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Editorial

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There can be little doubt that there are benefits of knowing how students learn for anyone involved in university teaching. Nonetheless, many of us rely on our intuitive understanding of learning that comes from being successful students in higher education. For the majority of academics, the desire to pass on some of the positive experiences they had as students is linked to the reasons they teach (Ballantyne, Bain & Packer, 1997). Alongside this, surveys of the value of teaching continue to show that even research-active academics want to see teaching valued more than it currently is (Cretchley, Edwards, O'Shea, Sheard, Hurst & Brookes, 2014; Scott & Scott, 2016).

For many, the valuing of teaching denotes recognising the contribution teachers make to learning (Land & Gordon, 2015). Our own experiences as learners may have been an appropriate guide for thinking about what is necessary to achieve high quality learning outcomes when our students were like us. Increasingly our students come from different backgrounds, have different expectations of higher education, and leave with different prospects afforded by a university degree. Under those circumstances, a deeper, less intuitive, more nuanced understanding of student learning is required.

Michael Prosser and Keith Trigwell help us develop this deeper understanding of the relationship between teaching and learning. They build their model of the teaching-learning experience on the web of presage, processes and product influences that form the 3P model that Biggs adapted from Dunkin and Biddle (1974). Prosser and Trigwell argue that the benefit

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of the 3P model is it makes the range of elements that contribute to the learning experience for students more explicit. After 20 years of research on learning contexts, conception, perception and approach variables we can be confident that the 3P model is applicable to almost all teaching contexts and disciplines.

The result of Prosser and Trigwell's review of the student learning literature is a clear definition of what constitutes better teaching. A better teacher is one whose focus is on changing students' conceptions rather than an emphasis on the presentation of content. Their research shows that under these circumstances students are more likely to adopt deeper approaches to learning, which in turn have been shown to lead to higher quality student learning outcomes. Prosser and Trigwell conclude that teachers with appropriate support can grow and develop as university teachers in ways consistent with their model of the teaching-learning experience as long as programs for teachers concentrate on the underlying intentions and conceptions of the experience of teaching/learning rather than the activity or strategy.

Susan Page, Michelle Trudgett, and Corrinne Sullivan review the policies and practices related to indigenous student education and remain optimistic that similar educational outcomes as non-Indigenous students are achievable in the foreseeable future. With 3.7 percent of the Australian population in higher education they acknowledge that there is still a considerable distance to travel if the Indigenous population is to have an equal proportion of Indigenous students studying in higher education. Yet, unprecedented numbers of Indigenous students are studying at Australian universities in 2017 and a vibrant Indigenous sector has emerged from the margins of higher education to ensure that the current policy directions are having the desired effect.

Page, Trudgett and Corrinne argue that in view of the positive results of Indigenous postgraduate students there are realistic opportunities for success in graduate employment in universities. By 2040 they expect that every university will have senior Indigenous appointments at the Deputy Vice-Chancellor level. Further, they anticipate that the numbers of Indigenous undergraduates will continue to grow, and considering there has been a decrease in Indigenous undergraduates undertaking block-mode programs, this increase will involve Indigenous students participating in mainstream courses.

Where more work still needs to be done is in the area of embedding Indigenous perspectives in the broader curriculum. Page, Trudgett and Corrinne are each involved in developed Indigenous specific graduate

attributes for their respective universities and initiatives like theirs are set to expand now Universities Australia has agreed that all universities will have plans in place for ensuring graduates engage with Indigenous perspectives in their degrees by 2020,

Kerri-Lee Krause completes our reviews of the research into student learning, taking a personal perspective based on her career in higher education research and as a collaborator on many influential research studies funded by a range of government funding agencies. Her deliberation on the challenges facing higher education shows that the student experience research of the past 15 years has provided valuable insights for researchers and policy makers. Krause identifies four themes that have emerged from her own research career that has shifted as the nature of the higher education student experience has changed over two-decades. Krause argues that these four themes hint at implications for the next 15 years of student experience research. She concludes that student transition and engagement will continue to be an important focus for researchers, with transition research expanding beyond transition into university and looking at what happens beyond the institution. Krause predicts there will be innovative ways in which students will engage with industry and communities before, during, and after their studies. She also feels we can expect a new notion of curriculum to emerge as systems are able to bundle course content and credential students' outcomes in different ways.

Each of our authors recognises that universities—like every workplace—are likely to change markedly in the coming decade. To prepare for this possibility university teachers are encouraged to develop a deeper, and more personal understanding of what influences the learning of their students.

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