Australasian Association for Institutional Research

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Monthly e-Newsletter – December 2009

What's in this edition?

EDITORIAL OF SORTS

Well, that'll be 2009. Not one the education sector will forget for a decade or so.

There are a couple of changes to the AAIR Committee I should let you know about. Ivan Skaines, our Immediate Past President, has stopped being immediate and slipped on to the honour board. Ivan has stepped down from the Committee and stepped into new spaces in and around Dungog. We're grateful to Ivan for all the energy and ideas he has put into AAIR.

Bob Hall from Canterbury Uni made a great contribution during his year on the Committee, especially in rekindling the links between NZ and AAIR. With a role change at Canterbury, Bob steps down. The NZ connection is picked up with Kathie Rabel from Victoria Uni of Wellington joining us.

There are many people who will receive this newsletter for first time and wonder why. Most likely you attended the AAIR Forum and AAIR membership was included this year in your registration fee. The newsletter isn't mandatory, though. If you have received the 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

TOP FORUM, ADELAIDE

Thanks so much to everyone who made the AAIR Forum in Adelaide happen.

A bunch of Croweaters to thank. Andrea Matulick (UniSA) was the mastermind, more than ably supported by a luminous cast from the SA unis: David De Bellis (Flinders), Roslyn Clermont (UniSA), Trish Hanlon (UniSA), Dan McHolm (Adelaide), and Sue Mikilewicz (UniSA).

Also thanks to Brigitte and the Leishman Associates team for another sterling effort on AAIR's behalf.

Papers

The Forum PowerPoints and papers are now available on the web: http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aair2009/program.php

Best Paper went to David De Bellis and Talitha Bennett of Flinders Uni for 'The move to a system of flexible delivery mode (on-line v paper) unit of study student evaluations at Flinders University'.

Paul Wong from ANU and Peter Rennie from Leadership Australia collected both Best Presenter and Best New Presenter awards:
- Paul for his paper titled 'An Agile Extract Transform and Load (ETL) Data Development for ERA XML Submission'
- Peter for his paper titled 'A practical theory for changing society – one organisation at a time'

Life membership

At the Forum Dinner, Nick Booth was awarded an AAIR Life Membership. Thanks for your contributions over many years, Nick, including your work as Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Webmaster.

PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

Digital Futures: from digitization to delivery

Sydney: 1-5 February, 2010
University of Technology, Sydney

London: 19-23 April, 2010
King's College

There's no excuse for missing this, because it's on twice. You could even go twice. It's a 5 day program which 'focuses on the creation, delivery and preservation of digital resources from cultural and memory institutions.' The target group is 'practitioners from the library, museum, heritage and cultural sectors looking to understand the strategic and management issues of developing digital resources from digitisation to delivery.'

Five days for $2100 is small beer, considering you get a certificate and guided tours of the State Library NSW and the Powerhouse Museum. Or if you take the London option, guided tours of the National Gallery and the National Archives:
http://www.digitalconsultancy.net/digifutures/

Quantitative Analysis of Teaching & Learning in Business, Economics and Commerce Forum

12 February 2010
The University of Melbourne

This Forum is a now a fixture in the academic heavens – the first was in 2005. Organised by Melbourne Uni's Faculty of Economics & Commerce, it's put on by the Faculty's Teaching & Learning Unit and the Department of Economics.

Papers at the 2010 gig will include:
- Who is afraid of business statistics?
- Innovative teaching practices to produce innovative graduates: a framework
- Teaching management mathematics
- How effective are in-semester tests in predicting final examination results? A case study from Econ 101.

There's a half day parallel forum on 11 February called Measuring the Student Experience which will offer quantitative papers on the CEQ and institutional teaching evaluation surveys/teaching quality instruments.

Bowl along:
http://tlu.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/teaching_staff/forum/index.html

AVETRA 2010 – VET Research: Leading and Responding in Turbulent Times

8-9 April, 2010
Holiday Inn, Surfers Paradise

This is the 13th conference of the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association. The program is yet to come, but you know it will be good. If you need convincing, have a squiz at the archives of conferences past:
http://avetra.org.au/publications/conference-archives

While the conference program isn't up yet, there is some info about pre-conference workshops on 7 June, including one titled Raising the Bar on VET Teacher Education Qualifications which will be conducted by Linda Simon (AEU Federal TAFE President) and Annette Bonnici (A/Head Teacher Information Technology, Northern Beaches TAFE). Keep checking here
http://avetra.org.au/annual-conference

Group Training National Conference 2010: Skill2Work

14-16 April, 2010
Hilton, Adelaide

With upwards of 40,000 apprentices/trainees under their wings, Group Training Organisations (GTOs) are a key component of Australia's apprenticeship/ traineeship system. No detail yet on the program, but it'll be on its way soon I guess. Julia Gillard is lined up to speak, along with John Buchanan from the Workplace Research Centre at Sydney Uni, Barbara Pocock from UniSA's Centre for Work and Life, and Chris Richardson from Access Economics. Off to a good start:
http://www.gtaltd.com.au/about_gtanational/national_conference/conferences/conf2010_Adelaide/conf2010.html

Retention 2010: International Conference on Student Success

June 9-11, 2010
Hilton Palmer House, Chicago

The Educational Policy Institute is holding its annual conference on retention in Chicago. Hilton Palmer House is actually a Hilton hotel, but quite something if the pictures are anything to go by. There's not much more to look at other than the pictures at the moment – the conference program is still to come, though there's a bit of detail about pre-conference workshops. Think about it – Chicago in summer…:
http://educationalpolicy.org/events/R10/default.htm

EAIR Forum – Linking Society and Universities: New Missions for Universities

1-4 September 2010

Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Valencia

EAIR is one of AAIR's siblings. You'd be forgiven for thinking that EAIR stood for the European Association for Institutional Research. It probably did once. But officially, EAIR is the European Higher Education Society.

Next year's EAIR Forum themes include:

- Reaching out to society: the way universities interact with society
- The experience of students/learners
- Enhancing quality to serve society
- Policies and funding for university sustainability.

There's enough advance information about the Forum to whet your whistle. Worth thinking about, or dreaming about:
http://www.eair.nl/forum/Valencia/Welcome.asp

NEWSLETTER NOTES

1. Starting uni early

This is just a promise of something exciting. *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students* is a report from National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education at UniSA. It's due to hit this webpage soon, so watch out for it:
http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/Pages/InterventionsEarlyInSchool.aspx

2. Organising equity

In November the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education launched equity101. The website will provide a port of call for those exploring equity matters. Already there are links to equity research centres and equity offices in Australian unis, along with links to research papers on equity issues. There's a page that will host surveys about international equity and social inclusion research – nothing there yet, but sounds good. The News page is also going to be handy – it lists user-submitted items from all corners so we can keep up with who is saying and doing what. Register to blog, set up tags, etc:
http://www.equity101.info/

3. La Trobe rings the changes

La Trobe has embarked on a big organisational change strategy. Not sure if 'big' captures it. Wide, deep, root and branch. Really big. The strategy is called Changing La Trobe: A Program for Renewal. Lots more information here:
https://www.latrobe.edu.au/change/

4. ESOS Review Interim Report

The ESOS Review has produced an Interim Report which hit the decks on 3 December. Haven't read it yet so all I can do is point you towards it really – its 21 pages seem to cover what the Review has heard via consultation and what the key issues appear to be. So nothing more definitive than a nod and a wink:
http://aei.gov.au/AEI/GovernmentActivities/InternationalStudentsTaskforce/ESOS_Review_InterimReport_pdf.pdf

5. Early career academics in the uni workplace

In an article in the online mag *New Matlida* Melissa Gregg rebukes universities on a whole range of fronts for letting down academics (particularly early career academics) and students, trading in their interests and well-being for a set of unlovely corporate values. Her particular concern is how present settings work against a fair go for academics of the future.

Workplace and workforce change is everywhere. What Gregg points to has general analogues elsewhere. But to be sure, the specifics of change in particular sectors and occupations matter a great deal. Gregg's article, 'Why academia is no longer a smart choice', voices concerns expressed by more than a handful of university insiders, so we can't write off her perspectives as unrepresentative or peripheral. They have to be talked through, particularly as we face the daunting task of expanding the academic workforce to meet new participation targets and cope with workforce ageing at the same time. Here's the article:
http://newmatilda.com/2009/11/24/academia-no-longer-smart-choice

Talking through these concerns is no doubt why Gregg was involved in setting up a conference with the ARC Cultural Research Network. The conference – State of the Industry – was held in late November. Day one was concerned with the next generation of university teachers and students. Day two focussed on researching culture and cultures of research. More on the conference here:
http://www.uq.edu.au/crn/industry/about.html

6. The $64,000 question

New Zealand's new government established the 2025 Taskforce to come up with ideas about how to lift NZ's rank among developed countries, taking the view that in the last 30 or 40 years things had deteriorated pretty badly. The Taskforce has a very wide brief: what needs fixing.

The first instalment on the Taskforce's thinking came on 30 November with *Answering the $64,000 question: closing the income gap with Australia by 2025*. Very new so I haven't read it, other than to look at what it says about education. Here's the early list of thoughts on that topic:

- The substantial increases in subsidies since 2005 for early childhood education and day-care should be reversed.
- A funder-provider model should be adopted for the school sector, allowing new providers to enter, with all-up per student funding equivalent to that for existing state schools.
- In the meantime, governance and accountability structures in the school sector need to be reformed to provide better incentives for stronger performance and greater accountability for teachers, principals and schools.
- Government-imposed fee caps on university fees should be abolished.
- Market-based interest rates should be reintroduced for student loans.
- Governance of the public tertiary sector should be reformed, including exploring rationalisation of the non-university sector and establishment of universities as independent foundations.
- A full review should be undertaken to identify, and recommend reform of, those areas in which various government education agencies … have become overly prescriptive, and to explore other, less intrusive, monitoring and accountability options to achieve policy ends that pass a cost-benefit test.

You can access the first 2025 Taskforce report, and the summary report, here:
http://www.2025taskforce.govt.nz/fromthetaskforce.htm

7. Parliamentary round 1

Just a reminder that the Senate Inquiry into Rural and Regional Access to Secondary and Tertiary Education Opportunities is due to report on 11 December. The report should be accessible from:
http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/Committee/rrat_ctte/rural_and_regional_education/index.htm

8. Parliamentary round 2

There was a little-noticed House of Reps Committee inquiry which reported at the end of October. The report is titled *Adolescent overload? Report of the inquiry into combining school and work: supporting successful youth transitions*. Okay, it's longish – 140 pages plus 60 pages of appendices. But I think you might be duty bound to read it all the same. There's plenty to ponder and as the report points out, 250,000 school students (about 37% of students) are in the workforce.

The report has a bit of everything – effective transitions, pathways, VET in Schools, models of work experience, impact of work on learning. And of course, the expectations and experiences that kids pick up about the link between work and study come with them when they sign on for an apprenticeship or enrol in your diploma or undergrad degree. Here it is:
http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoolandwork/report/fullreport.pdf

9. Where now for UK HE?

The UK government, under the guiding hand of Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, has released *Higher ambitions: the future of universities in a knowledge economy*.

In his intro, Mandelson writes: 'The question we face now is how we continue to widen access and sustain and improve standards of university excellence in an increasingly pressured international context and in a more constrained public spending environment. Some will argue we will have to choose between excellence and opportunity. This Government rejects the need to make this choice. *Higher Ambitions – The future of universities in a knowledge economy* sets out how we can continue to deliver wider participation and drive up excellence even in a time of rising competition and tighter public funding constraints.'

The report reaffirms the UK target for at least 50% of young people (aged 18 to 30) to enter HE. There's a renewed commitment to linking universities with schools (including primary schools) so that kids are captured by the possibilities of higher education.

Here 'tis:
http://www.bis.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/publications/Higher-Ambitions.pdf

10. NSSE turns 10

The tenth annual report of findings from the North American National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was released a month or so ago. *Assessment for improvement: tracking student engagement over time* is terrific because it can paint a long view picture – soon enough the AUSSE will provide us with a similar portrait.

There are lots of nice things to think over. I'll leave you to fossick around for yourself, save for these two that I rather liked:

- Overall, three-quarters of entering first-year students were very certain that they would persist at their current institution. However, students with no high school involvement in co-curricular activities were less certain that they will persist compared with those who participated in such activities.
- Seniors who worked on a research project with a faculty member were more likely to pursue graduate/professional education (37% versus 24% of all other students) and less likely to pursue full-time work (49% versus 55% of other students).

You'll find the report here:
http://www.nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2009_Results/pdf/NSSE_AR_2009.pdf

11. IR data for Joe Public

Some AAIRies may be interested in the website of George Mason Uni's IR Office. Just one way of presenting institutional data for public view. I guess it would be easier for many if the data was presented in other, or additional ways, besides tables:
http://irr.gmu.edu/

12. DASH it all

DASH (Digital Access to Scholarship at Harvard) is a repository working on an opt-in basis: academics can elect to place research publications in the repository. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) was the main mover with, as I understand it, a unanimous faculty vote to adopt the opt-in approach. It shows in the numbers – FAS folk have already lodged 1,845 publications, with the Harvard Law School in second place with only 74.

Can't tell you exactly when this was launched, but some time in the last few months anyway:
http://dash.harvard.edu/

IT IS WRITTEN

'In Australia the under-achievement of disadvantaged students and disadvantaged schools has been an intractable problem for just as long as it has been considered unacceptable. Ubiquitous, it has long been the subject of governmental reform commitments – many of the "No child will be left behind" variety – which have had little or no effect.

'The Indigenous Australian education disaster is a subset of a wider problem: a persistent failure to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged students and disadvantaged schools on the one hand and the wider school population on the other.

'There is a fundamental issue here: can educational disadvantage be overcome without overcoming broader socio-economic disadvantage? In other words, will there be educational disadvantage for as long as there is broader social and economic equality?

'… It has ever been the case that individual students from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome social and economic disadvantage and succeed. The problem we are dealing with here is a social one. The onus falls on those of us who believe in the classical ideal [that educational improvement can take place despite socio-economic disadvantage] to show that educational reform can produce broad-based social transformation among disadvantaged students, and not just the raising up of a few.'

- Noel Pearson, 'Radical hope: education and equality in Australia, *Quarterly Essay*, Issue 25, 2009, Melbourne: Black Inc, pp 16-17.

13. Instruments of study

The Wabash National Study burrows in to student outcomes and student experiences for those enrolled in liberal arts colleges across the US. The link below takes you to the overview page for the study. Some AAIRies will have a peculiar fascination for the suite of survey instruments used in the study – NSSE is but one of 15 instruments deployed. Follow the 'Instruments' hyperlink for details:
http://www.liberalarts.wabash.edu/study-overview/

14. Free universities!

No – not the removal of fees, I'm afraid, but enhancing university autonomy by removing regulatory controls. With the blessing of the EU, the European University Association (EUA) has commenced a comparative study of university autonomy in Europe. By 2011 the study will have developed a scorecard for benchmarking university autonomy.

To kick things off, on November 30 the EUA released *University autonomy in Europe 1: exploratory study*. This first offering looks at around 30 variables that will be tracked over time to determine how free unis are, individually and systemically, in four domains: academic, financial, organisational and staffing.

We're looking at variables as diverse as how the rector (or VC) is selected, what rules are applied by government to the management of financial reserves, how student admission is regulated, and what the employment status of academics is.

The exploratory study notes an interesting bottom line: 'Financial autonomy is one crucial factor allowing universities to achieve their strategic goals. If there is not a certain freedom to act independently in terms of financial issues, then the other dimensions of autonomy may well only exist in theory.'

Haven't looked at it closely but I will. Promises to be enlightening both about the issues themselves and about university systems across the European patchwork. May even have some relevance to thinking about TEQSA. The study is here:
http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/EUA_Autonomy_Report_Final.pdf

15. Learning technologies and managing change

Education.au has released its latest *Annual report on emerging technologies: planning for change*. The focus this year is on how to change the way we do and think so that we can maximise the benefits of new learning technologies.

Appendix 7 is pretty useful – 'Shifts in the philosophical, theoretical and professional dimensions of learning'. It simply identifies how the notion of collaborative learning is moving the scope and practice of teaching and learning:
http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/SICTAS/SICTAS_etech.pdf

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IT ISN'T OVER YET

In 1955, Francis Ratcliffe, Officer-in-Charge of CSIRO's Wild Life Section, wrote to FG Nicholls, CSIRO's Secretary of General Administration.

'[Ratcliffe appealed to Nicholls] to reconsider a directive from head office that all research results had to be published by CSIRO. He asked Nicholls to grant him, as Officer-in-Charge, "a certain amount of discretion" about what might be regarded as "official":

"Many of my staff [Ratcliffe wrote] publish, or want to publish a lot of unofficial stuff; and sometimes the line between the official and the unofficial is quite impossible to draw. Sometimes work which started as a purely hobby interest, done in a man's spare time and at weekends, may develop into a piece of official research – the best example of this is Harry Frith's interest in the Mallee Fowl, and the physics of its egg incubation … Dom Serventy presents an even more difficult case. As far as I can make out he spends his whole waking life being an ornithologist, at times acting and thinking as an officer of the CSIRO and at times as a private individual."'

'The boom and bust desert world: a bird's eye view', Libby Robin and Leo Joseph. In *Boom and bust: bird stories for a dry country*, edited by Libby Robin, Robert Heinsohn and Leo Joseph, 2009, Collingwood: CSIRO Publishing.

16. Tertiary ministers speak as one

The new Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE) met on 20 November. The communiqué tells us in broad terms what's coming and what the priorities are. COAG's December 7 meeting will tell us more. It's at COAG that the National Green Skills Agreement, endorsed by MCTEE, will be formally blessed. Here's the communiqué:
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/Documents/MCTEEComm201109.pdf

MCTEE also endorsed the equity blueprint plans for the new National VET Equity Advisory Council. For reference, the Council's website is here:
http://www.nveac.tvetaustralia.com.au/

17. Industry's quality priorities for VET

Communiqués are the new order of the day, it seems. Skills Australia convened a Strategic Industry Forum on the same day that MCTEE met. The Forum issued a communiqué headed 'Lifting Quality in Training'. It's just one page long, but don't let the brevity fool you. There's a big agenda sitting behind the abstemious phrasing. The three priorities emerging revolve around more and better information about provider performance, greater industry involvement in RTO audit and assessment processes, and a national workforce development strategy for the VET workforce.

The VET workforce item is yet another indication of a growing interest in current competence of VET teachers and assessors:
http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/skillsaustralia/Documents/CommuniqueSIF.pdf

18. Current competence in Queensland

Speaking of a growing interest in current competence of VET teachers … Part of Queensland's VET Professional Development Strategy is an industry currency research project. A discussion paper was released in August that's worth skipping through. There's an interesting chart on page 3 which identifies the most commonly occurring AQTF non-compliance areas for Queensland VET. Staff competence is right up there.

There's a project report being prepared as you read this. The discussion paper is available here, as the project report will be eventually:
http://www.vetpd.qld.gov.au/industry_currency/project.html

19. CEET conference papers

Monash Uni's Centre for the Economics of Education & Training (CEET) held its annual conference on 30 October at which the theme was 'Education and training in an era of economic uncertainty'. So you missed it. That's okay. The conference papers and the PowerPoint presentations are all on the CEET website. I've had scant time and so to date have read only one paper – 'Social inclusion and tertiary education' by Sue North and Fran Ferrier. You ought to read it, too. You'll find eight other papers here:
http://www.education.monash.edu.au/centres/ceet/publications/conferencepapers/2009.html

20. 2009 Australian Training Awards

The 2009 Australian Training Awards presentation ceremony took place around mid-November. You can scroll through the winners here:
http://www.australiantrainingawards.gov.au/2009_Winners_and_Finalists/

Swinburne Uni's TAFE Division picked up the gong for Large Training Provider of the Year. The award was partly in recognition for Swinnie's extensive VET in Schools program than works, in various ways, with hundreds of schools. Some details about Swinnie's VET in Schools activities are here:
http://www.tafe.swinburne.edu.au/cevl/vetin_schools.htm

The Small Training Provider of the Year was Blue Dog Training in Brisbane. Blue Dog didn't stop at that. It also picked up the Innovative Business Award. Not a bad haul. You might want to take a tour around Blue Dog's website – you could start with the media release that yaps happily about taking home two prizes:
http://www.bluedogtraining.com.au/news/the-doggies-lead-the-pack.html

DEEWR has also announced a review of the categories for the Training Awards, which I assume will have some implications for the various state and territory awards. The discussion paper on the changes is, for some reason, not accessible from DEEWR, except by log in. However, there's a draft available on the TDA website. Go figure. Here's the draft:
http://www.tda.edu.au/resources/20091006-Aust-Training-Awards-Discussion-Paper-Final.doc

The proposed categories are interesting for what they say about what's important in the training system just now. Here's a list of possible categories extracted from the discussion paper's longer list:
- VET Achievement Awards
  - Investing in VET for greater productivity (small business)
  - Participating in VET for career change (adult worker)
- Quality in VET Awards
  - For quality in training delivery (RTO)
  - For specially tailored training (to meet employer needs) (RTO)
- VET Partnership Awards
  - For successful training outcomes based on collaboration between Employer/Student/ RTO
- National Special Focus Awards for VET
  - For successful training outcomes using an E-learning methodology (RTO).

21. UK skills

Back in October the UK Commission for Employment and Skills produced *Towards ambition 2020: skills, jobs, growth*. If you cycle back to Newsletter Item 9 – Where now for UK HE? – you'll note that the HE paper also sports 'ambition' in the title. They are companion pieces in some ways. For the most part, the report seems to me to be exploring issues that are front of mind in Oz:
http://www.ukces.org.uk/upload/pdf/skills_jobs_growth_finalpdf_231009.pdf

22. The future of history

The National History Challenge winners were announced on 24 November. The Young Historian of the Year Award was Alix Biggs from Canberra Girls' Grammar.

As history is, without quibble, the single most important subject in the school curriculum, I thought I'd mention the Challenge which is open to kids from Grade 5/6 to Year 12. And give a plug to the History Teachers' Association of Australia for making it happen. The subject associations are an ornament sometimes unnoticed by strangers to the school system. Anyways, more on the Challenge here:
http://www.historychallenge.com.au/index.aspx?pageid=89

23. My School

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is responsible for setting up the My School website. It's just a one-pager at the moment, but by early next year you'll be able to look at individual schools across Oz and see how each is travelling compared to like schools. The info will inform equity planners in the tertiary sector as much it will inform parents. Get some practice in by looking at the sample school report:
http://www.myschool.edu.au/

24. Playing with time

The US think tank, Education Sector, has produced a terrific report called *Teachers at work: improving teacher quality through school design*. It's terrific just because it makes you think twice about what you never think twice about. The design aspect here isn't to do with buildings so much as with how to organise teachers' time to better effect:
http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/Teachers_at_Work.pdf

Your Christmas Hamper

There were lots of things I didn't have time to tell you about this year. Good reads and great sites I thought you'd be interested in.

Seems a pity to let them pass us by. So here's your Christmas hamper; a real mystery bag. Control+click for Chrissy:

A partridge in a pear tree

Two turtle doves

Three French hens

Four calling birds

Five golden rings

Six geese a-laying

Seven swans a-swimming

Eight maids a-milking

Nine ladies dancing

Ten lords a-leaping

Eleven pipers piping

Twelve drummers drumming

25. Playing with space

The UK National Foundation for Educational Research released in May *The effects of the school environment on young people's attitudes towards education and learning*. The focus is more limited than the title suggests. Students moving into one newly built school were surveyed, before and after the move, to see whether innovative school design positively influenced student engagement, learning opportunities, behaviour, attitudes to school, self-concept, post-school study intentions. Looks like a yes on all fronts. So good school design seems to be another tool that can help lift post-school educational participation:
http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/BSY01/BSY01.pdf

26. Reading and the unread

This comes by way of notice only – it was released on 2 December so I haven't got the slightest idea whether it's any use to us. *No reader left behind: improving media coverage of education* comes from the Brookings Institution and seems to be scratching an itch that really irritates me – where's the consistent, high quality media (all forms) analysis of educational issues in Oz? So perhaps this report might have a few good ideas:
http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/reports/2009/1202_education_news_west/1202_education_news_west.pdf

27. Popular writing and the academy

One reason it's hard to get coverage is that education-speak is an eye-glazer for the average stranger. Discipline-specific jargon is even worse – not just an eye-glazer, it's a blinder. Can I steer you, then, to a fine piece by Gail Hornstein in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, titled 'Prune that prose: learning to write for readers beyond academe'.

The following quote gives you a flavour for Hornstein's approach: 'Popular writing, by definition, invites lots of different kinds of people to invest their time and money in your ideas, and your expression of them. The contempt that academics have toward that kind of writing is, in essence, contempt for the ordinary reading public. We assume they're unable to grasp the subtlety of our thought. We think that writing for a broad audience requires "dumbing down" our arguments. But that's wrong. Popular audiences are tougher critics than fellow academics are. You have to be saying something of import or interest; otherwise, people will just ignore you and read something else, or play video games, or watch television.'

Read the article here:
http://chronicle.com/article/Prune-That-Prose/48273/

FOR THE PODDIES, VODDIES AND BLOGGIES

Animating print

I reckon this will catch on. Corporate reports, student assessments and junk mail will never be the same. *Prospect* magazine ran an article back in September called 'Video in print: the moving image is coming soon to books and magazines'.

Here's the opening para: 'Subscribers to the US magazine Entertainment Weekly expect to read about television shows, but in the issue of 18th September, some of them discovered that they could watch the shows themselves. Inside the magazine was a little screen, slightly smaller than a credit card and held within a cardboard insert on the printed page, showing – in full colour and with sound – new and old shows made by the CBS Corporation. Buttons on the surround controlled the clips, one of which was an ad for PepsiCo, which helped pay for the insert.'
http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/2009/09/video-in-print/

Can't Connect, Won't Connect

This is the title of a BBC radio program that unfortunately is no longer available as an audio download. However, you can still get a sense of it from an article in the BBC's online mag. 'The internet's conscientious objectors' is a reminder that unlike you and me, there are millions of folk who aren't hooked on cyberadrenalin. It's not because they can't get access. It's because they don't want to have anything to do with the web. And that includes a few youngsters:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/8187305.stm