

# HERDSA connect

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## Inside

Going online in Singapore, disruption in Hong Kong, transition policy perspectives, relationship-rich education, kitchen chemistry, teaching philosophy on the move, reviews, teaching in Bhutan, the HERDSA Fellowship, challenges of international study and more.



## From the Editor

### Maureen Bell

It seems inevitable that our writers in this edition have the covid19 pandemic in front of mind, yet there is a sense that meeting the challenge of this unprecedented disruption to teaching and learning brings opportunity. Students and teachers are adapting to an uncertain and rapidly changing environment. Universities are engaged in efforts to keep students learning and teachers teaching. As Sally Male notes in her STEM column, our reliance on, and trust in the scientific community demonstrates the importance of higher education in developing expertise across the disciplines for community health and resilience.

Geoff Crisp notes that as the higher education sector has come to realise the critical role of technology in education it is time to be bold in our thinking and plan for long-term change. This realisation is demonstrated in Ian Morley's article from Hong Kong as he explores the need for

pedagogical wisdom to underlie the sudden development of online courses at a time of social disruption and in Johan Geertsema's *Postcard from Singapore* as staff are required to roll out multiple new webinars.

Our *Community* pages, as always, highlight some of our truly inspiring members of the HERDSA community of scholars. Affiliate member Kezang Yuden writes of her work as a teacher and mathematician in the Kingdom of Bhutan. HERDSA Fellow Judith Dinham envisages 21st century education in a digital world. Dana Burfeind and Christine Devine demonstrate the value of lateral thinking in curriculum design for excitement and discovery in their kitchen laboratories, thinking which could be emulated across the disciplines. Sally Kift writes on the contribution of transition pedagogy to student success strategies and institutional policy. Student writer Linda Qian Yu-Whattam reflects on the challenges of international study. Our *Reviews* writer Peter Kandlbinder features *The Journey of Learning Analytics*, while Paula Myatt reviews the HERDSA Guide *Using Stories in Teaching* and finds a good story can be a powerful learning and teaching tool.

The inevitable postponement of our Brisbane HERDSA 2020 conference is a disappointment, yet we have reason to be optimistic about the future of higher education and HERDSA has an important role to play. Surely relationship-rich education as highlighted in our *Feature* article by Peter Felten, will always be at the foundation of student success. Our Brisbane 2021 conference will be a celebratory and stimulating event as HERDSA scholars engage in rethinking our approaches to higher education.

HERDSA CONNECT, the magazine of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, is delivered in hard copy to all HERDSA members three times per year. Contributions are welcome and may be submitted to the editor for consideration.

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## From the President

Denise Chalmers

By the time this is published we will be months into dealing with the covid19 pandemic. Whatever is written now on the current situation will seem naive and uninformed in the future. Who could have predicted any of this and the rate at which decisions are being made on every aspect of our lives from our freedom to move, shop, congregate and work? I know many will have lost their jobs, and some will have lost friends and family. It is indeed a troubling and difficult time.

I was recently in Pakistan visiting a very impressive university with faculty and professional staff supporting their students to achieve world standard learning outcomes. Pakistan, like many countries struggles to provide quality primary education, so attaining a quality tertiary education is beyond the hope of so many. They, like the majority of universities around the world, have had to close their doors to their students attending classes and devise ways of engaging their students in continuing to learn. The impact of closing institutions in many students being unable to return to complete their studies. The need to support colleagues and students in these countries in particular, now and through

to the longer term becomes even more important. Much has been written on how to teach and support the learning of students in both low and high tech ways. Innovative ideas will be shared and some solutions found to do this. For some though, the challenge will seem insurmountable, particularly when they are also dealing with personal anxiety and uncertainty around their family's health and income. The challenges facing each and every country, and particularly countries with limited economies, large populations and poor health systems are enormous.

When the worst of the pandemic passes and systems are restored, institutions reopen, colleagues and students have returned, hopefully we will have put in place better practices and better ways of engaging in teaching and learning and research. The collective and personal traumas will last much longer, and for some, a lifetime. When that time comes with the rush to get on and do what needs to be done, we will all need to remind ourselves to take time to listen, hear what is really being communicated and not rush by with a cheerful, thoughtless, optimistic "she'll be right mate" comment.

The desire to keep positive and reassure ourselves and others that we will 'get through' this, 'get to the other side', 'good things can come' despite this terrible situation are all good and right. Indeed, we will get through it, as we must. I like to think I am one of those eternally optimistic people who likes to reassure, to find a positive where they are hard to find. Each of us probably needs to have a good dose of that optimism to keep on working with our students and colleagues in our teaching, research and service roles, even in the best of times. The daily uncertainty, never mind the longer-term uncertainty of what our futures might look like is palpable. Yet I find myself jumping to the positive when communicating with colleagues. I have to regularly remind myself to step back and really listen to hear the anxiety and what is troubling to them, and not jump into suggesting a solution. Often it is not a solution they want, but for their concerns to be heard. We need to take time to do this.

I remain an optimist, I encourage each of us to find good things in these difficult times. Resilience is important and it will get us through. Let's just try and bring as many as we can with us.

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The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia is a scholarly society for people committed to the advancement of higher and tertiary education.

HERDSA encourages and disseminates research on teaching and learning and higher education development.

HERDSA works to build strong academic communities.

Details about membership are available from the HERDSA website: [www.herdsa.org.au](http://www.herdsa.org.au)



# Learning and thriving

Peter Felten

Three themes emerged from the nearly four hundred interviews that Leo Lambert and I conducted in 2018-2019 with undergraduate students and academic staff throughout the United States. Across diverse institutions and disciplines, we heard about the importance of “relentless welcome”; “inescapable opportunities for meaningful interactions”; and, “a constellation of mentors, including mentors of the moment,” for the learning and thriving of all students.

Then the covid19 pandemic reframed everything. Classes – and essentially all aspects of education – moved online. Despite that abrupt shift and these anxious times, I believe that academic staff should focus more than ever on relationship-rich practices in all we do with students.

Education during a pandemic may seem unprecedented, but online teachers have been sailing similar waters for years. In research for our book, Leo and I interviewed students and staff from Southern New Hampshire University. Erin Perry Schreier, director of academic support at SNHU, told us how students can feel “adrift in online classes” where

they don’t meet face-to-face and can’t go up to their instructor to say, “I’m really struggling with this” or “I’m excited I’ve learned that”. In such a seemingly impersonal environment, SNHU’s president insists that the “secret sauce” for student success is that someone communicates to each student that they, and their education, matter.

That’s as true online as is it in face-to-face settings, and the positive effects of meaningful interactions are particularly strong for students of color and first-generation college students in the US (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). What these students – and all students – need in any educational context, and need in particular during extraordinary days like these, is described by Laura Rendón’s theory of “validation”. Academic staff initiate validation by interacting with students in ways that convey belief in students’ ability to succeed despite the barriers and struggles they encounter. This often involves setting high expectations and enabling students to learn, make mistakes, and pick themselves up to try again. Rendón explains how validation helps students believe in their inherent capacity to learn, become excited about learning,

feel part of the learning community, and feel cared about as a person.

Creating a validating environment for all students is our obligation, and it is firmly within our remit. As Melbourne University scholar Chi Baik, with Larcombe and Brooker recently wrote “Academic teachers need to give attention to the social dimensions of learning that are within their role...”

Students’ peer relationships also are essential for both wellbeing and academic success. Scholar David Scobey summarized US research in an interview by saying, “Horizontal peer-to-peer relationships are the ones that keep students, especially students who are marginalized, from letting each other fail.”

Academic staff can seed student peer relationships with interactive pedagogies. For instance, a rigorous study by Gavassa and others explored both traditional face-to-face lecture and online sections of introduction to biology courses. They found that active team learning exercises, with support from undergraduate learning assistants and the instructor, were the most important factor for positive student outcomes, particularly for students of color, in both learning environments. Effective teaching and learning are rooted in relationship-rich practices.

These human connections will support all of us – students and academic staff – as we navigate through and beyond education in the time of covid19. As a historian, I think that when we look back on this unusual period, we should ask a question posed in a different context by the scholar Rebecca Cox, “Rather than ask why and how so many college students meet with failure, perhaps it is more useful to consider how students persist in the face of such powerful urges to quit.” At the foundation of student success, today and tomorrow, we will find relationship-rich education.

Peter Felten is Executive Director of the Center for Engaged Learning at Elon University and co-author, with Leo M. Lambert, of *Relationship-Rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).



# Around the branches



Our branches in Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong offer added value to HERDSA members.

## ACT

Chair: Pamela Roberts

The ACT branch began the year with a workshop for writing abstracts for the HERDSA 2020 conference. Unfortunately, bushfires and smoke led to us offering a virtual event. As a result, four abstracts were submitted by ACT HERDSA members. The branch committee were also invited to participate in a pre-TATAL workshop held at the University of Canberra. Members were invited to the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences teaching and learning days where innovative learning technologies and practices were showcased. We were forced to postpone a presentation by Prof Geoff Crisp, University of Canberra, on lessons from the Peer Review of Teaching for Promotion ALTC project.

## Hong Kong

Chair: Anna Siu Fong Kwan

Hong Kong universities and higher education institutions have been conducting teaching and learning activities online since summer 2019 due to the influence of social movement. The outbreak of covid19 extended the online learning trend to all sectors of education. The Hong Kong Branch AGM and executive committee meeting was conducted online in March. One important discussion item was the possibility of implementing the third round of the Redesigning Student Learning Experience in Higher Education in 2021 with a focus on how to make online learning more successful for students.

HERDSA members working and visiting Hong Kong are welcome to our activities. Contact Anna or visit the website: <http://herdsahk.edublogs.org>

## Queensland

Sara Hammer

Branch Treasurer Christy Collis of QUT will shortly join the Advancement of Learning and Teaching team at USQ as Associate Director, Academic Development. Branch executive member Ross Guest has stepped down and we are looking to fill his position. HERDSA Queensland executive would like to thank Ross for his collegiality and support. USQ held its second *salon webinar* for the year. Professor Kevin Ashford-Rowe, of QUT presented: *The digital university for the real world*. The most recent *UQ Higher Ed Heroes* podcast explained how students learn through practical simulations and crisis scenarios. Plans to host Professor Chrissie Boughey from Rhodes University in South Africa are on hold.

## South Australia

Chair: Andrea Duff

The South Australian branches of HERDSA and ACEN recently joined forces to run a very well attended Snapshots event *Incentivize us – Funding KPIs in the new decade*. The event began with panelists Sharon Scott of A.C.E.N./Adelaide University, Sharron King from UniSA College and Lydia Woodyat from Flinders University. The panel reflected on questions around student experience, employability and equity followed by break-out sessions and networking. The AGM was held and office bearers appointed – Chair Sarah Hattam UniSA, Secretary Andrea Duff UniSA, Treasurer Jeanne Young

Flinders University. The new branch committee looks forward to planning for some exciting events in the second half of 2020.

## Tasmania

Chair: Tracy Douglas

HERDSA Tasmania members attended and presented at the *Teaching Matters* conference. Conference themes were Leading our Development, Our Student Experiences, Designing our Learning, and Our Digital Futures. HERDSA members Tracy Douglas and Jo Kelder facilitated *Writing a Teaching Philosophy* workshops on Launceston and Hobart campuses which were well attended and useful to new academics and academics writing promotion or teaching award applications. A number of members are supporting UTAS academics writing local or national teaching award programs as part of our Peer Professional Learning Program for Awards – SOTL a mentoring system for staff applying for teaching awards. As we cope with the isolation created by covid19, we are having coffee catch-ups (SoTL Coffee CUPS) using Zoom.

## Victoria

Chair: Julia Choate

Theda Thomas has stepped down as branch chair after leading an exciting period for HERDSA Vic. Theda has been an outstanding, highly dynamic chair, and remains closely connected to HERDSA. We look forward to Theda's recovery and return. Julia Choate from Monash University is the new branch chair, and new members include Alexandra Johnston from University of Melbourne who researches scholarly teaching capabilities of academics, Tulsa Andrews of Federation University



who researches engaging academics in professional learning, and Puspha Sinnayah from Victoria University who researches impact of the block model on learning. 2020 may be challenging, but we look forward to the work to come.

## Western Australia

Chair: Katrina Strampel

The HERDSA WA Branch supported the local WA Teaching and Learning Forum early in the year. With almost 200 participants, it was an opportunity to showcase HERDSA and meet with staff from across WA. We hosted a ninety-minute TATAL Experience workshop with eight participants as one of the TLF workshops. Our Branch hosted the AGM in January with representatives from the five Western Australian universities. We discussed various ideas for keeping community connected during covid19 and following in 2020.

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## HERDSA New Zealand

HERDSA NZ conducts the vast majority of our business online, so it is a treat for us to meet face to face. We met in March at Canterbury University in Christchurch when covid19 was still in its relative infancy in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Advice from the Government and our institutions was that international travel was banned but domestic travel was okay. Little did we know that within a week everything would change. The meeting started not with the usual hugs and handshakes, but with 'Jazz Hands'. This would not be business as usual. Many of our resolutions and planned activities are no longer viable, and we imagine that other branches are in the same position. Nevertheless, what is becoming an annual event was a great day being together.

We are all now in lock-down. We have to live in a 'bubble'. No unnecessary travel or contact with others, we are in self-isolation. At Otago University, I (Rob) am co-leader of the Peer Learning Programme which runs face to face. Now, all

our teaching has moved online, so we run these via Zoom. What once seemed too complicated and hard to do online, has now been achieved. We are being creative, talking about teaching and supporting students.

For me (Barbara), being the acting Director of our centre at Auckland University has been a crazy week. We are being disestablished this semester. We are short-staffed so making sure all our programs go online has been hectic. Our many PhD students mostly international needed organising, and to understand what it means to keep safe. Our team meets for virtual morning teas to keep in touch and work together.

So many branch activities will not occur so we suggest that all branches explore different possibilities. It is an unsettling time, but also a time to talk, to synthesise, to be creative and to see what can be achieved. Keep safe everyone wherever you live.

Barbara Kensington-Miller and Rob Wass.

Photo: HERDSA NZ Committee at Canterbury University 2020



## STEM Sally Male

We rely on scientists and engineers although while systems perform as expected we do not notice their work. However in our urgent thirst for knowledge and solutions as we face covid19, leaders and the public turn to scientists and engineers for explanations, predictions, recommendations, and solutions. Right now, the importance of effective higher education in science and engineering is stark.

Higher education prepares engineering graduates to respond to previously unseen circumstances. They should be able to address complex, ill-defined problems, making decisions within time and knowledge constraints. To achieve this, work integrated learning is designed to offer experiences such as disruption not usually found elsewhere in the curriculum. Universities across Australia and internationally have invested heavily in developing work integrated learning to bridge the gap between university and work.

In response to covid19 students and practitioners have shed traditional ways and been thrust into geographically disparate teams. All students are experiencing disruption, ill-defined problems, and the need for decision-making within time and knowledge constraints on a scale well beyond most work integrated learning. If academics provide guidance, support, and reflection, then many of the benefits of work integrated learning could be created from the disruption of covid19. Current students are likely to be well-prepared to provide explanations, predictions, recommendations and solutions for future generations during smooth and rough times.

### Sign up for the HERDSA webinar

11th June, Academic Integrity during covid19  
<http://www.herdsa.org.au/content/herdsa-webinar-series>



## STUDENT VIEW Linda Qian Yu-Whattam

My first memory of learning English was when I was four. My father, a professor at a Chinese university, taught me how to pronounce 'dog' as I used to have a pet. I still remember he put me on an old leather sofa, placed over-sized headphones on my ears and a big thick dictionary in my hands, and then took a picture of me.

Between 2014 and 2016, I was undertaking my master's studies at the University of York. Studying in the UK at that time was challenging because that was my first time studying in an English-speaking country and I didn't know how to handle the cross-cultural adaptation problems. But I am grateful for my decision to study there, where the staff helped me with my academic development.

Now I am undertaking my doctorate in New Zealand and again the staff are helping me with my academic development. I was invited to speak at the HERDSA conference. This was my first time at HERDSA and my first time on a keynote panel. As the only international student on the panel whose native language is not English, I made a short speech about my learning experiences to throw some light on intercultural learning.

I was disappointed about not having many opportunities to make English friends on the UK campus because all my classmates were from Asia. I wish I could have genuinely immersed myself in the local culture before leaving the country.

So, in the coming decade, what will change in intercultural higher education? Will the trend of the East to the West be changed to the West to the East? Are universities ready for the coming challenges and to help their students to become a member of this globally connected academic community rather than just an international student in a foreign country?

Linda Qian Yu-Whattam at HERDSA conference 2019 (above).  
 Photo Andrew Lau.

Linda Qian Yu-Whattam is a doctoral student studying higher education at the University of Auckland in New Zealand.





## Who's who in HERDSA

Anna Chur-Hansen

**I am a Professor** in the School of Psychology at the University of Adelaide. I have been the Head of the School from 2013 to the end of 2019, and now I am an academic member of staff. I have responsibilities in teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level. My main areas of research are in health psychology, and in particular, food and eating, sex and relationships, physical pain, and death. Interestingly, in my clinical work, I often observe that all those topics intertwine, so they are not as disparate as they might first appear. So, in a nutshell, I am a teacher, a researcher, I do administration, and I do service to the university and to the profession of psychology.

**My first academic appointment** began in 1987. I was in essence “teaching only”, although that was not the formal terminology given to the role, and I was expected to conduct research, win grants and publish papers with minimal support

or guidance. In that way the “good old days”, to my mind, were also the “bad old days” and I think things have in many respects, improved. Because I absolutely loved teaching the medical and dentistry students, and floundered with my research productivity (with a heavy teaching load), by the 1990's I was a firm advocate for respecting teaching and the central role it has to play at university and in my career trajectory. I was looking for organisations and groups, both local, national and international – and HERDSA was one of the first I joined. So for me, membership is part of my identity as a university teacher.

**I am a HERDSA Fellow**, and in that capacity, I have mentored several people seeking to gain a Fellowship.

The Fellowship process was quite tough and the process of receiving and responding to feedback was not

particularly enjoyable. I have in fact written about that, some time ago, in one of these newsletters. It was a good reminder for me, about the need to deliver constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement in an empathic way.

**My numerous books** and novels are now collecting dust. I am afraid that in these days of STAN, ABC iview, Netflix and all these catch up channels, books are largely abandoned for binge watching of *Peep Show* (I just love it), *Parks and Recreation*, *The Office* (both the US and UK versions), *Extras*, *Seinfeld*, *The Bridge*, *Gameface*, and so on and so on. I don't really blog or tweet but I do have a twitter account and I like to look at other people's tweeting. I find some excellent papers via twitter to cite in manuscripts and to draw upon for teaching.

**I really enjoy** buying second hand rather than new clothes, shoes, furniture, and other household things. I feel very strongly about waste and the culture of disposability. I like shopping in second hand places.

**The qualities** I most admire in others are patience, kindness and clear thinking in the face of difficult, stressful situations – situations I observe can often be encountered at university – and elsewhere too of course.

**In the future** I reckon my most important work with HERDSA is helping Fellows with their applications. It is a good thing to do. Meanwhile, I am very grateful to still be on this mortal coil.

Regret is a wasted emotion. From everything I have done, any mistakes I might have made – these all have led to where I am now and who I am. I think I am a fairly open and honest person and I am very happy and grateful with my lot.

### Were you planning a poster for the 2019 HERDSA conference?

Why not publish your work in HERDSA CONNECT?

Transform your poster content into text and submit it for consideration as a HERDSA CONNECT showcase article. Send ideas and submissions to the editor: [mbell@uow.edu.au](mailto:mbell@uow.edu.au)



## The HERDSA Fellowship

Judith Dinham is Associate Professor and Director of Learning and Teaching in the School of Education at Curtin University. She was awarded her HERDSA Fellowship in 2016. Her portfolio submission revolved around the challenges of creating meaningful learning for large groups of online students

I am an educator of pre-service teachers and my discipline area is The Arts, which embraces dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts. When I accepted an academic position at Curtin University several years ago, I faced two areas of pedagogical challenge. One was to re-envision my approach to preparing future primary school teachers to teach in a diverse and performative learning area. The imperative for this was the limited number of units devoted to the discipline in the crowded University course. The other was to devise effective ways to teach this discipline area, and its pedagogy, in the online environment, since the School of Education had recently ventured into offering the course online through Open Universities Australia. For me, these combined challenges drove a deep re-thinking of my discipline; my role as an educator; the nature of learning; and the changing needs of learners.

I found myself trialling different strategies and approaches in my

regular teaching practice, and learning through experience. In some ways, experimenting with different strategies in the changed teaching environment had seemed chaotic and reactive. I found the process clarified the productive ways in which my pedagogy had evolved as I navigated the teaching environment. The process of interrogating my teaching experiences, sketching out the narrative, and identifying evidence, brought a sense of structure and order to my practice, as a global and coherent picture of my contemporary teaching practice emerged.

In preparing for the Fellowship submission the identified features of my teaching showed me the dimensions of a philosophy that both encapsulated and drove my approach to education. I valued the way the overarching focus on reflection and providing evidence for claims showed me where gaps existed and highlighted strengths to build on. I began to realise the degree to which I had developed expertise in the

online space, and how this was uniquely informed by the nature of traditional arts learning practices.

Since receiving my Fellowship, I have continued to develop my scholarship of online and digital learning and teaching in both leadership and teaching roles. This has included workshop and symposium presentations, as well as organising the Australian College of Educators' Crescentia Anthony Forum: *Including Technology in the Early Years*; and contributing a book chapter, to the publication *Children's rights in a digital age: Design, research and practice*. These endeavours have extended my contributions to the scholarship of learning and teaching beyond my immediate practice as I share my understandings with teachers who will be educating the next generations of children within the milieu of a digitally connected world.

The experience of preparing my Fellowship submission with its required focus on the scholarship of learning and teaching prompted me to join the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL). I have greatly enjoyed the community of practice this organisation represents. This year I responded to an expression-of-interest call-out made through ISSOTL and have now been invited to prepare a chapter for a new book publication *Teaching Digital Literacy: A Faculty Guide to Integrating Digital Skills with Disciplinary Content*, which is being edited by colleagues at the School of Professional Education and Leadership, University of Central Missouri. The intention of this publication is to assist university colleagues envision how they can devise meaningful learning experiences in their discipline areas in a digital context.

In my view, completing the HERDSA Fellowship has strengthened my practice, highlighted the unique insights that my knowledge about arts learning practices offers to envisioning 21<sup>st</sup> century education in a digital world, and focused the direction of my ongoing research efforts.



## HERDSA Affiliate Members

Affiliate membership aims to foster engagement from emerging and developing tertiary education systems within our region. Members are encouraged to collaborate with affiliates for research and learning.

### Kezang Yuden

I am an aspiring mathematician from the Kingdom of Bhutan. Since the institution of education system in the country half a century ago Bhutan had challenges with limited number of science teachers. So, to overcome this challenge government had taken the initiative to provide scholarships to young students to major in mathematics and science. I was a recipient of Royal Government of Bhutan Scholarship to study mathematics and to teach on my return. I graduated with a Bachelor of Mathematics from the University of Wollongong Australia in 2011. I've completed my postgraduate Diploma in Education from the Samtse College of Education under The Royal University of Bhutan (RUB).

The Royal University of Bhutan was launched in 2003 with the vision to be an internationally recognized university steeped in Gross National Happiness (GNH) values. There are ten colleges under the university spread across the country offering a variety of courses. Amongst them, Gyalpozhing College of Information Technology

(GCIT) where I teach. Gyalpozhing College was inaugurated in 2017 as a college of the Royal University of Bhutan. The vision is to be the Center of Excellence in Information Technology steeped in GNH values. GCIT offers Bachelors degrees in: Computer Applications, Computer Science, and Science and Information Technology taught by qualified and dedicated local and expatriate faculty members. The unique methodology of *Learning by Doing* was adopted by GCIT. They aim at helping students understand practical implementations and associated concepts.

I started teaching mathematics in secondary school in 2014. I realized early on that mathematics is not a subject of interest to many students. However, I found strategies like demonstration, activity-based learning and group activities were effective and helpful. In 2019 I joined Royal University of Bhutan as an assistant lecturer at GCIT. GCIT was offering Bachelor of Computer Applications to two batches of students. I was involved in the validation and documentation of the upcoming programs.

After a semester teaching discrete mathematics I realized more focus is required to the content of what I am teaching rather than the technique because of the limited number of classes for the bulky curriculum. I

could relate with my professors on usage of projectors and tutorials as it was difficult to balance quality with quantity. Also, since Bhutanese students are spoon fed while in school, it is a challenge for them to cope up with teacher friendly strategies like lectures and presentations.

I moved to Delhi to pursue MSc Applied Mathematics on study leave at the South Asian University. I am studying basic probability theory, mathematical modelling and differential equations. I am instilling the good practices of teaching in me as I will be teaching various fields of mathematics – linear algebra, numerical analysis, statistical analysis and probability including discrete mathematics when I return.

How do the higher education systems differ? Well, attendance was not compulsory in Australia. They are expected to be responsible enough but it is mandatory to accumulate certain percentage of attendance in India. However, the courses are rich, both in quality and quantity with reasonable attention towards every student in the classroom.

The Royal University of Bhutan has grown over the decades, both in terms of programs offered and the institution of new colleges across the country. The university is collaborating with universities in India, Australia and Europe to provide scholarships for the professional development and long-term studies for the faculties. I look forward to work in GCIT after my studies here and teach with interest for the betterment of my learners. I also want to engage into some research work at the college level as the RUB provides annual university research grants to young researchers with appealing research proposals. Meanwhile I will keep working on my opportunities to upgrade my qualification and to acquire professional development trainings.

Photo: Kezang Yuden (centre) with visiting colleagues





## Postcard from Singapore

Johan Geertsema

Last year, when I received Maureen's invitation to contribute a *Postcard from Singapore*, I took a look at some of the examples of other postcards that have appeared in *HERDSA CONNECT*. I had planned to provide a snapshot of life at my university, and what it's like to work as an academic developer here. I would have written about the complexities of academic identity in a large, prestigious, research-intensive university in Asia. I would have remarked on the importance of student voice as well as the need to move beyond it when it comes to evaluation of teaching. I would have noted the difficulties of moving academic development beyond 'facilitating' workshops aimed at getting academics to 'constructively align' their teaching – towards thinking about values and about the purposes of higher education. But all these plans for the column have had to fall by the wayside with the arrival of covid19. Even in orderly but green Singapore, environmental crises appear to be the new normal. First, in late 2019 we were struck by the semi-annual cross-border haze blowing in from burning forests in Indonesia, a stark reminder both of climate change and the human species' destructive impact on this planet as well as the less positive effects of globalisation. Visibility was reduced drastically as the

air quality deteriorated. Sports events were suspended, masks appeared everywhere, people became ill as they developed respiratory difficulties. And now, in March 2020, it's 'déjà-vu all over again', just worse. Events are suspended, masks appear everywhere, and people become ill as they develop respiratory difficulties.

However, this time the problem blows in not from Indonesia in the form of smoke, but instead invisibly from all directions. The covid19 corona virus outbreak reached Singapore early in 2020, and the official response to contain the disease was quick and robust. All of us had to start taking our temperature twice daily and logging it online back in February. The tally of new cases climbed inexorably, but nobody died until mid-March. Now of course, though the situation is stabilising in China, the virus is spreading across the globe: South Korea, Italy, Spain, the US. Globally schools and universities are shutting down. International conferences and meetings are being cancelled. Though the virus had been contained in Singapore early on, now we are importing it and the government has just closed the borders to everyone but citizens. We are in the eye of the storm.

At the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning where I work, we've had to scramble as in February the university required that all classes with more than fifty students be conducted online. While there are currently no plans to go online for smaller classes, many colleagues are doing so anyway in order to minimise contact. So, we too have had to roll out multiple new webinars and provide practical, hands-on help on going online quickly, and how to teach in an environment where there is reduced social, teacher, and cognitive presence (to borrow these helpful terms from the COI framework). Beyond webinars, resources are needed on online education and assessment integrity. At this stage, given the urgency of the situation, comprehensive redesign is not an option for most teachers, so the support needs to be oriented towards taking existing courses and programs online. And at the Centre, we early on took the decision to run not only the webinars on online education as webinars, but to convert all of our regular workshops, seminars, and programs. For the last month we have worked in split-team mode to minimise the possibility of spreading infection. The Centre is empty, quiet, and dark since there are no participants, and half the staff work from home. This is the new normal. Meanwhile, life has to go on. Meetings need to be held, workshops have to be run, initiatives unrelated to covid19 to continue.

I will end on a positive note. We have been wanting to set up a local branch of HERDSA for some time, but now that too is having to take a backseat because of the emergency. When the branch is finally up and running, that to me will truly signal a new beginning and the end of the emergency. May that day come soon.

Associate Professor Johan GEERTSEMA is Director of the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning at the National University of Singapore and a co-editor of the *International Journal for Academic Development* (IJAD).

Photo: Johan on the quiet NUS campus during March.



## A new education landscape

Geoffrey Crisp

What a tumultuous time we have all had this year. The covid19 virus has impacted every country across the globe and every aspect of our lives, no matter what our situation or how we live, work, study, socialise or play. It is impossible to hide from the impact of this virus. What has been interesting is to see the responses of governments, industry, and professional bodies from an initial cautious approach with measured impositions, to a rapidly escalating situation requiring more drastic restrictions on the movements of whole populations. How do we maintain the key elements of our higher education system, namely teaching and research, in the face of restrictions on the movement and assembly of people?

In the face of a WHO declared world pandemic, which services are considered essential for the functioning of a modern society? Is education considered an essential service? Are all levels of education equally important? If higher education institutions were to close for six months, what would be the immediate and long-term impacts? Apart from the personal costs to the individual student, society would have fewer qualified professionals entering the workforce at

a time when recovery from the impacts of the virus are most needed. This delay would prolong the recovery time and reduce the availability of professional services to the wider community.

Our universities have been working hard to maintain our teaching and research activities within the mandates of our various levels of government and in the spirit of ensuring the health and well-being of our students, staff and wider community. Although many institutions have been designing and delivering in the online environment for many years, we have finally realised, as a sector, the critical role that technology can play in education. Governments and professional bodies are also beginning to understand that education delivery mechanisms must change to match the needs of a modern society. Staff will need to work from home in many cases and this has brought a raft of challenges in terms of workplace agreements.

Professional bodies that determine accreditation requirements and registration continue to have a significant influence on the curriculum and assessments. Some of these specific requirements are being

impacted by current restrictions on movement and assembly. If we wish to graduate qualified professionals in our current teaching periods, universities will need some flexibility in how these requirements are met. TEQSA has indicated that there will be some flexibility in the application of the Higher Education Standards but universities will still be held accountable for providing a high quality education and will need to be even more vigilant in academic integrity matters as we move to online delivery and alternative forms of assessment. We will still need to maintain the quality and outcomes expected from a university education. The covid19 situation has focused our attention on how to deliver this quality at scale in a more flexible manner across our diverse range of institutions.

We will learn a great deal about flexible working arrangements, online delivery and online assessments during this situation. Online learning may become more mainstream. We may see a larger roll out of online and alternative assessment and less emphasis on end of semester examinations. We need to move on from static, timed exams with students denied access to real tools to help solve problems. Another valuable outcome would be the wide scale adoption of multiple formats for course delivery so that face to face sessions could be dedicated to active discourse and engagement. We would all benefit from a better work-life balance through the adaptation of flexible work practices adopted from the enforced work from home requirements.

What will be interesting from this response to the covid19 situation is what changes will become the normal new education landscape or will we revert to our past practices and hope this never happens again? We have a golden opportunity to make fundamental changes to the way we work, teach and learn. This is a time to be bold in our thinking and plan for changes beyond the six month horizon that is currently proposed.

Professor Geoffrey Crisp is Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic at University of Canberra, former HERDSA President, HERDSA Fellow, and Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.



## Severe social disorder Ian Morley

In late-2019 and early-2020 my university in Hong Kong experienced unprecedented disruption to its teaching schedule: violent clashes on and off campus between students and the police in mid-November 2019 brought a premature end to term 1 of the academic calendar. Following the commencement of term 2 in January, the impact of covid19 meant that by February all classroom teaching activities stopped and education was shifted online.

Notwithstanding teaching staff being familiar with both the concept and practice of eLearning, the move to completely teach online initiated profound technological and pedagogical challenges for professors and students. At the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), where I work, this situation was affected by the rule that all real-time online teaching was to be undertaken with Zoom, that is to say a newly-purchased software which, evidently, had never before been used by the vast majority of teaching staff and students.

Despite CUHK's Centre for Learning Enhancement and Research (CLEAR) speedily designing informative webinars to assist teachers in the effective use of Zoom, obstacles to 'good teaching practice' endured. A steep learning curve was experienced by teachers during their initial experiences of using the software. As I discovered at first hand,

only through actual teaching practice was it possible to grasp the limits and successes of activities within the Zoom environment *and* to establish reliable methods to gauge student feeling about their online learning. Cultural factors affected students' on-screen behaviour: many of my learners were reluctant to switch on their camera during classes and show themselves within a cramped home environment that contained a lack of suitable facilities for their studies or a family background.

The success of the decision to transfer from classroom to online teaching ultimately is underscored by institutions and their staff considering, and overcoming, a handful of basic challenges. First, in the face of hugely unsettling yet unpredicted events such as civil unrest, pandemics, and natural disasters, how do universities plan for local, national or international disruptions to their teaching and learning? Second, how is it possible for teachers to swiftly enlarge their technical and pedagogical capacity to teach electronically at the time of being asked to move from face-to-face to online teaching? Third, where do teachers teach given that they might be advised to stay off campus? Where can teachers locate sites with little noise/possibility of interruption, specifically places that are comfortable for the vocal imparting of

data yet possessing of enough bandwidth to guarantee stable internet connection? And, fourth, should there be a need to move from classroom to online teaching once the semester has already commenced? How can course design be productively remodelled so that the anticipated learning set at a course's outset is not compromised, student interest is maintained, and personal standards of teaching professionalism are sustained?

Of course, moving from the classroom to software such as Zoom bestows new opportunities for teaching and learning. It offers new occasion for teachers to improve their instructional practice so that, as an example, they are better able to engage with their students and encourage them to more actively learn. But, the unforeseen need to use new technology can create anxiety: which can be exacerbated by the realities of screen display problems, reduced face to face interaction between teachers and students, and the longer time needed to give a lecture online rather than in person. Anxiety can be compounded too in that most staff are not comprehensively trained in online pedagogy. Intrinsicly, therefore, a teacher might feel at times of turmoil in society that the only means to augment online pedagogical know-how is by empiricism, that is, employing untried online teaching practices and directly experiencing their successes and failures.

Thanks to CLEAR, and their wave of webinars by local teachers on constructive online teaching techniques, staff at CUHK have expanded their online pedagogy. After all, to successfully deliver education on-screen necessitates a marriage of technological and scholastic ability. On one hand, it is imperative to know technically what a software can do. On the other hand, technical awareness isn't the same as knowing how to apply it. Without this pedagogical wisdom the imparting of teaching and learning excellence will always be hindered.

Ian Morley is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Photo: The near empty central mall on campus, March, Chinese University of Hong Kong.





## Wordcraft Helen Sword

Writing expert Professor Helen Sword answers readers' questions about academic writing, productivity and wordcraft.

*How do I keep my own writing going – and support my students and colleagues with their writing – in a time of institutional shut-downs, social distancing, economic uncertainty and existential angst?*

Remember when we all used to complain about having no time to write? For all the precious lives and ordinary pleasures that the covid19 pandemic has robbed us of, this global calamity has bestowed on some academic writers a rare and unexpected gift: a calendar uncluttered by meetings, social events or conference travel. Yet those of us fortunate enough to have been granted such a windfall may find ourselves frittering away our days on Sudoku puzzles or Netflix movies, then lying awake at night asking ourselves, Why am I not getting any writing done?

Meanwhile, for many of our colleagues and students, the coronavirus crisis has sucked away what little writing time they might otherwise have rescued from a busy semester. Suddenly and with scant warning, they have had to shift their teaching online while also shouldering an array of other burdens:

responding to emails from worried friends, providing pastoral care for anxious students, shopping for elderly relatives, home-schooling restless children, shoring up newly unemployed family members – to say nothing of looking after their own physical and emotional health.

What these two groups of academics share in common is an underlying sense of guilt that we are not all behaving like high-performance automatons, effortlessly pumping out high-quality research in the midst one of the most significant social and political upheavals of our lifetime. Having been schooled in the art of self-flagellation, we have lost sight of the key scholarly skill that we need most in the time of covid19: self-forgiveness.

Human beings write for many reasons, most of which have nothing to do with academic audit regimes or publication metrics. For example, we may write to *Think* – and prompt our readers to think – harder, deeper and longer about things that matter. We write to *Engage* with each other, with ourselves and with the world. Sometimes we write to *Anchor* ourselves in history. Think of Daniel Defoe's gripping *Journal of the Plague Year* or that most poignant of historical shelter-in-place narratives, the diary of

Anne Frank. We write to *Create* new knowledge, new intellectual products and new verbal artefacts, whether through the publication of academic research and through imaginative outputs such as fiction or poetry. And sometimes we write to *Heal*. A wide body of scholarship has documented the therapeutic value of writing directly about our most painful experiences, from emotional trauma to physical injury and illness.

It's no coincidence that I've lined up these five keywords to spell out the acronym *TEACH*. Writing teaches us to make sense of ourselves and the world: to challenge ourselves, to learn, to grow.

Whether or not you feel as academically productive as you would like to be in these strange, unsettling times, it is crucial to remember that *you are still a writer*. Every time you scribble a few lines of poetry in your personal journal or tap out a WhatsApp message to a friend, you are coaxing language into new forms and salving the open wound of this troublesome moment in our history. Indeed, by validating and valuing the writing that you are already doing – that is, by listening to what your own words have to teach you – you may discover new ways of carving out more of that writing time you crave: *time* to think; *time* to engage with others; *time* to be anchored in the present; *time* to create new knowledge; and *time* to begin the process of healing.

It's time to write.

Professor Helen Sword is a scholar, poet and prize-winning teacher who has published widely on academic writing and writers. To help writers find their way back to their writing, she has launched a new "Resources for Writers" website ([www.helensword.com](http://www.helensword.com)) jam-packed with links to academic writing retreats, professional masterclasses, free YouTube videos, innovative online tools, a curated bookshop and more.

Do you have a burning question about academic writing that you would like to see answered in this column? Send it to Helen Sword ([h.sword@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:h.sword@auckland.ac.nz)) with the subject line 'Wordcraft'.



## Policy Perspectives

Sally Kift

In 2006, I had the great good fortune to receive one of two inaugural National Senior Teaching Fellowships from the Carrick Institute for Learning & Teaching. Carrick subsequently morphed into the Australian Learning & Teaching Council, which later became the Office for Learning & Teaching (OLT). The OLT was defunded in 2016. In total, 126 Fellowships were awarded, many of which transformed Australian higher education theorising, policy and practice. The crippling absence of continued funding for Australian pedagogical R&D is a policy discussion in its own right.

My Fellowship developed a sector-wide consensus for transition pedagogy (TP). TP focused on intentional curricular design for the first year experience of higher education to scaffold diverse cohorts' learning, success and retention. The underpinning philosophy was relatively simple: an integrative framework, enabled by cross-institutional partnerships of academics, professional staff and students, focusing on what learners have in common – their learning experiences mediated through curriculum – rather than problematising diversity and positioning its 'remediation' outside the curriculum via siloed, inequitable and de-contextualised support.

To facilitate a quantum leap from deficit thinking to positive policy and action, TP's implementation was underpinned by six curriculum principles

– Transition, Diversity, Design, Engagement, Assessment, and Evaluation & Monitoring. The coordination challenge was to enact and sustain coherent, whole-of-institution approaches for a comprehensive first year experience as 'everybody's business', harnessing inclusive curricula as the academic and social organising device mooted by Craig McInnus in his 2001 lecture *Signs of disengagement*. First year engagement is crucial. First year is when attrition is most dire. With curriculum as centrepiece, student success is not left to chance. Embedded, contextualised support for *all* students is delivered just-in-time, just-for-me. A sense of belonging is cultivated via supportive learning conditions, deployed explicitly with peers in the disciplinary context.

TP's philosophy is now embedded in many student success strategies and institutional policy statements including QUT and JCU, especially since the Higher Education Standards Panel (HESP) mandated institutional Retention Strategies in 2017. Serendipitously, TP's sector socialisation also coincided with the 2012 policy ramp-up of the demand driven system and consequential uptick in widening participation.

In the Fellowship Final Report, one recommendation was that consideration be given to articulating sector-wide standards for the first year. In 2014, as the HESP developed the new Standards Framework, advice was sought about TP's integrative principles. Their influence is evident in *Standard 1.3 Orientation and Progression* with reference to strategies to support transition, assessing the needs and preparedness of individual students and cohorts, early assessment and formative feedback, access to informed advice and timely referral, and identifying and supporting students at risk.

The high policy stakes of early student success and positive

first year experience have been sharpened further by dedicated reputational and regulatory focus on attrition and the new Performance Based Funding regime includes adjusted attrition for first-year domestic bachelor students as one of four core measures.

In February 2020, TEQSA released its *Good Practice Note: Improving retention and completion of students in Australian higher education*. TP is referenced in Orientation and transition to higher education study, the UTS Good Practice example; and Early identification of students at risk of discontinuing their studies.

Led by a growing understanding of student success teamed with sophisticated technology, many institutions 'are at least preparing to move towards a coherent, analytics-led 'third generation' (i.e., comprehensive, integrated, whole-of-institution) transition pedagogy.

Reflecting on a decade of TP in a 2015 HERDSA Review article, I observed that TP has developed to enable further whole-of-institution approaches to support students in multiple transitions across the student lifecycle – pathways into, through and out of higher education. TP has also been applied across diverse disciplines, cohorts, practitioner groups and contexts.

TP has made a timely contribution as an equitable enabler of first year experience policy and practice and has provided a sustainable and proven response to contemporary realities of finite resourcing.

Professor Sally Kift PFHEA FAAL is President, Australian Learning & Teaching Fellows. She received an Australian University Career Achievement Award for her contribution to Australian higher education.

### Links

<http://transitionpedagogy.com>  
[www.teqsa.gov.au/lat-est-news/publications/good-practice-note-improving-retention-and-completion-students-australian](http://www.teqsa.gov.au/lat-est-news/publications/good-practice-note-improving-retention-and-completion-students-australian)



# Meanderings

Robert Cannon

‘Diseases of Development’ was a topic I addressed in a light-hearted way in *HERDSA News* in 2009. Considering this year’s dramatic events, it is appropriate to return there now. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) was one disorder I discussed in relation to higher education. The symptoms of NPD are an inflated sense of importance, a lack of empathy, and an inability to recognise the viewpoints of experts. I complained at the time that so many in the media seemed to be suffering from it as evidenced by pontifications on how to manage education, construct curriculum and how to teach.

In recent months, the astonishing ‘expertise’ among so many lay people in fields as diverse as climatology, fire science, the history of Aboriginal fire-making, and epidemiology, demonstrates an explosion of this disorder.

The instant acquisition of expertise! Has no one thought to research this phenomenon? Instead of going to university, people could be inoculated with NPD to become immediate experts. We are witnessing the realisation of the 50-year old idea of the ‘inoculation theory of education’ attributable to Postman and Weingartner, in their 1971 book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*.

NPD swept Australia over Christmas during the dreadful bushfire season.

Vast sections of society, especially journalists, promoted their importance as experts. By February, the ‘curve of infection’ of NPD had flattened and almost disappeared. But by mid-March it returned with a vengeance. Reflected this time, was expertise in pandemic management, border control, governance, and constitutional law. NPD burst upon us from newspapers, television, social media, family members and work associates.

Expertise? Hardly! The media’s presentation of data provides clues. The instant acquisition of expertise had not occurred at all: articles contained meaningless raw data stripped of its national context; graphs with no explanations of scales used on axes; tables with no citation of sources; maps with no legends; writing peppered with errors of spelling, grammar, and facts.

Worse, NPD is prevalent in academia. Nowhere in education is the phenomenon of a heightened sense of importance, lack of empathy and an inability to recognise specialised expertise more evident than in the assessment of student learning. Assessment is the most poorly practised domain of academic practice. As David Boud wrote in *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education* (P. Knight, editor) “There is probably more bad practice

and ignorance of significant issues in the area of assessment than in any other aspect of higher education. This would not be so bad if it were not for the fact that the effects of bad practice are far more potent than they are for any aspect of teaching.”

Illustrating this potency, a recent story gained notoriety through extensive media coverage and attracted sharp criticism at the time of children striking over climate change. The story reported that a lecturer at an Australian university offered engineering students full marks on an assessment if they attended the climate strike. He told students they could skip his lecture to attend the strike, receiving full marks for that day, in return for emailing him a selfie from the event. The university was investigating the case.

Assuming the story is correct, we need to ask how is this assessment fair to all students in this class? How does this align with the endless claims by universities of their “excellence” in an age of equity, fairness, and inclusion? Assessments provide data for academic judgements and bad data leads to bad academic judgements.

Accurate data is fundamental to academic research and publication. Here there is further cause for despair. Alex Reinhart, in his book *Statistics Done Wrong*, argues that research data should be shared to address the high error rates in published papers. Citing published studies, Reinhart reports that at least half of the papers in several prominent journals of the American Psychological Association had an error, usually minor. But 15% reported at least one statistically significant result that was significant only because of an error. Even the prestigious journal *Nature* isn’t perfect, with 38% of papers making typos and calculation errors.

Academic and professional scepticism should never be abandoned. Nor should the search for a cure for academic NPD.

Robert Cannon is an education adviser in Indonesia and formerly Director of the Advisory Centre for University Education at the University of Adelaide.  
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## From the HERD editorial desk

Wendy Green

How can I get published in *Higher Education Research & Development (HERD)*? What do *HERD* reviewers and editors look for? What are the common reasons that papers are rejected? These are questions I am often asked as the executive editor of *HERD*. *HERD* receives close to seven hundred new submissions annually, and of these we publish one hundred and five articles. Many of those rejected are rejected *before* they are sent to review. Here are the most common reasons for these ‘desk rejections’.

*The scope of the study is too narrow.* Manuscripts that focus on a particular discipline, or geographic context, without drawing out broader implications, or manuscripts that draw on a narrow range of literature are not suitable for the *HERD* journal. *HERD* publishes articles with an international perspective, and which advance higher education (HE) theory and practice generally.

*The manuscript does not offer an important critical and/or analytical insight.* Studies of small, classroom interventions are generally not suitable for *HERD*. *HERD* publishes scholarly articles that make a significant and original contribution to HE theory and practice.

*The manuscript does not engage with our HERD journal’s ‘conversation’.* As we explain on the journal website: *HERD* seeks to foster conversations around particular higher education issues and topics over time. To this end, we ask authors to review former issues of *HERD* and, where possible, engage with previously published articles as part of preparing your manuscript for submission to us.

*The manuscript is not well written.* Some submissions are not suitable to be sent for review because they have stylistic, grammatical and idiomatic issues. Those in doubt about the quality of their writing should seek help from a professional editing service before submission.

Two other common reasons we ‘desk reject’ manuscripts are because the research is either *not methodologically or theoretically sound*.

I hope this brief overview of the most common reasons we ‘desk reject’ submissions will help you decide if the *HERD* journal is a good fit for your work and enhance your success in getting published.

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## ESSENTIAL READING HERD

Associate Professor Stephen Marshall, HERD Special Issues Editor, recommends the article by Michael Henderson et al, *Conditions that enable effective feedback* in *HERD* 2019, 38:7, 1401-1416.

Henderson et al consider the wider institutional conditions that might enable effective feedback to occur. Their article provides an interesting contrast to the earlier work of Gibbs and Simpson (2005), who focused specifically on learning design and thus primarily on the learner and their response to feedback in developing their ten conditions.

Derived from an extensive eighteen-month engagement with the sector, Henderson et al engaged with learners, academics and senior leaders to identify twelve conditions for successful feedback. Many of these connect both to Gibbs and Simpson’s Conditions Under Which Assessment Supports Students’ Learning and to Chickering and Gamson’s Seven Principles. The others however, speak to the uncomfortable truth that lies in the overlaps between this work and the earlier ones. The learning and learner aspects of feedback are and remain uncontroversial. The problem is the tensions that the other conditions in this work identifies.

Feedback is successful when “it is a valued and visible enterprise at all levels” and has “continuity of vision and commitment”. These ideas speak to the growing weakness in modern universities and the culture of accountability. When I read “there are processes in place to ensure consistency and quality” I worry about hobgoblins and I ask, Whose quality does it serve? Perhaps universities will take feedback from their current experience and consider the vision and commitment that is needed to enable effective feedback.



## ICED Marianne Merkt

This column highlights the work of organisations similar to HERDSA around the world.

Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hochschuldidaktik, better known as dghd, is the German Association for Academic Development. dghd is one of the twenty-six member networks of ICED. dghd is a vivid professional community. Its culture is characterized by openness, caring for relationships, networks and cooperation. The development of higher education teaching and learning is seen as a team work between academic developers and stakeholders and with educational politics and researchers.

Due to the corona epidemic in Germany, the conference organizers, made the switch to an online conference with three days to go. This could only be managed by an enormous engagement of the conference organizers and a community that was highly flexible, supportive, cooperative and competent in switching to a digitalized communication.

A vivid discourse on professionalisation processes of academic developers as individuals and as an organized professional group has emerged alongside a big funding line from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research called *Quality Pact for Teaching*. More than two thousand positions in academic development have been installed in funding projects. As the funding line is ending the professional community finds itself confronted with questions like, What is the expertise of academic developers

that higher education institutions need? How is professional quality assured and documented? What work conditions and which kind of reputation do academic developers need to be able to work efficiently.

dghd has made great efforts to position itself. A needs survey has been coordinated. Profiles and competences of the work field of academic developers have been worked out. A standing commission for further education has been established and dghd has published several position papers on the state-of-the-art of academic development in Germany. dghd cooperates with a research project relating to further education within the professional field and a *Handbook of Academic Development* is in preparation. The gained recognition is a hopeful sign. But it should not deceive on the risks that academic development still confronts. There are open questions about secured career pathways for academic developers, the guarantee of further education, the recognition of professional expertise in HEIs. Questions about stable professorships of academic development so that we are able to systemize and structure the research field, have means to supervise doctorates adequately and have a voice in committees of funding lines. Academic development as a pedagogical field is highly dependent on societal changes and political circumstances. dghd is aware of these risks and aims on establishing itself sustainably and at a high professional standard.

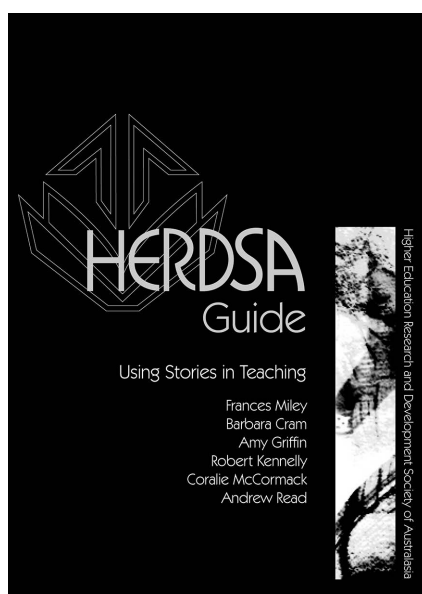
## ESSENTIAL READING IJAD

IJAD Co-Editor Klara Bolander Laksov recommends the special issue *Failure in Academic Development* (2020, 25:1).

What, how, and when can we learn from failure and from failed initiatives of educational development? These are central questions posed in this special issue. Six articles and one reflection on practice demonstrate that to learn from failure we need to engage in systematic, deliberate reflection through exploration and analysis of failure in our practice.

A common denominator of the articles in this issue is how the process of sharing experiences of failure, and discussing these experiences in relation to theory and literature, has led to learning and insights about academic development work. The contributions explore failure at three levels: the individual, shared in the local community, or disseminated through global outreach. The articles approach learning and development from failure in three different ways, where the purposes of the explorations range from learning to solve a 'situation' of failure; to learning from experiences of failure; to learning to better understand failure as a facet of academic development work.

Together, the authors paint a picture of failure as something that affects academic developers' work emotionally and even physically. Failure at the individual or group level makes us feel uncomfortable. Yet the findings from the studies show that by exploring our tacit assumptions about failure, either individually or through collaborative processes, we are able to develop insights into our work, to learn, and to develop how we approach our practice.



This Guide begins with “Everyone enjoys a good story”, but stories are more powerful than that. Stories can go to the heart of issues. Stories stay with us. Australian journalist and documentary maker Jenny Brockie uses stories to report on contemporary issues, and recently spoke about the power of stories. “I wanted to reach beyond the politicians, the commentators, the opinion leaders, and speak directly to people about their lived experiences: what it’s like to be a patient in hospital, a victim in a rape trial, a first responder, a whistle-blower, a homeless child or just someone who’s different.” Stories enable these insights and give students access to relatable, authentic contexts for powerful learning experiences.

*Using Stories in Teaching* was published in 2012. You might think it runs the risk of being dated, and in some minor respects it is. There’s a brief reference to the use of DVDs and *Dungeons and Dragons* but the effectiveness (and risks) of using stories in teaching have stood the test of time. The Guide is less about how to use stories and more about how to think about using stories.

The Guide does not aim to cover everything related to stories and storytelling. However, it introduces a breadth of storytelling genres and disciplinary possibilities, touching on fables, fantasy, folk tales, fiction and contemporary news, plus genres of

## Using Stories in Teaching

Frances Miley, Barbara Cram, Amy Griffin, Robert Kennelly, Coralie McCormack & Andrew Read

stories told through dance, music and verse. It offers insights into stories told by educators for teaching purposes, and also stories created by students for assessment purposes. Juggling these two ideas within chapters must have challenged the authors but enables readers to constantly consider these two almost opposing uses for stories.

The first chapters introduce storytelling and how to use stories in teaching. But, a warning, this isn’t a simple ‘how to’ guide. You need to read the whole guide to see the breadth of story uses and pick up on the useful tips which the authors bring from their own experiences. Chapter three focuses on the process of developing stories. This is where I started to take notes and reflect on my own practice and on the usability of the Guide. Different points will obviously resonate for different readers. I was interested to read “The tacit knowledge of a discipline can be difficult to explain and is rarely mentioned in textbooks but can be illustrated through stories” (p.14). This occurred in a discussion on stories for teaching, the need for students to engage with the story, and the value of disciplinary stories.

Chapter four provides insights into types of stories, through a broad-brush review and related introductory literature. There are story types for everyone. These writers provide a wide range of ideas that will leave many readers examining their preferred story ‘type’. Evidence is offered to support any innovations readers might consider and to potentially spark their ideas to evidence the impact of their future teaching innovation.

The last chapters are essential to the value of this Guide – and thus the need to read it through to the end (like any good story). Here we find ideas for the ways stories can be used. There is a salient reminder that it is critical to understand how stories are linked to

learning objectives – some stories are designed for the educator to teach and some stories are for the student to create and thus evidence their learning.

The Guide returns to a central theme – stories engage, intrigue and offer insights. Stories enable students to understand concepts more deeply, develop links to other disciplines, relate their study to personal experiences and locate their learning within their culture. However, like all powerful learning and teaching tools, there are inherent risks. The authors warn that emotion is often central to stories, and we must journey with care. With current higher education catch-cries of employability, work integrated learning, students as partners and authenticity, the role of stories is assured and our critical consumption and production of them remains a powerful learning and teaching tool.

Miley, F., Cram, B., Griffin, A., Kennelly, R., McCormack, C., Read, A. (2012). *Using Stories in Teaching*. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.

### The reviewer

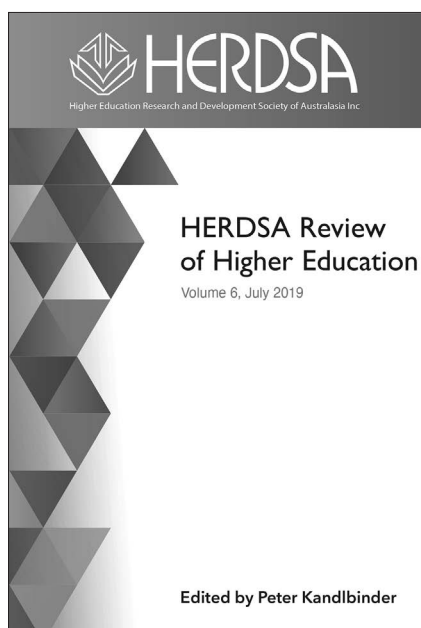
Dr Paula Myatt (FHERDSA, SFHEA) is a Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the HEA Fellowships @ Griffith Scheme at Griffith University, Brisbane, a narrative researcher and a user of stories.

### Reference

Brockie, J. (2019) “Sensitivity” within the exhibition “Truth, Power and a Free Press”, Museum of Australian Democracy.

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There is perhaps no better time to consider the possibilities of online learning than as the dust settles on the recent panic buying of online information and communication technologies. The past few weeks have seen remote learning adopted as the emergency response to what has effectively been a closing of campuses around the world. As others have pointed out, what we have just experienced is not a shift to online learning but a stop gap measure designed to carry us over the wave of the crisis before we return to business as usual (see as a good summary Hodes, Moore, Locke, Trust and Bond, 2020). The hasty embracing of remote learning has left little time for reflection making now the ideal time to consider future possibilities of online learning.

Few concepts have held out as much promise to revolutionise learning and teaching as learning analytics. In their article *The journey of learning analytics* Joksimović, Kovanović, & Dawson trace the evolution of learning analytics from the search for indicators of student attrition and academic performance to a shift towards more group and social-based practices in learning management systems (LMS) aimed at providing students with early and timely personalised feedback.

Tracing the evolution of teaching technologies back to the 1920s, Joksimović, Kovanović, & Dawson

## The Journey of Learning Analytics

Srecko Joksimović, Vitomir Kovanović  
and Shane Dawson

credit Pressey with developing the first automated teaching machine in 1927 and starting the search for an intelligent tutoring system. Pressey's goal was for students to receive instruction and immediate feedback without the need for human intervention. In the 1960s Skinner sought to solve the problem of providing individualised feedback to children in a classroom where their abilities and progress differed. With Skinner's teaching machine students progressed at different rates depending on their abilities. The idea of different students progressing differently is the idea behind adaptive learning and intelligent systems.

The adoption of web-based for distance learning systems led to collecting vast amounts of learning data. This evolved into online learning, with MOOCs enabling hundreds of thousands of students to learn online. Similar teaching strategies were adopted for traditional classroom-based learning as the LMS became an easy to use technology and rapidly expanded into mainstream teaching.

What Joksimović, Kovanović, & Dawson describe as driver for learning analytics is the LMS becoming a core resource to teaching and generating more data about teaching and learning than ever before. Learning analytics uses the available student learning data collected in natural settings and analyses it using a range of technologies like machine learning, data mining and data visualisation methods. This gives learning analytics a strong focus on quantitative data from large data sets that provides a high degree of confidence in the generalizability of their findings

With large scale data and relatively cheap computer computation power Joksimović, Kovanović, & Dawson argue that we are finally able to confront one of the biggest challenges in education, namely providing an

individualised program on a mass scale. For them the future of learning analytics will be to increasingly support student learning by providing analytics that identify personalised explanations of a student's educational knowledge and practices. The frontier according to Joksimović, Kovanović, & Dawson is not technological tools but rather embedding more nuanced educational theories than behaviourism into the analysis of student data.

We are in the middle of an unforeseen and unique experiment in teaching and learning. The global crisis has engendered a remote learning bonanza that will generate an unparalleled amount of student learning data. The review by Joksimović, Kovanović, and Dawson is a good place to start with familiarising ourselves to the possibilities of learning analytics so we can help shape the online learning research agenda into the future.

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Joksimović, S., Kovanović, V. & Dawson, S., D. (2019). The journey of learning analytics. *HERDSA Review of Higher Education*, Vol. 6, pp. 37-63 Retrieved from [www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-6/37-63](http://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-review-higher-education-vol-6/37-63)

### The author

Srecko Joksimović and Vitomir Kovanović are data scientists in the Teaching Innovation Unit at the University of South Australia. Shane Dawson is Professor of Learning Analytics at the University of South Australia.

### The reviewer

Peter Kandlbinder is Executive Editor, HERDSA Review of Higher Education.



## The Kitchen Lab Taking the cookbook out of undergraduate science education

Dana Burfeind and Christine Devine

One of the best parts of being a scientist is the discovery – a chance to conduct experiments with unknown or unexpected outcomes. It is this discovery that drives innovation and the creation of new knowledge. Unfortunately, this excitement and discovery are largely missing in the early parts of undergraduate science education. The early years in undergraduate training are logistically challenging to deliver given the large cohort sizes, diverse cohorts, and crowded curriculum. These constraints often limit what lecturers are able to do within the confines of a normal laboratory session. Therefore, the laboratory practicals are often ‘cookbook’ and do not allow scope for students to fail, learn from their failure, and complete the assessment task. This unfortunate necessity removes a critical opportunity for our students to learn and develop as scientists. In 2018 we developed the Kitchen Chemistry (now Kitchen Lab) program to fill this critical gap.

The Kitchen Lab program is a series of co-curricular workshops that sit outside of the curriculum but are aligned with key concepts in large first year units within the sciences, health sciences,

and education. Kitchen Lab workshops are light-hearted, inquiry-based, and open-ended. We also intentionally have removed as many barriers to access as possible. All of the chemicals that are used are household, for example, salt, boiled cabbage extract, glycerol) and we use plasticware instead of glassware wherever possible. This allows workshops to be conducted in flat-bottomed classrooms instead of labs where students do not have to supply their own PPE or be dressed appropriately for a lab environment although we have PPE available for students if requested. Each workshop has a link to a key topic in the curriculum such as titration, standard curves, making solutions; and has the relevant technical skills scaffolded into the workshop activities. Workshops are stand alone, but also build from week to week in developing technical proficiency.

We maintain a low student to staff ratio in the workshops. This is accomplished through peer enabling the program. In each workshop we have a minimum of two paid professional educators working alongside volunteer peer learning

facilitators. This staffing arrangement allows us to be adaptable to the needs of the students attending the workshops. Furthermore, since the content is not assessed in the workshops, it does not matter if a student wants to practice their pipetting technique for two hours and not complete the designated workshop activity. We are finding this flexibility in delivery a great asset to our students.

We formally evaluated the first full semester of the program to determine who was attending the workshops and what they were achieving. Workshop attendance was 92% first year students, unsurprising as we targeted first year units in our advertising. We also found that 35% of the students attending the workshops were international students and 32% were mature aged students. These data indicate that we are positively disproportionately servicing the international and mature aged populations. Furthermore, based on student self-reporting, we suspect that we are also positively disproportionately servicing students with disability plans but we are unable to access those data at present due to privacy considerations. In interviews, participants reported increased confidence in the laboratory and faster and better completion of their assessed laboratory activities. We also found that students appreciated the flexible, adaptable, and authentic learning environment. They found it was a safe place to fail without academic consequence, and they felt a sense of belonging with the community of students at the workshops. We are now looking to develop a system to validate the skills students learn in the Kitchen Lab workshops and use that to support preparedness for work-based learning activities.

Dr Dana Burfeind and Dr Christine Devine are STEM educators at Queensland University of Technology. Before working in science education, they worked as disciplinary scientists in marine ecology and developmental biology.

Photo: Learning about experimental design and data collection by measuring change in marshmallow diameter after microwaving.

### Links

<https://blogs.qut.edu.au/successful-futures/category/kitchen-lab/>



## Meaningful workshops and teaching philosophies

Dieter Schönwetter, Coralie McCormack, Robert Kennelly and Gesa Ruge report on their HERDSA part-funded tour, bringing their workshops on reflective practice and teaching philosophies to scholarly groups in Australia and New Zealand.

Over a six-week period four academics from two continents visited eighteen universities. We facilitated thirty-two events for over seven hundred participants in panel discussions, networking lunches, keynote presentations, showcase presentations and individual/small group activities across Australia and New Zealand. Statistics aside, the experiences by the team, the participants in the sessions and the opportunities to live with country hosts, contextualized the magic that transpired.

During the first two days, at different New Zealand university venues, two Talking About Teaching And Learning (TATAL) workshops were presented. Dieter's Eurocentric individualistic worldview clashed with Māori collectivist principles of a Pepeha. Meaningful cultural and Indigenous connections with the people and places surpassed the impersonal introductions of academic endeavours. Moreover, this style engaged the audience more than the former Eurocentric introductions ever did. This magical twist of worldviews was expanded upon and further enlightened by our Māori, Caribbean, Australian Indigenous, Adventist, and

Catholic participants, to view teaching as more involving a community rather than an individual.

Our first TATAL challenged Dieter's analytical and mechanical approach to developing teaching philosophies (TP). Surrounded by free writers, Dieter's TP model was viewed as rigid and potentially a barrier to the freedom of thought needed to reflect on the depth and intricacies of a TP. However, not all was lost. The model had a place following free writing to further develop the comprehensiveness of a TP. The Māori war canoe replaces the Eurocentric trade sailing ship as the metaphor for teaching. The canoe carries the 'learners' in the waters of 'knowledge'. The two observers at the bow provide directives of upcoming challenges such as changing waves, currents and wind to the community of learners in the canoe. The Māori Chief guides the canoe with the assistance of the warriors on either side who, in a strategic rhythm, power the speed and safety of learning that occurs. A community of interconnected and interdependent learners and teachers learning and teaching as one.

Over to Australia, where hosts and participants provided additional tour magic. Intriguing was the chance to tease out the spiritual aspect of the TP with Seventh Day Adventists and Catholics.

Teaching includes a sense of calling or a vocation, and the reminder of the importance of providing participants with a safe environment where teaching thoughts are shared, and, in the words of one participant, "fearless of being judged". Second is the value in the sharing and developing of group-teaching philosophies. One participant pointed out, "The development of a team TPS is something I see as essential and will proceed to employ this". Third, guided by our TP research findings, we encouraged opportunities to engage university leadership in the importance of bringing back the value of teaching in universities at the HERDSA sponsored events. Lunch-hour discussions with university leaders and administrators resurrected the value of teaching through meaningful team workshops. Also important were the opportunities to network with others who teach students and a chance to share ideas about the meaning behind teaching, such as in the written TP. Fourth and most enthralling, was participants' responses to our research findings where the TP is not only viewed as an important tool of career advancement, but more significantly, a way of garnishing resilience.

In the final week our group spent three days in reflection, celebrating our stories and those of participants and gazing into the future regarding next steps surrounding the TP research project. These 'magical' moments revealed the philosophies of people's lives as we interacted with each other, discussed the important matters in life. Each of these stories revealed different journeys, all guided people towards teaching, whether informally or formally. We agreed on the importance of stories as they exposed and guided our beliefs about teaching and research and our construction of our sense of self. The underlying beauty of these stories focused on the caring of the student and making a difference.

The scholarly workshoping tour was part-sponsored by a \$3,000 HERDSA grant.

Photo: The team I to r: Gesa Ruge, Dieter Schönwetter, Robert Kennelly, Coralie McCormack,

Pepeha is used in a Māori context and has a formal basis, but the idea is universal. Pepeha identifies who we are, where we are from, and where we belong.



Postponed to 2020. We look forward to seeing you in Brisbane in 2021.

# HERDSA 2020 Annual Conference

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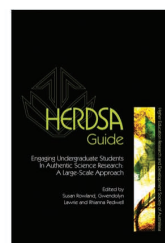
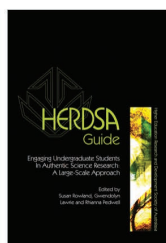
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## LATEST PUBLICATIONS



## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



### TATAL Workbook

The TATAL workbook steps you through the process of developing a teaching philosophy. This may be done with colleagues in order to facilitate collaborative reflective conversations or individually following the prompts and activities in the workbook. The workbook includes educational theories that underpin the TATAL approach to philosophy development, teaching philosophy approaches or frameworks, teaching philosophy examples, and a series of activities that culminate in a first draft of a teaching philosophy statement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### HERDSA Publications for New Scholars

Scholars new to higher education research may like to consider the following publications:

- Higher Education Research and Development Anthology
- HERDSA Review of Higher Education
- Lecturing For Better Learning
- Conducting tutorials, 2nd Edition

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