduced the time lost in learning about the society and the executive. My thanks to our new members who readily joined the Executive from April this year.
- A new membership brochure and graphic for HERDSA have been developed to create a more modern look.
- The new website with increased capability and portfolio management capacity has been developed and is almost there!

- The Constitution was reviewed and presented to members for consideration prior to the AGM.

What Next?

These same portfolio areas are now moving to some new goals and priorities. In short, they are:

HERDSA Presence

- We would like to develop a higher education forum to explore emerging issues and to more fully engage senior leaders in these debates. This would complement the existing conference.
- HERDSA needs a stronger voice on higher education policy matters. This will be a high priority. If you see issues on which you think we should be commenting, please email me: Shelda.Debowski@uwa.edu.au. These responses will also be placed on the website for your information and comments/suggestions from HERDSA members will be solicited.
- Website blogs and member profiles are being planned for the new website to encourage our knowledge of members and their interests.

HERDSA Publications

- More HERDSA Guides are in planning. If you have ideas please let us know – we are keen to keep providing useful support and we know the guides are very popular with our members.
- The contract with Taylor and Francis is being renegotiated. We are keen to increase the number of issues to accommodate the increased number of accepted submissions. Some rich discussions are currently occurring with the publishers on a number of matters.
- Conference papers will now be available through the HERDSA website. These are uploaded and ready on the new website.
- The *HERDSA News* will also be available via the new website.
- We have formed a Scholarship and Publications Portfolio team to explore other avenues that we might offer to enable members to publish and promote their scholarly work.

HERDSA Community

- Our Visiting Scholar Portfolio is another initiative that has recently commenced. We welcome suggestions on potential visitors – we also hope to collaborate with other higher education agencies or associations to sponsor our visitor.
- As President I am hoping to visit most regions over the next two years. My first visit will be to Canberra in two weeks time. These visits offer an ideal opportunity to explore HERDSA's work and to support the local networks of colleagues.
- Regions and events will be better promoted through the new website. This will make it easier for our members to see what is happening and to keep in touch with their colleagues.
- A new members breakfast was held for the first time at the recent conference. It will be continued as part of the conference strategy.
- The 2008 and 2009 conference convenors have been confirmed, with both participating on Executive meetings.

HERDSA Fellowships

- The new PD strategy for existing fellows has now commenced.
- Fellows will be well profiled on the website so that they can be recognised and assist other members as appropriate.
- A Fellows PD session will now be included in every pre-conference programme along with information sessions for potential fellows.

HERDSA Management

- We will continue our three meetings per year as these have been invaluable in progressing the Society.
- A policy on HERDSA's sponsorship of projects will be developed as we are receiving many requests for assistance.
- HERDSA marketing is a high priority for the next two years. We are very keen to build our membership base to contain costs for our existing members. And we are also very keen to promote the value of HERDSA to those new in academe.



- The website will be launched very soon and training for all executive members with portfolio responsibilities will take place.

Our *Treasurer Report* was also presented for approval at the AGM. My thanks to Maureen Bell for her excellent work in guiding our expenditure and planning for 2007/8. And a warm welcome to Kathryn Baltimote-Aufflick who has now assumed this role. For your information, the following areas are the main costs that will draw on your subscription fees for the coming year: office related costs; journal funding; editorial support for the journal; new publications and the executive meetings in April and November. We have aimed to operate within budget for ongoing management of the Society. Fortunately our conferences and publications have provided an additional income stream which we use for strategic projects. The projects which have been identified as

being of strategic value to our members include the following:

- Sponsorship of an historical review of academic development in Australia and New Zealand under the guidance of Alison Lee. This project is supporting interviews of academic development leaders who have influenced the growth of higher education;
- The Visiting Scholar scheme;
- Increased support for conference planners with a more appropriate SEED funding allocation that will roll over each year;
- Ongoing development of the website;
- Development of the Higher Education Forum strategy; and
- Additional Guides and other publications.

I will keep you updated on these strategic initiatives as part of this regular column.

Finally, the AGM also voted on the recommended constitutional changes and

these were unanimously carried. The new constitution will be placed on the website for your reference.

There is much more to tell, but I hope this gives you a small sense of where we are focused. Our primary goal as an executive is to provide you with a relevant, engaging and very useful society that supports your needs as an educator in higher education. If you feel we should be addressing certain issues, I need to hear from you. As always, I sincerely welcome your comments and feedback. Please feel free to email me on any matter large or small.

With best wishes,

Shelda Debowski

Shelda Debowski is President of HERDSA and Director of Organisational and Staff Development Services, University of Western Australia

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Higher Education in the Headlines

By Peter Kandlbinder

A summary of the top stories on higher education from the last 3 months of *Australian Higher Education Supplement* (www.theaustralian.news.com.au), *Times Higher Education Supplement* (www.thes.co.uk) and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (chronicle.com).

Higher education made headlines around the world in the mainstream press with the Virginia Tech shootings. In May, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* published a special issue that included the university President's analysis of the events. The higher education newspapers also focused on recruitment, student finances, the budget, the purpose of higher education, the role of academics as public intellectuals and equity as issues for the higher education sector.

Recruitment

In April the *Times Higher Education Supplement* had a major focus on

recruitment in the UK with new tests being used to probe employee suitability and the increasing use of overseas scholars to ease staff shortages. The conditions for some academics in the UK have steadily improved with the number of chairs up 63% in a decade and improved pay for women who work in post-92 universities. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* found that politics was keeping some scholars out of the US while a number of surveys showed that the big winners in the US sector were College CFO's and *Australian Higher Education Supplement* found that Vice-Chancellor pay raises have outpaced other industry leaders while changes to the semester structure to allow winter schools is putting pressure of Australian academic's work conditions.

Student Finances

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported on a series of financial scandals

in the US involving a number of colleges and the deals they have made with student loans lenders, offshore investments and insurance companies. In the *Australian Higher Education Supplement* it was reported that Australian students battle to balance paid work and study and are reluctant to take on local full-fee degrees. Extra entry options were highlighted as a risk for Australian universities but some continued to consider offering free degrees to overcome an accountant shortage.

The Budget & Funding

The budget period in Australia lead to a number of stories in which Vice-Chancellors called for increased funding and were then surprised by a \$1.7bn boost that exceeded their hopes, only to be later qualified as a welcome increase but no bonanza to higher education funding. Not everyone saw the budget as positive with

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New Members of the Executive 2007–2009

Kathryn Bartimote-Aufflick



Kathryn is an associate lecturer in academic development within the Pharmacy Education Unit at the University of Sydney. She has been a member

of HERDSA since 2003, and will be new to the Executive Committee in 2007. Kathryn's role is a mix of working with other academic staff to achieve good teaching and learning in Pharmacy including supporting them in their own education research, and pursuing her own research interests. Before starting this role at the end of 2006 she taught, researched and consulted in applied statistics in another faculty for 7 years. Her current research is in two streams: 1) the adaptation of statistical techniques for various collaborative projects in various areas of natural sciences and health; 2) research into the learning and development of university teachers – in the use of evidence to drive program agendas, and more particularly the self-regulatory and metacognitive processes involved in the continual transformation of an individual academic as they learn about and research their teaching.

Deanne Gannaway



Deanne is an academic developer within the Staff Development and Training Unit at Flinders University. In addition to traditional

professional development activities aimed at academics such as foundations programs, teaching and learning workshops and consultancy with University teaching teams, she is also involved in a number of institutional, local and nationally focused projects. She has been a HERDSA member since 2003 and

has been part of the HERDSA conference committee for HERDSA Conference 2007 recently hosted in Adelaide in July. Her research interests and experience have been within the areas of online learning, dissemination of innovations evaluation of teaching and learning and cultural diversity and inclusive practice and academic leadership.

Gordon Joughin



Gordon is a senior lecturer in academic development at Wollongong University and a long standing member of HERDSA. He has worked in a number of

Australian universities, including Griffith University and the Queensland University of Technology, and recently spent four years at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. While in Hong Kong, Gordon was President of the HERDSA Hong Kong Branch. At Wollongong University Gordon coordinates the University Learning and Teaching programme for new academic staff. Gordon's research and writing has focused on assessment and includes a collection of assessment practices (*How Assessment Supports Learning*, Hong Kong University Press, 2006 with David Carless and Fun Liu) and a Special Edition of *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* (31, 4, 2006). Two particular areas of interest are oral assessment and the nature of change processes within higher education institutions.

Janet Taylor

Janet is an Associate Professor within the Learning and Teaching Support Unit within The University of Queensland, where she is coordinator of Academic



Learning Support. She has been a HERDSA member since 2001 and a HERDSA Fellow since 2005. Janet is a specialist in mathematics learning support and has taught mathematics and science at university over a number of years. Within her unit she has special responsibilities for facilitating scholarship and research in learning and teaching. She has published widely on learning and teaching within Higher Education with a focus on bridging and university mathematics. Her current research includes the Undergraduate Learning Project, Emerging Technologies Project and most recently the integration of Web3D technologies within university curricula.

Most HERDSA members probably are unaware of the arrangements of the HERDSA office and the tremendous work done by our administration manager, Jennifer Ungaro, so I have included the following to put everyone in the picture. Editor.

Jennifer Ungaro



HERDSA Office is managed by Support U a business which specialises in administration and event management. Jennifer Ungaro and Kelly Hong

from Support U will assist you with any queries on behalf of HERDSA. The work performed for HERDSA is undertaken over a period of 25 hours per week and is not necessarily performed during office hours. Should you wish to contact HERDSA you can do so by email or phone. Emails are answered daily including Saturdays and phone calls will be returned within a 24 hour time frame 7 days per week.

Contact email: office@herdsa.org.au

Contact phone +61 2 9771 3911.

Robert Kennelly from the University of Canberra also joined the Executive in July and he will be featured in the December issue.

HERDSA Fellowship Scheme

The HERDSA Fellowship Scheme, known formally as the HERDSA Fellowship Recognition and Development Scheme, now has 29 Fellows, following the inclusion of 7 new Fellows at the recent HERDSA 2007 Conference in Adelaide in July 2007. The HERDSA Fellowship Scheme is based on the fundamental values of HERDSA, namely the development and improvement of higher education; the encouragement of scholarship in learning and teaching; the use of peer review and interaction as supporting mechanisms for setting and maintaining standards. While the Fellowship Scheme recognises high quality educational practice, it is first and foremost a professional development Fellowship Scheme.

The purposes of the Scheme are to:

- improve the quality of educational practice, management and leadership across the higher education sector and so improve the quality of the student experience;
- enhance the professionalism of teachers and educational leaders and managers;
- recognise and reward those who facilitate high quality student learning and the student experience;
- provide opportunities for further professional development in cross-institutional groups;
- provide a process for critical reflection into educational practice, leadership and the learning process;
- provide a forum for peer evaluation and dialogue.

Why would a HERDSA member apply for a Fellowship? There are many answers to this question, probably as many as the individuals who apply. Some members apply because it may assist in a critical phase in their career, some because the award of a Fellowship represents peer recognition of significant achievements over a sustained period of time, others recognise that the process of taking time out from their hectic schedule to reflect on their educational practices or their development and leadership roles will allow them an opportunity to move forward in their personal and professional development. Some members seek a more formal developmental pathway, one that

involves a collegial partnership with others who have similar interests. Whatever the reasons for applying, the award of a Fellowship will allow members to develop as professionals and to contribute to the development of others involved in higher education.

One of the unique features of the HERDSA Fellowship Scheme is the emphasis on the ongoing professional development opportunities afforded to Fellows. Many professional organizations have a Fellowship scheme that recognises significant achievements over many years; the recipients are often considered 'icons' within the profession. Although some HERDSA Fellows may very well be considered 'icons' within the profession, HERDSA Fellowships are not reserved solely for those who have reached 'iconic' status! All HERDSA members are eligible to apply for a Fellowship; there is no minimum period of time that you must serve before applying, but it is unlikely that someone who has engaged for less than 5 years in professional educational work would have sufficient experience upon which to draw for the necessary evidence and reflective practice examples.

HERDSA Fellowships are not just for academic practitioners; they are relevant to those involved in academic or student development programs, as well as those members involved in educational management and leadership. The Fellowship documents use the term 'educational practice' to encompass all activities associated with enhancing learning and teaching and the student and staff experience.

For members contemplating applying for a Fellowship, it is essential to read the Registrant's Handbook a few times in order to clearly appreciate the requirements for the portfolio. There are five parts to the HERDSA Fellowship portfolio:

- Introduction and context for your educational practice;
- Philosophy of teaching statement;
- Statements and evidence addressing the 7 essential criteria;
- Reflective statement; and
- Curriculum Vitae.

The portfolio represents your grounded rationale, based on reflection, of your approach to your educational practice and the evidence that supports your case. It uses selected examples to illustrate the basis for your reflections and achievements. HERDSA Fellowships are not awarded solely on the basis of achievements; indeed a portfolio that simply lists teaching prizes, grants and publications will not satisfy the requirements for a Fellowship, no matter how impressive the list. Similarly, assertions about approaches to educational practice that lack evidence, or are clearly not consistent with the stated teaching philosophy, will not satisfy the requirements for a Fellowship.

The 7 essential criteria that must be addressed in the portfolio cover the range of issues that are fundamental to the philosophy of HERDSA, namely:

- Educational practice demonstrates a concern for learning;
- Assessment encourages and supports learning;
- The needs of different participants are recognised and they are supported in their learning and development;
- The wider departmental/institutional/community context for learning is recognised and built upon in improving educational practice;
- Curricula are planned and innovation is introduced to enhance learning;
- Critical reflection to improve educational practice takes place in the light of evidence obtained from different types of evaluation; and
- Research and scholarship (disciplinary and pedagogical) are used to enhance participants' learning.

Each criterion is judged according to an acceptable or not yet acceptable standard. It is important to appreciate that applicants must address 3 components in each of the 7 essential criteria, namely a description and outcomes (you need to describe what you do, why you do it and what the outcomes have been); reflection and learning (you need to describe what you think about what you have done and what you have learnt by doing this); and further development (you need to indicate how you would do things differently in the

future, based on your reflections). This is where the HERDSA Fellowship represents more than simply a list of achievements; it signifies that the awardee has reflected on what they have done, why they have done it and what they will do in the future. The discussion for each criterion must show evidence of critical reflection related to the required elements, and be consistent with your stated teaching philosophy.

Many applicants choose to have a Mentor, someone you can talk to about your educational philosophy and the examples you may wish to include in your portfolio. The Mentor is a critical friend, they are not there to write the portfolio, nor are they Assessors. A Mentor cannot assure you that a portfolio will be judged to have met the required standard; they can provide suggestions about the clarity of your approach to describing your educational practice and the evidence you have included.

Portfolios are sent to 2 Assessors, who will be HERDSA Fellows. The criteria and standards based assessment process is collegiate and is a peer-based process. Often Assessors provide useful feedback on further work that is required for the portfolio before it can be judged to have met the required standard.

Some HERDSA members have asked about the difference between the HERDSA Fellowship and the Carrick Associate and Senior Fellowship schemes. Although both schemes aim to advance learning and teaching in higher education, the means by which they achieve this overarching goal, and the selection criteria, are quite different. Carrick Fellows are expected to develop a program that explores and addresses a significant educational issue and they are required to disseminate their findings or activities to the sector. Carrick Fellowships have a defined project associated with their activities, with defined outcomes; they are expected to stimulate strategic change in higher education institutions. Both Associate and Senior Fellows are recognised scholars in their particular discipline; they will have significant scholarly output over a sustained period of time and be associated with leadership activities in their area.

Both the Carrick and HERDSA Fellowship Schemes aim to develop the personal and professional skills of the awardee and expect the awardee to be an ongoing advocate for excellence in learning and teaching. Although collaboration, both nationally and internationally, are important for Carrick Fellowships, it is the responsibility of

the individual Fellows to develop the appropriate partnerships. HERDSA Fellows are allocated to a collegial triad with two other Fellows in order to foster the development and evaluation of professional development activities. HERDSA Fellowships are awarded for 3 year periods, and the maintenance of the Fellowship is dependent on the evaluation of the ongoing professional development activity of the Fellow.

HERDSA Fellowships are a rewarding experience that will enhance the professional life of members and contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. All members should contemplate the possibility of applying for a Fellowship at some stage in their career, and further details are available at <http://www.herdsa.org.au/fellowship.php>.

Geoffrey Crisp is the Director, Centre for Learning and Professional Development and Director, Online Education at the University of Adelaide. He is chair of the Fellowship portfolio which oversees the Fellowship scheme on behalf of the HERDSA Executive Committee.

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HERDSA Executive Portfolios

The work of the HERDSA Executive Committee is divided among a number of portfolios and committee members are assigned according to their interests and expertise. The work of the portfolios will be featured in the next few issues of HERDSA News. In this issue Geoff Crisp has described the work done by the HERDSA Fellowships portfolio.

President

Shelda Debowski

Vice President

Mark Barrow

HERDSA Fellowships

Geoff Crisp, Kogi Naidoo, Janet Taylor, Mark Barrow and Robert Kennelly

HERDSA Membership

Maureen Bell, Mark Barrow, Kathryn Bartimote-Aufflick

HERDSA 2008 conference convenors

Kathryn Sutherland and Mark Barrow

HERDSA Website

Gail Wilson

Scholastic Publications

Kathryn Sutherland, Ian Macdonald, Maureen Bell, Gordon Joughin and Allan Goody

Visiting Scholar

Deanne Gannaway, Gordon Joughin and Maureen Bell and a New Zealand representative

Executive Officer

Roger Landbeck

HERDSA Guides

Allan Goody

HERDSA Marketing

Shelda Debowski and Deanne Gannaway

HERD

Ian Macdonald and Izabel Soliman

HERDSA Treasurer

Kathryn Bartimote-Aufflick

HERDSA office management

Jennifer Ungaro

NB. These are the main contacts, although any member of the HERDSA Executive would be happy to speak on any of the portfolios.

HERDSA Conference 2007

The 2007 conference departed from long standing tradition by being held in a hotel rather than a university. The Hilton Hotel provided accommodation for delegates and venues, large and small, for presentations and the conference dinner.

Preliminary examination of the evaluation of the conference showed that the majority of the respondents were happy with their experience but a small number had concerns. All of the suggestions submitted on the conference evaluation sheets will be forwarded to the HERDSA 2008 conference committee.

Prizes and Awards

The following prizes were awarded at the conference:

The Edith Cowan Prize for the Best Paper in Authentic Learning

was awarded to *Dieter Fink* from Edith Cowan University for his paper:

Self Assessment: A Critical Step in Developing the Research Capabilities of ProfDoc Students.

The Taylor and Francis Prize for the best paper by a new researcher

was awarded to *Olga Muzychenko* from the University of Adelaide for her paper:

Learning Style variations in a culturally diverse class: a case study.

The University of Sydney Institute of Teaching and Learning Creative

Presentation Award

was won by *Nick Hopwood* of Oxford University for his paper:

Exploring a theoretical framework for understanding doctoral education (written jointly with Lynn McAlpine).

There were several papers that scored equally on the evaluations for this award so the judges used the evaluator's comments to make a final decision.

HERDSA Fellowships

Seven new HERDSA Fellows were announced at the recent HERDSA Conference. All HERDSA Fellows displayed a high degree of reflective practice and presented evidence indicating a scholarly approach to their educational practice. The new Fellows are:

Professor Geoffrey Crisp, Director of the Centre for Learning and Professional Development at the University of Adelaide. Geoff has displayed leadership in learning and teaching, academic and staff development, as well as policy development at the institutional and national level.

Lynden Griggs, Faculty of Law at the University of Tasmania. Lynden has designed curricula that enhance the learning of all students in his classes; he has an enlightened understanding of how assessment, learning outcomes and feedback interplay to drive student learning.

Anna Chur Hansen, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry at the University of Adelaide. Anna has designed curricula that facilitate critical thinking approaches from students in health science programs, examined the relationship between clinical and academic performance in terms of English language proficiency, and published extensively in the area of health professional education.

Peter Jones, Department of Social Work and Community Welfare

at the James Cook University. Peter has developed innovative approaches to student activities that build on the social constructivist approach to learning and the effective use of formative assessment.

Susan Jones, Associate Professor, School of Zoology at the University of Tasmania. Sue has designed curricula and learning activities that promote higher level learning and the development of students as professional scientists. Sue has provided effective leadership in learning and teaching in her discipline and published extensively in the area of education in the life sciences.

Noel Myers, Learning and Teaching Coach at the University of Tasmania. Noel provides a learning environment that engages students and encourages life long learning. Noel has effectively integrated new technologies into his curriculum designs and has shown leadership in the provision of blended learning environments.

Jackie Walkington, at the University of Canberra. Jackie has developed authentic learning and assessment environments for students in teacher education and provided leadership in the provision of professional development programs for practicing teachers.

Impressions of the Conference

I invited two delegates, who were attending a HERDSA conference for the first time, to write about their personal impressions of the conference. Here is what they had to say. Editor.

Steph Ellis

Some conference experiences linger longer than others. Among these are those that stimulate deep reflections on practice, widen the scope of social networks from contact during and after the event, and on occasion, there are those which carry the potential to both facilitate private rewards for individuals and develop a collegial spirit, that encourages professional collaboration for broader, public benefit. My experience of the 30th annual HERDSA conference, held this year in Adelaide, was that it initiated an exchange



Conference Convenors: Geoffrey Crisp and Margaret Hicks



that makes positive contribution to both domains possible.

As a first-time attendee, I benefited from the Committee's considered effort to include new participants in conference events. The welcome breakfast on Day 1 provided an opportunity for blue-dot "newbies" to connect with long-associated red dot members, who warmed the way for our participation in proceedings, including the memorable conference dinner held in the evening of Day 2. A personal note of thanks here, to Roger Landbeck for his guidance as my "buddy" throughout. It was the HERDSA Executive and associated members in aggregate though, who harnessed their 30-year-strong experience to not only arrange a comprehensive line up of workshops, presentations and discussion fora, but to include social events to feed into and from these sessions. It is one level of organisational capability to arrange a conference with the right blend of industry information and social engagement; it is another beyond this that manages to conduct proceedings in a way that fosters a collegial environment that supports an inclusive exchange of ideas from all conference participants, new and established.

It is one of HERDSA's objectives to facilitate the improvement of teaching and learning. Personal and collaborative reflection on practice is the driver of change for improvement in practice. The keynote addresses of this year's conference framed discussion of theory and scholarship by situating teaching practice in its socio-political context; encouraging reflection on the paradigms through which we view our practice; and, raising awareness of the stages of progression through an academic career and the systems that might be needed to support career advances. Ideas and developments discussed during the conference, and in particular in the keynote addresses, have led me into a number of subsequent spin-off discussions with colleagues, (going beyond my earlier perception of the parameters of conference exchange). I am encouraged by the extent to which this exchange has stimulated a personal reflection and filtered through to my workplace. Facilitation of informed discussion and exchange, offers a basis for personal and collaborative efforts to be taken towards improvements in practice. It is for us as individuals and a community

to carry this potential forward.

The community of teaching and learning, which HERDSA represents and leads, has opportunities to develop. (As was noted by Professor Marginson, certain times offer more possibility than others). Recognising the valuable stimulus that societies such as HERDSA offer for participation in on-going and collaborative exchange and using the knowledge to make informed change, realises a potential to develop practice personally and as a community. As a new member I would like to take this opportunity, to thank HERDSA for using its 30 years of experience to model inclusive practice in conference proceedings and for providing development opportunities on more than one level.

Steph Ellis is an English language program manager, who has worked in TNE programs for over seven years and is currently managing a program delivered at five locations in China. As a travel enthusiast, Steph has visited over forty-five countries and worked extensively in five, notably China and Korea. Presently completing a Masters in Education, Steph is a B.Arts honours graduate in Criminology from Melbourne University.

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Ian Cameron

On arrival at the Adelaide Hilton I did immediately look around for some familiar faces and also asked myself, "Am I the only engineer here?" It was pretty clear from the conference listings that engineers were an endangered species at this event – however I did find a few of that academic species as the proceedings progressed!



Working at the conference

Some who readily claimed to have left the "dark side"!

However, I wasn't there to rub shoulders with engineers but to enjoy the wider experience that could only come from such a gathering across the higher education sector. And that's what I got; enjoying the breadth of discipline perspectives and the obvious enthusiasm of many individuals for the value they saw in seeking to raise understanding and performance in their own areas. It was by most measures a very worthwhile experience – and yes, I'll be back for next year if timing permits to report on progress and outcomes of my Carrick senior fellowship.

So, what was really outstanding and memorable from my perspective as an engineering educator and researcher?

First, the plenaries were an interesting mixture of the political, the profound



Simon Marginson giving a keynote address "A tale of two education revolutions: Higher education in 2007"



Playing at the conference



Visitors from South Africa

and the personable. Simon Marginson presented a somewhat pugilistic but helpful overview of the HE sector which was useful in its coverage but clearly presented to "stir the pot". Sue Clegg had some really important challenges in her presentation, once the jargon was stripped away, to reveal an appeal for the HE sector to go deeper in our learning and teaching research and scholarship. Ask the deeper question "why?" not simply "what or how"!

André Sursock's presentation about the Bologna process was useful in setting the record straight about current thinking and events in the EU. In particular she informed the audience that the HE scene is a lot more diverse, complex and convoluted than what is commonly imagined from the antipodes. Some

after-presentation conversations were enlightening both ways.

The individual sessions that I attended ranged from issues about team based project work to whole-of-curriculum design. For me it was interesting to observe, that despite the eclectic nature of the audience and the fact that many disciplines were represented in the conference, there is still a well-developed "silo mentality" in some areas. It seems that advances and learning in one discipline have not necessarily been recognised by another. This leads to a subsequent recreating of the wheel, rather than building on the obvious strengths developed in other HE discipline areas. Is it the "not made here" syndrome or is it just that we don't do our homework well enough when it comes to educational initiatives? Of course, I could always

say that "engineering is fundamentally different from other disciplines", but that would be somewhat disingenuous.

The real strength of the HERDSA meeting for me was the wide coverage of important topics across the HE sector and the ability to engage with presenters on their work. It proved to be an opportunity of excellent mutual assistance. Shame about all those 11 parallel sessions ... oh to be omnipresent!

Ian Cameron is Professor of Chemical Engineering at the University of Queensland. He was awarded a Senior Fellowship from the Carrick Institute of Learning and Teaching in 2006. In 2003 he won the Prime Minister's Award for Australian Teacher of the Year.

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Threshold Concepts Symposium ~ from theory to practice ~

June 18 - 20, 2008

Queen's University - Kingston, Ontario Canada

You are invited to attend the 2nd biannual symposium on Threshold Concepts. A key focus will be developing threshold concept theory as well as moving theory into practice.

The first symposium held in Glasgow in August of 2006, demonstrated the excitement and energy of this emerging new area of research. Apart from being a fascinating and important area of research it is evident that the idea of threshold concepts appeals to many practitioners and teachers, proving to be an important area of progress for curriculum development and discipline-based educational development.

This is a first call for papers with abstracts due September 30, 2007.

Complete information is available at

<http://thresholdconcepts.appsci.queensu.ca/index.php>

Tribute to Ilma Brewer

By Jackie Lublin

HERDSA is saddened to record the death of Dr Ilma Brewer, 1915–2006. Ilma Brewer was a foundation member of HERDSA, and was made an Honorary Life Member of this Association in 1999. Such was her eminence in her field that her passing was marked with an obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on January 24, 2007, which noted her extraordinary achievements in her discipline of botany and also noted her innovative approaches to teaching in that discipline.

Ilma Brewer was a Renaissance person: she was a brilliant botanist who began study at Sydney University in 1932 ("when few women studied science" as the obituary noted). She finished a Master's degree in 1936, held a Linnaean Macleay Fellowship between 1937 and 1941, and was awarded the highly prestigious degree of Doctor of Science in 1942 for her work on plant succession on Sydney sandstone and the coastal dunes. During the war she worked with Army Intelligence in mapping coastal vegetation in NSW. In 1943 she married an American officer, and went to live in USA in 1945.

She returned to teaching at Sydney University's Botany School in 1957 as a part-time demonstrator, and subsequently became a temporary lecturer, temporary senior tutor, lecturer in Botany/Biology in 1963, and Senior Lecturer in Biological Sciences in 1970. In 1978 she retired from the university.

Her return to teaching in the late 50s coincided with the discussion and development in UK and USA of some exciting new directions in university teaching and learning. These included the use of educational technology as teaching adjuncts like audio-visual aids, tape-slide machines, CCTV lectures and even the overhead projector. Of more profound importance were the possibilities of self-instruction and self-pacing for the development of independence and mastery in learning (I remember the exhilaration of reading Keller's "Goodbye Teacher" (1) and wondering how we could persuade staff to give it a try), the specification of levels of cognitive skills by Bloom (2), and the use of small groups for discussion and learning rather than for mini-lecturing. All of this was encapsulated by Ilma when she asked "How ... can students be encouraged to develop higher order skills, to think for themselves, and to adopt a critical approach to learning? The challenge should be

presented by those who teach them" (3). Finding conventional teaching inadequate, she rose to the challenge of teaching Plant Anatomy by devising a carrel-based, self-paced, audio-visual teaching laboratory in which students worked in weekly sessions in their own time and at their own pace, and which was supplemented by structured small group tutorials held at the end of each week. This she called the SIMIG model – Self-Instruction by Modules followed by Interaction among Groups.

SIMIG was implemented in 1969. After her retirement in 1978 Ilma wrote a book *"Learning more and teaching less: A decade of innovation in self-instruction and small group learning"* (4) which was an account of ten years of SIMIG and which reveals just how forward-thinking she was about how students learn and what they should be able to do with that learning; she showed, for instance, how during those ten years she was able to improve student learning and consequently deliberately raise the cognitive levels of exam questions i.e. by eliminating those questions which only required recall and by increasing the number of questions requiring analysis, synthesis and problem-solving abilities.

Her humanity, patience and empathy with students and her dedication to the improvement of teaching and learning are clearly seen in the book, which is primarily a description of an exciting innovation in teaching and learning rather than a piece of educational research; writing in 1985 she said "Perhaps the best testimony to the acceptability in the department of the course is that it has survived virtually unchanged since I retired from teaching at the end of 1978" (5). It is now more than 20 years since she wrote that, so perhaps the most impressive tribute to Ilma Brewer as an educational thinker is that her ideas and principles still continue to inform the present-day teaching of Plant Form and Function in the School of Biological Sciences at Sydney University. In the AV Laboratory (during Ilma's time known to students as "The Brewery") the carrels remain but the technology has been updated e.g. carrels still have microscopes but they now also have computer screens and interactive programs rather than audio tapes and work books; there is now an online interactive program for individual revision, not a tape-slide program; students as individuals still undertake the weekly sessions in their own time, and weekly

tutorials are still held. The possibilities of the new technologies are awesome for all of us in the way they are changing our conceptions of teaching and learning and the ways by which these are mediated, so I believe it is a great tribute to Ilma Brewer that the new teaching technologies have supplemented, not supplanted, the enlightened approach of SIMIG. A more formal tribute to her concern with student learning is the annual Ilma Brewer Prize, awarded to a first-class honours student in botany at Sydney University.

So, she was a remarkable person; she was described in the *SMH* obituary as "attractive, vivacious and stylish" when she married Dick Brewer in 1943. I met her in the '70s when I was a junior member of HERDSA, and remember her vividly as charming, interested and helpful (and beautifully dressed). While she is to be admired as an outstanding scientist, it is fitting that HERDSA should also honour her as one of those fortunate teachers who grasped early on that student learning is the goal of teaching, and who had the interest and ability to apply the insights of the self-instructional and small-group movements to her own teaching.

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3. Brewer, I. M. (1985). *Learning more and teaching less: A decade of innovation in self-instruction and small group learning* (p. 3). Guildford: SRHE & NFER-NELSON.
4. op cit.
5. op cit p. 7.

I would like to thank Professor Robyn Overall, School of Biological Sciences, Sydney University, for her help in demonstrating how the present-day AV Laboratory continues Ilma Brewer's SIMIG concept and practice.

Jackie Lublin is a past President of HERDSA and has been a life member since 1999. She retired from higher education ten years ago when she was Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of Sydney.

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Where is the Student in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)?

Reflections on the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) 2007 Conference

By Erika Kustra

Does the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) improve student learning? Does engaging in SoTL make you a more effective teacher? These were some of the difficult questions that were being asked this July at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) Conference.

Sydney, Australia was a wonderful location to hold the fourth annual conference, the first time outside of North America. Coming from the heat of a Canadian summer, the Australian winter was refreshing, and the beaches phenomenal. In addition to sun, sand and new colleagues, there were several key observations I took away from the conference.

Impact of SoTL

I have a sense of disquiet over the future direction of the SoTL. Should I encourage *all* instructors to engage in research into teaching and learning with public dissemination? Should I, instead, encourage instructors to approach teaching in a scholarly way, which would include reading the research, but not necessarily publishing it? Where is the student in this? Does SoTL actually improve student learning? Is it a good use of everyone's limited time?

SoTL, as a concept, may be understood quite differently by different people, particularly as the discussion becomes international. For me, scholarly teachers have an approach to teaching that includes using existing literature and expertise to inform their teaching, systematically gathering their own information, and thinking critically and reflectively to

improve student learning through teaching. Teachers engaged in SoTL go one step further, by formalising the questions they ask and then publicly disseminating their findings.

As the trend to involve more people in SoTL activities grows, we need evidence about whether SoTL actually improves student learning, in order to make good decisions about resource and time allocations. I believe these were the kinds of questions that lead to the theme for this conference "Locating Learning: Integrative Dimensions of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning". As a group, we have now moved beyond asking "What is SoTL?" to look at even more difficult questions.

Unfortunately, from the sessions I attended, there does not appear to be much actual evidence about the overall impact of SoTL on student learning or even effective teaching. One of the main stumbling blocks is the difficulty in finding relevant and feasible measures for student learning.

The best evidence, from the sessions I attended, was presented by Angela Brew and Paul Ginns. The University of Sydney has a Scholarship of Teaching Index which consists of a series of questions completed by members of a department which yield a score or index. Resources are allocated accordingly. The questions address 3 main areas:

- a) teaching preparation (eg. completed courses in teaching);
- b) teaching awards; and
- c) publications in teaching and learning.

As the Scholarship of Teaching Index increased, student perception of their learning experience improved. However, when examined more closely, the presenters showed that teaching preparation and awards had the greatest impact, while publications had little. Interesting findings!

The presenters are planning additional analysis and research. At first glance, it appears to me that student perception of their learning experience is not *directly* improved by instructor engagement in full SoTL, although it *is* improved by instructors' use of a scholarly approach to teaching. Students *indirectly* benefit from SoTL because instructors with a scholarly approach read the SoTL publications of others.

Possible solutions were mentioned by several presenters, such as encouraging only a few people to engage in SoTL. Connie Schroeder, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, suggested moving existing SoTL to the centre of institutional initiatives. For example, find out what institutional problems are of concern, and use SoTL to achieve solutions. Cheryl Albers, CASTL, recommended people should be consumers of SoTL before becoming producers. Additionally, Thomas Olsson, Lund University, suggested various degrees of SoTL involvement may be desirable in an institution.

The Value of International Context

There is incredible value in attending international conferences which include representation from around the world. It provides an opportunity to watch for

trends that cross the world, and to try to learn from the similarities and differences. For example, what is the influence of government on teaching and learning? We see the shifting trends in England and Australia from quality control and accountability towards enhancement and improvement. This shift is happening just as the Canadian government is *beginning* to focus on accountability. The chance to learn from each other is important in developing a longer term vision for teaching and learning.

International trends were captured by all the keynote speakers. For example, Andree Sursock spoke of the Bologna process. It is an amazing accomplishment to have approximately 47 countries, with over 800 universities, working together to change higher education by introducing a stronger student focus, by implementing personalised learning paths and by facilitating greater mobility across countries.

SoTL is just one of the trends that are developing across countries. The administrative support and money available varies quite widely, and the opportunity to learn from various approaches and models is invaluable.

Models and Theoretical Perspectives

In addition to grounding talks in the literature, most presenters made an effort to let the audience know which theoretical model or perspective was underlying the SoTL question or method of research. I was initially surprised at what appeared to me to be a novel approach compared to conferences I was most familiar with, particularly in the sciences. When all participants come from a common background and set of assumptions, stating the perspective or approach is rare. However, because researchers in SoTL come from such a large variety of backgrounds and research traditions it is important not only to ground research in the literature, but to let the audience know which perspective you are using to approach and answer your question.

Debating University Purpose

The keynote, Allan Luke, raised questions that had many people, including myself, discussing and debating following his talk. He said that we need to begin honest discussions and debates about the true purpose of universities. The answers may be less important than the

discussions. Currently, the purpose of universities is largely unexamined, which allows other agendas to take over. We need to consider designing curriculum based on our decided purpose, and Allan Luke suggests that future directions will include ethics and morals.

Overall, it was a real pleasure to attend the conference. It provided a great deal of information and many insights to consider. And finally, I particularly valued the opportunity to meet and engage in conversations with wonderful colleagues.

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Higher Education in the Headlines cont ...

from page 8

the business faculties expecting future funding cuts and concern was raised about the Federal Governments push to take control of State university finances. The Go8 universities used the up-coming election as an opportunity to push for sweeping reforms and deregulation of the Australian higher education sector. Overseas campus were still seen as viable in countries like India but UNSW found that cost and competition forced it to reverse a decision to build an offshore campus in Singapore.

The Purpose of Higher Education

The Times Higher Education Supplement reported that as Prime Minister Gordon Brown wants to target

work skills as a major benefit of education calling on universities to embrace economically valuable skills or lose students to the Further Education sector. In June, one of the US most-prominent liberal-arts colleges decided to close due to falling enrolments. Meanwhile in the UK demand for terrorism studies surged and post-92 universities continue to outperform the elite universities in regards to teaching quality forcing some universities to consider a legal contract that would restrict students' rights to seek compensation over inadequate teaching.

Academics as Public Intellectuals

The Times Higher Education Supplement reported mixed messages

about academics roles as public intellectuals with some told to push their intellectual credentials while others face new policies banning criticising universities. The UK boycott of Israeli academe had strong support from some sections of academe but the *Times Higher Education Supplement* was predicting a backlash against the action in June.

Equity

Two major equity cases were reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* which raised questions about gender equity and affirmative action in the US. In April the *Australian Higher Education Supplement* argued that school education was the answer to falling low socio-economic status student enrolments in Australia.

Academic Stage Fright—The Story So Far

By Amanda Burrell

Nervous, snappy, distracted, signs of odd behaviour: yes, this describes the feelings that washed over me, as the spectre of giving a lecture loomed large. O-week instead of being a time of new beginnings and welcoming students had become my most-feared week of the year.

How Did This Begin?

I returned from maternity leave in week five of semester. Teaching assignments had already been set. So for the first time in my academic role, I was at work, but not lecturing. I felt buoyant and inspired. I noticed my rhythm was different to others but it felt fine. Motherhood changed me. Nothing seemed to bother me and my focus on career had changed irrevocably. I'd had an epiphany – if I can make *people* I can make anything!

I displayed hitherto unseen vigour in reading, researching and crafting well-chosen words to communicate knowledge with an audience in a variety of relevant and interesting ways. I tackled things I was previously too intimidated to try. In my first ten years as an academic I focussed mostly on teaching. I had always researched and written original case studies for my students but lacked the confidence to make the leap to writing for publication. Teaching was all consuming. But now I was making inroads into research, focussing on the scholarship of teaching. I was cranking out refereed papers and grant applications. And then it stopped.

I struggled to identify the problem. After days of increasing feelings of non-specific dread, lack of ability to concentrate, the jitters, touchy digestion and task avoidance resulting in the cleanest office ever – I realised I was in this state because it was O-week. I was about to start lecturing again. I wondered if any one else was feeling this? So I sent a tentative little email to "All Staff" with the innocuous subject line—nervous about teaching? I was embarrassed about asking, so I hit send before I could think better of it. I was not prepared for the response.

It was instantly clear I was not alone I had described my so-called "symptoms" and many had felt the same,

but like me hadn't linked the feelings with the behaviour and the impending start of semester. When I checked with my husband this semester wasn't any different. He expected me to be agitated, distracted and "off my food" at this time. What *was* different was that I'd had more than a year off, so I could *really feel* what was happening to me. For the first time I consciously reflected on my experience of academic stage fright.

My first lecture went well. They normally do – and yet I was still frightened before each one. Upon reflection, I was always nervous before lecturing, and, because I'd always taught, those nerves permeated my entire academic experience. I got very good reviews from my students, but somehow still focussed on the dissatisfied outlier comment. Because teaching was my sole focus – it had to be perfect. I coped by drawing on skills I learned in training as a professional actor twenty four years earlier.

With a renewed research confidence, I wanted to find out if similar training might help others. With ample evidence of *something* worth looking at: a funding source was located, a grant gained and a pilot study commenced.

Research: An Opportunity to Learn More

This project started as coaching, developed into research and grew organically throughout the process using the constant comparison method Glaser and Strauss (1967). Ultimately the methods included interviews, multiple observations (with and without students) and a range of surveys. A research team of scholar/practitioners were drawn together. Expertise in physical theatre (including Grotowski laboratory style work) Grotowski (1981) scenography (the melding of audience, performer and the performance space) Aronson (2005) and ability to work with non-performers Boal (2002) were considered crucial to the pilot's potential success.

The first phase involved developing a working definition of typical physiological manifestations of stage fright. Pargman

(2006) and Eliot (2006) provided a way of describing "symptoms" such as: "cotton mouth", butterflies, stomach cramps, cold sweats, blushing or blanching, frequent urination, shallow breathing, pounding heart, hands, feet and/or knees shaking, eyes dilating and mind racing.

Our Approach

Data gathering began with semi-structured depth interviews to tease out the participants' experiences of lecturing and academic stage fright. Concurrently, and prior to any coaching, we carried out the first of four personal observations of lecture performance. Some themes quickly emerged, supporting our hunch that academic stage fright was more common than we might have thought.

One issue to emerge from the data was, not knowing how to "perform" in a lecture without resulting in "lecture cabaret". Participants were concerned they would have to lecture in a kind of "normed or homogenised" performance style. Other strong concerns were what to do when technology fails, or when you lose your place mid lecture. Participants sought a more interactive lecture style, better vocal control Berry (2000) and wanted lecture performance concerns to not invade other parts of their lives. Interestingly most described feeling the cluster of so-called "symptoms" in the Pargman Eliot (2006) list, but some had a much stronger emotional reaction than others.

Actors train for many years, prior to commencing a professional career, and often continue training throughout their working lives. We didn't have years. Our funding allowed us a maximum of thirty hours. We had to make tough decisions about what was desirable and what was possible. A coaching program Spolin (1996) was then mapped out to specifically address the issues of our pilot group.

A Brave Few

We were working with performance anxiety, not usually discussed, so understandably our pilot sample was small. Funding constraints meant only academics from the school funding



the study were eligible although many other academics were interested. 31 were eligible, 14 began the process, 10 started coaching and eight finished. All who completed the pilot program gave permission for their experiences to be used for research purposes.

Those who took part had no idea what they were in for – they deserve praise for their leap of faith! We knew but there were still shifts from our plan to our progress. Such is the nature of embodied coaching/research. We had developed a set of exercises addressing the issues of the group, but were unsure how they (the group) would respond. The coaching team patiently waited to see what emerged. This wait was intensified because academics tend to be to be very goal oriented, successful, independent learners and much of their work is learning outcome focussed.

You Want Me To Do What?

The research team developed coaching material as a result of interview and lecture observation data. The pilot was held on campus, participation was confidential and we conducted it out of teaching time, using discreet locations. We were using, (where possible) the participants' own teaching (performance) spaces. Although we had designed a wholly inclusive program around the style of work a repertory company might use, some found the lure of email irresistible.

Several wanted to know precisely what was in each session so they could decide which ones they would attend, and which ones they could do without. In an "outcomes focussed" world we asked a lot. We asked that they trust the *process* by borrowing a technique from the theatre and *wilfully suspend disbelief*. Most could.

Participants were asked to arrive for coaching, ready to deliver 20 minutes of their favourite material (like a mini lecture or "lectorial" based on content that they were most comfortable with. While many performance mishaps occur due to lack of familiarity with the content – that was outside the scope of this study. Although specifically asked *not* to practise, participants told us they rehearsed and carefully crafted prior to the pilot.

So How Did It Go?

The benchmark observation of "lectorials" showed that all participants delivered to a very high standard. Post

pilot observations revealed *quantum improvements in all performances*. Hoping for incremental change, we were pleasantly shocked by this result!

Participants reported:

- broadened understanding of what a lecture can be;
- more focus on student engagement rather than primarily focussing on content;
- they felt more confident; *
- they felt more in control of the lecture and the audience; *
- they felt more at ease physically and with their vocal delivery; * and
- they felt more themselves.

* the research team independently observed this during the pilot, prior to participants reporting this in a survey after the completion of the pilot. So these improvements both were felt *and* visible.

There were some serendipitous outcomes worth mentioning. They reported more of a team feeling with colleagues, and feeling more energised when lecturing. Many noted that they would now pop into colleagues' offices to ask how their lecture went or tell how theirs went—the performance—not the content. None had ever done this before!

As our participants were highly skilled academics they learned fast. We were stunned at how quickly they wove new knowledge into existing structures. Those who chose to experiment with technology during the coaching (remote clickers and "Madonna" headsets) found technology really helpful; three regularly used it through the following semester.

We have just completed second stage post coaching evaluations with very promising results. In most cases the quantum performance improvements are still in place 15 weeks later. One participant reported that the researcher's presence for the final observation made them self-conscious and inhibited, raising issues of *how* we observe, and yet remain *apart* from the performance. Half the participants can still quote (unprompted) specific performance tips given to them during coaching. One reported enduring feelings of anxiety despite lingering improved performance levels.

All participants who took part in the entire pilot wanted more. Despite this, time is an issue, we designed thirty hours of material but participants felt they could

only spare three days in a row, rather than a whole working week to take part.

What Next?

We are now calling for participants for a campus wide follow up study. A larger sample will allow us to assess the results. We have added an anxiety expert and Australia's leading university based vocational performance schools to the research team mix.

We would welcome the opportunity to run two parallel programs to assess how intensive delivery compares with, for want of a better word, comprehensive delivery (a spaced delivery across a semester).

We would also welcome the opportunity to run a multi-site test of our research and coaching on different campus populations.

We would be very interested in indications of interest or preparedness from readers to be involved in further research.

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Unpacking the Scholarship of Teaching as an Everyday Academic Practice

By Kay Pozzebon

I was honoured to be invited as a panel discussion member in this year's Vice-Chancellor's Colloquium at the University of the Sunshine Coast. The theme for the colloquium was the Scholarship of Teaching and the topic which I discussed was Currency in Higher Education Learning and Teaching Practice. In particular, I addressed this topic in the context of how it can be incorporated as an everyday academic practice, from my perspective as an early career academic. I hope that regardless of where you are in your academic career, my overview can assist you, even if it is to help you with your mentoring role to other colleagues who are starting out their career.

While I am an early career academic, I found myself last year in the most uncomfortable place of realising that the honeymoon is over. While I was proud of my teaching achievements, I felt at times that I was only treading water. I wanted to learn more about higher education learning and teaching practice, but I was very apprehensive of delving into a new discipline and all the new theories and terminology that came with it. Also, I was concerned about how I would find the information. What are the "good" books and articles that I needed to read? And finally, even if I found these resources, how am I going to find the time to read them.

For me, the best option at the time was to enrol in a postgraduate course, Foundations of University Teaching, offered at the University of the Sunshine Coast through the Office of Learning and Teaching. Early in my readings I came across a quote by Professor Royce Sadler, who said "retaining sanity and getting job satisfaction in higher education involves balancing the competing demands within the broader context, and managing them so far as possible for oneself" (p. 3). I

drew great comfort from this quote and it helped motivate me to venture further into the higher education learning and teaching discipline.

What I found is that the higher education learning and teaching literature is multi-disciplinary, and while there were new theories and terminology for me to learn, a lot of the material was also familiar as it was from my own discipline. I also found that there was no simple magic formula for effective teaching. Teaching that results in student understanding and creating a context of learning that encourages students to engage with the subject matter involves the interaction of the teacher, student, and context. I had to not only focus on what students bring to the classroom, but I needed to clarify what role I had in the learning process, and how I could create an environment to facilitate learning.

For example, I thought about my introductory course, which is a content heavy course. I wanted to have more interactive lectures and avoid lectures which involved me talking for two hours. In particular, I thought about my first lecture for the semester and how this lecture involved me going through administrative issues, an overview of assessments, and providing an introduction to the course. All very important information to cover, and yet this was a very significant time in the course as most students would be highly motivated and excited as it was the first week in the semester.

Another issue was the environment. I would have over 200 students in a large lecture theatre. How could I encourage student interaction and engagement in such a situation?

I realised that the first lecture was going to set the scene for the rest of the semester and that what happened in the first lecture would create the norm for the

rest of the weeks. I could create a norm for lectures which would be me talking for two hours, or I could create a norm for lectures which encouraged and required student interaction.

In the end, I structured my first lecture to still cover all the information that was needed to be addressed, but in a way that challenged and engaged students. For example, I started the lecture with a true/false question based on a stereotype about the topic, to make students aware of the assumptions they brought with them about the course. Another example is that instead of just talking about the key figures in the discipline, I presented the information in the form of a "Who am I?" quiz.

In the first lecture and the subsequent classes, I worked hard to establish and maintain this norm of interaction. The question remains, did I create a norm of student interaction and engagement?

What I did find is that throughout the semester, students did interact and ask questions. During my "Does anyone have a question?" section during the lecture, instead of silence, I had students asking questions. Better still, it wasn't the same students asking questions each time. Also, when I'd pose questions to the students, most students didn't try to avoid eye contact with me, instead I had students answering the questions.

From my experience, I found that my effort in gaining currency in higher education learning and teaching practice has not only helped me improve as a teacher, but it has recharged my motivation. My increased knowledge about pedagogy has been extremely helpful. I now know the name of what I am doing, but I also know why it works. I also pass this information onto students, in that in addition to teaching the course content, I share the process of learning. I am aware that I've only taken the first

steps into this process, as the more I learn, the more I realise how much more I need to learn.

So how does one gain currency in higher education learning and teaching practice? If like me, you are concerned about time and you want it to be part of your every day academic practice, I hope that the following suggestions may help.

You can build currency:

- through professional development opportunities. Colloquiums, workshops, and conferences are not only an opportunity to obtain information, but a chance to identify fellow colleagues who are interested, and to recharge your motivation in this area.
- through membership in committees (e.g., learning and teaching committees) and organisations (e.g., HERDSA).
- accessing learning and teaching resources. While there are resources

specifically in the higher education domain, you'll also find that within your discipline, there are education journals. This is an opportunity to read what researchers in your own discipline are doing with regard to teaching and is also a useful resource if you have an interest in the teaching and research nexus. To find these resources, library staff are available to assist and there are also resources available from the learning and teaching department in your university.

by incorporating goals in your performance and development review. By formulating goals, you give yourself a structure and time line to work by.

and finally, informal discussions with your colleagues is a great way of not only accessing information, but also enhancing your motivation.

I know at times this is difficult, and that if you stopped someone in the corridor

to ask them if they want to talk about the scholarship of teaching, you might get a strange look in return, but from my experience, I've found that if I've had a teaching problem, many people are willing to lend an ear and offer suggestions. Casual conversations in the staff room can lead to innovative solutions to teaching problems and opportunities for research.

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Practitioner Researcher: Conducting and Disseminating Research into Learning and Teaching

By Kathy Lynch

What follows is based on presentations given by Kathy Lynch in June 2007 at the University of the Sunshine Coast's VC Colloquium on Learning and Teaching, and in July 2007 at the University of Technology Sydney's Faculty of Information Technology's Learning and Teaching Workshop.

I commenced my teaching career over 30 years ago, and have taught in three sectors of education (secondary school, TAFE, and University) across four Australian states and territories. The last 10 years of my career have been in the university environment where I have progressed through the ranks of lecturer, senior lecturer to associate professor (the position I now hold at USC).

In preparing this talk, I reflected on what underpinning philosophy influences my teaching, with the results being reflected in terms of:

- what can I do to improve the learning experience for my students regardless of their level of education?; and
- how do my students learn?

One way I reflect on my work is by not only by thinking about it, but writing about it, and discussing it with other like-minded people. I find it a relief to find out that I am not the only one who has to deal with certain situations, which has lead to many a discussion with peers. Furthermore, these discussions often lead to finding a solution, or improving my approach. It has also been rewarding to

hear that my solution or ideas are adopted or adapted by my peers.

I thought hard and long about what words of wisdom I could share with colleagues that I have great respect for without telling them "how to suck eggs". The following is my advice on how to conduct and disseminate your research into teaching, and the rewards that it can bring. Researching your teaching is stimulating and rewarding, however, it takes time and sustenance to grow and flourish, therefore:

- Find a mentor;
- Review for conferences and journals;
- Be aware of the work your colleagues are doing;
- Be visible; and.



- Network at conferences.

I will recall a few opportunities that came my way, and made a difference:

1. Studio-Based Teaching

Before joining USC, I was at Monash University, where some seven years ago in the Faculty of IT, they implemented a novel way of teaching their undergraduate Information Systems degree. Without going into the details; we used a "studio" approach underpinned by the Bauhaus apprentice/mentor model, integrated curriculum, reflective practice, and team teaching.

The approach was filled with challenges and rewards (good, bad and ugly). Despite many ups and downs, students' learning flourished, resulting in work-wise IT professionals. This could not have been accomplished if we (the teaching team), had not only reflected in meetings and workshopped on what we were doing, but developed and followed a research strategy for the innovation and disseminated of our work to the broader academic community.

2. The Conference Paper to Journal Road

As many academics do, I recently presented a paper at a conference. As always, after the presentation there was chatter, but it continued down the corridor (and over dinner). Three of us, one from England, one from South Africa, and myself from Australia, "saw" that cooperating together and sharing our

experiences could not only benefit our students, but could also assist others who teach in a similar program (IT final year industry projects).

A paper was produced and was accepted for presentation at the same conference the following year. Furthermore, we were asked to revise, expand then resubmit the paper to a journal. The superior paper is now published in a journal.

This example is a typical scenario for many academics, but one that works, and that brings together like-minded academics, disseminates information, develops knowledge, and moves one towards improving the learning experience for students (and teachers).

3. Small Internal Grant to a Successful ARC Linkage

As I developed my reputation as an academic who delivers, is a good teacher and researcher, and is an IT professional, I became involved in a small internal, cross-faculty initiative to develop a web portal for the reclamation of Indigenous languages of Victoria – content I knew little about (though I do now). However, with my expertise in interface design, usability, web services (areas that I teach and research), and a solid educational background, we developed a prototype, which has since become the basis of a successful ARC Linkage project.

The outcomes of the research more often than not, has had positive impact on my teaching, and improved the learning

experience for not my students, but others' students as well.

Yes, it takes time, focus, and support, however, you can have it all if your research is planned for quality, you are consistent, persistent, strategic, and methodical.

QUALITY – otherwise a waste of time and energy.

CONSISTENT – work on it every week, and don't be too scattered across topics; keep focused.

PERSISTENT – try and try again. Build on your previous work and your strengths.

STRATEGIC – select conferences that fast track to journals, aim to work your way up the rankings, work with more experienced colleagues; look for possibilities and opportunities (internal grants, seeding funds, consultancies, non-funded collaborations).

METHODICAL – Have a (1 to 2 year) plan, know submission deadlines.

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James Groccia

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INTERNATIONAL COLUMN EXCHANGE—FROM POD

Productivity and Quality: Higher Education's Dual Priorities

By James E. Groccia

Higher education throughout the world is facing a crisis that simply cannot be solved by making minor changes to the same old way of doing things. This crisis manifests itself in tightening budgets, escalating tuition, declining public trust and rising skepticism of the value of higher education.

Student fees and accompanying debt, at nearly all US colleges and universities continue to climb. Driving increased student costs have been declining state support for higher education resulting from economic recession, declining state tax revenues and shifting state priorities. Yet universities continue to face financial pressures from rising personnel health care costs, increasing enrollments, capital improvements and financial aid investments to attract and retain students.

Declining public confidence parallels the decline in financial support. State legislatures have adopted political and financial agendas that are either indifferent or hostile to higher education. Rightly or wrongly, parents and students believe colleges are expensive and wasteful. Institutions cannot continue to pass along their own increasing costs to parents and students through yearly, double-digit tuition and fee increases.

In light of these mounting pressures, financial and academic viability may depend upon a unified campus-wide effort to increase productivity and quality. A key first step is for colleges and universities to recognise and accept the permanence of these issues. Short-term solutions for long-term problems will not be enough.

Productivity and quality cannot be separated; rather, realistic and sustainable educational innovation must be designed with both in mind. The pursuit of quality becomes productive when innovations and changes are attainable, substantive and affordable. Unfortunately, new

ideas and teaching approaches usually come hand-in-glove with up-front and hidden additional expenses and staffing demands.

Colleges and universities must reduce costs and increase quality by instituting organisational strategies that take a "big-picture" perspective, focusing on institutional planning and transformation. The common approach to academic leadership could be labeled "advancement by random acts of progress". An alternative approach is needed for institutions to minimise inefficiencies and organisation; to be successful, strategic planning must provide direction for innovation and must actually be followed.

Institutions should implement assessment strategies that rest upon valid and reliable uses of measurement. A culture of assessment should be broadly adopted that serves to demonstrate the impact of programs and activities—which are tied back to institutional goals and quality. Instructional effort and faculty time, as well as the allocation of university resources, should be regularly measured against the attainment of desired institutional, faculty and student-learning outcomes.

Institutions should renew their focus on faculty development. Increased attention needs to be paid to mentoring and training current and future faculty for the work that is actually done—which is primarily teaching—and for an understanding of the interrelationships between cost and quality.

Technology—used appropriately and correctly—can also enhance productivity. While not a panacea, technology can increase access to information and to students, and have other positive impact on costs and quality. Higher education institutions can reduce costs and increase learning through curricular reform.

Careful investigation can ensure what is taught is up-to-date and relevant, as well as reduce unnecessary course repetition and redundancy. Finally, campuses must challenge and support their instructional staff to use effective, evidence-based classroom teaching strategies to increase learning productivity and quality.

A hopeful sign for the latter is that, after centuries using the efficient, albeit somewhat ineffective lecture; there is an evolution away from didactic to more active learning methods. There is strong evidence that higher education professionals, as well as accrediting bodies, state legislators, governing boards and the general public, are increasingly focusing on student learning, access, graduation, productivity, and faculty work as much or more than on research.

The good news is that colleges and universities are implementing many of these changes. Innovative approaches to increasing productivity and quality are springing up across the globe. To continue this trend, all members of the institution—faculty, administrators, staff, students, alumni and governing boards—as well as an informed public, must accept responsibility for addressing economic and quality issues that rest at the core of the institution's survival. They must do this in ways that reflect each constituent's expertise and blend them together in ways that serve to attain individual, institutional and societal goals.

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I.T. IN HIGHER EDUCATION COLUMN

Web 2.0: Next-g, a sequel, or more of the same?

By Roger Atkinson

As the IT world seems to have an inexhaustible scope for generating new words, *Web 2.0* being a topical and typical example, it's important to have a systematic approach to checking out the newcomers. For *Web 2.0*, I propose an analytical framework defined by the questions, is it *next-g*, *a sequel*, or *more of the same*?

To explain the theoretical foundations for this analytical framework, let's define how these terms relate to *Web 2.0*. Firstly, whilst "*next-g*" is actually a registered TM [1], owned by a one time relative of the flying kangaroo [2], here I use it as a descriptor for appeals to persons who want to be inventors or co-inventors of the next best thing. Secondly, "*sequels*" are best illustrated and defined by Hollywood examples, like the series *Die Hard*, *Die Hard 2*, *Die Hard 3*, *Die Hard 4.0* [3]; or *Mad Max*, *Mad Max 2*, *Mad Max 3* [4]; or (you get the idea?). A sequel appeals to those who liked the prequel. Thirdly, "*more of the same*" appeals to *Grumpy Old Men* [5] who feel that these new fangled words may be little more than well-intentioned, but uninformed pretensions about having invented something new.

The purpose for this column is to help you sort out your primary pole of identification with the tripolar model, *next-g*, *a sequel*, or *more of the same*? If you know already, please move on to your next most pressing task, or your morning tea, or whatever, and if you don't know, or need to acquire a modicum of evidence to support what you feel you know, I invite you to read on. However, I should caution that Roger's model for diffusion of the *Web 2.0* "*innovation*" does not pretend to be in the same class as Rogers' model for *Diffusion of Innovations* [Everett M. Rogers, 6], which has enjoyed (quite deservedly) a far longer run than the Hollywood examples cited above. The

best known feature of Rogers' model [7] is his categorisation of "*adopters*", in the well-known sequence, "*innovators*, *early adopters*, *early majority*, *late majority*, and *laggards*". A five point, uni-directional scale, in contrast to this Roger's model, which is a humble, three point, non-directional scale (though I have hinted at my bias towards the *Grumpy Old Men* faction). I did consider an alternative three point scale, "*leaders of the flock*, *follow the leader sheep*, and *we are foxes*", but that was not sufficiently non-directional.

Discussion of *Web 2.0* is apparently abundant, for example as Google attests, *Results 1-10 of about 237,000,000 for "web 2.0"* [8]. Can we handle such a number by using Roger's three point categorisation? Let's try it and see, though with caution as the sample size is small and the technique idiosyncratic for constructing Table 1. In this Table the three "*next-g*" examples are American, with Tim O'Reilly [9] being often cited, as the originator of the term "*Web 2.0*". The quotations give only a small sample of these authors' enthusiastic desire to project a limitless vision for *Web 2.0*, notwithstanding their apparent reluctance to give a definition for *Web 2.0*. By contrast, the "*sequel*" examples, all from Australian authors, indicate a linking to more specific purposes and clienteles, including primary schools in the case of Paul Reid [14]. The four "*more of the same*" examples are drawn from a single source, the *Proceedings* of ASCILITE's December 2006 Conference in Sydney [19]. This conference provided perhaps the best opportunity in Australia to date, to ascertain academic acceptance and utilisation of "*Web 2.0*" as a concept. However, only one of the conference's 120 refereed research papers contained significant references to *Web 2.0* [13], whilst about six papers contained minor

or even trivial references to "*Web 2.0*" as indicated by the four cited in Table 1. Preliminary indications from ASCILITE's December 2007 Conference to be held in Singapore suggest to me there's little increase in references to "*Web 2.0*" compared with asc'06 papers [20]. So, if educational technology and IT researchers, as represented by ASCILITE conferences, are showing little interest in *Web 2.0*, or are adopting a "*more of the same*" attitude, what's the explanation? Are the writers in the "*more of the same*" category failing to keep up with the literature, or are the enthusiasts in the "*next-g*" category failing to see that they have re-invented the wheel? Whilst the "*sequel*" category has an each way bet?

Of course the notion of "*failing*" isn't helpful. The world of edtech and IT is used to legitimate divergences between those who wish to accord more prominence to the technologies, and those who see technologies as tools, as a means towards higher objectives and not ends in themselves. For example, there are those who enthuse about blogs and wikis, those who enthuse about CSCL (computer supported collaborative learning), and others who just implement collaborative learning.

Another impression from my investigation for this column is that introducing a new word like "*Web 2.0*" needs some good luck to secure adoption by the targeted community of practice. It's not easy, but nevertheless people will try their luck, as illustrated recently by our Prime Minister, who tried out the new word *overwatch*: "We take the view that the Commonwealth should adopt something of an *overwatch* role" [21] Whilst there was some ABC media commentary, mainly from a legal expert who could not find an "*overwatch*" role defined in the Australian Constitution, it

Table 1: Web 2.0: Next-g, a sequel, or more of the same? Some examples

Category	Author	Illustrative quotations
Next-g	O'Reilly [9]	Like many important concepts, Web 2.0 doesn't have a hard boundary, but rather, a gravitational core. You can visualize Web 2.0 as a set of principles and practices that tie together a veritable solar system of sites that demonstrate some or all of those principles, at a varying distance from that core.
	Alexander [10]	The term is audacious: Web 2.0.... Many people—including, or perhaps especially, supporters—critique the “Web 2.0” moniker for definitional reasons. Few can agree on even the general outlines of Web 2.0. It is about no single new development.
	Schindler [11]	Web 2.0 is a set of technologies, a huge set of related functionality and almost a lifestyle choice... Ideally, Web 2.0 sites... make it easier for people to connect and to learn from one another. The result of the user-generated content, for instance, is said to be “collective intelligence”, or the wisdom that comes from consensus decision-making. (Buzzword-watchers will remember when the hyped term for this was “collaboration”).
Sequel	Lee and McLoughlin [12]	...a burgeoning interest in Web 2.0, both in mainstream society as well as in education, with tools such as blogs, wikis, RSS, social networking sites, tag-based folksomomies, and peer-to-peer (P2P) media sharing applications gaining much popularity and traction in all sectors of the education industry.... potential for... enhancing their learning experiences through customization, personalization, and rich opportunities for networking and collaboration.
	Plaisted and Irvine [13]	Web 2.0 is a multifaceted term that describes the “second generation” of web services that are becoming available online ... Web 2.0 services are the force behind “social software” such as Wikis, which facilitate the collaboration and sharing of information....
	Reid [14]	Many educators are questioning if the industrial age institutions we work in are ready for the kids of the digital communication revolution.... If “knowledge sharing is the lubricant behind the knowledge community”... then the engine of web2.0 is beginning to be used by educators as the agents of change. We are beginning to see a culture of sharing and creativity which is not based upon market exchange but rather an intellectual exchange.
More of the same	Holt et al. [15]	The move to the read-and-write Web, so-called Web 2.0, opens up new dimensions of digital literacy for learners and teachers as active consumers, and critical readers and editors of information....
	Pettit and Kukulska-Hulme [16]	...foster online communities of learners. Such an approach will be very familiar to university teachers, whether on campus, online or using a blend. Even the delights of Web 2.0 may not be as new as is sometimes thought. Lilley (2006), for example, has argued that “[i]f the blog has a common ancestor with the diary, <i>MySpace</i> shares at least some of its DNA with the scrapbook”.
	Conole et al. [17]	... the level and type of communication is notable – there is strong evidence of peer support and peer community, reminiscence of the rhetoric inherent in the idea embedding in social networking and the world of Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005)
	Jones and Conole [18]	... new terms and ways of describing tools and their use emerge at a frightening rate (consider for example the rapid increase in discourse on wikis and podcasting, the rise of the term social software and Web 2.0 in the last year or so).

appears that "overwatch" has failed to gain "popularity and traction" (to paraphrase Lee and McLoughlin, [12]). Although my trusty *Macquarie Dictionary* recognises "overwatch" as a word, I for one doubt that "overwatch" will warrant a "sequel or more of the same" analysis. Actually, I'm not entirely sure that "Web 2.0" does either.

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BOOK REVIEW

Making the Grade. A Guide to Successful Communication and Study

Iain Hay, Dianne Bochner and Carol Dungey

**3rd Edition (2006). Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Victoria. ISBN 9780195517590
xxii+346 pages. A\$47.95**

Reviewed by Michael Carey

"Making the Grade" is a comprehensive guide to self-development of academic skills required for university study. The book covers the aspects typically covered in academic skills workshops in universities around Australia in an engaging friendly tone that would appeal to students, which is the intended audience for the book. The ideas contained in certain topics such as "Coping with exams" and "Arguing through: preparing and presenting written argument" are particularly well conceived and should be of interest to academic skills advisers. These sections of the book have informed the design of some of our academic skills workshops at the University of the Sunshine Coast. This third edition contains a timely section on using the library with current useful information on accessing electronic information and sources.

The format of the book is well-conceived as a reference text, implementing bold headings, bullet points and liberally embedded "tips" boxes for accessibility and brevity. Students are likely to find this format easy to scan for important information. The overall tone of the text is personal and conversational (written non-academically in the first person) making a potentially dry subject pleasurable to read.

The book consists of 16 chapters spanning 311 pages, plus a glossary of 19 pages. It is therefore not, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, a book that even the most diligent, autonomous student would want to read "from front to back". It is more likely to be used as a reference book that students dip in and out of as they encounter new learning formats in their studies. For this purpose the book is particularly well set-out.

The first chapter details information on a topic that is vital for students who are new to the university learning experience

— listening and note-taking. It covers familiar territory on effective listening and note-taking in lectures and how to participate actively in tutorials, seminars and workshops. There is nothing new to impress an academic skills adviser here, but to students it is likely to be detailed enough. The second chapter covers study techniques and a brief but nonetheless clear section on time management. It also contains tried and true information on reading strategies such as "SQ3R", taking notes for essay source material and the pragmatics of group study. Chapter 3 continues the discussion of group work in a section on "Teaming up" for study. This section talks candidly about the pros and cons of group dynamics, roles, team writing and group presentations. It concludes with a clear explanation of why this often frustrating mode of study continues to be a valuable learning experience.

Chapter four, titled "Finding out: becoming well informed" outlines the skills required by the modern student to navigate the technology provided by today's libraries: the internet, electronic catalogues and journal databases, as well as describing "older" cataloguing systems for "physical collections of resources". I particularly like the coverage on journals and the qualification of peer-reviewed and reputable sources, which is a message that can never be aired too often.

The remaining chapters offer detailed information on the various types of assessment tasks students are likely to encounter: essays, reports, annotated bibliographies, summaries, reviews, oral presentations, posters and exams, as well as the finer points of presenting figures and tables, and drawing maps. In addition, there is a chapter that outlines the various modes of discourse used in presenting an argument, which is not comprehensive,

but is sufficiently pitched at the student reader.

Finally, no academic skills handbook would be complete without a chapter on acknowledging sources appropriately, which this book covers with reference to the Harvard, Foot and End-Note and Vancouver systems of referencing, but there is no mention of APA. This is a curious omission considering its continuing uptake as the preferred author-date system of many American academic journals dealing with the social sciences and its mandatory use in psychology courses in Australia.

In summary, the strengths of "Making the Grade" far outweigh the weaknesses, which consist of the aforementioned omissions and areas not developed as fully as they could be. It communicates well through its choice of style and structure, which is conversational and features a concise report-style structure for ease of access. The content is comprehensive and appropriately pitched to students. For the academic skills and language adviser looking to revamp their workshop content, I would suggest it could form the basis of a series of PowerPoint presentations on Academic Skills. Certainly, it would be an appropriate set text or recommended reading for Academic Skills or Enabling courses.

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