



Monthly e-Newsletter – November 2007

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EDITORIAL

I read recently that the Chinese government has introduced a new regulation in Tibet which makes it unlawful for a lama to reincarnate without permission. I guess that means the folk in Beijing pick the next Dalai Lama. A roundabout process. And it gives regulation such a bad name.

I expect the December newsletter might be a little slow out of the blocks – it's due a few days after the Sydney Forum. I'd say you've got Buckley's. But this one, at least, is on time.

Ideas and content for the newsletter are welcome, as is your feedback. Please take the opportunity to share with your colleagues. Subject to space and relevance to members, the newsletter can run job vacancies and items on upcoming events. Contact me at: [rob@](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au) with sharpwords.com.au

Back copies of Newsletters are available here: <http://www.aair.org.au/Pages/Newsletters.html>

Look forward to seeing you at the Forum in ...



AAIR e-Newsletter – November 2007

IT IS WRITTEN

What do students *really* do when they write research papers?

Librarians at the University of Rochester in New York asked themselves this question. They pursued it using an ethnographic research methodology – always handy to have an anthropologist on staff. For the librarians, the importance of answering the question lay in determining how best to structure library services. For the rest of us, its importance lies in what it tells us about how students tackle the ubiquitous essay assignment. You can cut to the chase – Chapter 11.

But you'll find little gems earlier on. Chapter 7 is a beaut – it follows students through their campus day. It's a busy life. Bound to prompt some useful reflections on student engagement.

Download the report here:

http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/downloadables/Foster-Gibbons_cmpd.pdf

AIN'T IT THE TRUTH

Our intellect holds the same position in the world of thought as our body occupies in the expanse of nature.

- Blaise Pascal

AAIR Committee members

President: Ivan Skaines, University of Western Sydney

Immediate Past President: Wendy Marchment, Griffith University

Vice President: Josephine Palermo, Deakin University

Hon Secretary: Dean Ward, Edith Cowan University

Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Marian Thakur, Monash University

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Bruce Guthrie, Graduate Careers Australia

Don Johnston, Southern Cross University

Dave Marr, Australian National University

Andrea Matulick, University of South Australia

Rob Sheehan, Sharp Words Editing & Writing Services (Victoria)

AAIR website: <http://www.aair.org.au/>

AAIR 2007 FORUM

CHANGE, EVIDENCE & IMPLEMENTATION: IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

28-30 NOVEMBER, 2007

CROWN PLAZA, DARLING HARBOUR, SYDNEY

Just a few weeks until The Great Event.

Keynote speakers are:

- Mr Ian Hawke, Assistant Director-General (International, Non-State and Higher Education), Queensland Government Department of Education, Training and the Arts
- Professor Kerri-Lee Krause, Chair in Higher Education, and Director, Griffith Institute for Higher Education
- Professor Geoff Scott, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Quality), University of Western Sydney

On Wednesday 28 November the program offers four parallel streams on Planning and Quality, Surveys and Reporting, Students, and Sustainability. The streams include eight workshops and three Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The SIGs are:

- Data Warehouse – National Benchmarking System for Higher Education DEST Statistics
- DEST Statistics
- Developing an Historical Australian Graduate Survey Database.

On 29 and 30 November the program offers 5 parallel streams on Change, Quality Outcomes, Improvements, Leading and Managing, and Working Together.

More than 40 presentations are scheduled with presenters from Australia and New Zealand, China, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and the USA.

The draft program is on the AAIR website: <http://www.aair.org.au/Forum2007/DraftProgram.pdf>

Take the opportunity to share ideas and conundrums with your colleagues, 96 of whom were registered by early October.

It's never too late – feel free to circulate this newsletter to your contacts, or direct them to the Forum website for registration and other details: www.aair.org.au/Forum2007/Index.html

**The 2007 AAIR Forum is hosted by the
University of Western Sydney**

**The 2007 AAIR Forum is sponsored by
Graduate Careers Australia**

PODDIE'S CORNER

Westminster and Harvard

BBC documentary on excellent education. It comes in two parts. The first looks at the Finns extraordinary school system, reputedly the world's best in terms of access, equity and performance. Part 2 takes us on visits to Westminster School in the UK and then to Harvard. Here, the lack of equity gives me the heebie-jeebies. But you are hard-pressed to do other than admire the results they get for their students, which go beyond exam papers. The Harvard excursion is a reminder that there are a different ways of engaging students, and being tough on first years is one of them. Doco is called Top of the Class, and you'll find it here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/documentary_archive/7002460.stm

Been there, done that

Recognition of Prior Learning is an area that the VET sector needs to get to know and love. Only about 3.5% of VET students have RPL done, and the percentage is stubbornly steady. Skills shortage, skills mismatches and population change make this rate of RPL unacceptably puny. There's a cornucopia of podcasts from the 2007 RPL Colloquium Overview, run in June by TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning. It depends where you're at with RPL as to which of the pods you might choose. The smorgasbord is here: http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/ezine/year_2007/jul/coll_smith.htm

PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

5th International Conference on Researching Learning and Work – 2-5 December, 2007

I've mentioned this one before. It's in Cape Town, South Africa. The conference aims to rethink the boundaries between work, learning and knowledge.

It's a long way from the AAIR Forum in Sydney, which finishes on Friday 30 November, to Cape Town. So look, I'll give you the Saturday off. The conference flyer is here: <http://www.hsra.ac.za/Document-2169.phtml>

IV International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education

Isn't about time you paid a homage to Catalonia. Why should George Orwell have all the fun? GUNI – Global University Network for Innovation – is holding this conference which will 'examine the role higher education is currently playing or should be playing in the future to contribute effectively to human and social development in the context of globalization'. It'll only take three days out of your working week, so give it a go. Barcelona, 31 March-2 April 2008. <http://web.guni2005.upc.es/news/detail.php?chlang=en&id=1117>

U3A International Conference

U3A has been in the lifelong learning game longer than the idea of lifelong learning itself. U3A's conference – sporting the theme *The World Ahead: from here to where?* – is running from 19-21 November 2007. You'll have to go to the new Middle Earth, way down there in Christchurch, NZ. Here's the deal: <http://u3a.netfirms.com/Conference.htm>

NEWSLETTER NOTES

1. What's the diff?

In mid-October, Britain's Economic and Social Research Council, along with government departments and university funding bodies, has launched a three year project called 'Impact of Higher Education Institutions on regional economies'. There are 15 universities involved in the study which has a website here: <http://ewds.strath.ac.uk/Default.aspx?alias=ewds.strath.ac.uk/impact>

2. Mon université est plein d'anguilles

Is that right? Gee. Don't fret. This might help. The UK's Council for International Student Affairs – aka UKCISA – wants to help track whether services to international students are up to scratch. In May it released the results of its first survey: *Benchmarking the Provision of Services for International Students in Higher Education Institutions*. There's an accompanying self-assessment tool available as a Word document. http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/about/pubs_research.php

3. Ako Aotearoa

New Zealand's National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence — was launched on 1 November. It's only been a few days so we don't expect much yet. But we won't have to wait long. Ako Aotearoa has taken over the It is also running a project funding scheme to support research and activity that focusses on learners and learning outcomes. Priorities for 2007 are:

- (a) Retention
- (b) Employability
- (c) Experiences in the first year of tertiary study
- (d) Contribute to Mātauranga Māori and meeting the needs of Māori learners.

And a smart-looking website:
<http://www.nctte.co.nz/home.php>

4. 感谢来. Terima kasih kerana kedatangan. Thanks for coming. Dank voor komst.

The Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education – nuffic – has just conducted its second Day of the International Student in The Hague. Yes, there's a marketing angle. But more. Workshops, debates, stand up comedy – a celebration of what international students have contributed and are contributing. Maybe we should have an Australasian version. More details here: <http://www.dis2007.nl/>

5. How do I measure thee? Let me count the ways.

In Australia, the new outcomes-based auditing system is just settling in so we might not want to tinker too much with it just yet. But we're bound to, eventually. Anything that lasts more than five years in education is a monument. So with that in mind, you could start thinking about tinkering by dipping into *Indicators for quality in VET*, a publication of the European Commission. It is a precursor to bringing some consistency to quality assurance practice across Europe. It looks at indicators in use, how they align, their virtues and blemishes, what indicators might be developed. Download it at:
http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Upload/Information_resources/Bookshop/469/5167_en.pdf

6. Buying T&L on the High Street

The UK's Higher Education Council for Further Education – aka Hefce – ran a review of its funding

model for buying teaching and learning. If you aren't *au fait* with the model some aspects of the review report will seem like the Rosetta Stone. But most of it makes sense. The report is called *Review of the teaching funding method: Outcomes of second consultation on changes to the method from 2008-09*. Only 14 or 15 pages from memory: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_23/

7. Buying T&L on Main Street

I haven't quite worked out what the College Board is/does. But like a lot of education-related websites in the US the College Board's is dripping with rankings and with standardised tests. It's starting to look just teensy bit obsessive from here in Melbourne (that's Victoria, not Florida). Okay, that was a cul-de-sac. Back to the main drag. The College Board issues an annual review of trends in the cost of going to college. The 2007 review is out. The cost is going up well beyond inflation. I hesitate to recommend you read this. I'll just say I found it fascinating for various reasons – the metrics are sometimes a bit unexpected, I got a little closer to understanding the US student financing system (so that's two steps into the mile), and it looks at two year and four year colleges so I could do some on-the-spot comparisons not generally available. You'll find it here: http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/trends/trends_pricing_07.pdf

8. Australian Universities Review

No. Not the stage show. The *Review* is the National Tertiary Education Union's journal, which for some reason came out as a double issue in the middle of the year. There are articles from a bevy of VCs, a good read by Geoff Sharrock about how knowledge creation is changing the world inside the university, and a zinger by Leesa Wheelahan on whether the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund is much chop. Just for you: <http://www.nteu.org.au/publications/aur/4901-02/pdf>

9. Monash Showcase

No. Not the musical. But it is 'The Vice-Chancellor's Showcase of Teaching Excellence'. The presentations/papers from the 2005, 2006 and 2007 Showcases are all on the web, and there's a lot to work through. I lost track of time. My advice is to be selective and restrained: <http://www.monash.edu.au/teaching/vcshowcase/>

10. aCADemix

The Centre for Academic Development at the University of Auckland is putting out a mag called aCADemix. Natty title, isn't it? Two editions so far. There's the local in flavour, so if you are pining for news about the people at Auckland, this might be a nice way to catch up. News on research – the use of the mobile phone as part of a smoking cessation program, for example. And some good stuff on T&L in the broad – collaboration in tutorials, and reviews of recent books for teachers. And the article on punctuation was a joy to my editing eyes. The pdf versions are here: <http://www.cad.auckland.ac.nz/index.php?p=magazine>

11. Show your workings (1)

Universities Australia released on 29 October a Discussion Paper called *A National Internship Scheme*. UA wants to prompt thinking about how to systematically and systemically grow strong links between higher education and employment. I haven't read it yet, but I will. I found its 14 pages lurking here: <http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/documents/publications/discussion/A-National-Internship-Scheme.pdf>

12. Show your workings (2)

On the website of the Australian Collaborative Education Network there's a page of proceedings from national and international conferences, plus one or two other goodies: <http://www.swin.edu.au/hosting/acen/resources.php#conf>

13. Don't believe it

This is only tangentially related to education. Tenuously, even. So often I hear the plaint that people are too gullible when it comes to believing what the find on the web. Thought you'd like to know it ain't necessarily so. In the world of advertising, according to A C Nielsen, word of mouth is the go, then that quaint old thing, the newspaper. The net isn't catching everyone by any means. I'm not burning my books just yet: <http://au.acnielsen.com/site/Trustinadvertising.shtml>

14. ATN Profile – newsletter

The Australian Technology Network posts its newsletter on its website 6 times a year. The November 2007 edition wasn't up when I looked but it can't be far away. It's mostly newsy, which is

what it's meant to be, easy to read, and keeps you up to speed. At least once in each newsletter I read something that causes me to scurry off into the web for more information. The archives are here: <http://www.atn.edu.au/newsroom/ATN%20in%20Profile%20publications.htm>

15. Trading in Ideas and Knowledge – Work Foundation

In the middle of the year, the Work Foundation – a UK outfit interested in tangling with the ever-moving target that is work – released the report *Trading in ideas and knowledge*. It argues that Britain's international trade advantage is in knowledge services and that's where the country should target resources. HE is a big part of the picture the report paints. Very reminiscent of some of the things Australians say about education and the knowledge economy. Read it here: http://www.theworkfoundation.com/Assets/PDFs/ke_trading.pdf

THE ELECTION WE'VE BEEN HAVING

I don't know about you but I was worn out by this election campaign well before it started. A few things to note, though the education portfolio is a little thinner than I thought it might be. Maybe it's all yet to come.

The Go8 has very kindly provided a ready reckoner of headline HE stats to spray around when the local pollie knocks on your door, or does her or his next campus walk: <http://www.go8.edu.au/policy/papers/2007/Go8%20Backgrounder%20No%201,%20Oct%202007.pdf>

Simon Marginson has put together something similar but cross-sectoral, including early childhood education. The Election Backgrounder is waiting for you here: http://www.sisr.net/apo/election_education.pdf

TAFE Directors Australia has plonked *Balancing Tertiary Education* into the ideas marketplace: http://www.tda.edu.au/pdf/Directions_web.pdf

And apropos of absolutely nothing, check out Politifact. This is where the spin from the US Presidential contenders is scrutinised and a call on accuracy is made. I think we could do with something similar: <http://politifact.com/truth-o-meter/>

AAIR

2007 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AAIR AGM will be held from 10.00am- 10.30am on Friday 30th November, 2007
– the final morning of the 2007 Forum – in the Sussex Room at Crowne Plaza, Darling Harbour.

Agenda

1. Attendance, Apologies and Proxies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of 2006 AGM
3. Committee' Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
5. Planning for 2008 AAIR Forum
6. General Business
7. Next Meeting
8. Closure

Dean Ward
Hon Secretary

APPOINTMENT OF PROXY TO VOTE AT THE 2006 AAIR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members unable to attend the Annual General Meeting may nominate a proxy to the Hon Secretary.

I, _____, of _____

being a financial member of the Australasian Association for Institutional Research hereby appoint
_____ of _____

also being a financial member of AAIR, as my proxy at the 2007 Annual General Meeting and at any adjournment of that meeting. My proxy is authorized to vote on my behalf for/against any motions or proposals at that meeting at his or her discretion.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Proxies must reach the Hon. Secretary by mail, fax or hand prior to the commencement of the Meeting.

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