



Monthly e-Newsletter – November 2009

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EDITORIAL OF SORTS

Yes folks, it’s the bumper edition!!! I’m cheating – I’ve included lots of stuff I had lined up for the last edition but ran out of time to put into place. So it’s really the bumper crop after the October drought.

It amuses me, a sometime editor, to find that the 6th & latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, published in July, has issued eight pages of corrections to the first printing. Schadenfreude with style. You might like to take a look – it sure made my editorial day: <http://supp.apa.org/style/PM6E-1st-Printing-Reprint-Corrections.pdf>

Your contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. I aim to get the newsletter out ‘around’ the 5th of the month. But no guarantees.

If you are receiving a copy of this newsletter and would prefer not to, email me and I’ll scrub you from the distribution list. My email address is: rob@sharpwords.com.au

Look forward to seeing many of you in Adelaide next week!

IT ISN’T OVER YET

In 1854, the House of Commons considered a bill to reform the constitution of Oxford University. The first paragraph below is excerpted from Benjamin Disraeli’s speech on the bill.

The second paragraph contains the biographer’s own musings – worth keeping in mind as you read that the book was published in 1967.

“If I were asked, ‘Would you have Oxford with its self-government, freedom, and independence, but yet with its anomalies and imperfections, or would you have the University free of those anomalies and imperfections, and under the control of the Government?’ I would say, ‘Give me Oxford, free and independent, with all its anomalies and imperfections.’”

‘To Gladstone [Prime Minister at the time], who believed that the Bill was the last chance of genuinely conservative reform and that, if it failed, worse things lay in the future, Disraeli’s attack was no doubt very irritating. ‘High fantastic trifling’, writes Morley [Gladstone’s 1903 biographer], adding that it ‘helps to explain the deep disfavour with which Disraeli was regarded by [Gladstone] his severe and strenuous opponent’. Perhaps: yet to a generation that has seen state control, through the purse, riveted upon the universities to an extent inconceivable a century ago, it may not seem quite so fantastic. Disraeli’s famous affirmation that a university should be a place of “light, liberty, and learning” has not become such a truism that we can afford to forget it a century later.’

- *Disraeli*, Robert Blake, New York: St Martin’s Press, 1967, pp 358-359.



2009 AAIR ANNUAL FORUM

**11-13 November
Intercontinental Hotel, Adelaide**

Turning water into wine: Institutional Research as an essential ingredient in strategic decision making for tertiary education

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The conference program is now available on the Forum website:
<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2009/program.php>

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Wednesday 11th

Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC

Formerly Chair of the Higher Education Review Expert Panel and VC at UniSA
Chair, Australian College of Educators

Convergence, competition and collaboration – planning in the emerging tertiary environment

Thursday 12th

Dr Gavin Moodie

Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Griffith University

Quality, quantity and quintains: what the Commonwealth and others may expect of quantoids

Friday 21st

Mr Nick Palousis

2006 Young South Australian of the Year; British Council Eureka Prize for Young Leaders in Environmental Issues & Climate Change, 2007; Australian Davos Connection's Future Summit Leadership Award and UNESCO Adelaide Award, both 2008.

The business case for sustainability to the Higher Education Sector

**Conference Welcome Reception sponsored by Centre for Independent Business Research
Conference Dinner sponsored by Australian Corporate Software**

Forum Partners

Australian National University ♦ Queensland University of Technology
RMIT University ♦ University of Technology, Sydney

Forum Hosts

Flinders University ♦ University of Adelaide ♦ University of South Australia

PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

Smarter Schools: COAG National Partnerships Round Table

9 November 2009 (5.15pm for a 5.30pm start)

UniSA, Hawke Building

Monday evenings are pretty slow, aren't they? So if you're in Adelaide looking for something sparkling to do, I reckon you could give this a burl. The round table discussion will comb through the new Smarter Schools National Partnerships, viz:

- National Partnership on low socio-economic status school communities
- National Partnership on literacy and numeracy
- National Partnership on quality teaching.

The round table is presented by the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education and The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre. More details on this Monday spectacular here:

http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkecentre/events/2009events/StudentEquity_SmarterSchools.asp

An overview of the three Partnership Agreements is here, courtesy of the indefatigable DEEWR:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Documents/COAG/Smarter%20Schools%20National%20Partnerships.pdf>

VET Leaders in Times of Change

National Workshops, November 2009

With ACER, the LH Martin Institute at Melbourne Uni has embarked on an overdue exploration of what VET leaders & managers need in their kit. The plan is to define the VET leader's capability set, and then produce resources to support capability development and monitoring. Good plan.

Following a national survey of 200 VET leaders earlier in '09, the Institute is conducting a series of half day workshops to introduce VET leaders to the survey findings and seek their support in identifying the kinds of resources and programs that will support VET leaders to do their demanding work.

So it's:

- Melbourne on 16 November (two workshops)
- Sydney on 20 November (two workshops)
- Brisbane on 23 November
- Adelaide on 26 November.

Here's the good oil:

http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/executive_educ/vet_leaders_workshops.html

e-nterprises e-merge e-xhibit e-mbed: How workplaces are integrating e-learning

24 November 2009

Sofitel Melbourne On Collins

I do love the Australian Flexible Learning Framework. Always something interesting on the go. Like this. The 2009 Industry e-learning Showcase and Exhibition has a wide range of industry bodies, VET providers and enterprises all properly showing off the ways in which they have integrated training and the workplace using flexible learning approaches in partnership arrangements.

The day runs like so:

- Partnering with an RTO
- Working with employers
- Exhibition, lunch and networking
- Achieving whole of industry sector change
- Exhibition, afternoon tea and networking.

All that, and just \$165. Here 'tis:

http://industry.flexiblelearning.net.au/2009/showcase/showcase_program.pdf

Vocational Education Summit: Policy, Funding & Practice for the Skilling of Australia

26-27 November 2009

Rydges Melbourne

This looks like a dandy two days. A good mixed salad of contributors and topics. For instance:

- Making the Most of Qualifications - Pathways Between VET and HE
- Moving Toward Greater Autonomy in Vocational Education
- An Alternative Regulatory Model for Dual Sector Institutions
- Enterprises Training their own Staff and Pathways to VET Qualifications. The why and how of Enterprise RTOs
- High Yields: Harvesting Local Talent for Regional Growth

There are a couple of pre-conference workshops as well:

- Developing successful industry partnerships
- e-learning in VET.

More details are at the following link – you have to go through a darned silly process to get hold of the brochure – not painful, just silly:

<http://www.iir.com.au/conferences/education/vocational-education-summit>

ASCILITE 2009: Same places, different spaces

December 6-9, 2009

University of Auckland

The Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education 2009 Conference is coming. The shorthand themes for the conference are:

- BlendedSpace
- VirtualSpace
- SocialSpace
- MobileSpace
- WorkSpace

No spaces, ironically. Day one is workshop day. All the info here on a natty website (as you'd expect): <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/auckland09/?m=Venue>

Academic Librarians 2: Singing in the Rain Conference

Hong Kong Polytechnic University

11 - 12 March, 2010

Libraries are places of great change and ferment these digital days. And librarians are really kicking over the old traces with panache: venerable institutions singing the tune of the times. This conference is focussed on:

- the skills & positioning of academic librarians
- the impact of the library
- the library's organisational patterns and the value delivered to its owners and clients.

There two Aussies delivering keynotes on the quality enhancement theme (Vic Elliott from ANU, Ian Smith from La Trobe). The early bird option closes on 8 January, so sort it out before mid-December or there will be nobody around to approve your travel: <http://www.lib.polyu.edu.hk/ALSR2010/>

8th IVETA All Africa Regional Conference

Windhoek, Namibia

18th-21st April 2010

You don't often get the chance to visit Namibia. Here's your opportunity. The conference theme is 'Skills for the future'. Speakers include a Kiwi (Ruma Karaitiana, CEO of the Building and Construction ITO) and a couple of Aussies (Peter Noonan and Jane Carnegie).

The call for papers has just closed, so you'll have to keep checking back for the full program. <http://www.namibiaiveta.com.na/>

AIR 50th Annual Forum

May 29-June 2, 2010

Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers

The AIR Forum is the big tent for Institutional Researchers. It's a way off yet, so not much detail, but one to bookmark. Formal program details aside, you can complete the survey about what kind of recreational events you'd like to see included in the Forum program:

<http://forum.airweb.org/>

2010 SEAIR Conference

October 19-21, 2010

Tagatay City, Philippines

And even further off is the 2010 SEAIR Conference, to be held in Tagatay City – about two hours south of Manila. The conference theme is 'Towards Global-ASEAN Institutional Research strategic alliances'. Papers are invited on the usual wide range of IR topics with deadline for abstracts being 15th May 2010. At this stage you can get further info from Don Malabanan at De La Salle University-Dasmarias: dsmalabanan@dasma.dlsu.edu.ph

I'll get some more detail to you in an upcoming newsletter. In the meantime, you can check out Tagatay City, which bills itself as 'Probably the most pleasant city in Asia': <http://www.tagatay.com/>

And just by the way, the latest edition of the *Journal of Institutional Research South East Asia* (sporting contributors from Oz, Jordan and Malaysia) is accessible to you at: <http://www.seair.au.edu/journal/JIRSEA%20v7%20n1%202009%201st%20Draft.pdf>

Apology

In the October e-Newsletter, Rob Payne from Griffith Uni was good enough to provide us with a report on the outcomes of the successful Data Warehousing Forum which Griffith hosted on 28 and 29 August.

I was inattentive enough to get Rob's name wrong – he briefly suffered the QWERTY-induced misnomer of Rob Hayne.

My apologies. On this occasion, I should have dropped my itches and watched my ps and qs.

NEWSLETTER NOTES

1. Green space

Bond Uni's brand new Mirvac School of Sustainable Development Building is a really green space. The website tells me that it is the 'First in Australia to achieve a 6 Star Green Star – Education PILOT Certified Rating for design by the Green Building Council of Australia'. You can take a virtual tour, or drop in for a self-guided wander: <http://www.bond.edu.au/faculties-colleges/faculty-of-business-technology-and-sustainable-development/schools-and-centres/school-of-sustainable-development/the-building/index.htm>

2. Green school

Flinders Uni is establishing a new School of the Environment, which opens in January. Flinders is bringing into the new school research and teaching programs from various parts of the university to provide focus on things environmental. As befits a South Australian institution, it will concentrate on groundwater research and policy, among other things. The media release is here: <http://blogs.flinders.edu.au/flinders-news/2009/10/09/flinders-creates-school-of-the-environment/>

3. Alice and the Red Queen

'Well, in our country,' said Alice, still panting a little, 'you'd generally get to somewhere else if you run very fast for a long time, as we've been doing.'

'A slow sort of country!' said the Queen. 'Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!'

And so I direct you to a terrific report released by FASTS – the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies. In mid-October Kim Carr launched *Women in science in Australia: maximising productivity, diversity and innovation*. The irritating fact is that while we have achieved much in Oz in attracting women into science, we have a way to go before women are properly represented at senior levels in academic, research and management roles. It seems like in the mid-1990s we just stopped putting much effort into putting things to rights. A slow sort of country. Good read: <http://www.fast.org/images/news2009/fast%20women%20in%20science%5B1%5D.pdf>

4. The full bottle on SOTL in NZ

Auckland University of Technology published, back in May, a report titled *The status of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in New Zealand universities: three institutional case studies*. The report takes a captain at the state of SoTL in AUT, Massey and Canterbury. Frustratingly, it comes without an index, but a small thing when set beside the sedulous gathering and analysis of information.

For starters it provides a good literature review that consumes half the document – so you have a good reason to keep it on your shelf. It goes on to explore the nature of SoTL activity, the barriers to it, how to evaluate the impact of SoTL, and offers a small bundle of recommendations for policy makers, discipline and profession bodies, and university leaders.

May I say the report makes reference to one of my enduring niggles – we often fail to capitalise on the great practice honoured by teaching awards. You get the gong and often that's the end of the sharing. So let me quote from page 83 – amid suggestions from AUT staff about how to promote SoTL were these, under the heading 'Excellence in Teaching Award Recipients as Resources':

- Develop a system where new teachers observe and reflect upon the practices of award winners
- Display award winners' posters prominently in the University
- Provide more opportunities to have conversations about teaching.

I'll buy a dozen of each of those. Read on: http://oldwww.aut.ac.nz/resources/staff/cepd/tmf_report_final.pdf

5. Standards for debate

AUQA has released *International trends in establishing the standards of academic achievement in higher education: an independent report and analysis*. This is a top job by Kerri-Lee Harris from Melbourne Uni. There's a very compact summary – just a few pages – of the state of play around the world. And then a bundle of case studies from various global ports of call, from Europe to Taiwan. We are just entering the lists for the academic standards debate. Now's probably a good time to give these 36 pages the once over: <http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityenhancement/academicstandards/environmental-scan.pdf>

6. A Victorian feedback suite

Feedback for learning is worth close attention. Even if you're skeptical about shifts in assessment practice advocated by the assessment for learning movement, it's hard to say other than feedback is a key to learning and independent learning, for students. So says me, anyway. And feedback from students for their teachers matters too. Here's the suite.

First, the Teaching and Learning Unit at Melbourne Uni's Faculty of Economics & Commerce. Five teachers share feedback ideas, strategies and tactics, via short videos. I'm uncomfortable about spruiking this as I play a part in the interviews. But I'm a bit player with as much on screen presence as a 1960s ABC newsreader. The stars are Jeff Borland, Danielle Chmielewski, Valerie Contronei-Baird, John Lyon and Alison Parkes:
http://tlu.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/teaching_staff/feedback/

Dr Susan Lawler from La Trobe's Albury-Wodonga campus channels T H Huxley as a means of providing unflinching feedback to her students of evolution and genetics. She tells us how on ABC Radio National's *Ockham's Razor*. I hope the audio is still available to listen to, because listen you should. But if not, the transcript will still be there for you. The program is titled 'How T.H. Huxley helped me teach my students how to write':
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/ockhamsrazor/stories/2009/2708509.htm>

ALTC released a while back *Developing multi-level leadership in the use of student feedback to enhance student learning and teaching practice*. The project from whence comes the report was done at RMIT, shepherded by Jim Barber (UNE's incoming VC), Sandra Jones & Brenda Novak. AAIRies may be interested in the role of an internal student survey instrument (the Course Experience Survey) as a primary source of project data and guidance. I took particular note of the project's Critical Success Factors (listed on p68), reflecting on how institutional research skills/functions might have played a part. Lots of examples of coalface experimentation. Links to the report and the resources developed through the project are here:
<http://emedia.rmit.edu.au/altclgp/>

And back to La Trobe – here you'll find the uni's student feedback policy and procedures, and samples of the new student feedback instruments (both undergrad and postgrad):
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/ctlc/studentfeedback/index.php>

7. CQU launches LTERC

CQU has established the Learning and Teaching Education Research Centre (LTERC). The official launch took place in mid-September, performed by new VC, Scott Bowman. The LTERC home page has links to lots of interesting stuff, including online access to the second edition of *Studies in learning, evaluation, innovation and development*:
<http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=779>

8. Out there

Have been doing a bit of thinking about community engagement, and how that might be reflected in the still-materialising nature of Compacts for Australian unis. As part of the musing I found my way to ACU's Institute for Advancing Community Engagement. It's worth having a read of the Institute's three current Beyond Today programs and how they are linked to learning, teaching and research: Beyond Disadvantage, Beyond Borders, and Beyond Differences:
http://www.acu.edu.au/about_acu/community_engagement/institute_for_advancing_community_engagement/

I also found enlightenment at the website of Uni of Toronto's Centre for Community Partnerships. Lots here to look through if community engagement is of interest. Good to read about how the Centre is open to supporting student clubs and societies to be part of the engagement gig:
<http://www.ccp.utoronto.ca/>

9. Staying on

Lots of AAIRies rightly spend lots of time tracking retention and attrition. If that's you, consider spending a little time this website: Improving Retention at Griffith. You can't get access externally to some of the things I'm sure you'd like to peruse, but there's much else to keep you busy:
<http://www.griffith.edu.au/office-quality-planning-statistics/improving-retention>

10. Incentive grants to finish your degree

Indiana Uni has come up with an unusual approach to improving student retention and performance. Undergrads attending IU, and who come from Indiana, can earn an incentive grant if they complete their year of study and post a B average. All funded by shaving administrative costs and putting the savings towards the incentive grants and other student supports and services:
<http://newsinfo.iu.edu/news/page/normal/11728.html>

11. Canterbury bonds

The *New Zealand Herald* reports that Canterbury Uni is looking to raise up to \$100m through a bond issue. It wants to use the funds to improve its facilities. The offer closes on 30 November apparently. Haven't checked this any further, but I figured I should let you know in case you've got some lazy cash about you:

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10602116

IT IS WRITTEN (1)

'Another aspect of the "IQ debate" that is exasperating for cognitive scientists who study reasoning and rational thought is the endless argument about whether intelligence is malleable. No one denies that this is an important question which needs to be resolved, but it has totally overshadowed cognitive skills that are just as useful as intelligence and that may be more teachable...

'The lavish attention devoted to intelligence (raising it, praising it, worrying when it is low, etc.) seems wasteful in light of the fact that we choose to virtually ignore another set of mental skills with just as much social consequence – rational thinking mindware and procedures. Popular books tell parents how to raise more intelligent children, educational psychology textbooks discuss the raising of students' intelligence... There is no corresponding concern on the part of schools that their students reason judiciously, and no corresponding recognition that intelligence is useless to a child unable to adapt to the world.'

- *What intelligence tests miss: the psychology of rational thought*, Keith E Stanovich, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, p 197.

12. Queensland birthdays

You'll need forty candles and two cakes if you're going to do this properly. CSU, in its current guise, is 20 this year:

<http://www.csu.edu.au/about/history/>

Bond Uni is also 20, though the cyber-celebrations aren't as extensive:

<http://www.bond.edu.au/about-bond/introducing-bond/20th-anniversary/index.htm>

13. The RRAT speaks

The Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee is putting in some close work on tertiary education. On 27 October it reported on the government's proposed income support arrangements for rural and regional students. The report is here:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/rrat_ctte/income_support/report/report.pdf

The Committee's Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities is the next cab off the rank – it was due to report on 29 October, but has an extension to 11 December. We do really need some policy and practice innovation if we are to have a wide brown learning land. You might want to drop in here from time to time before December 11 – you can read the submissions to the Inquiry, and transcripts of the public hearings:

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/rrat_ctte/rural_and_regional_education/index.htm

14. How Canada stacks up

The Council of Ministers of Education Canada has released a report titled *Education indicators in Canada: an international perspective*. It draws on Canadian stats and lines them up with the data from the OECD's *Education at a glance*. Lots of mentions of Oz and NZ. The report takes in all education sectors, with lots of international comparisons that are as useful for those of us in Oz and NZ as they are for the Canadians. This is the first in a series of reports of this ilk, so we can look forward to more:

<http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/212/education-indicators-canada-international-perspective-2009.pdf>

15. How did you get to uni?

Alternative routes into and pathways through higher education was published a month or so ago by the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. The complexity of motivations for taking on vocational or higher education is canvassed in the report. The challenge of how to grow aspirations for post-school training and education is one we'll be working with for some time to come in Oz as SES targets, and undergrad degree-holding targets, begin to shape what we do and how we do it. So, for what a different perspective is worth:

<http://www.dius.gov.uk/~media/publications/B/BIS-RP-004>

16. South African story (1)

South Africa's Department of Education released in May the *Report of the Ministerial Committee on transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions*. I've only skimmed it, but even a skim is a jolt. The report welcomes the advances unis have made in transforming themselves as contributors to a new South Africa, but pulls no punches about the limited nature of the advances and the real deficits still apparent: <http://edulibpretoria.files.wordpress.com/2009/05/racismreportnov2008.pdf>

17. South African story (2)

South Africa's Council on Higher Education released early in 2009, *Postgraduate studies in South Africa: a statistical profile*. It's a thorough dissection of the state of play – some good news, some bad, some equivocal.

I steal here from the report's Foreword: 'Particularly important findings ... that suggest the need for policy intervention are ... the ongoing enrolment of students who neither graduate nor drop out; and the increasing burden on supervisors, given the shrinking of the academic workforce mostly through retirement. The fact that the distribution of postgraduate enrolments and graduations across public higher education institutions is not too dissimilar from the description in the [National Commission on Higher Education's 1996] report is a matter of concern; yet, the list of universities that carry the largest part of postgraduate enrolments has ceased to be limited to historically white and advantaged institutions.' The report is here: http://www.che.ac.za/documents/d000196/CHE_MonitorProjectV7.pdf

18. U pick

The Center for College Affordability & Productivity (CCAP) collaborates with *Forbes* magazine in coming with rankings of US colleges. The claim is that the rankings they produce reflect outcomes and results whereas the established *US News & World Report* rankings give too much weight to reputation and inputs. Perhaps. Anyway, the 2009 CCAP/*Forbes* rankings are here. The twist this year is that there is a Do-It-Yourself ranking option: http://www.centerforcollegeaffordability.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=78499

19. Civil construction & workforce development

The Victorian Branch of the Civil Contractors Federation has put out a pearler of a Discussion Paper called *Workforce sustainability in the civil construction industry in Victoria*.

It's a great snapshot of what one industry has on its mind when it comes to workforce development and training – much of what the paper says sounds pretty familiar in other industry contexts too.

There are insights here about how industry-based RTOs go about their business. And insights into how regional provision is often a hard row to hoe, no matter how well connected you are to industry itself. Recommended reading: <http://www.civilcontractors.com/Administration/About/Editor/Library/documents/VIC/Training/GeneralTraining/Workforce%20Sustainability%20Paper%20Jul%2009.pdf>

20. Open go for sunshiners

As I'm sure you know, a croweater is an old soubriquet for a South Australian. The old soubriquet for a Queenslander is banana bender, but I prefer a new nickname I heard recently – sunshiner. Perhaps it reminds me of that old flick and book, *The Sundowners*, set in Queensland and starring Chips Rafferty and John Mellion, along with some unknown US actors. None of which has anything at all to do with this item. Let's get serious.

Queensland TAFE Open Learning (TOL) enrolments are up 46% on 2008, according to the TOL website. I don't know what the 2008 numbers were, but 46% sound pretty spectacular, doesn't it? From the same news item I learned that:

- children's services programs are the most popular choice
- finance and accounting programs are also in high demand.

The big downside is that TOL only takes enrolments for 51 weeks of the year. Slackers. Here's the item:

http://www.openlearning.tafe.qld.gov.au/about/news_and_events/enrolments-increase.html

You can browse the TOL website to see what quals are on offer. It's a diverse list. For example, here's the brochure for the Cert IV in Training and Assessment (Online): http://www.openlearning.tafe.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/taa_brochure.pdf

21. PD for Queensland VET professionals

Queensland's Department of Education and Training has developed a website for VET professionals called VET Learning Pathways. The pathways to accredited and non-accredited training are determined by your entry point – whether you are new to VET, or a practised, advanced or accomplished practitioner. Best if you have a play around to see how it works: <http://www.vetlearningpathways.qld.gov.au/index.html>

The website is one of the products issuing from the Queensland VET Professional Development Strategy:

<http://www.vetpd.qld.gov.au/>

22. Southbank goes north

Southbank TAFE Institute will embark in 2010 on a pilot student exchange program with Genesee Community College in New York state. It's a combined homestay/clinical placement arrangement that runs over 10 weeks and is open to students in nursing, health sciences and biotech qualifications. Southbank's media release is here: <http://www.southbank.edu.au/site/about/MediaReleases/MrsearichProcess.asp?MrlId=526&Qtype=101&Stype=L&Arch=>

And Genesee's media release is here: <https://www.genesee.edu/news/articles/dspArticle/2798/>

23. National Green Skills Agreement

We haven't got one yet, but the plan is that COAG will endorse an Agreement when it meets on 7 December. Julia Gillard spoke at the Australian Government Green Skills Forum on 23 October and gave us an idea of what the Agreement will contain. The pointy bit of the speech, for the education and training sector, comes at the end. The Deputy Prime Minister made as clear a statement of expectations as you're likely to get:

'... this Agreement will ensure the timely, structured and ongoing review of all Training Packages to embed skills for sustainability components. I view the response of the training sector to this challenge as a test of its true flexibility. This is not a time for delay or obstruction or excuses. I expect that all green skill gaps in Training Packages will be identified by the end of March 2010 and that the revision of the suite of Training Packages, including the necessary industry consultation and validation processes, will be substantially completed by the end of 2010.'

The DPM went on to say that the Agreement 'will develop national standards of sustainability practice and teaching in vocational training. This may involve the addition of specific criteria or the adjustment of current standards to reflect sustainability practice and teaching in vocational education. ... it will consider the best available national and international evidence to modernise the skills of the VET workforce to ensure that sustainability training provided by teachers and instructors is useful, relevant and applicable.'

So there you go. There is a bit of change ahead for Training Packages. The incorporation of green skills has been on the agenda for a while – it might be worth scurrying back in time to the National Quality Council's 'Skills for Sustainability Excellence Framework':

http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/51264/SfS_Framework.pdf

Beyond that, we are looking at the simplification of Training Packages and the embedding of language, literacy and numeracy skills into qualifications.

The DPM's speech to the Green Skills Forum is here:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Speeches/Pages/Article_091023_125628.aspx

24. Industry particulars

I like Service Skills Australia's set of Training Package User Guides and resources for RTOs. There are three Guides: one for tourism, hospitality and events; one for hairdressing; one for retail. The avowed purposes of the Guides are:

- to offer 'trainers and assessors a useful resource with information and practical strategies that will assist them in ensuring good practice in skills and knowledge development'
- to set out 'industry expectations to inform policy makers and auditors.'

I note the emphasis in the Guides, and in the checklists for RTOs, on currency of industry knowledge held by trainers and assessors – an emphasis that seems to be gathering a head of steam.

The Guides are available here:

http://www.serviceskills.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=969&Itemid=2263

(You can access the checklists from the same page – hyperlinks in orange at the top right of the page, under the heading 'Article Index'.)

25. Informing the market

New Zealand's Tertiary Education Commission issued two discussion papers in early October:

- Making ITO [Industry Training Organisation] performance information publicly available
- Approval of qualifications for funding purposes.

I've only scanned the first of these which traverses territory the Australian VET sector has been travelling. The paper notes the NZ government's 'expectation that the provision of publicly available performance information is an important way to ensure accountability for government funding'.

Feedback on the papers closed on 30 October, but you can still have a look at them here:

<http://www.tec.govt.nz/templates/standard.aspx?id=5918>

26. 2009 E-learning Benchmarking Survey

The Australian Flexible Learning Framework has released the 2009 E-learning Benchmarking Survey – since 2005 the survey has tracked the extent to which RTOs are using e-learning, how they use it, and what difference it's making.

The snapshot of survey outcomes is here:

http://e-learningindicators.flexiblelearning.net.au/survey_results_all.htm

But I'd encourage you to take a wander through the full report. You can situate your own RTO in the broad sweep of responses from the 705 participating RTOs. For example: 'Sixty-two percent of VET teachers/trainers said that "the use of e-learning was a priority for their training organisation", with 48% saying that they were well supported by their training organisation in using e-learning (23% said they were not well supported and 29% were neutral).'

The full report for your edification is here:

<http://e-learningindicators.flexiblelearning.net.au/docs/09results/2009BenchmarkingSurveyReport.pdf>

27. Skills at large

The Skillaroos did a grand job at the 40th WorldSkills Competition in Montreal. Fifth place overall. Top job. Here's the latest news:

<http://www.worldskills.org.au/skillaroos.php>

The full international rundown is here:

<http://www.worldskills.org.nz/htmlinks/calgaryonsite.html>

IT IS WRITTEN (2)

'A proposal to give the best teachers much higher salaries could similarly transform the education debate. An extra \$1 billion a year could add \$50,000 a year or more to the pay packets of Australia's 20,000 best teachers. It could, for instance, give the top 7 per cent of Australia's 280,000 classroom teachers remuneration at about the level of members of parliament. Paying some teachers much more than others based on their experience, professional qualifications and ability to inspire their students would well accord with liberal-conservative values, even though it would mean more government spending on (mostly) public schools. Asking each school to specify how its best teachers are to be determined and how this money ought to be spent (provided that it must go to teachers but can't go to all of them) would help to encourage more initiative at the school level.'

- *Battlelines*, Tony Abbott, Melbourne University Press, 2009, pp 149-150.

28. Learning leaders

Towards the end of 2008, Independent Schools Queensland established the Centre for Educational Leadership and Innovation (CELI). It has a broad brief including fostering partnerships in and beyond education, and supporting action research projects.

The immediate focus is on professional learning for school leaders and aspiring leaders. The Centre is committed to three main themes – leadership, teaching and learning, and ICT. The CELI website is here:

<http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/Page.aspx?element=202&category=1>

CELI is running an Innovation Forum on 9 and 10 March next year at the Sebel CitiGate Hotel in Brisbane. It promises to be a good outing involving the ubiquitous Julia Gillard, keynote speakers from Singapore and from the world of ICT, along with workshops on things like how to prompt innovation and how to bring web 2.0 into the learning space. Details here:

http://www.aisq.qld.edu.au/files/files/whatsnew/2010_Handbook.pdf

29. The under-25 view of Oz

The Foundation for Young Australians has released the 2009 edition of *How young people are faring*. This was always important reading, but probably mandatory now we have a bundle of targets and performance measures that go along with education and training. It doesn't take much to see the relevance of findings like these:

- 19 year-olds who are fully engaged in education or work are happier with their lives.
- The qualification gap between school completers and early school leavers widens in the post-school years. School completers more often go on to gain further qualifications (by age 23, 65 per cent did so) while early school leavers, who have not even attained an initial qualification, are less likely to obtain any further qualifications (only 57 per cent did so).
- School completion is linked not only to factors such as social background and achievement, but also to students' subjective feelings about school. Compared with early leavers, more of those who complete Year 12 are happy at school, enjoy being there and feel they belong, and have positive relationships with their teachers.
- Attainment of post-school qualifications varies considerably by gender. At national level, women are far more likely to gain university qualifications by age 24 than are men. The rate for women (33 per cent) is almost 10 points higher than for men (23.2 per cent). Women also more often gain diploma level vocational qualifications — 9.3 per cent as against 6.8 per cent for men.

There's around 70 pages of rich reading here:

http://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/FYA_HYPAFReportWEB.pdf

30. When I grow up...

Now I had cause to go misty-eyed at least twice as I read this paper. I don't know if that's a good enough reason to recommend it to you, but I will anyway. The paper is by Brenda Holt and was delivered at the 2008 conference of the Australasian Association for Research in Education. The title is, "You are going to go somewhere!" The power of conferred identity status on "disadvantaged" students and their mobility to University'.

I tracked it down after reading that Brenda was awarded the Melbourne Uni Chancellor's Prize

(Social Sciences) for her PhD thesis, 'Global routes/rural roots: identity, rural women and higher education'.

The tears came to my eyes over this, a response from one country kid to the question about why she made it to uni and her peers didn't:

'I made it to uni because
I'd been dreaming university dreams
since the end of Year 10 and because
teachers at school
took the time to feed those dreams,
to whet my appetite for culture and ideas, and
to sustain my love of learning.'

More mist prompted by this, from another country kid:

'When I was in primary school, about grade 5, I started thinking, "What am I going to do? I'm going to university. I'm going to be so smart!" In the middle of high school, I thought, "I'll go to uni, that will be so cool." By year 12, I was like, "I'm not going to defer – I want to go straight to uni. I don't want a holiday or a full-time job."

I didn't have a weep over this bit – you just know that Brenda is right when she writes: 'It is not an Open Day or a University Prospectus that draw under-represented students to university. It is the long-term identity narratives that position education and its importance in their imagined futures. We must start with particular people in particular schools and build a presence of the university option. We must also help teachers better understand their role in building an educational identity.'

I think you'd better spend some time inside this paper:

<http://www.aare.edu.au/08pap/hol08168.pdf>

31. The map surfaces

Sometimes you wonder where these things get to before they get to us. The *National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning Project – Final Report* is dated November 2008, but it wasn't released until last month. Not sure why. It all seems pretty uncontroversial, and pretty useful, to me. It's a whopping doc though (280 pages) so I've sampled rather than digested it whole. It's good for sampling – about half of the report looks at what individual agencies and associations are doing in the professional learning space:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/QualityTeaching/researchandpublications/Documents/MAPPING_Finalreport.pdf

32. The teacher's mind

State of Mind is a report of a study carried out by Education Week in the US. Based on a survey of a sample of US K-12 teachers, the study identified three clusters of teachers: the disheartened, the contented, and the idealists. These three pages pose a lot of fascinating questions:

<http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/teaching-for-a-living2.pdf>

33. State by state

I may have mentioned this before – can't remember, but I visit every now and then for a ten minute browse that meets my trivia requirements for a week or two. StateMaster is a collection of stats about each state in the US. It allows you to compare one with another. Lots of education stats:

<http://www.statemaster.com/index.php>

There's also NationMaster that allows you to do comparisons across countries, right down to the number of library books per head of population – a measure on which Australia ranks 52 out of 81 countries. But you'll be pleased to know that on scientific literacy, Oz and NZ rank equal sixth out of 27 countries. We don't have any old science books in our libraries – just the right ones:

<http://www.nationmaster.com/index.php>

FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES

Cocooned

Obviously I lead a sheltered life. Quite by accident I came across Slow TV at *The Monthly*. It seems to have been up and running since early last year. There's a huge number of lectures and interviews with everyone from Simon Marginson and Inga Clendinnen to Judith Brett and Bruce Petty. Jeepers.

You can get audio and video files at your whim. Sign up for a newsletter. Follow it on Twitter. The works. For nix. The pods/vods are sourced from all over the place – writer's festivals, the Lowy Institute, universities. Forget the video store. Go Slow. Great learning and teaching resource, methinks. Here's the website, although if you're quicker than me you already know all about it: http://www.themonthly.com.au/view/slowtvsearch?tid=All&tid_1=125&tid_2=All&tid_3=All

MASTER OF TERTIARY EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

The LH Martin Institute is seeking participants for 2010 Master of Tertiary Education Management program. The Masters is a two-year, part-time, professionally oriented graduate program, awarded by Melbourne Uni.

The program offers:

- access to current research on policy trends and management issues, in Australia and internationally
- exposure to expert practitioners, cases and simulations to blend theory with practice
- a strong cohort experience with tertiary sector peers, based around two residential schools per semester in Melbourne
- scope to align study tasks with work projects and career aspirations.

The program is open to middle & senior level educators, researchers and administrators from tertiary institutions in Australia & New Zealand.

Scholarships are available for selected participants.

Applications close on 16 November.

You can get more details here:

<http://www.mihelm.unimelb.edu.au/mtem/index.html>

More digital TV

Well, I'm not always half asleep. I might have missed the advent of Slow TV, but I was right on to Forum Network. Forum comes to us from National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting Service in the US. I'll leave you to browse around – there are lectures and documentaries galore. And may I bring your notice to the particularly important fact that there is whole category given over to history. Quite right too:

<http://forum-network.org/>

Rob's Higher Ed Blog

This is terrific. But again, I seem to be behind the game. Looks like Rob has been posting here since September 2008. Dear oh dear. Anyway, Rob is Rob Hale from UNE and the blog is full of fine musings 'about business intelligence and data warehousing in Oz and NZ tertiary institutions': <http://blog.une.edu.au/robbj/>

Back to laws

One vod/pod not on Slow TV is Macquarie's Steven Schwartz delivering the Vice-Chancellor's Inaugural Annual Lecture. I think this means he is doing the first one, not all of them in perpetuity. The lecture is called 'Re-moralising the university'. I liked it. Schwartz leaves you under no illusion that unis have thrown in their lot with economic instrumentalism, and that we ought to stop and get back to basics:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/mqvideos/vcLecture.html>

Schwartz is in good company. Drew Gilpin Faust, President of Harvard, offers some similar thoughts in her piece for *The New York Times* called 'The university's crisis of purpose'. She finished on a flourish: 'Human beings need meaning, understanding and perspective as well as jobs. The question should not be whether we can afford to believe in such purposes in these times, but whether we can afford not to.' Read it all:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/06/books/review/Faust-t.html?_r=1&nl=books&emc=booksupdateemb3

Teachers to the fore

I'm warming to US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. He has made a couple of attention-getting speeches in the past month – inspirational, aspirational. I don't know enough about his political ability to get things done, but he is saying lots of sensible and solid things.

On 9 October he spoke at the University of Virginia, calling his address A Call to Teaching. He recognises that with the retirement of the baby boomer generation from the ranks of school teachers, much will be lost. Their leaving is an opportunity to reinvigorate the profession – if we can recruit enough people to the job. Duncan said: 'We need to use every high-quality avenue possible to recruit teachers, whether they are older, successful adults interested in taking a new career path, or college seniors looking to serve the country and work with children.'

Watch the speech – he's an amiable engaging speaker:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdqxTo4C6o8>

A week or so later, Duncan was at Columbia Uni, this time talking about teacher preparation. Check out this excerpt: 'We will encourage partnerships with states and districts that address teacher shortages in high-needs areas. And we will

encourage programs committed to results: Programs that use data, including student achievement data, to foster an ethic of continuous improvement for students and teachers. Our best teacher preparation programs see the smart use of data as a boon that can help them improve, not as a burden. They see competition from alternative providers not as a threat but as a force from which they can learn, benefit, and share ideas.'

The full text of Duncan's Columbia speech is here:

<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/10/10222009.html>

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