

## Wrapping Up the HERDSA OLT Grant

By Iris Vardi

By now, many of you will have come into contact with at least one of the initiatives we have been able to run courtesy of the grant that HERDSA received from the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) for the project *Advancing Higher Education Teaching and Learning*.

With the grants monies spent, now is a good time to give you a wrap up of what this grant has allowed HERDSA to do both for the academic community at large and the HERDSA community. Most conspicuous have been all the events that were held, mainly through the branches, bringing expertise from around Australia across to most parts of the country and New Zealand. An amazing 27 events were held over a period of about 8 months attracting over 1190 attendees. These popular and well-attended workshops, forums and talks covered diverse topics of interest to local communities including learning analytics, assessment, feedback, scholarship, critical thinking, problem solving, learning spaces, psychological well-being, and student expectations. Our deep gratitude goes out to the Branch Chairs and their respective executives for making the branch events happen 'on the ground'.

Complementing the branch events was a Senior Leaders' Forum in

February 2014 which attracted over 40 senior leaders from across Australia and New Zealand to Melbourne to discuss the challenges of leading educational change and innovation. Between the branch events and the Senior Leaders' Forum, staff from all levels of university life were given an opportunity to get together across institutional, and sometimes state, boundaries to discuss teaching and learning and how it can be improved.

The enthusiasm for these types of events, and for the collegiality that this process brought to the Branch Chairs as a group, resulted in me approaching the convenor of the OLT Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows Network, Dawn Bennett, at the end of 2013. Together, we developed three initiatives, positively received by both the Fellows and the Branch Chairs, which link the Branches with the OLT Fellows Network. Following on from the highly successful Shane Dawson Roadshow event funded by the grant, the first initiative involves expressions of interest being made by OLT Fellows to Branch Chairs to be part of a yearly Roadshow. The remaining two initiatives provide additional means for OLT Fellows to connect independently with local branches. These initiatives have already got underway with Romy Lawson being the first OLT Fellow to go 'on the road' and visit the branches this year.

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# From the Editor

A large part of this issue is devoted to reporting the results of the very fruitful collaboration between the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and HERDSA. Thanks to a grant from OLT HERDSA was able to undertake a wide variety of projects to support learning and teaching which are described in Iris Vardi's article on the front cover.

One of the projects was the offering of small seeding grant for research in learning and teaching. In all there were nine grants and five of these are reported in this issue with the remaining four to be published in the August issue. There is a wide variety of projects. Hopefully the research teams will be able to obtain funding to enable them to continue the investigations as there were some really interesting results reported.

One of the projects was undertaken by two members of the HERDSA Executive, Deb Carke and Lesley Petersen. This was the short online course in the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching for New Scholars run at the end of last year. This was part of the initiative to help New Scholars through the New Scholars Portfolio headed up by Deb Clarke. This work has been described in several previous issues of *HERDSA News*. This initiative is proving to be of great help to many new academics.

Another outcome of the OLT funding has been the planning and development of

a new online journal, 'Review of higher education research and development'. The journal will be launched at the Hong Kong Conference. The journal's editor, Peter Kandlbinder, has written an article for this issue describing the journal and what it hopes to achieve.

We welcome a contribution from the VOCED sector in which Rose Anne-Polvere introduces us to some research resources that are freely available. A long standing member of HERDSA, John Milton, offers us the benefits of his experience on how to complete administrative forms associated with teaching and learning. Our resident IT in HIGHER EDUCATION writer, Roger Atkinson, leads us through the complex development of Learning Management systems from the days of software patents to cloud computing. Tuck this history away, it is useful background to have

We are hoping to establish a page devoted to news from New Zealand. It is easy to forget the contributions from New Zealand and that HERDSA is a society of Australasia so hopefully this page will go some way to getting the balance right.

This year's conference will be in Hong Kong and we hope many of you will be encouraged to make the trip and enjoy the HERDSA family in a different cultural setting.

**Roger Landbeck**

## New HERDSA Guides just out

Two New HERDSA Guides are now available. You will find details of their contents and how to order on line on pages 12, 14, 17, 25, of this issue.



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However, events weren't the only thing that the OLT grant enabled. The grant also enabled the seeding of new research into teaching and learning and the supporting of new scholars in this area. In a previous issue of *HERDSA News*, I spoke of six micro-grants that were awarded to seed research into a range of under-researched areas including online learning communities, authentic learning, internationalisation, and disadvantage and equity. Since then, we found ourselves in the enviable position of having some grant monies left over. This gave us the opportunity to seed another three research projects, the details of which I would like to share with you.

Sherrie Caarels's project, *Benchmarking student perceptions of the use and effectiveness of mobile devices in practical activities*, explores student use and perceptions of e-Manuals in laboratory and field based studies. The judging panel commented that this project "*has the potential to provide some much-needed re-vitalisation of science practical teaching and the ideas will be transferable across a broad range of disciplines*".

The seeding of Lyndon Walker's project, *Gamifying Undergraduate Statistics*, has allowed for the first of three key research phases to be undertaken: the design and

programming of a prototype game for first year statistics students. Subsequent phases will involve trialling of the game, surveying of the students and evaluation of the game's impact on student learning and achievement. The judging panel commented that this project "*addresses an interesting problem and (that) there is potential for it to seed something more extensive*".

Elizabeth Molloy's project, *Feedback on feedback*, involves the appraisal of an instrument to assess the quality of verbal feedback provided by an educator to a learner in the workplace. The judging panel noted that with a sector-wide drive for more authentic learning situations "*this project focuses on a potential key weakness of such experiences: the quality of verbal feedback received by a student in the workplace*." You will be able to find out more about all these projects as the Project Leaders report on them through *HERDSA News*.

Last but not least, the grant enabled HERDSA to develop a new online journal: The HERDSA Review of Higher Education. This journal will provide biennial expert commentary on the latest developments in higher education research and development for senior leaders and policy makers in higher education. Commissioned authors

will address key priority issues as identified by survey of Australian PVCs and DVCs Teaching and Learning and look at how these are conceptualized within the higher education literature. Each of these peer-reviewed articles will draw out implications for policy, research and development. Issues can be found at the HERDSA website at [www.herdsa.org.au](http://www.herdsa.org.au).

Many thanks are due to Dr Shelda Debowski who led this project and shaped it to provide so many benefits to HERDSA and the academic community at large. Do look out for all these initiatives and enjoy the opportunities they will provide. You can find out more about the project on the HERDSA website, and you can see the report to the OLT on the OLT website under the more extensive project title: "Facilitation of advocacy and leadership in enhancing learning and teaching in the higher education community by HERDSA".

***Dr Iris Vardi, Higher Education Consultant, managed the HERDSA OLT Advancing Higher Education Teaching and Learning Project.***

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## Submitting Items to the HERDSA Weekly Email List

If you wish to post an item of news to the Weekly Email News please use the online system, the details of which you will find at:

[http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page\\_id=2679](http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=2679)

Please note that the mailing system we are using does not permit attachments or pictures.

The Weekly Email News is posted every Wednesday.



# SEED RESEARCH GRANTS REPORTS

*The following five research reports were written for HERDSA News by the researchers who received seed research grants from HERDSA. Note they are not meant to be scholarly journal articles. The remaining four project reports will be published in the next issue of HERDSA News.*

## Surfing or Diving? An Exploration of Student's Practices and Attitudes Towards Technology for Learning

By Angela Dobebe, Stuart Thomas and Meg Elkins

In recent years Universities have committed significant resources to on-line and virtual environments to support student learning but with design and implementation coming largely from perspective of the institution or educator. With this in mind we ask the question "How are our students *really* using mobile and socialisation technologies in their learning?" This includes unpacking how they use learning management systems, blogs, wikis and social media sites. In the literature and anecdotally, there is evidence of a tension between the potential of social technologies to enhance student engagement and learning and negative associations with its use, including adverse impact on mental development and stimulation; and the pressure to remain connected and its probable distractions from study and work.

With this in mind, an investigation of the *real* student experience of teaching and learning in a cyber-environment is called for. A small pilot study based on in-depth interviews was conducted with a sample of 23 students, to investigate their use of social technology in their studies and whether they feel it was helping them in deep level learning ('diving') or leading only to shallow, surface learning ('surfing'). By inviting students to report and reflect on their technology-based, study-related activities we were able to learn something of whether certain practices are helping or hindering students in their course work.

Interview questions covered dimensions of motivation, study habits, method of University selection and some demographic characteristics for the purposes of cross tabulation. The researchers asked a mix of grand tour questions and floating

prompts (McCracken, 1988). At the beginning of the interview informants were asked to recall what comes to mind when the words 'technology' and 'RMIT University' were said. Those initial thoughts were then explored to develop an understanding of how the student accessed technology, where it was accessed and the advantages and disadvantages of that technology. Since the informants would approach this question with personal stories or experiences, further prompts were used to understand the significance of the technological access, their experiences across multiple contexts (e.g. study, work, social) and the experiences of friends or family.

Although the interviews were broad and only semi-structured, informants were asked to elaborate on various statements they made, for example, to provide more explanation about their experiences or comparisons with the technological uses of others. Given this method, informants spoke for virtually the entire period, with the researchers only engaging in floating prompts (following the initial grand tour question), asking for clarification on certain terms and every so often, summarizing informant responses or views. Interviews lasted on average of almost 10 minutes (207 minutes total interview time). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed *verbatim*, resulting in 354 pages of text. Interviews were continued until saturation on the key themes of technology use was reached (Creswell, 2009). Leximancer was used to analyse the full text of all 24 interview transcripts followed by using content analysis to explore the broader themes as they emerged.

### Leximancer Analysis

The Leximancer software maps the themes according to frequency of words and connectedness of words to other words i.e. *use* and *everything*, see Figure 1. As a result, the maps i.e. word association) colours through to cooler colours (i.e. the red, orange through to cooler colours such as green and blue to purple) are able to indicate meaning and relationships. The map of interview transcripts presents a rich collection of assorted comments, for example the hottest theme to emerge is the category Use. Concept words found within that theme are *home, computer, work, doing, stuff, friends, class and bring*. Related concepts for categories were *computer, Internet, laptop, phone and technology*.

### Content Analysis

Broadly, two themes emerge, that technology is an effective enabler for student to do things related to their careers and study, and secondly, that accessing it must be controlled if it is not to become a distraction. As a positive, technology enabled career motivated students to engage in the broader professional conversation and to immediately access external resources to extend or consolidate topics room learning. For example, one student suggests that technology allowed them to professionally brand themselves, 'I like that we're all enthusiastic, we're all trying to brand ourselves online, especially marketing you have to. So you read about marketing campaigns and you tweet that...you recommend others to follow certain marketing gurus.' This twenty-something female student also suggested that as students they have dominated the



technology platform and she called on educators to ‘be on it as well, encouraging us’. This is a very interesting point, because the current model is generally based on educators implementing technology innovations in the classroom and outside of it, expecting students to will participate in their conversations, their way, but as this student highlights, they would prefer for us to join their conversations and on their terms.

Another example of the educator preference for handing out the software to be used, and the problems for students associated with that model, is typified in the comment by a twenty-something female student:

*We were given an example of the software that we could have used but that one wasn't the best and you could go and find another one and they didn't give it to us, you had to go and find a way to download it. You could only use the software on Microsoft, not on Mac, so we had to get - I have a Mac computer so I had to find another program to do it on and it was really difficult.*

Perhaps consistent with this finding is that students reported very little engagement with the University’s collaborative learning tools, such as Wikis, blogs, shared drives and discussion boards, one student even asked ‘What is a wiki?’. It appears that students tend to collaborate outside the University supplied platforms, preferring instead more familiar environments, such as Facebook.

While there are signs of positive outcomes, many students also reported that the technology can be a distraction. As one twenty-something female student suggested about their use of technology:

*...I know that it's bad but if I am supposed to be listening to a lecture or something, a lot of the time when we've got our laptops or our phones out, it's a big distraction to studying itself. I'll find myself just kind of drifting off and opening another tab on my laptop and just going through just random things and not even listening to what I'm supposed to be listening to. It's a really big distraction... That would be more of a negative to my learning but a lot of people don't really care. They just do it anyway.'*

Further, the students do not seem to be good at filtering the various forms of technology they utilised. For example, emails and instant messages (work, study and person) would be accessed from multiple devices with no filtering or parameters in place,

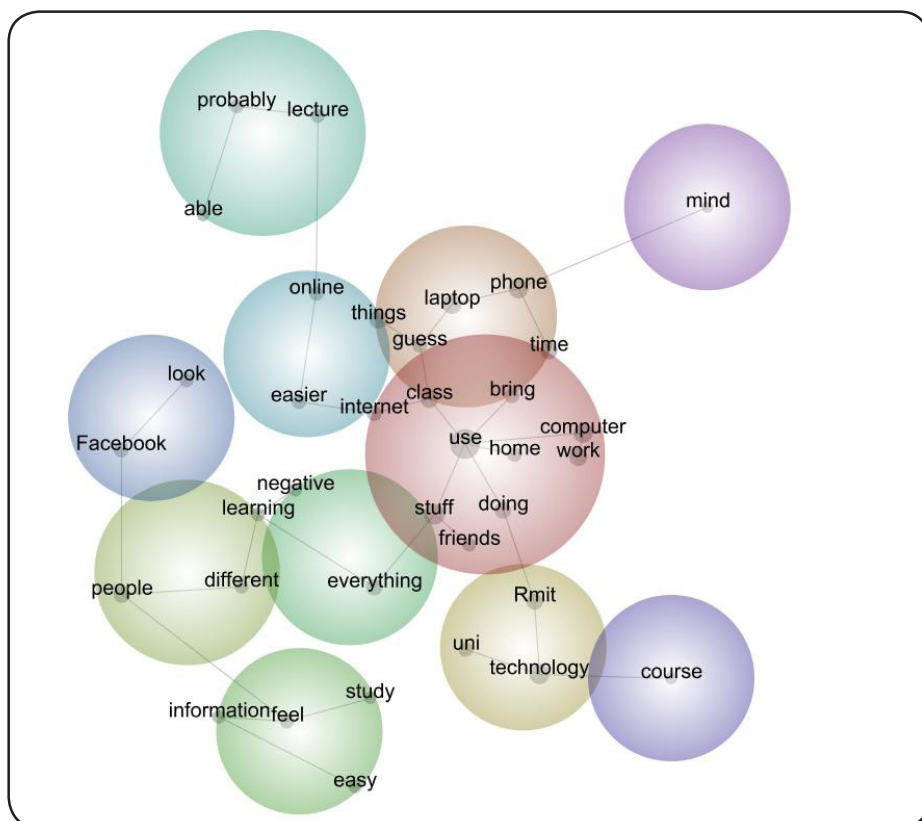


Figure 1: Informant transcripts data Leximancer Concept Map

thus the same message would be viewed multiple times.

Reliance on the device itself and the connection that device brought was also evident. Students could not be without the device on their person without some feeling of anxiety. One student expressed the disbelief in their parents being able to leave the house without their phones. It appears that two level of disconnect are evident, the first is that they had to be in physical contact with their technological device (most often a mobile phone) and second they had to be accessible via the technological connections that are enabled by the technology, such as able to engage in online communities or be contactable by others, no matter where they were or what they were engaged in at the time. One comment typifies the relationship students have with their technology. This male student, aged 24, suggests their technology is:

*Connected to me and I feel like it's now part of me and I feel weird if I don't have it and stuff, but I don't feel it's a bad thing... I feel like it's a good thing being this connected. I feel like it's normal and it's fine. There's nothing strange about it.*

In conclusion, this pilot study has highlighted two significant avenues for further research. First, the findings suggests that some of the preconceptions of the education institution about how technology will be used, when there is some evidence here to suggest that students want us to meet them on their terms, in their familiar environments. Second, the findings highlight that students were more interested in using familiar technology in different ways, for example collaborating in Facebook groups, rather than learning how to use the University’s discussion boards or wikis. This seems to challenge the assumption that digital natives are able and willing to adapt to any or all technologies and requires further exploration. A better understanding of students’ preferred modalities will inform more productive strategies for educators and students to engage with each other.

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- McCracken, G. D. (1988). *The long interview*. Newbury Park, CT: Sage.



*Angela Dobele is a senior educator, deputy head of school and is principal investigator on the project. Angela has a track record in qualitative research on student performance and the factors influencing it and this project extends that work into the learning technology space. Primarily a marketing academic, Angela's research in the marketing discipline takes in consumers' attitudes to and use of personal technologies. This combined with her work in student performance makes for a natural fit to the project.*

*Stuart is co-principal investigator and brings more than 15 years' experience as an educator to the project. Stuart's teaching in the field of finance has incorporated extensive use of technology-based simulation to bring "real-world" challenges and skills into the classroom experience. Stuart has also served on many of his University's and policy panels and steering committees on learning technology and its implementation and brings this institutional perspective and experience as well as abiding*

*interest in learning support and student performance* Meg Elkins

*Meg has over 10 years teaching experience in economics at tertiary level and is an enthusiastic adopter of technological tools for effective learning. Meg currently incorporates a range of technologies in her classroom, including Prezi, personal response devices and tablets and believes that this project offers opportunities to stimulate discussion and inform policy on the best use of technology.*

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## Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) "How To" Series: A programme to support New Scholars in the Scholarship of Learning & Teaching

By Lesley Petersen and Deb Clarke

Following Deb Clarke's article in the last issue of *HERDSA News*, in which she described the launch of the New Scholars SoTL Seminar Series in November 2013, we can now tell you what happened and our resultant future plans.

To briefly recap, during November and December 2013, the New Scholars SoTL Seminar Series was undertaken over five weeks by a group of 15 new scholars in universities across Australia and New Zealand. The sessions comprised three two-hour synchronous sessions in which the participants were introduced to aspects of research into teaching and learning, followed by two sessions employing the "Shut up and Write" model to support participants in formulating their research papers. The seminars were facilitated by Dr Deb Clarke, Associate Professor Lee Partridge and Dr Lesley Petersen who are members of the HERDSA Executive New Scholars Portfolio group, together with Cassily Charles from Charles Sturt University, who facilitated two writing sessions using the "Shut Up & Write" approach.

The aims of the programme were to: i) provide meaningful and sustained networking opportunities for the participants, and; ii) support new scholars in learning the "game" of publishing in SoTL. As the programme progressed, we found that the online activities encouraged extensive sharing and dialogue amongst the group and did in fact provide a valuable space for networking. Furthermore, based on the feedback from the participants, the programme really supported participants in understanding the nature and process of publishing in SoTL.

An anonymous informal survey using Survey Monkey™ was conducted in January 2014 to evaluate the programme, in which the participants were asked a range of questions categorised into six key themes. As well as wanting to find out what they thought about the facilitation and content of the programme, we were also interested in discovering why they had enrolled and what outcomes they thought they had achieved as a consequence. The themes included:

- Presenters & Pedagogy;
- Content & Resources;
- Technology;
- Colleague Recommendation;
- Motivation; and
- Outcomes.

The participants provided very positive feedback about the value and need for this type of programme, with comments such as:

*"Although I knew about SoTL and its processes it was good to be able to go back and bring the core aspects of this discipline to the fore."*

*"I have achieved a clear plan for a current SoTL programme as well as a plan for a large long term SoTL programme as a result for engaging in the seminar series. I also have a set of resources which will scaffold my engagement in the SoTL process. Many thanks."*

*"The sessions were iterative and well-paced. I learnt a lot and feel like I have a much better idea of what's required in this area."*

As can sometimes happen with technology, there were some minor challenges at



times using Adobe Connect as the online platform for the five seminar sessions, with participants having to work out why they couldn't hear each other or how to get the webcam working – and these were not always challenges just for the new scholars!

### So what's next?

As a result of the seminar series, a number of activities and outputs have been planned. Firstly, the submission of two abstracts for a roundtable and showcase at the 2014 HERDSA conference looking at the use of technology as a mechanism to build a global SoTL community of practice and addressing the needs of new scholars via programmes such as the SoTL Seminar Series. We will also be facilitating the

SoTL Seminar Series as a pre-conference workshop at the conference. Following the conference, and using the feedback we receive from our presentations and the pre-conference workshop, we will be developing manuscripts for submission to an international Higher Education journal.

Secondly, ethics approval was recently confirmed allowing us to conduct a more formal interview with the new scholars who participated in the Seminar Series in 2013 to find out what they see are potential or real barriers to engaging in SoTL and how they will continue to engage in SoTL having completed the Seminar Series programme.

And lastly, feedback from the HERDSA Executive Committee at our next meeting

in March will help us decide how we can advance the programme to offer it again with perhaps a broader reach to universities internationally.

Ultimately we hope that the SoTL programme will enhance the profile of HERDSA and encourage increased scholarship in learning and teaching.

*Lesley Petersen is the Teacher Development Adviser and Mentor at the Eastern Institute of Technology in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand.*

*Deb Clarke is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Human Movement Studies at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst.*

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# Gamifying Undergraduate Statistics: A HERDSA Seed Grant Project

By Lyndon Walker and Birgit Loch

## Introduction

Gamification is the process of adding game elements to a non-game context in order to facilitate engagement (Kapp, 2012). It is commonly used as a business strategy, but is also becoming increasingly popular in education (de Byl, 2012). Although gamification does not necessarily mean the creation of a game, in the case of this project, the goal was to produce a game to enhance engagement with first year statistics students.

Swinburne runs first year statistics classes of up to 2000 students per study period through the Open University of Australia, as well as teaching hundreds of students on campus in Melbourne. Although the students are already provided with an extensive suite of formative exercises on Blackboard, it was observed that some students, particularly younger students, did not always engage with these materials. The purpose of the HERDSA Seed Grant application was to get funding to produce a statistics game that would increase student engagement with formative exercises.

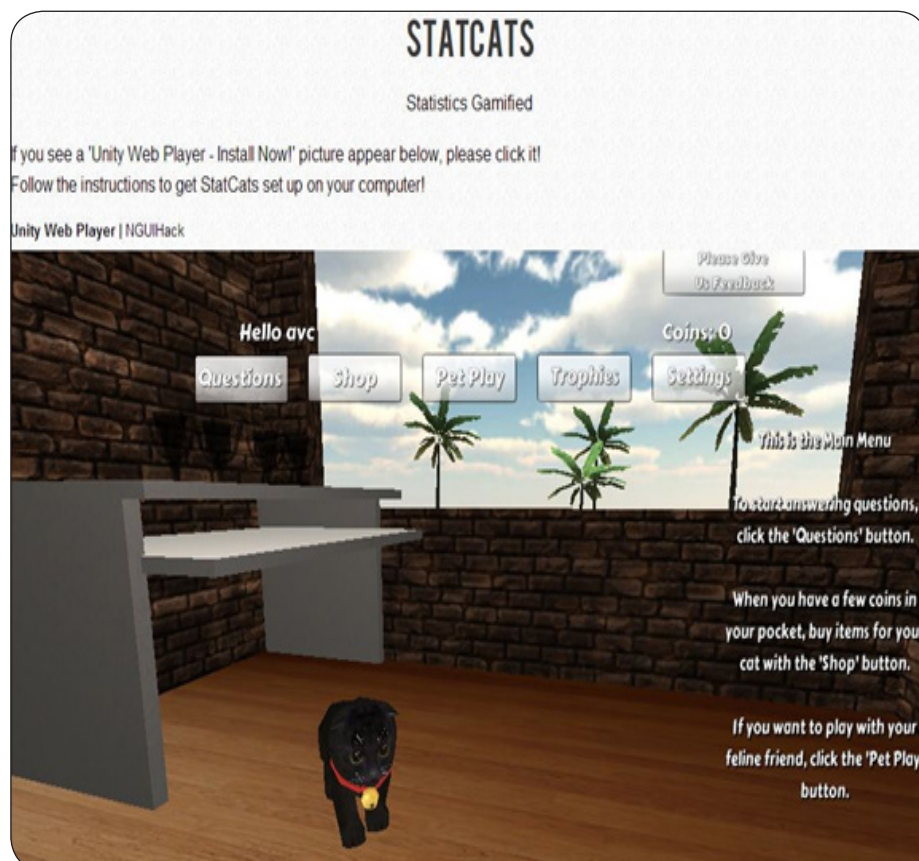


Figure 1: The Stats Cats Game

Given the amount of funding available, the main goal was to produce a prototype that could be used as a “proof of concept” for future funding and development.

## Learning and Games

Philosopher Bernard Suits writes:

*It is games that give us something to do when there is nothing to do. We thus call games “pastimes” and regard them as trifling fillers of the interstices of our lives. But they are much more important than that. They are clues to the future. And their serious cultivation is perhaps our only salvation (Suits, 2005).*

Suits (2005) goes on to describe games as “voluntarily overcoming unnecessary obstacles”. Educators and video game designers have toyed with the idea of using video games for learning (and the idea of “edutainment”) for many years. Malone (1980) is one of the seminal works in the area of using computer games for learning, particularly around the idea of the impact intrinsic motivation plays in a computer game. If users can be intrinsically motivated by the playing of a game, they will be more engaged in that activity. A strong positive correlation has been demonstrated between a learning activity’s intrinsic motivation and the activity’s learning effect (Schafer et.al., 2013).

Two useful collections of examples of gamification in education can be found at:

<http://www.yukaichou.com/gamification-examples/top-10-education-gamification-examples> and <http://www.gamifyingeducation.org/>

## The Stats Cats Game

The Stats Cats game is available to play at <http://statscats.weebly.com>. It presently covers descriptive statistics (means, medians, quartiles, etc). The premise of the game is that you have a virtual pet cat. By answering statistics questions, you can accumulate coins to purchase accessories for your cat such as a jet pack and a top hat. In addition, successfully navigating a level of questions will earn you a virtual trophy that will appear in the background indicating a particular achievement such as completing a level without getting any questions incorrect.

Stats Cats was programmed in the Unity environment and is currently hosted on the free Weebly.com website. At present the game only has a small range of questions, so the amount of replay value, where students return to the game, is limited. However, given the positive feedback from users, this will be expanded in the future.

When developing the game, the focus was on producing a fun and whimsical environment that would help to engage the students. It needed to appeal to a broad range of people as the online cohort of students is very diverse. Figure 1 shows the Stats Cats interface and the virtual cat. Players access the game options via the buttons along the top of the screen, where they can answer statistics questions, spend coins they have earned from answering statistics questions, dress and play with their cat, and admire the trophies they have earned by playing the game.

## Results

Figure 2 shows the unique number of visitors to the Stats Cats website. The site has had between 50 and 100 unique visitors per day since it was launched. Although the target audience was Swinburne students, students from at least one other tertiary institution have also been playing it.

Users can provide feedback on the game via a linked web survey. These surveys are still being collected but early results have been very positive. Comments from students have said that they enjoy having a fun interface to practice statistics exercises, and that they are more likely to attempt formative assessment tasks in a game format. Formal results will be published in a future journal article once all of the survey results have been collated.

## Future Research

The purpose of this project was to produce a prototype statistics game. The Stats Cats game has received positive feedback from students and staff and has increased student engagement. Future development of the game will include the addition of more questions and more topics, a more sophisticated rewards scheme and more ways for students to interact with their pet cat.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the financial support of HERDSA to enable this project to be completed. In addition, I want to acknowledge the programming and game design support provided by Swinburne students Josh Sommerfeld and Rhys Evans.

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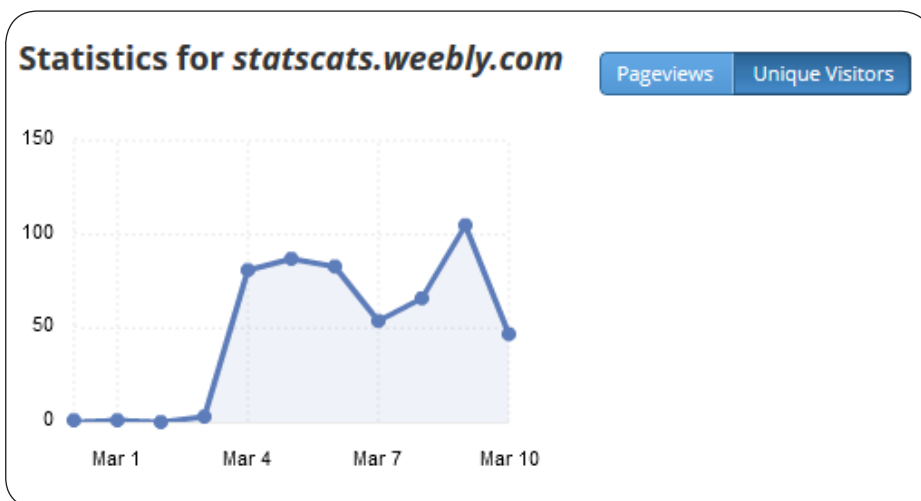


Figure 2: Unique visitors to the Stats Cats website.





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## Developing a Society for Cost and Value in Medical Education

By Stephen Maloney, Dragan Illic and Kieran Walsh

Education and educational research has developed into a scientific discipline due to the shift toward scientific rigour and peer-review. To maintain its relevance and accountability, we believe the next cultural shift in this field needs to be toward fiscal responsibility alongside learning outcomes, such as measuring outcomes of cost-effectiveness from the perspective of both the learner and the educational institution. Gone are the days of education no matter the cost.

This is particularly true in the seed funding recipients 'home field' of health professional education, due to the relatively high costs associated with education in this field, and the longstanding workforce shortages in medicine, nursing and allied health professions across rural and remote Australia. A key finding of the Australian Productivity Commission was the need for more efficient, effective, high quality training to address the significant health workforce shortages (1).

The burden of cost to health professional training programs is significant, with these costs passed onto the participant, affecting the accessibility of the education, and therefore diversity of student recruitment. Student loans reached \$23.1 billion through the higher education loan program (HELP), with \$5.2 billion listed as 'doubtful debt' in 2012 (2). The high costs also lead to a consolidation of courses offered by universities, impacting on capacity and educational outreach.

Cost-effectiveness in medical education is a natural frontier of exploration. It directly impacts on the accessibility of education, efficiency and quality of teaching and learning, and productivity of our health workforce development.

Despite the established need and growing curiosity by researchers, cost-effectiveness of educational approaches and processes is one of the most under-researched areas of medical education.

Capable and passionate researchers in the field of cost-effectiveness in medical education are few, and spread across the globe, with no designated forum for knowledge sharing or mentoring, either on the world wide web or otherwise.

The seeding grant received from HERDSA has been used to develop a new interest group, the "Society for Cost and Value in Medical Education". The society would form the basis of an online platform for the development of a community of like-minded researchers and educationalists, to stimulate ideas, and to foster new collaborations and mentorship – a greenhouse for growing capacity in cost-effectiveness research.

Elements of the society's functionality and activities would include; 1) the ability to nominate current projects and interests 2) a forum for listing and linking to relevant publications, and 3) a vehicle for communication between members to facilitate knowledge sharing and new collaborations.

The society would be designed to be sustainable, with an established rotating governance structure to allow others interested in the field to take on leadership positions.

Teaching and learning is undergoing a cultural change in student-centered learning, including the push for flipped teaching, peer-assisted learning, increased use of virtual learning environments and the use of simulation (3). However, these innovative approaches for applying new technologies are being applied with minimal evidence with respect to cost and value. The lack of evidence increases the risk of implementation, and increasing uncertainty in the quantity of curriculum being devoted to these new methods (4). Although 'in-house' commercial analysis is completed by most educational institutions, publication or peer-review of this analysis is scarce. Moving discussions about the efficiency of educational methods from unpublished in-house commercial analysis, to being transparent and open to scrutiny, will benefit the sector and the community in which its skills serve.

The website for the society is in the final stages of its construction. The site will be launched in June 2014. As part of its initial promotion, the seed-grant team is awarding a publication prize of \$500 to the best article in the field of cost and value for 2014. Nominations will be made via the sites homepage.



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# Why Internationalisation of the Curriculum Matters for Management Programs

By Diana Rajendran, Janet Bryant, Patricia Buckley and Ryan Jopp

Developing students' capacity for adopting a global perspective should form an integral part of higher education given the complexity of the workplace and the world today. Hicks (2003) argues that it is critical to engage students with contemporary global issues to develop their awareness of diversity and the concomitant social responsibilities, despite an understanding of internationalising the curriculum being bedevilled by "conceptual fuzziness". This warrants an obligation to provide curriculum offering a balanced world view, and appreciation of diversity in vision and mission statements of many higher education institutions. A serious lack of momentum in how internationalisation of the curriculum is conceived, implemented, and assessed within specific disciplines and a great variability between different disciplines in their readiness to embrace internationalisation objectives, is highlighted by Clifford(2009). Other critics, for example Childress (2010), posit that academics are puzzled by how to associate internationalisation goals proclaimed by their institutions with their disciplinary research agendas, as well as with grounding these objectives in terms of their Scholarship of Learning and Teaching.

This project was initiated to explore the range of Internationalisation of

Curriculum (IoC) approaches adopted in the Management discipline, at Swinburne University of Technology and to develop a curriculum model for implementation of IoC. A literature search was undertaken to foreground key issues, followed by networking with discipline colleagues. As an outcome of this review, and these early conversations, an analysis of the alignment of two key areas was proposed. The first intent was to identify current IoC approaches in order to evaluate the extent to which they aligned with Global Citizenship (GC) attributes, as espoused by Haigh & Clifford (2010). Second, the alignment of these approaches with the position upheld by our institution on Internationalisation was examined (see 2020 Swinburne University Vision statement). Our commitment was to develop a sound curriculum model for implementation of IoC, supported by appropriate pedagogical approaches. Based on the principles of authentic learning we needed to firstly, develop our own conceptual working definitions for the terms IoC and GC.

After extensive discussion and workshopping, we evolved a shared understanding in our group. We agreed that IoC requires acknowledgement and understanding of how different cultural and societal values may underpin and

fundamentally contribute within (and to) an educational context. We embraced this shared meaning as foundational to adopting a counter hegemonic approach to learning based on critical analysis of Western ways of Knowing (epistemologies). Based on this critical pedagogy, our aim is, then, to develop inclusive, cross-culturally sensitive, co-operative and collaborative learning communities.

Our group deliberated further to consolidate these views by formulating our own shared working definition of Global Citizenship, our second key construct. After observing the agonising conversations of the group, as they got more and more pear shaped, to arrive at a shared understanding, our mentor Associate Professor Valerie Clifford mercifully intervened! Our pondering culminated in unanimous acceptance of the quintessential Oxfam (2006) definition that states a global citizen is an individual who:

- Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen;
- Respects and values diversity;
- Has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally;
- Is outraged by social injustice;



- Participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from local to global;
- Is willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place; and
- Takes responsibility for their actions

This definition generated rich discussion and in some cases strong reactions from our interviewees. We came to see how valuable an analysis of the responses to the definition may be for operationalizing material for education practitioners and our own future publications.

We all agreed that the dearth of clear specification from educational policy makers on how to make global citizenship objectives operational, underscored the need for exploratory investigation of how these issues are embedded into curriculum at the unit, program and institutional levels. Through examination and identification of better avenues for integrating global citizenship initiatives into curriculum, we believe we will be able to make a significant contribution to how Internationalisation of the Curriculum and Global Citizenship are perceived, in higher education.

Many questions arise, of course - Should we appreciate what citizenry is about before we can have a conversation about being a global citizen - how are they different, and does the difference matter? Arguably, the notion of civil society and citizenship are bound together, but one or both may be more likely to be addressed as part of a traditional social science curriculum than in a management program. Given this, how do we embed global citizenship into management curriculum? Should it be treated purely as construct, or are there more pragmatic ways of embedding the notion with respect to the practice and scholarship of learning and teaching? More importantly, what pedagogies can best support such objectives?

Clifford (2009) identified that academics approach embedding global citizenship content in courses with a range of responses. This range includes 'tinkering' at the edges, resistance based on claims that their courses were already internationalised, or responses like 'it is just too difficult to incorporate IoC', as it challenges their "disciplinary canon" (p15). Added to this, are those academics who circumscribe their work to narrower objectives related to developing employable professionals

(Clifford, 2009). The variation in responses reveals the difficulty of approaching the implementation of IoC initiatives in management curriculum. It is clear IoC can be and possibly is most often viewed from an 'add-to' perspective, rather than being understood as an integral process beginning at the point of program development. That is, one delineated through clear specification of learning outcomes, oriented towards global citizenry, which suffuse both delivery and assessment activities on a program by program basis.

A core question for debate is: 'Should management curriculum be dominated by a western view of the world (west is best)? This, by its very design, perpetuates western economic and social ideologies at the expense of other views. The opportunity to more fruitfully engage in a meaningful intercultural exchange is lost, which seems to be at odds with global connectedness and global citizenry. Contributing to the debate may be helped by applying a future-oriented lens to thinking about what knowledge, skills and attributes we want students to gain in a management curriculum which contributes to their having roles as global citizens. Importantly too, such an undertaking needs to recognise that at a social level, students function and operate on the world-stage (anyway) principally through social media. While they may be geographically unaware of a country location or understand the significance of a political hot-spot, they will nevertheless be quite likely to engage via social media with people from these 'hidden/cyber' locations.

This project potentially presents an opportunity to generate conversations on IoC and GC with other institutions from a cross-section of countries across the globe. Through such a diaspora it is anticipated that new approaches, cultural and economic views will emerge and be incorporated into future management programs.

Diana Rajendran, Janet Bryant, Patricia Buckley and Ryan Jopp are academics working at Swinburne University, in Melbourne, Australia. We work in the Swinburne Business School (formerly the Faculty of Business and Enterprise), across a range of positions, including research and teaching. Our shared interest in IoC and GC culminated in a workshop on October 2, 2013, with Associate Professor. Valerie Clifford. Valerie, the author of the book 'Internationalisation of the Curriculum

for Global Citizenship in Higher Education' has significant knowledge and experience in this area, and outlines her approach to IoC as 'radical rather than liberal'. She considers internationalisation of the curriculum as a way of 'challenging current course content and pedagogy, and offering a transformative educational experience to students' (2011).

As part of Swinburne's 2020 Vision, the university claims to be a 'leader in international education' whose graduates will be 'forward thinkers able to adapt to global challenges'. Our study intends to explore the extent to which these claims find a voice within the Management department, at the university. The aim of our study is to gain an understanding of how staff, largely responsible for curriculum development, perceive, evaluate and operationalize IoC, in relation to the stated institutional objectives. The study will involve several stages, each designed to further our deliberation on how IoC is perceived by, and implemented in teaching delivery, by teaching staff in management programs. Strategies to develop GC in Swinburne students will also be drawn from the data. The key component of this study will involve interviews with approximately ten unit convenors across the Management department. The interviews will be based on the component parts of global citizenship as explicated in the Oxfam (2006) definition.

It is expected that the results of the study will assist in identifying whether gaps exist between the espoused policy and teaching practices, when it comes to commitment to IoC and GC at the institutional level. We also hope to highlight the critical role of staff in development and application of appropriate strategies associated with IoC to foster inter-cultural learning, while consolidating critical management skill sets needed for students to develop and contribute actively as citizens of civic society in a globalised world.

The issues of internationalisation and globalisation are impacting upon all Australian universities. Consequently, if universities are to maintain relevance for students, and all stakeholders, the importance of IoC and GC need to be acknowledged. The commitment/willingness of staff, and administrators, to mobilise in response to the challenges of creating global citizens is a critical ingredient. This first stage of a broader study, will provide insight into one



department, at one university, the results may not be generalizable to all Australian universities. However, it is expected that the findings will provide a valuable contribution to the growing body of literature in this area, as well as expediting the identification of key challenges to the realisation of global citizenry imperatives in higher education agendas.

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Anne Melano, Maureen Bell and Ruth Walker

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# Presidents Report



By Allan Goody

In the past couple of weeks I have been on a number of university campuses just as all the first year students were starting their journey through university life. Students everywhere, milling around classrooms and coffee shops, some with confused looks, but most looking happy as they negotiate their way around the campus and begin to figure out what uni life is all about. As an academic, the beginning of semester was always an exciting time of the year, bringing back memories (somewhat distant) of my first days at university. The anticipation and sense of wondering what lies ahead, exciting new things to learn and new friends to be made; and also feeling a bit (lot) lost and nameless after being one of only 24 in my senior year of high school. I don't have any involvement with undergraduates any more – sadly – and I wonder if they are having those same feelings?

At the same time, there are new teachers lining up to greet their first class. I remember what that was like too! A room full of nameless faces wondering who I was and what to expect and me wondering who they were and what they were expecting. They were the good old days. Sadly I am not part of that anymore either. I am just another academic on a short term contract that came to an end! But now I have the opportunity to work in a variety of contexts and meet new teachers and academic developers who continuing that interesting and exciting work.

As the academic year gets into full swing, I hope you are still feeling the excitement of meeting a new group of students (or new teachers) and helping them discover new things and also welcoming back those students returning for another year and seeing the changes in them. For you too I am sure there are plenty of changes. No

matter what campus I visit, change is all around. But regardless of this constant change, whether it be positive or not-so positive, there are still so many enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers quietly going about their job of creating great learning experiences for their students and professional staff working hard to create environments that support those teachers.

This was no more evident than the Teaching and Learning Forum held at the end of January at UWA. For those not familiar with the Forum, it is an annual two-day event organised by the five Perth-based universities and hosted on a rotating basis by one of those universities. This year there were almost 300 participants; that is 300 academics from (mostly) Western Australian universities eager to share their practice and talk about teaching and learning. That's almost the numbers of a HERDSA conference! To take two days out of their preparation time close to the start of the academic year to engage with colleagues is laudable and clearly demonstrates that teaching does matter. The Forum is collegial, no competition here; we are all aiming for the same outcome – enhancing student learning and the student experience. And what's more, there were students talking about learning too and what they have done to assist their peers in the learning process. The Forum is always two days well spent.

Another opportunity I had to witness collegiality and sharing of ideas was the Educational Developers Caucus (EDC) conference in Calgary, Canada in late February. The EDC is part of STLHE (Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education), the Canadian equivalent of HERDSA. Yes it was cold in Calgary in February (one morning it was minus 27c under a brilliant blue sky as I ventured onto campus) but the welcome was very warm from Debra Dawson

(President of EDC) and all the 120 plus delegates. And I was lucky to stay with my friend and colleague Lynn Taylor who is now Vice Provost (Teaching and learning) at the University of Calgary. While on campus I had the opportunity to see their new buildings including the Energy Environment and Experiential Learning (EEEL) building (when the conference dinner was held) and the Digital Library (yes, most of the books are now housed elsewhere). Both of these spectacular buildings include so many innovative learning spaces. Another bit of 'teaching and learning envy' is the under-construction Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (not named for Lynn I might add), the result of a \$40 million gift, which will focus on educational innovation and provide a suite of innovative learning spaces. Ah, what you can achieve with generous benefactors. Let's hope more of that happens in Australia (both the money and the buildings).

STLHE is similar to HERDSA in many ways including in the formative years being more focused on academic development and now embracing the wider higher education community. EDC is one point of difference. While EDC is part of STLHE, as the name suggests, it has a focus on educational development with its own constitution, executive and conference.

Part of the reason for my trip was to learn more about EDC and in particular their Educational Developers Institute which was conducted for the first time last year. POD (in the USA) has a similar program. As more people move into academic development roles and with the job description for academic developers seemingly expanding every day, I see (and am hearing from others) a need for professional development opportunities for both new and aspiring academic developers as well as those more experienced whose roles are changing and



evolving. This is something I would like HERDSA take the lead on and hopefully in the next year we can progress this idea.

While on the subject of academic development, let me remind you of the ICED (International Consortium for Educational Development) conference in Stockholm in June. The biannual conference is always an enjoyable educational and social event. No doubt my colleagues from my time working at Karolinska Institutet will arrange another memorable ICED conference. The location will certainly partly ensure that HERDSA was a founding member of ICED. This past year the ICED Council resolved to levy a membership fee on member organisations. While this fee will cost HERDSA about \$1000 each year, I see it as part of HERDSA's contribution to supporting academic development across the globe. Academic development touches all HERDSA members in some way or another as academic developers work to support teachers and professional staff in enhancing the student experience. I hope you support our continued involvement in ICED. At the June conference I will begin a term as one of two Vice-Presidents of ICED.

As I said in the last issue of News, HERDSA is once again offering support to members who may wish to form a Special Interest Group (SIG) around a topic of specific interest to them. At the conference in

Hong Kong, members of the Executive will be facilitating a session to provide information about forming a SIG. Maybe there is interest in (re)forming an academic development SIG. So if you are attending the conference and are interested in SIGs come along to the session.

The HERDSA project funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) has now concluded with the final event held in Melbourne in February. One of the outcomes of the project is the new online journal *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* and the first edition will be launched soon. Small amounts of funding through the project were instrumental in a lot of activity in the branches in the past year and our challenge is to find ways to continue that activity now that this source of funding has ceased. Collaboration with the OLT Fellows is one way that we will be able to do this so look for co-sponsored events in your region soon. HERDSA exists because of and for its members and as an Executive, it is important that we continue to focus on the members in our activities. Another way we hope to do this is with a new-look website with greater functionality for members. Watch for it soon.

I have just returned from our March Executive meeting. This was the first meeting where we planned for just a one day meeting and through good forward planning on the part of all the portfolios we

managed to get through the business on the agenda including some healthy discussions about future initiatives. One discussion centred on ways to bring early career academics into the HERDSA community and what we can offer them. There was also discussion about how to attract more people into the HERDSA Fellowship scheme and promoting the Fellowships more broadly. These are ongoing discussions with some potential ideas to explore. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

When Roger reminds me about the deadline for this column, I often wonder what I am going to write about, what may be of interest to you. If in this column you are expecting a critique of the current state of higher education in Australasia from your HERDSA President, I am sorry to disappoint. There are many commentators out there who know (or presume to know) more about these things than me. It is more my style to connect with you in a more personal way; how I, like many of you, experience the day-to-day life of working in higher education.

And so on to Hong Kong and the 2014 conference. I look forward to seeing you there and enjoying both the academic program and social activities that Anna and the conference team have planned for us.

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## THE HERDSA FELLOWS COLUMN

### Reflections of a HERDSA Fellow



By John Gilchrist, University of Canberra

As a HERDSA Fellow it is perhaps appropriate that I have a history of reflective practice and engagement with my teaching. My motivation is as much my own desire to improve as it is to imbue the joys of life long learning into my students.

My earliest teaching experiences were enriched by informal discussions with colleagues in my discipline and across disciplines. I take teaching and learning seriously. In 1996 I was seconded as an Associate to the Centre for Education Learning and Teaching (CELTS) at the University of Canberra to develop a coherent skills program in law. In 1999 I completed a Graduate Certificate in Higher Education. In 2001 I was appointed a CELTS fellow, on the basis of my outstanding scholarship and leadership in the area of teaching. In 2009 I was awarded a University of Canberra Citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning over a sustained period.

I recognize that teaching and learning comes at a 'cost'. It requires rigour and

sustained effort. I do not find teaching easy. I think teaching demands professionalism in outlook and endeavour, and a willingness to reflect and improve. Ongoing educational engagement with other teachers and reflection on my own teaching in the light of my own experience, student feedback, peer and literature review, is part of this outlook and endeavour.

Since 2009 I have been participating regularly in informal professional learning through TATAL (Talking About Teaching and Learning) workshops with colleagues from other disciplines and other tertiary institutions. These reflective workshops with colleagues across different disciplines provide a forum for learning that has stimulated, supported and encouraged me. They have also provided a 'Rolls Royce' experience in developing a HERDSA Fellowship application. My facilitators, Dr Coralie McCormack (HERDSA Board member) and Robert Kennelly (life member of HERDSA and HERDSA Fellow) have guided me and others in Fellowship applications and are

continuing to enrich teaching practice in higher educational institutions through the establishment of other TATAL groups across Australasia. In return, I am a co-facilitator of a TATAL group arising from the HERDSA Conference in Hobart in 2012 and have co-facilitated HERDSA TATAL in Auckland 2013. I plan to be a joint facilitator in a HERDSA TATAL at the HERDSA Conference July 2014 in Hong Kong.

The enrichment of my teaching through constant engagement and a desire to guide and encourage others to do so, transcends the seemingly ever-increasing and ever-changing administrative and managerial load which all of us experience. It keeps me fresh for a fundamental aspect of higher education - teaching.

I strongly encourage you all in continued reflection and engagement in your teaching and learning. If you want to find out more about TATAL refer to the December 2013 issue of *HERDSA News* (Vol 35 No 3).

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# The HERDSA Fellowship: Enabling Facilitators of Learning and Learners



By Fay Patel, Bond University

The invitation to write for the Fellows column in the 2014 *HERDSA News* publication coincides with the sad news that the world has lost one of her most profound leaders, Nelson Mandela (fondly known as Madiba, first President of a democratic South Africa in 1994). I am deeply grieved by his passing, inspired by his wisdom and fortunate to have shared his birthplace. I am reminded of how my history and land of birth, family and the communities who shared my oppressed past, and my spirituality with its enduring embrace of humanity have shaped my philosophy. Framed within this context, I subscribe to Freire's critical pedagogy as a holistic framework for learning design. It is an enabling paradigm that requires learners (teachers and students in the Freirian context) to challenge domination, contest knowledge and raise consciousness with the aim of transforming their socio-political landscapes. Freire (1997) reminds us of our collective responsibility as education leaders to re-commit to upholding human values for a better world in which human suffering is alleviated through education. From my experience in an international context, my observation of recent higher education practice suggests that there is a lack of compassion and commitment to transformative actions that uphold human values.

The HERDSA Fellowship award in 2012 was a milestone for me as someone who is not inclined to talk about self and achievement. The Fellowship has enabled me as a facilitator of learning and affirms the knowledge, experience and achievements that I bring to the ever evolving scholarship of learning and teaching discourse. Freire (1997) contends that 'one of the essential tasks of progressive educational praxis is the promotion of a curiosity that is critical, bold, and adventurous' (p. 38). The Fellowship enables me to be bold in exploring beyond and across visible and

invisible boundaries in search of meaningful learning encounters; allows me to introduce and share the notion of other knowledge, placing emphasis on the value of indigenous knowledge; permits others to listen with me to the critical messages our learning unfolds (including the messages in the awkward silences in between); and facilitates our collective visions for a learning paradigm that will uncover learning that stands the test of time. Sample (2011) asserts that discovery and uncoverage within the learning design paradigm is NOT about 'how much material we cover, it's how deeply we *uncover* it, how deeply we dig down to the core principles or processes of our discipline, of which we want our students to have a lasting—*enduring*—understanding'.

The Fellowship gave me voice and brought respect within an international community context allowing me to share alternate perspectives that may be controversial, forthright and confronting. For those for whom voice and respect are the norm such a view may seem trivial. However, for others born into societies in which voice, respect and dignity have to be earned over centuries of human degradation and humiliation as with me, the HERDSA Fellowship award is overwhelming.

The Fellowship award has inspired a diverse range of scholarship activity and collaborative higher education partnerships. Collaborative scholarship include a book Technology Innovation Leadership in Development: A 'Middle East' (West Asia) Perspective and a journal paper on Creativity as a Desirable Graduate Attribute: Implications for Curriculum Design and Employability with Dr Giselle Rampersad; a paper titled Enabling Leadership in Teaching and Learning: Balancing Creativity and Compliance Agendas in Australian Higher Education with Professor Tania Aspland; and another paper, Cross-Institutional and

Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Curriculum for Global Engagement with Dr Mingsheng Li and Dr Matthew Piscioneri. The latter is an outcome of the regionally, nationally and internationally supported collaborative professional development symposia on global engagement and citizenship held in February (hosted by Monash University) and September 2013 (co-hosted with Professor Sarah Paddle, Deakin University). Dr. Matthew Piscioneri invited me to co-convene both symposia which were funded by his Monash University 2013 Teaching and Learning Fellowship grant. The symposia attracted a diverse community of higher education practitioners (approximately 150) from 17 universities in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and England in a blended learning forum that included face-to-face and virtual participation using Skype and streaming link technologies. Of particular note, the event was successful because of the willingness of colleagues to connect across institutional, interdisciplinary, geographical and virtual barriers.

Other collaborative partnerships include invitations from Associate Professor Shelley Kinash to act as external reviewer to the Bond University Office of Learning and Teaching to review applications for the 2013 national learning and teaching awards and grants; as guest speaker at an event recognizing learning and teaching excellence and innovations; and to submit chapter on *innovative solutions for online pedagogy* (2013) in the handbook *First Steps Toward Blended Learning @Bond*. I have also contributed to the development of an online foreign language pilot program (Arabic for Specific Purposes) as co-researcher and education development consultant in Dr Zouhir Gabsi's research project. In my role as Associate Editor of the HERD journal, I continue to develop my critical self-reflective skills and revisit my perceptions and assumptions of learners and





teachers. I am also honoured to participate as a HERDSA Fellowship mentor for the first time as of December 2013.

My HERDSA Fellowship portfolio reflective statement notes my aspiration 'to develop and establish a professional presence as a versatile educator' and I believe that goal is facilitated through various opportunities that align with my philosophy. My philosophy is reflected in the way I embrace the world around me, how deeply I impact present and future global (local and global) communities, and in my integrity and humanity. Being a member of the HERDSA Fellows group provides multiple opportunities to further develop my professional competencies as an education development professional. The Fellowship continues to support my ongoing collaborations in higher education enhancement initiatives within Australia and overseas.

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***Dr Fay Patel is an educational development consultant at Bond University (Office of Learning and Teaching). Fay has thirty years teaching, research and educational development experience in higher education in an international context (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA and South Africa). Fay's co-authored and co-edited publications include journal papers and books on the globalisation of learning, creativity as a desired graduate attribute, technology innovation in development, and online learning.***

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## New HERDSA Guides now available

Transnational Teaching and Learning  
Anne Melano, Maureen Bell and Ruth Walker

Teaching across national boundaries can be an exciting and challenging experience. Distilling the wisdom of experienced transnational teachers as well as the research literature, this comprehensive guide provides practical advice on the broad range of issues affecting academics engaged in transnational higher education. In addition to advice for teachers, course coordinators are offered tips for designing new programs to help avoid the many potential pitfalls before they occur. The Guide also celebrates the rewards of transnational teaching; the enrichment from cross-cultural encounters and the insights that teachers bring back to their pedagogical work with international students in their home universities. While it draws on the Australasian experience, the Guide has wider applicability.

To order this publication on line go to:  
[http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page\\_id=35](http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=35)

# TRANSNATIONAL TEACHING TEAMS

## Transnational Team Builds Professional Development Resource for Transnational Teams

By Lynne Keevers



Project members meet at INTI Laureate campus, Malaysia. Left to right: Sumitha Ganesharatnam (INTI), Cathy Hall (RMIT), Mark Freeman (evaluator), Betty Leask (La Trobe), Casey Scholz (RMIT Vietnam), Lynne Keevers (UOW), Barry Harper (INTI), Fauziah Kp Dawood Sultan (INTI), Vincent Loh (INTI), Jane Lim See Yin (INTI); Inset: Gerry Lefoe (UOW), Maureen Bell (UOW), Pamela Abuodha (UOW)]

How can transnational teaching teams deliver quality subjects, work well together, and avoid the pit falls of the fly-in-fly-out model? The OLT funded project: *Transnational Teaching Teams: Professional development for quality enhancement of learning and teaching* has concluded that learning and teaching practice development needs to be collaboratively designed and negotiated by the whole teaching team, sensitive to the context of all team members across all teaching sites, and involve team members learning and developing together in the context of their daily work.

The project has led to the development of the Transnational Teaching Teams Toolkit which comprises eight 'toolboxes'. Each toolbox provides a set of piloted and peer reviewed curriculum and pedagogical resources to support transnational teaching

teams in a range of teaching and professional development activities.

The Toolboxes are:

1. Induction and Professional Development Framework;
2. Participatory Action Learning and Action Research;
3. Internationalisation of the Curriculum;
4. Parity in Assessment;
5. International Student Collaboration and Dialogue;
6. Intercultural Group Work;
7. Academic Language and Literacy; and
8. Transnational project-based learning.

The contents of each toolbox comprise:

- **A Facilitator Guide** to using the resources.
- **Facilitation Resources** for facilitating the teaching teams' work on the key issue
- **Content Resources** providing information and guides developed by the project team
- **Sample materials** developed by the teaching teams for use by themselves and their students
- **Case studies** offering insight into the original team projects
- **Links** to further reading and online resources.

The resources were developed from the situated needs of participating teaching teams. Teaching team members articulated their needs and set about developing resources and processes to meet those needs using a Participatory Action Learning (PAL) process. Support materials requested by the teams were sourced or, as was often the case, developed. For example, one teaching team identified parity in assessment across sites as an issue. The team worked together, often communicating by videoconference across sites, to develop an assessment calibration process that led to remarkable similarity in grading across the whole teaching team. Their work led to the *Parity in Assessment* toolbox that contains a range of materials developed by the teaching teams and their students.



To support the teaching teams in developing effective teaching and team approaches the project team developed a set of brief guides specifically for the transnational education context. These include guides to:

- Internationalisation of the Curriculum and Inclusive Pedagogy;
- Peer Assessment;
- Student Group Presentations;
- Parity in Assessment;
- Intercultural Group Work;
- Project-based Learning.

Templates and guides were also developed to support the teaching teams in effectively meeting to plan and implement their transnational teaching PAL projects including:

- Internationalisation of the Curriculum: Pre-workshop Questions for Teaching Teams;
- Team Workshop Action Planning Template;
- Action Learning Guide; and
- Action Research Guide.

A set of five case studies outlining the activities, challenges and successes of the original teams is included. Underpinning the processes and resources in the toolkits and the induction and professional development program, is a set of principles for professional development of transnational teaching teams.

A *National Symposium* will be held in June (see advertisement below) to disseminate project deliverables; inform the transnational higher education sector about available materials and effective processes; and provide a forum to discuss issues related to teaching and learning in transnational

education programs. The symposium targets a broad range of stakeholders involved in transnational education including Deputy Vice Chancellors and Associate Deans International, Associate Deans Education, academic developers, subject coordinators, and teaching team members involved in transnational teaching.

The project - Transnational teaching teams: professional development for quality enhancement of learning and teaching - is led by Dr Lynne Keevers from the University of Wollongong as lead institution and Dr Sumitha Ganesharatnam from INTI International College, Subang Jaya, Malaysia. Partners are INTI Laureate International University (Malaysia), RMIT International University (Vietnam), RMIT University, and University of South Australia.

**Contact: Dr Lynne Keevers, University of Wollongong, lkeevers@uow.edu.au**



*Professional development for quality enhancement of learning and teaching in transnational education*

**Transnational teaching teams:  
An International Symposium  
Monday, 16 June 2014  
University of Wollongong, NSW**

***Are you interested in transnational education approaches and effective professional development for transnational teaching teams?***

This **one-day symposium** is designed to explore the issues, challenges and opportunities of transnational teaching and how you can utilise the outcomes of an OLT funded project to enhance the effectiveness of transnational teaching teams.

- **Explore** the issues surrounding transnational education programs and participate in an interactive forum for discussion and debate on issues and solutions.
- **Participate** in workshops to discuss issues and explore resources developed by the project.

*Resources include:*

- principles and a framework for effective professional practice development with transnational teaching teams
- case studies
- a resources toolkit

*The toolkit provides materials and processes useful for:*

- induction
- inter-cultural learning
- calibration of assessment
- internationalisation of the curriculum
- encouraging interaction and dialogue between students across sites
- key issues in transnational education

**For more information email [lkeevers@uow.edu.au](mailto:lkeevers@uow.edu.au)**



# Review of Higher Education Research and Development



by Peter Kandlbinder

HERDSA was initially established because of a need for people to come together and discuss the challenges facing the higher education sector. It quickly became apparent that there was a gap in the higher education literature regarding research that spoke to the unique make-up of the Australasian context. Until the 1980s the field of higher education research and development was poorly understood and there was scope for a journal in which authors could reflect on what they had learned by tackling the distinctive challenges of the Australasian experience rather than simply relying on research from the United Kingdom or United States. Since then, *Higher Education Research & Development* (HERD) has built a prominent position for itself as the premier journal of higher education teaching and learning for the region. It has published original articles from many of the key researchers in the field and has a reputation as a quality publication well beyond Australasia.

Academic publishing has changed quite dramatically since the establishment of *HERD*. There are now an ever-increasing number of publication outlets for higher education research and the growing number of original articles on higher education research and development presents another opportunity in the higher education publication landscape. This time around the issue is not too few articles but too many. For a growing number of academics it has become increasingly difficult to keep up-to-date with a large number of research specialisations in tertiary education and how they apply to one's own institutional context.

This became apparent in HERDSA's recent Office for Learning and Teaching funded project "Facilitation of advocacy

and leadership in enhancing learning and teaching in the higher education community". The project undertook a comprehensive analysis of Australian teaching and learning scholarship and research and identified considerable investment has been made in teaching and learning projects since 2005. The review highlighted some important themes that warranted further investigation, including some that have been largely overlooked by the sector.

In response to these findings HERDSA has been working towards establishing a new online journal focusing on reviewing Australasian research and development. *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* is to be launched at the next HERDSA conference as the first volume of an annual review of latest developments in higher education research. These reviews will be undertaken by commissioned authors who have been recognized for their expertise in the field. Each issue will consist of a collection of peer-reviewed articles that review scholarship of teaching research, conference proceedings or work previously published in research journals. In such a review authors will describe how the issue is conceptualized within the literature, identify theories and practices that are shaping the outcomes of higher education and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these outcomes.

*HERDSA Review of Higher Education* will be distinctive from other review journals in two main ways. Firstly, it focuses on higher education systems within Australasia and thereby draws out implications for research and development that has direct relevance to the HERDSA membership. Secondly, the selection of topics will be objective in the sense that they are based on significant themes that emerge from the HERDSA Conference Proceedings, *HERD* journal

keywords and funded teaching and learning project reports. These themes will be ranked in a bi-annual survey of DVC (Academic)

& PVC (Teaching and Learning) to ensure each volume addresses the highest priority issues facing Australasian universities.

This will be the first online journal for HERDSA. The higher education sector has been slow to embrace online publishing, which is usually only adopted by journals focusing on technology in higher education. Online copies of *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* articles will be available from the HERDSA web site at no cost although readers who prefer paper copies of articles will be able to purchase print versions from the HERDSA office. This provides HERDSA with an online, open access journal that meets some of the priorities set out by the Australian Research Council, as well as the United Kingdom and United States governments, who have all made significant moves towards requiring funded research outcomes to be published in open access publications.

It is expected that *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* will benefit HERDSA members by providing timely information and authoritative advice about major issues confronting higher education. It complements the other publications currently offered by HERDSA by bringing together discussion of issues facing higher education into a single collection. Even though a range of common challenges exists across the sector, there appears to be a lack of awareness on how research can support policy development in higher education in any meaningful way. This may partially be due to a steady turnover of senior academic leaders and their focus on practice, which leads many of them to rely solely on internal staff resources for strategies for



dealing with the day-to-day issues facing their institution. This suggests it will be a significant challenge for *HERDSA Review of Higher Education* to communicate across the many different university communities focused on improving teaching and learning in higher education in a way that will

make the journal a valuable resource that makes a difference to policy, research and development.

*Peter Kandlbinder is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute for Interactive Media & Learning at the University of Technology,*

*Sydney. He is a member of the HERDSA Executive. He is the first editor of this new journal.*

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## Free Access to Current, High Quality Tertiary Education Research, Policy, Practice and Statistics from Australia and Overseas ... [www.voced.edu.au](http://www.voced.edu.au)

By Rose Anne-Polvere



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VOCEDplus has extensive coverage of Australian and international material. Online and free to use, it currently holds over 57 000 entries, many providing instant access to full text via the desktop, with around 400 new titles added each month.

### About VOCEDplus (formerly VOCED)

VOCEDplus is produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with funding provided by

Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and endorsement by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn, Germany. It was originally developed with assistance and support from a network of clearinghouses throughout Australia set up over 30 years ago with the aim of sharing information about activities in the TAFE sector.

In 1997, the first web version of VOCED was made available from the NCVER organisational website. In 2009-11, NCVER undertook a major rebuild of the database and website to take advantage of the potential of new technologies to provide improved services - resulting in VOCEDplus.

VOCEDplus covers the outcomes of tertiary education in the shape of research, policy, practice, and published statistics, encompassing higher education, VET (including VET in Schools), adult and community education, education/labour market relationships, social inclusion and informal learning. Selection is guided by NCVER's five national research priorities: (1) skills and productivity; (2) structures in the tertiary education and training system; (3) the contribution of education and training to social inclusion; (4) learning and teaching; and (5) the place and role of VET.

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- **Citation tool** – this tool enables you to download the citation for a specific item, generate a reference list of your search results, and save a full record; it also has the capability of downloading a record from VOCEDplus in EndNote tagged format for importing into your EndNote library, and it can be accessed via each item's full record, as well as from the My Selection tab at the top of the homepage
- **My Selection** – this feature acts like a shopping cart, allowing the user to select records from search results or full record pages, then email or save records in various formats (e.g. author-date citation modelled on the Harvard style, tagged format for import into EndNote, or full record format)
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  - From the Home Page click on **Advanced Search**
  - Add the words *higher education* to the top search box
  - Click on the drop down menu and select the **Title** field
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  - Click on your browser's RSS icon and subscribe to the feed.

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A range of subject guides have been developed as pathfinders to researching a specific topic. Each guide includes subjects and keywords to use for searching VOCEDplus, a selection of items in VOCEDplus on the topic and relevant resources and organisations. The subject guides can be found under the Tools tab on the main menu.

The language of vocational education and training (VET) is complex and particularly prone to jargon and acronyms. The *Glossary of VET* provides definitions of terms and acronyms used in Australian VET

literature. It also includes information about key VET-related organisations and historical documents that have shaped the development of VET in Australia. Browse the glossary at <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/glossary-vet>

VOCEDplus provides a number of Special Collections which can be accessed via the Browse tab at the top of the home page. The special collections are groups of thematic documents selected by the VOCEDplus team and tagged so that they can be automatically retrieved together with one click for easy browsing and access.

One of the most popular collections is the Australian National Landmark reports - selected key documents that have influenced the development of tertiary education (vocational education and training; higher education) systems in Australia.

*Rose-Anne Polvere has been an Information Specialist with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) for over 15 years. She has extensive experience in providing reference, research and information service for both internal and external clients.*

*Her current role also includes managing the content-related tasks of the VOCEDplus database and website, including sourcing and indexing research, policy and practice relevant to the tertiary sector, and developing the VOCEDplus special collections.*

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# Time to Change the Maths Message: What Does 'Assumed Knowledge' Really Mean for Students?

By Dr Deborah King and Joann Cattlin, University of Melbourne

Many universities in Australia no longer have prerequisite mathematics subjects for entry to degrees in science, mathematics, engineering and technology, opting for an 'assumed knowledge' entry requirement. There is growing concern in universities across the country that students entering science, engineering and technology degrees do not have the required mathematical background. In response, most universities now offer to commencing students, a variety of mathematics subjects at various levels, a range of support programs or have reviewed their teaching approaches and curriculum to accommodate the diversity of student backgrounds. The impact on universities is significant in terms of the cost of extra service provision, but is most commonly felt by frontline academic staff struggling to teach large classes of first-year students who don't have the required assumed knowledge. While these academics are making significant efforts to adapt their teaching, course content and program structure to improve student outcomes, these efforts do not make up for the deficit in mathematical knowledge. The consequences for students are not only high failure rates in their first year subjects, but difficulty in applying mathematical skills throughout their science and engineering degree.

These issues were the focus of a National Forum on *Assumed Knowledge in maths: its broad impact on tertiary STEM programs*, held on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February at the University of Sydney. The forum was attended by 145 academics and education specialists from mathematics, science and engineering from universities across Australian and New Zealand along with representatives of state curriculum authorities, the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, the Catholic Education Office and peak science and mathematics bodies like the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute (AMSI) and the Australian Mathematical Society

(AustMS). The forum was organised by the First Year in Maths (FYiMaths) project (funded by the Office of Learning and Teaching) and supported by the Institute of Innovation in Science and Mathematics Education (IISME) at the University of Sydney.<sup>1</sup>

The Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb gave the opening keynote address in which he expressed concern that while the numbers of students studying high level maths at high school were falling, there continues to be growth in students enrolling in STEM degrees. He identified a range of issues that had led to the decline in students' studying higher level maths, including a lack of incentive due to the removal of prerequisites for mathematics by universities and resulting perception that even intermediate level maths wasn't necessary to study STEM. He characterised the forum as a significant community of interest who could influence policy through working with the secondary sector to enhance understanding of the importance of mathematics for studying STEM and to provide support to teachers through specialist professional development.

A key element of the forum was the collection of presentations by academics on their institutions' approaches to teaching mathematics to diverse student cohorts and the adaptive responses developed through program and curriculum reviews. Most of the presentations are available on the FYiMaths project website ([www.fyimaths.org.au](http://www.fyimaths.org.au)).

The presentations revealed that institutions are developing a range of teaching approaches that scaffold learning through tasks and assessments that focus on developing key mathematical skills, building student's confidence and self-awareness. Different class formats have also been trialled, including smaller seminar style classes, 'flipped classrooms' and variations of lecture recording.

One of the key tools used by many institutions is diagnostic testing of mathematical skills for incoming first year students. Tests can be administered before, or early in, the first semester of first year, they may be compulsory or voluntary, and may direct student enrolment in specific courses, or serve as formative assessment. A number of institutions have developed their own test, while others have adapted those used at other institutions.

Bridging programs are a common mechanism to enable students without mathematics from school to develop the required mathematical skills for STEM programs. There are two main models of bridging program: a pre-semester short course that is fee based and open to the public, and a semester course that is credited as part of their degree program. The presenters reported mixed results from their bridging programs, with concerns expressed about the depth of knowledge developed, and the problems of teaching mathematics alongside other first year STEM subjects requiring this knowledge.

A key element of course and degree program redesign at many institutions was the collaboration that happened between the staff teaching mathematics and their colleagues in science and engineering disciplines. On a practical level consultation enabled mathematicians to identify the key mathematical skills their students need for science and engineering and to contextualise examples of maths applications. Most importantly consultations established an understanding and ongoing consultative relationship that further enhanced the integration of mathematics subjects into the degree programs, increasing student engagement and linking the maths they learnt in first year to later courses in their degree.

The outcome of the forum has been to develop a consensus amongst STEM academics, peak mathematics bodies and



education specialists on the need to work together to arrest the declining maths skills of students. In the coming months the FYiMaths project will initiate actions intended to promote further discussion about how to redress the concerns about how the removal of prerequisites is influencing student choices.

*Dr Deborah King is the Director of First Year in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Melbourne, and is the project leader of First Year in Maths. She is also involved in a number of teaching and learning*

*projects, including assessment practices, communication skills, and mathematical misconceptions. She has been involved in curriculum design at both tertiary and secondary level.*

*Joann Cattlin is the project manager of the First Year in Maths project. She has been a project officer and researcher on ALTC and ARC projects utilizing her background as a university librarian and experience in government policy work. She is currently completing a Master of Information Management and her research interests include communities*

*of practice and information seeking behaviours.*

## References

1. The FYiMaths project is investigating the challenges facing first year mathematics coordinators and has recently interviewed academics at universities across the country. IISME hosted the forum as part of its activities in encouraging engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning in science and mathematics.

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# On Completing a Form

John Milton

Well, not really any form - specifically a submission to TEQSA seeking course accreditation [1], [2]. In this short essay I attempt to make sense of part of my professional experience helping course leaders in a non self-accrediting registered higher education provider. It is being shared to help others in their journeys 'making sense'. It also may prompt research to bring forth more soundly based descriptions of experience.

I'd say there are three different broad approaches to completing a course accreditation submission to TEQSA. These are based on my observations from working with discipline experts responsible for new course submissions, hereafter called the course leader.

## 1) Completing the Form and Getting it Right

The course leader focuses on the questions aiming to complete the form and getting them right. This approach tends to see the questions in isolation (from each other and from a wider context). It can be associated with seeing the form and process as a burden or even a barrier; seeing some parts of the submission as irrelevant; looking for the formula for success or simply, the 'right answers'; taking it for granted that the course is a worthy one; disinterest in the likely readers or, on the other hand, absorption with the likely readers and decision makers.

## 2) Creating a Thorough and Coherent Submission

The submission as a whole is the focus for the course leader with a need to get it right. The course leader works to create a complete, coherent structure to the submission including the curriculum as it is defined by the submission. Important goals underpinning the application writing include ensuring logical relationships (including educationally logical constructs such as constructive alignment). Elements of a formulaic approach can enter the submission writing - tacit rules which have emerged from practice. Collectively these relationships can 'drive' the preparation of the documentation. It can be associated with seeing the submission as the end point (if not the subsequent decision of the accrediting agency).

## 3) Creating A Course As It Is To Be

The focus of the submission writing is the course as it is to be implemented. The course as it is described in the whole application is developed with an eye for the course's (effectiveness through?) implementation rather than the submission itself. A key part of this perspective can be the anticipated experience of the course by students and teachers which then guides the course leader's decision making - for example designing a course to effect particular broad types of student experiences. It may

be associated with looking firmly into the future delivery anticipating and addressing practical and educational issues for students and teachers.

I have also noticed course leaders with more explicit and complex understandings of the educational role of the course in institutional, discipline and professional education contexts. Some even accept the regulatory context (to a degree!) while keeping the focus on the opportunities the process creates for the course.

On reading these descriptions a course leader colleague commented she adopted these different approaches to different parts of the form. While this acknowledges that course leaders may question the point of some questions and requirements it is my view that there is greatest long term educational value in the process by maintaining as far as possible an approach based on (3).

We can see these categories collectively as hierarchical in the experience of the course leader in the sense that course leader with a disposition to adopt approach (3) will adopt approaches (2) and even (1) depending on a range of factors including the situation at time of writing; for example shortcuts may be taken if time pressures apply. However a course leader with a disposition for (2) would adopt approaches (2) and (1) depending on the context of the writing.

What practical benefit is there identifying the different approaches to preparing a submission?





We may have an interest in whether course leaders can be influenced to adopt a higher order approach to completing an application. This needs more trial in practice. A colleague has suggested engaging in discussion and reflection about the different approaches from the early stages of proposal development with a view of facilitating course leaders' sensemaking. I'd add making a concerted early effort to ask, debate and develop responses to the bigger questions, for example, what is the future role of the course?, what opportunities does the course afford us?, how will the course achieve its intended outcomes?

The impact of such initiatives could be enhanced by asking previously successful course leaders who have adopted approach (3) to share their experiences, the issues they addressed and particularly how they shaped their courses.

An independent party posing key questions bringing the logical relationships to the fore may help move a course leader from (1) to (2) for specific parts of the application (for example, the learning outcomes – assessment alignment). I had experience with some success probing and questioning a course leader, repeatedly requiring him to prioritise each subjects' learning outcomes looking for the one or two key, overarching and 'highest order' learning outcomes. Then, following the constructive alignment logic, deciding the structure of assessment in each subject

assuming there is one or possibly two key and overarching assessments. It was to that course leaders' credit that he quickly drew on his own extensive experience as well as commitment to sound learning and moved beyond his somewhat formulaic, category (1) approach which he had let dominate his work on this particular course proposal to that point.

Given the different approaches to submission writing we may also have an interest in how the process of preparing good applications builds in long term effective high level educational practices in course implementation (recognising the submission process is geared to meeting or exceeding higher education standards [3]). Some suppositions can be offered:

Following approach (1) may see these standards at worst as irrelevant or too general. It could be seen as only relevant to identifying the answer which will generate a tick of approval.

Approach (2) may see these standards as important to address for the submission but little or no interest in or commitment to implementation.

Approach (3) potentially sees longer term value in practices which may have emerged from engagement with the standards and incorporated in plans for course delivery.

These observations, suppositions and questions point to the value of identifying

the different approaches to completing the accreditation form and submission. They await further sharing of insightful observations and analyses of course leader experiences as well as rigorous research starting with that fundamental question 'how do we complete a (TEQSA course accreditation) form?' followed by 'what has been the long term impact on course implementation?'

## Endnotes

- [1] Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/>
- [2] Accreditation of a higher education course of study <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/for-providers/accreditation/initial-accreditation>
- [3] Higher Education Standards Framework <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2012L00003> ; also <http://www.teqsa.gov.au/higher-education-standards-framework>

Acknowledgements: Bridget Haylock, Christine Hepperle, Chandi Piefke, Debbie Pratt.

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## THE OLT COLUMN

# Office for Learning and Teaching update – March 2014

By OLT

*The Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) has begun another busy year supporting sustainable quality improvement in higher education learning and teaching through its suite of grants, fellowships and awards. 2014 will also be a year to further strengthen collaboration, dissemination and engagement opportunities with OLT programmes and activities.*

On 10 and 11 June 2014, the OLT will host its inaugural two day conference in Sydney. Titled ‘Learning and Teaching for our times – higher education in the digital era’, the conference will focus on innovation and change in higher education, particularly the developments in technology and their impact on the delivery of learning and teaching in Australian universities. The conference will provide an opportunity to showcase the work being funded through the OLT in identified priority areas for 2013 and 2014. Project leaders will be encouraged to disseminate project outcomes and resources demonstrating the transformations that are occurring in the delivery of learning and teaching in their disciplines and institutions.

Late last year, the Minister for Education, The Hon Christopher Pyne MP, approved funding for eight projects on the 2013

strategic priority areas: technology enabled learning, graduate employability and learning analytics. These projects will synthesize existing research and further investigate how learning analytics can assist with student retention; how universities can best support students to develop generic skills; and how technology enabled learning can enhance student learning outcomes. The OLT will announce 2014 strategic priority topics and call for project proposals later in the year.

OLT secondees, Professor Patrick Crookes from the University of Wollongong and Professor Belinda Probert from La Trobe University, are making great progress with their respective research projects.

Professor Crookes’ project is establishing a model for a Transforming Practice Programme, in partnership with the UK’s Higher Education Academy. The project will scrutinise university policy surrounding ‘Rewarding and Recognising Teaching Excellence in Promotion Processes’. The pilot programme commenced in February of this year and involves 13 Australian and nine UK-based education institutions to facilitate collaborative innovation and bolster reward and recognition for teaching excellence.

Professor Probert is authoring three discussion papers on a programme of work on teaching-focused academics in Australian universities, particularly the challenges of sustained scholarship, standards and status in an increasingly differentiated system of higher education.

The OLT is also partnering with the Higher Education Standards Panel to fund a Research Fellow who will investigate academically viable alternatives to traditional courses of study and recognition of prior learning; the credibility of qualifications that are not based on delivery of traditional courses of study; and the potential impact on setting minimum standards for higher education. Applications for this opportunity have closed and an appointment will be announced shortly.

To assist with forward planning, key dates for 2014 grants, awards and fellowship programmes are available on the OLT website at [www.olt.gov.au](http://www.olt.gov.au)

The greatest improvements in learning and teaching are those that come from within the community of practitioners. We look forward to continuing our work with you this year to improve quality and inform best practice in learning and teaching.

## AKO AOTEAROA COLUMN

# Enhancing the Impact of Projects Designed to Enhance Tertiary Teaching and Learning

By Peter Coolbear

*In the last HERDSA Newsletter Peter Coolbear, National Director of Ako Aotearoa, talked about their developing role as a funding agency to support*

*enhancement of tertiary teaching and learning in New Zealand. In this second article he reflects on recent changes to their funding approach.*

Over 2013, Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand’s National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence completed the implementation of a



co-funding approach for its main project funds. This means that fundees are now expected to contribute at least fifty percent of the costs (in dollars or kind) either from their own resources or from other funding sources. At the same time, we have been extending our work to evaluate the impact of completed projects. Both of these initiatives have naturally had considerable impact on how our funding is positioned within New Zealand's tertiary sector.

As many HERDSA members will be aware, our impact evaluation work has been shared with the Office for Learning and Teaching Teaching and Learning in Australia and Tilly Hinton (University of the Sunshine Coast and who was then academic seconded to the OLT) and I made a joint presentation on this at the HERDSA Conference in Auckland last year.

## The Impact of Co-Funding

It is very early days, but present indications are that our co-funding approach is well accepted across our tertiary sector. In our 2012/2013 competitive national funding round, Ako Aotearoa received 13 expressions of interest and selected four projects for funding support. These had a total value of just under NZ \$1.3m with investment from organisations comprising 54% of that total. In our recently completed 2013/2014 competitive round we received 25 expressions of interest and awarded funding to five projects (total value, with fundee contributions of 52%, NZ \$1.5m).

This suggests that we are meeting a clear demand and that our funding is valued by education providers to supplement investments they are making in their own right to improve outcomes for learners. What we are noticing also is that the average quality of applications to us has improved. We have always received more high quality applications than we can fund, but under our full funding model there was always quite a long tail of applications that simply weren't competitive (I explored some of the reasons for this in my previous article). By requiring co-funding and thus organisational buy-in to our project work, the number of "easy no's" for the selection panel has fallen off considerably.

There is also an encouraging alignment to New Zealand's present strategies for tertiary education. Four of the five projects we have agreed to support in the 2013/2014 round

focus on improving success for identified priority groups, namely: Māori, Pacific and younger learners. The fifth project centres on mobile learning technologies which is, of course, another hot strategic topic.

It is also notable that each of these projects is solutions focussed. How much credit Ako Aotearoa can take for this is debatable, but we did deliberately make a significant change to our funding publicity by removing the word "research" from high level statements in our promotional material. While each of our new projects will be research-informed and has the potential to generate peer-reviewed research outcomes: this is by no means the primary objective. We expect projects to be conducted with the necessary rigour required by the research community, but the primary objective is about actualising benefit to learners.

## Measuring the Impact of the Work Itself

For many (most?) research projects, impact is measured – if at all – simply by reach: how many people, other than friends and colleagues, are interested in and cite the work. While this is important, we want to do more than this: we want to measure what difference the work is making to both practice and outcomes. This may be complex and challenging stuff, but that is no reason not to do it.

Inevitably, the quantitative language of business comes in here. We need to be able to show a return on our investment to our government funders (and now to our co-fundees as well). To balance this, we also need the qualitative stories about the transformative potential of improved experience for individual groups of learners. Further, we need to better understand how we can most effectively lever off the good work that has already been done and identify when and how it can be applied in different contexts within a diverse and often conservative tertiary education system.

Our impact evaluation framework developed and first trialled in 2010-2011 by our then Research Manager, Kirsty Weir, has four dimensions:

- Reach (generation and dissemination of project outputs)
- Impact on practice
- Impact on learners

- Impact on the project teams themselves.

These dimensions provide the basis for a series of evaluative interviews with project teams conducted at six, 12 and 24 months after project completion. In each of these dimensions several themes are explored (for example impact on learners has the themes of academic enhancement, learning environment and resources, relationships, personal development and pathway progression). We also try to distinguish between independent evidence and that attributed by practitioners.

Of course there are a range of overarching issues and trade-offs here. Two of the top three are, first, perpetual difficulties around attributing causality and, second, a real debate about reasonable time-frames in which to expect evidence of impact on learning with different types of projects in different contexts. Some projects are direct interventions in the learning environment which, if successful, should provide short-term returns. Others are much more strategic and endeavouring to achieve longer-term sustainable change.

The third fundamental issue, especially in a co-funding model, is how can we be sure our added investment provided added value? The "is this actually business as usual?" question we ask our selection panels to consider in evaluating all proposals is a strong gate-keeper, but it is no means the complete answer.

We must also acknowledge the fact that we retro-fitted this evaluation process to previously funded projects. We have been greatly impressed by and very much appreciate the very high levels of support and interest we have received from project teams in response to our request for their involvement.

So all this is a work in progress: we are learning as we proceed, but we are beginning to establish what I believe are some robust audit trails from funding invested to practice enhancement and learner benefit. As a funder looking to protect and grow its available funding, it is essential that we give it the best possible go.

*Ako Aotearoa expects to be able to publish its first full set of collated impact evaluation reports in the first half of this year*

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## IT IN HIGHER EDUCATION COLUMN

# From Software Patent Wars to Cloud Computing: How the LMS Has Evolved

By Roger Atkinson



How much of your reading is initiated by an interesting headline? Like one that appeared in *The Economist* in 2013, “Obituary for software patents” [1]. While the topic may at first glance seem to be a little specialised or even quite boring, *The Economist’s* headline links to a salacious topic from the past, ‘software patent wars’, to a contemporary buzz phrase, ‘cloud computing’, and to what I feel is a significant trend in the recent evolution of the LMS (learning management system). So for me that headline initiated a lengthy but intriguing reading and re-reading path.

To begin with software patents, it is less than a decade since the “patent war” that is perhaps the most memorable for IT in higher education. This was Blackboard Inc. suing Desire2Learn Inc. in 2006 for an infringement of Bb’s U.S. Patent 6988138 over learning management systems [2]. Bb’s legal action created outrage in educational technology communities, but over time the issue quietly faded away. The end point in this “patent war” was summarised succinctly by Keller (2010) [3]:

Patent No. 6,988,138 granted Blackboard the rights to course-management software in which a single user could have multiple roles in multiple courses. A federal jury in Texas ruled in 2008 that Desire2Learn had infringed the patent and ordered it to pay Blackboard \$3.1-million. ... But the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ruled later in 2008 that the patent should be invalidated because others had used similar technology to what Blackboard said it had invented. Blackboard officials vowed to have the ruling overturned on appeal. ... Last week, a Blackboard representative said in an e-mail that the company had ended its appeals and that the patent had been officially terminated. [3]

Whilst Blackboard’s 2006 legal action put Bb into the “patent troll” category attacked by *The Economist’s* “Obituary for software patents”, it is perhaps more interesting to probe further into reasons for Bb’s announcement that “the patent had been officially terminated”. As an advance organiser: “losers change direction rather than persist with a failed tactic!” The most obvious reason of course was legal setbacks - especially the success of Desire2Learn’s appeal in 2009 [4]. Among the contributions to the legal counterattack on Bb was the widespread publicity for published work that undermined Bb’s claim that it *invented* the LMS [2]. Thanks to the Internet’s capacity to simulate a library of almost infinite size, much of that critical publicity remains available online [5]. It won’t go away; even the infamous 2006 patent remains online [6].

A second obvious reason was the deep resentment Bb’s action generated amongst the population that Bb had to win over and keep on side in order to sell licences and services: university, college and school sector teachers and management [2, 4]. As another advance organiser: “one cannot declare war upon one’s own customers and potential customers!” Looking back at some of the references [2], it was a warring period, a blunder by Bb: “Boycott Blackboard”, “Blackfate” [7]; “... like poking a stick into an anthill ... a furious reaction...” [Downes, 8].

However, there another reason, explored in the rest of this column, that is possibly more important, from a longer term perspective. This is ‘outsourcing’, now being linked increasingly to a contemporary buzz phrase, ‘cloud computing’. In the Australian context, at least, ‘outsourcing’ is often an emotive term associated with fears about losses of jobs to overseas suppliers who provide cheaper services [9]. By contrast,

within the narrow and very specific context of IT in higher education, such fears seem to be quite muted [10]. This could be in part because IT is a relatively rapid growth area, in which outsourcing facilitates expansion, on a ‘few or even no new jobs in house’ scenario, in contrast to a ‘job losses’ scenario. Also, in part, there can be persuasive arguments within academia that IT services are not in the ‘core mission and competencies’ class [11]. Furthermore, the outsourcing of IT services is becoming better known under a catchy new label, ‘cloud computing’, thereby distancing a little from the fears associated with the outsourcing of other kinds of services or in other industries. Lastly, in the very specific case of outsourcing/cloud computing for LMS services, a prominent Australian supplier has emerged, thereby avoiding the extra apprehension associated with ‘offshoring’ (i.e. outsourcing to an entity in another country [12]).

The prominent Australian supplier of outsourcing/cloud computing for LMS services is NetSpot, a South Australian company [13]:

### *Your Premium eLearning Partner*

NetSpot supports education organisations within Australia and New Zealand. We provide professional services including managed hosting for over 2,000,000 users, technical support, training, content migration, implementation support, and help desk. [13]

The phrase “over 2,000,000 users” added to the length of my reading path. Divert to the ABS website, to find that Australia’s student population (all sectors of formal education) was 2,040,400 in May 2012 [14]. Perhaps ‘users’ refers to ‘unit enrolments’? But,



no matter, it is clear that with its large number of university and other educational institutions as clients, NetSpot is attaining the most important of the common goals shared by 'outsourcers' and 'outsourtees', namely *economies of scale* [11]. Why run your own server bank, software maintenance processes, technical help desk, etc., for (say) 100,000 LMS unit enrolments, when a third party can let you into the economies of scale attained with (say) 2,000,000 unit enrolments? And that's so much easier these days, given the previous decade's spectacular advances in network, server and data storage technologies, especially with respect to reliability and cheapness.

Besides economies of scale, there are numerous other advantages, disadvantages and issues associated with outsourcing/cloud computing [11] [15]. But one aspect seem to have received little attention. This is the emergence of large scale *purchasing power* (for want of a better term). To illustrate this concept by way of analogy, Australians are familiar with arguments between our very powerful supermarket duopoly (Coles and Woolworths) and their suppliers, for example producers of dairy products and the dairy farmers. Like, 'accept our downwardly revised unit price for your contract renewal, or no deal, we will not put you on our shelves'. Coles and Woolies have scope to exert that pressure owing to their capturing of high proportions of the Australian shopper population. Adapting the supermarket scenario to the LMS market, producers (such as Bb) have accepted that the good old days of rising income from software licensing fees that could be increased every year (and defended by 'patent wars') are gone. Now it's more like, 'discount or you won't appear on NetSpot's shelves'. Actually, Bb does 'appear on NetSpot's shelves', in the form of *Collaborate* and other Bb products [13], though we do not know the extent of the 'discount' or other inducements. In other apparently adaptive tactics, Bb is becoming also a provider of managed hosting ('taking to the clouds!') [16], in their case with Bb *Learn*; has bought forward new products (such as *Collaborate*, *Connect*, *Mobile* and *Analytics*); commenced offering free course sites for small scale users [16]; and has continued its old game of 'buying up' or 'buying into' competitors [17].

Is there a danger for universities and others who have been strong supporters

of Moodle and other open source LMSs, and 'outsourtees' such as NetSpot, as Bb buys into competitors? Young (2012) [17] suggested that there is a danger, as "... Blackboard essentially owns the open-source alternatives [Moodle, etc.] as well". I find from my reading that Young's view is too pessimistic. The history of these matters suggests to me that Bb has been forced into a defensive strategy, for example offering free course sites (perhaps in response to Pearson and Google developing a free LMS [18]), and in their newer products offering integration with LMSs other than Bb's own *Learn*. Ironically, one could suggest that as LMS evolution has proceeded, Bb has been forced to *learn*, *collaborate* and *connect* with others.

Also, the history suggests to me that Australia's universities (and other LMS users) are on a safe path with current LMS outsourcing/cloud computing directions and providers, though it could be important to be united behind a small number of Australian-based 'outsourtees' or even a single 'outsourtee'. The big challenge for universities is not technological infrastructure for the LMS, it is populating the LMS with good courses, increasing the numbers of students enrolled, and sustaining their satisfaction levels.

This column has concentrated upon corporate aspects of the evolution of the LMS, with no mention of evolution in teaching and learning aspects of the LMS. That's not an oversight! Firstly, 'pedagogical evolution' is beyond the scope of this brief column, but secondly and perhaps more importantly, it could be argued that 'corporate evolution' has followed a more tortuous path (and therefore is more salaciously interesting!), from software licensing and patent wars, to software-as-a-service [11] and cloud computing. By contrast, 'pedagogical evolution' got away to a fast start, and perhaps a smoother, 'non-salacious' or 'low controversy' path, being strongly influenced from its beginnings some 15 years ago by emerging new ideas in pedagogy, especially constructivism. For example, as expressed by Moodle's originator, Martin Dougiamas [5] (who did not get into patent wars):

In 1998, I started exploring educational theory to find directions for improvement. Constructivism, and particularly constructionism, was immediately attractive to me as a tool

to help understand learning and the nature of knowledge (Dougiamas, 1998) as were theories of how reading and writing could be used in learning (Dougiamas, 1999). This is because the Internet as a medium is well-suited to interactive constructive activities... (Dougiamas, 2000, [5])

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# Meanderings

By Robert Cannon



At 10am on New Year's Day 2014 my resolution to remain calm when reading the morning papers was already in ruins. The reason was an opinion-piece by Peter Martin titled 'Sugar: How sweet it is' (*The Age*, 1 January, 2014). The well-written article was about the biochemistry and genetics linking sugar and obesity. Martin, I noted, is the *economics* correspondent at *The Age*.

While I would stoutly defend Martin's freedom to write on sugar or any other matter, what troubles me is the frequency with which reputable people in one field of enquiry write as if they have professional expertise in quite dissimilar fields. Perhaps Martin does have expertise in biochemistry and genetics, as well as economics, and I am in error – a matter for which I apologise. Nevertheless, we do seem to be getting more and more commentary on topics as diverse as health, climate change, international relations, and education from people who have no established expertise in these fields.

This kind of commentary reflects the complaint voiced by Tom Nichols in an essay *The Death of Expertise* (<http://thefederalist.com/2014/01/17/the-death-of-expertise/>). Nichols despairs of "... a Google-fuelled, Wikipedia-based, blog-sodden collapse of any division between professionals and laymen, students and teachers, knowers and wonderers..."

Nichols' despair is reflected in the way that few professional educators express their informed opinion in the media, leaving room for journalists and others to move in and for politicians to get away with weak policy ideas: teachers, curricula, centralised control, school and university funding, computers for all, and their fascination with high stakes assessment of student learning come to mind.

My long-held view that the assessment of student learning and the evaluation of teaching are two of the most poorly practiced areas in education is reinforced in the opening chapter of the second edition of *Assessment for Excellence, The Philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* by Alexander Astin and

Anthony Antonio (Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, 2012). Here the authors complain about assessment practices performed out of sheer habit or convenience, practices that are not related to the basic mission of universities and that lack of clarity of purpose. (For the purposes of this article only, I am combining assessment and evaluation into the one broad idea of making judgements about something based on the collection of appropriate data.)

This indictment is somewhat surprising because of the centrality of evaluation and assessment in education and also because there is such a vast literature on both. I looked up the Taylor and Francis website (<http://www.tandfonline.com>), publishers of our journal, *Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)*, and found four specialist educational journal titles with the term 'assessment' and three with 'evaluation'. There are 251 education journal titles from this one publisher alone, including *HERD*, *Studies in Higher Education* and *Teaching in Higher Education*. These journals also publish on assessment and evaluation.

Why I think poor practice seeps into our work in education is partly that many academics working in universities feel they that are an expert on education even though their academic qualifications are not in education. So experience of many years of formal education 'qualifies', it would seem, academics to be expert and to be infallible judges (at least in their own minds) of student work and teaching competence.

There is an alarming contrast between the practice of assessment and evaluation in universities and in the wider community. Three examples from three countries illustrate this point.

To become an Australian Rugby League referee a candidate must complete a course comprising ten units of study. After this, time is spent with a Referees' Association for face-to-face learning. Once the course, the face-to-face sessions, and an assessment have been completed, the candidate will be considered for a position. The ten units of study include such diverse topics as

The Role of the Referee, Practical Refereeing, Judiciary Procedures, Legal Responsibilities and Code of Conduct (<http://www.playrugbyleague.com.au>).

From football to dogs: According to the website of the American Kennel Club ([http://classic.akc.org/events/obedience/judging\\_requirements.cfm](http://classic.akc.org/events/obedience/judging_requirements.cfm)), before attaining provisional approval as a judge, an applicant must have owned, trained and titled a dog, been active in the sport for six years, acted as a steward ten times, judged at obedience matches a minimum of five times, participated as a dog trainer, and attended an obedience seminar. But that is not all! Before attaining provisional approval, the candidate's name is published and the opportunity is provided for all interested persons to comment on the applicant's judging qualifications. Then there is a written test, an interview and finally the new Provisional Judge must judge a minimum of ten assignments and have judged a minimum of 150 dogs prior to applying for regular status.

From dogs to driving: To become a driving examiner in the United Kingdom, and before commencing a four weeks long course, candidates are screened on the basis of driving qualifications, driving and criminal records, and personal suitability. Although there is some driving on this course, the emphasis is on learning the assessment and interpersonal skills needed to be an effective examiner. On successful completion of the course, examiners complete a 12 months probationary period and managers will monitor skills as an examiner to ensure that standards and performance are maintained (<http://www.dsa.gov.uk/Category.asp?cat=648>).

So, to become a judge of football, dogs or driving, a potential candidate can be screened for suitability, complete a program of formal training, undertake assessable practical work, serve probationary periods, and be monitored. Both interpersonal and technical skills are required. What can



we say about the requirements of people in our universities who undertake work requiring judgement of student and staff performance? Would any come close to approaching the stringent requirements of the American Kennel Club? Why is dog judging inherently more difficult and demanding than judging students and teachers in universities?

It is alarming that the circumstances around this characteristic of universities may be getting worse. After reading Benjamin Ginsberg's book, *The Fall of the Faculty; the Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why it Matters* (Oxford University Press, 2011) one can conclude that more and more evaluative work will likely be undertaken by administrators rather than academics. At the very least, and in spite of the criticisms above, academics do bring a deep understanding of their respective disciplines to the evaluation table. Perhaps no more, if we accept Ginsberg's arguments and evidence.

Ginsberg notes (p.26) that a low teaching staff-student ratio is considered a measure of educational quality. He argues that if

universities were really concerned about educational quality it would surely follow that the increased spending on universities over recent years would be reflected in teaching staff expansion. But what happened in the United States was that staff to student ratios remained fairly constant over 30 years at about 1:16 but what changed dramatically was the administrator ratio per student. In 1975, US universities employed one administrator per 84 students but by 2005 the administrator ratio dropped to 1:58. Ginsberg notes how administrators have wrested control of established academic functions and worries about the impact of this change on academic quality. To this we can add worries about the quality of educational judgements. This worry is linked as much to the actual process of evaluating students and teachers as it is to the development and management of evaluation policies and procedures that are now more likely to be controlled by administrators.

To the extent that this is happening here must surely be a matter of deep concern. The opening chapter of the second edition of *Assessment for Excellence* by Alexander

Astin and Anthony Antonio (Rowman and Littlefield, Maryland, 2012) reinforces my concern. The quotation from page 1 (my emphasis added) concludes this edition of *Meanderings*:

"Practically everybody in the academic community gets assessed these days, and practically everybody assesses somebody else. Students, of course, come in for a heavy dose of assessment, first from admissions offices, later from the professors who teach their classes, and increasingly from administrators complying with state accountability requirements... Administrators also assess faculty, and in many institutions, have the final say in faculty personnel decisions."

**Robert Cannon is an external evaluator of the USAID-funded Palestinian Faculty Development Program. He is also an evaluation adviser for a large USAID basic education project in Indonesia. He was formerly Director of the Advisory Centre for University Education at the University of Adelaide.**

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## HERDSA New Zealand

**Chair: Clinton Golding**

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**HERDSA NZ website: <http://www.berdsa.org.nz/>**

The big news this year is that **Professor Helen Sword** is the recipient of the TERNZ 2013 Medal for Research with Major Impact. HERDSA members will know that Helen's scholarly research is underpinned by compassionate and critical thinking and the medal is well deserved.

As always HERDSA NZ has been very active. In addition to hosting the wonderfully successful 2013 HERDSA conference the highlights of 2013 are noted as: the popular Shane Dawson Learning Analytics workshop and a Research

Mentoring workshop conducted by Jim Thornhill.

A variety of activities are in the pipeline for 2014 including the TERNZ (Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand) conference on November 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> in Auckland. HERDSA NZ organises this conference every year except when hosting the HERDSA conference. The conference is designed to be an inclusive, cooperative space for dialogue. All members from Australia and New Zealand are warmly invited so put this in your diary.

Other activities in the planning pipeline include:

- Graduate Attributes Symposium, Wellington in April
- HERDSA Revisited, all major centres in July/August

## By Clinton Golding

- Higher Education Research Symposium, September in Auckland.

**Members will find the article by Clinton Golding in this issue of HERDSA News**

**- HERDSA NZ to host a (metaphorical) street party for the tertiary education neighbourhood - interesting reading in which Clinton suggests HERDSA should take a hand in fostering a stronger community built on our common interests in tertiary or higher education (see below).**



Clinton Golding, Chair HERDSA New Zealand





## TERNZ MEDAL RECIPIENT, 2013 – RESEARCH WITH MAJOR IMPACT

Helen's research and writing over many years analyses and fosters creative innovations in the intersecting domains of literary studies, digital poetry, higher education pedagogy and academic writing. She has published five books and innumerable academic papers as well as hosting several websites on digital poetry and writing.

Helen's work on academic writing is very significant and influential from the perspective of both scholarship and practice. Writing is an aspect of academic/research work that is inescapable, but troublesome and anxiety-provoking for many academics (and students). The international recognition of her contribution in this area reflects, in part, an appreciation for her



Professor Helen Sword  
(University of Auckland)

having helped to bring the issue of academic writing into the open. Helen's most current work - *Stylish Academic Writing* - was published by Harvard University Press in 2012. It is based on an empirical study derived from a linguistic analysis of more than a 1,000 peer reviewed articles and books. In this sense it distinguishes itself from most other writing guides and self-help books as it is a scholarly work that carefully uses examples of good and not so good writing to illustrate both the theory and practice of writing.

When launched, the work received worldwide attention and the Times Higher

Education Supplement put it on the front cover with a three-page article. Few New Zealand researchers have achieved this sort of recognition for an idea. Reviewers have said:

Elegant data and ideas deserve elegant expression, argues Helen Sword in this lively guide to academic writing. For scholars frustrated with disciplinary conventions, and for specialists who want to write for a larger audience but are unsure where to begin, here are imaginative, practical, witty pointers that show how to make articles and books a pleasure to read—and to write.

Dispelling the myth that you cannot get published without writing wordy, impersonal prose, Sword shows how much journal editors and readers welcome work that avoids excessive jargon and abstraction.

Helen's work most definitely meets the criteria for 'research with major impact'.

## HERDSA NZ to Host a (Metaphorical) Street Party for the Tertiary Education Neighbourhood

By Clinton Golding, Chair of the NZ Branch

I was surprised to discover there were so many tertiary education organisations, associations and societies in New Zealand. I knew three or four of HERDSA's neighbours, but had missed more than 10 others. It was as if I had never looked at the other homes on the street I lived.

There is a broad and diverse tertiary education neighbourhood in NZ (with a mind-numbing array of acronyms). As well as HERDSA there are also organisations for particular groups of tertiary educators – Learning advisors have the Association of Tertiary Learning Advisors of Aotearoa New Zealand (ATLAANZ), academic developers have the Academic Staff Developers of the Universities of NZ (ASDUNZ) or the Tertiary Academic Staff Development Educational Network

(TASDEN), and foundation and bridging educators have the Foundation and Bridging Educators New Zealand (FABENZ). The Tertiary Education Union (TEU) and Ako Aotearoa (The NZ equivalent of OLT) are prominent, but it is easy to miss the NZ Association of Research in Education (NZARE) and the NZ Council for Educational Research (NZCER) who also have a stake in tertiary education. There are also subject associations with a strong interest in the tertiary sector, such as the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE), the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia (PESA) and the Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Education (ANZAHPE). Two other local groups worth mentioning, both of which focus on quality assurance, are the

Academic Quality Agency (AQA) and the NZ Vice Chancellors Committee. And there are even more that I don't yet know.

In such a diverse neighbourhood, what should HERDSA do to be a good neighbour?

I don't suggest amalgamating different organisations – Each group has its own particular interests, and they each serve an important, independent function. Instead, I suggest HERDSA should take a hand in fostering a stronger community built on our common interests in tertiary or higher education.

So my recommendation for those in HERDSA, especially the executive, is first of all, be aware of the wider community. Second, say hello to the neighbours, whether



at a conference or via email. An email exchange might be enough, but to really say hello and get to know the neighbours, you can't beat a street party where everyone gets together.

With this in mind, HERDSA NZ will invite its neighbour organisations, societies and associations to join us in our annual conference. HERDSA NZ organises a conference every year we don't host the HERDSA conference. We call it TERNZ

(Tertiary Education Research in New Zealand), and it is designed to be an inclusive, cooperative space for dialogue. In 2014 the conference is in Auckland on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November. We would be delighted to have representatives from all the different organisations in New Zealand and Australia – the more the merrier. We even have a space for special interest groups on the preceding Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup>, when members of different organisations or societies can meet together. It might

not be an actual street party, but our aim is to capture the same spirit of community building.

*For more information about TERNZ, contact Dr Barbara Kensington-Miller, Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education, The University of Auckland:*

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## HERDSA Branches

HERDSA branches and regional networks form a key link in the HERDSA community's chain of networking and developmental events. Branch chairs and committees work hard behind the scenes to organise branch activities for HERDSA members. Local networking activities include colloquia, fora, pre- and post-conference presentations, network meetings, and speakers. If you have not yet made it to one of your branch activities we encourage you to get involved. News of past and future branch activities can be forwarded to mbell@uow.edu.au for inclusion in the next *HERDSA News*.

In the last few months all branch executives have been very busy organising a series of workshops that have attracted unprecedented involvement by HERDSA members and non-members. These workshops were part of the HERDSA Advancing Teaching and Learning in Higher Education project. One of the bonuses of the project was the opportunity for Branch chairs to meet and brainstorm ideas for Branch activities. Members reported that the Branch activities provided:

- useful information about current literature, directions for future research and implications for practice;

- the opportunity to engage with and discuss key issues and trends in tertiary education; and
- support for development of professional relationships and networks.

Our thanks go to the Branch executive for the effort they have put into this initiative and good luck in future activities.

### ACT

*Chair: Catherine McLoughlin*

Thanks to Jean Rath who has stepped down as chair and who is heading back to New Zealand to take up a new position at the University of Waikato. Jean is looking forward to continuing her active involvement with HERDSA from her new base. Congratulations to Catherine McLoughlin who has taken on the mantle of ACT Chair.

A session entitled *Highlighting heutagogy in self-directional online resources for professional learning* was held in December to highlight the findings of professional learning research projects that have influenced the design, structure and content of a set of three online professional learning resources. These resources have been designed to enable

academic staff and research students to access online support and resources using a self-directional informal approach. The resources include:

- The MOOBRIC: A rubric that enables academic staff to identify and reflect on their online course design and teaching skills.
- Moodle's Little Helper: An online repository of examples, instructions and suggestions about how to design online courses and teach online.
- The Researcher's Little Helper: An online repository of examples, instructions and suggestions about how to conduct postgraduate research.

An end of year event was held at ANU with presentations by OLT citation award winners in the ACT and was enjoyed by all who attended.

**Contact Catherine McLoughlin:**

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### HONG KONG

*Chair: Anna Siu Fong KWAN*

The Branch is working hard as the HERDSA 2014 Conference approaches and they look forward to seeing us all at



## HERDSA Hong Kong from 7 to 10 July.

The conference theme is *Higher Education in a Globalized World*. Conference details can be accessed <http://conference.herdsa.org.au/2014/>

Hong Kong branch is famous for its *Dinner Dialogues*. The most recent dinner dialogue highlighted Associate Professor Romy Lawson from the University of Wollongong discussing the principles behind curriculum renewal for quality assurance and cultural change in the higher education context.

All HERDSA members who are working in, or visiting Hong Kong are most welcome to HERDSA HK activities. Please visit the website or contact Anna for the most up to date information.

HERDSA HK Website: <http://herdsahk.edublogs.org/>

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## NEW SOUTH WALES

Watch this space!

## QUEENSLAND

Watch this space!

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*Chair: Sharron King, University of South Australia*

The SA HERDSA branch had a very productive end to 2013 with 2 seminars in November. The first was a very well received seminar from David Boud on *Exploring effective feedback strategies* with over 110 participants from all three universities in South Australia and Tabor College. The second event on the 20<sup>th</sup> November was a full day event with the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN) and the SA and NT Promoting Excellence Network (SANTPEN) focusing on *Researching in higher education: identifying the gaps and future directions*. The event began with a highly informative expert panel session discussing national priorities in teaching and learning research. Panel members included our own HERDSA

president, Allan Goody, Judy Kay (ACEN), Suzi Hewlett (OLT) Deb West (SANTPEN/Charles Darwin university), Daryle Rigney (Indigenous Strategy and Engagement, Flinders University), and Malcolm Tight (Lancaster University, UK). Two interactive workshops on measuring teaching impact and research / fellowship grant development followed, hosted by Keith Trigwell (University of Sydney) and Judy Nagy (UniSA) respectively. The closing keynote by Malcolm Tight addressed the status and future directions of higher education research, providing both a national and international perspective on current issues.

HERDSA SA began the seminar series for 2014 with a workshop on first year student expectations and experiences where a number of useful resources were provided for participants. Again there was good representation across the major higher education institutions in SA with 53 participants.

Future events planned for 2014 include a workshop in April with A/Prof Lynne Roberts (Curtin University) on *Developing Best Practice in Honours and Coursework Dissertation Supervision* and a seminar in June with A/Prof Romy Lawson (University of Wollongong) on *Principles for Designing a Curriculum to Develop and Assure Student Learning Outcomes*. Further details on dates of these workshops will be circulated shortly. A full branch meeting will be held in May to plan for future events. HERDSA SA executive look forward to working with SA branch members in 2014.

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## TASMANIA

*Chair: Tracy Douglas*

HERDSA TASMANIA held three OLT funded events recently: Learning Analytics: Building evidence based practice workshop by Shane Dawson; Providing Effective Feedback; and Assessing Critical Writing, both by Iris Vardi. These were very well received by participants, comments included that they initiated collegial discussions around the subject of learning analytics; viewed feedback through a different lens; and

encouraged understanding of the concept of critical writing more clearly.

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## VICTORIA

*Chair: Elizabeth Levin*

Joan Richardson has handed over coordination of Victoria to Elizabeth Levin from Swinburn University. The 2015 HERDSA conference will be in Melbourne so the branch executive and members are very busy as you can imagine.

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## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Chair: Melissa Davis*

The WA Branch held its AGM at the annual Teaching and Learning Forum in January. The branch is very pleased to welcome to the committee Madeleine Laming from Murdoch University and Trina Jorre de St Jorre from University of Western Australia.

The Branch is planning to host a number of events throughout the year. The Branch is hosting a one day *Writing Workshop* facilitated by *Dr Sally Knowles* which is an excellent way to support the scholarship of teaching and learning in the HERDSA WA community, another OLT funded initiative to bring discussion to the Branches. In addition there will be presentations by National OLT fellows *Associate Professor Lynne Roberts* (Curtin University of Technology) and *Associate Professor Romy Lawson* (University of Wollongong) as well as local presenters.

Look out for our survey of members about areas of interest. Please take time to complete this as it will help direct planning and activities in the second half of the year.

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## 2014 TERNZ CONFERENCE The University of Auckland

Since 2002 TERNZ has provided a forum for enquiry into learning and teaching in the New Zealand tertiary sector. It aims to support and develop a community who share a common interest in research. At a time when universities and polytechnics are under considerable external pressure to change, it provides an opportunity to step back and examine the direction in which education is moving, and the means by which practitioners might influence that direction. A distinctive feature of the conference is the emphasis on creating time for discussion and space for reflection. We aim to continue a dialogue which transcends disciplinary boundaries, and to promote further exploration of a research approach to teaching and learning.

The conference is relatively non-traditional in that parallel sessions are not simply presentation oriented. Presenters talk about their research or ideas for research for a short time (approximately 10 minutes) and then facilitate discussion or “workshopping” for the remainder of the one hour session. In the past, the most successful sessions have been those in which participants are challenged to explore their own ideas about a concept and where they extend their own thinking as well as that of the presenter.

**Dates:** 26-28 November 2014  
**Venue:** The University of Auckland, City Campus  
**Cost:** \$200 (includes all catering and social event)  
**Guest Presenter:** TBC

Further information about the conference can be obtained from Barbara Kensington-Miller [b.kensington-miller@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:b.kensington-miller@auckland.ac.nz) or by visiting <http://www.herdsa.org.nz/ternz/2014/>

Hope to see you there.

Barbara

Dr Barbara Kensington-Miller  
Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education | The University of Auckland