



**Monthly e-Newsletter – February, 2010**

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**EDITORIAL OF SORTS**

Giddy. It’s fast and furious out there in policy land. The changes to Australia’s skilled migration program were released on 8 February. I haven’t got to grips with all yet. However, it’s pretty clear that the changes will put a cat among the pigeons for more than a few VET providers. Senator Evans’ media release is here:

<http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2010/ce10006.htm>

And the MySchools website is now the basis for allocating funds to 110 schools with results below the national average on NAPLAN tests. A first, if small, instalment. Here’s the news, announced on 7 February:

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article\\_100208\\_084053.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_100208_084053.aspx)

I’ve had a couple of queries about access to past editions of the newsletter. At the moment you can’t access recent editions via the AAIR website. Sorry about that. The good news is that the website is undergoing an upgrade and access to newsletters will be available from the new look website in the none too distant future.

If you attended the 2009 AAIR Forum in Adelaide, AAIR membership was included in your registration fee. The newsletter comes to you as part of your membership. If you have received the newsletter

**NatBes Update**

A number of newsletter readers have been following the progress of NatBes, the National Benchmarking System for Australian Higher Education Student Data Collections. This system is being developed by Edith Cowan University.

Currently the system is in development and a range of modifications are being progressed very slowly, due to available resources and competing priorities.

To provide a release as early as possible (so that the IR community may test the system and provide feedback) the first release for general testing will be restricted to Load, Enrolment and Completions. The dataset will be self-contained: that is, Enrolments cannot be queried in conjunction with Load.

The Progress and Retention/Attrition benchmarking components are being deferred to a later release.

Further updates will be provided via this newsletter. Or for further information you are invited to contact the following at ECU:

- Dean Ward ([d.ward@ecu.edu.au](mailto:d.ward@ecu.edu.au))
- Meenal Shah ([m.shah@ecu.edu.au](mailto:m.shah@ecu.edu.au)).

and would prefer not to, email me and I’ll scrub you from the distribution list. My email address is: [rob@sharpwords.com.au](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au)

I welcome your contributions to the newsletter. I aim to send it out ‘around’ the 5th of the month, but no guarantees. Subject to space and relevance to members, the newsletter can run job vacancies and items on upcoming events. And always keen to include items you think will be of interest to others. Please feel free to contact me by email: [rob@sharpwords.com.au](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au)

Look forward to hearing from you in 2010.

## PLACES TO GO – THINGS TO DO

### **TAFE Governance & Regulations Forum**

**24-25 February 2010**

**Hilton on the Park, Melbourne**

There is a bit of ferment around Australia around TAFE governance and VET regulatory frameworks, isn't there? So it's probably a good time to take stock, which is what this Forum proposes to do.

Details here:

<http://www.informa.com.au/conferences/education/tafe-governance-regulations-forum>

### **Universities Australia Higher Education Conference**

**3-5 March 2010**

**Hotel Realm, Canberra**

This year's conference themes include:

- Assessing the excellence of research
- Academic standards: defining higher education
- The tertiary sector
- University contributions to environmental sustainability
- Learning modes and delivery
- Social inclusion
- Implications of student-centred funding.

The conference will also see the Inaugural Summit of Councils of Deans (jointly hosted by the Deans of Arts, Social Sciences & the Humanities, and the Australian Council of Engineering Deans).

Program and other details here:

[http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/pol/icies\\_programs/conference/index.htm](http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/pol/icies_programs/conference/index.htm)

### **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Workshops**

This one day workshop will be offered by IBSA in capital cities all over Oz, at various dates between 27 April and 19 May. The plan is to cover:

- Fundamentals of competency-based assessment & RPL
- Training Package & AQTF requirements
- Developing RPL assessment strategies
- Meeting the needs of candidates
- Developing RTO policies & procedures for RPL

Details are at this url (which is so long I've taken the liberty of reducing the point size):

<http://www.ibsa.org.au/products-and-services/workshops-and-amp-events/event-news/tabid/230/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/113/Recognition-of-Prior-Learning.aspx>

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### **VET Teaching Conference 2010 ... A Celebration of the VET Professional**

**20-21 May 2010**

**Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre**

This Conference is hosted by the Queensland Department of Education and Training. There are five major conference themes, to wit:

- Diversity in the VET game – no two days are the same!
- Working with all learners – everyone's needs are different
- Contemporary VET learning – strategies for now and the future
- Assessment for learning – revitalising the link between assessment and learning
- International VET – there's something in it for everyone.

I figure there will be lots of VET folk who might want to pencil this outing into their diaries. The Call for Papers closes on 26 February, so there's still time to pencil a 200 word proposal for a conference session. Early information here:

<http://vetteaching.com.au/site/content/view/1/1/>

### **ISSOTL10**

**19-22 October, 2010**

**Arena and Convention Centre, Liverpool, UK**

ISSOTL is the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning. ISSOTL's 2010 conference will explore:

- Teaching e-learning methods
- Assessing students
- Course and programme design
- Blended and e-learning
- Skills development and lifelong learning
- Graduate outcomes
- Employability
- Supporting learners
- Diversity and inclusivity
- Internationalisation and globalisation
- The student experience and voice
- Faculty development methods and/or strategies.

Keynote speakers include Dr Janette Ryan, Senior Lecturer in Education at Monash Uni. Very early days yet, so no much detail. Call for papers is open until 1 March:

<http://issotl10.indiana.edu/>

## NEWSLETTER NOTES

### 1. Comparisons are odious

In November last year, the Institute for Higher Education Policy, a Washington mob, produced a report that AAIRies might find diverting. It's called *The spaces between numbers: getting international data on higher education straight*. The basic line is that the OECD's tertiary education data is a bit of a dog's breakfast – too many variations between data definitions, gaps and mysteries in national collections, systemic differences that produce data which can't be judiciously compared.

There is any amount of international comparison going on and the report suggests it might be a good idea if the comparisons were based on something more credible. The authors suggest that the doomsayers who reckon US higher ed is losing its edge are misled by wonky comparisons.

Oz and NZ score numerous incidental mentions on the way through:

[http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/s-z/\(Report\)TheSpacesBetweenNumbers-GettingInternationalDataonHigherEducationStraight.pdf](http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/s-z/(Report)TheSpacesBetweenNumbers-GettingInternationalDataonHigherEducationStraight.pdf)

### 2. NZ's Tertiary Education Strategy

NZ's Tertiary Education Strategy, 2010-2015, was released just on Christmas 2009. It doesn't indicate specific targets, like the post-Bradley percentage targets that apply in Oz, but the directions appear similar in many ways – lifting the national stock of qualification holders, lifting the level of quals held, improving equity group participation, and research focused on the national interest.

The funding landscape is a little different though. The Strategy states in part: 'The Government will therefore be looking at funding settings to create incentives for more young people to achieve qualifications at levels four and above [basically, that's Cert IV and above in Australian parlance]. In a capped funding environment, this will involve reducing government funding for some qualifications at levels one to three that do not assist students into higher-level learning or employment, or do not improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills.'

Here's the full monty:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/~media/MinEdu/Files/TheMinistry/TertiaryEducationStrategy2010/TertEdStrategy2010To2015.pdf>

### 3. To and fro in the House

On 2 February, the first day of sittings for the Parliament of Australia in 2010, the Deputy Prime Minister made a Ministerial Statement on the Higher Education Revolution. Her statement, and the response of her Opposition number, Christopher Pyne, appear in the Hansard between mention of the Productivity Commission's Report on executive remuneration and a Ministerial Statement on Afghanistan. Political life is nothing if not varied. Anyway, pages 55-61 of the following document will give you the Gillard and Pyne versions of the higher education universe: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/rep/dailys/dr020210.pdf>

### 4. Undergrad research #1

Macquarie Uni's website on Undergraduate Research in Australia has grown to incorporate lots of useful content – a treasury of resources from helpful websites to strategies for improving undergrad involvement in research. Some time soon, ALTC Teaching Fellow, Angela Brew, who has guided the project out of which the website has developed, is due to release a manual on the topic. Start here and follow your nose: [http://www.mq.edu.au/ltc/altc/ug\\_research/index.htm](http://www.mq.edu.au/ltc/altc/ug_research/index.htm)

### 5. Undergrad research #2

The Undergraduate Research in Australia website mentions that on 18 October, there will be a seminar prior to the ISSOTL10 conference (see the earlier listing under Places to Go, Things to Do) entitled 'International perspectives on undergraduate research and inquiry: a scholarly discussion'. More info here: <http://www.cur.org/Liverpool.pdf>

### 6. Undergrad research #3

Every year, RMIT University's Landscape Architecture publishes *Kerb* magazine. It's a high quality publication that dives in to the issues of the moment for the discipline. The wonderful thing about *Kerb*, which is distributed nationally and internationally within the profession, is that the editorial team is made up of a new group of students each year.

Have a look at what this year's student editors are up to:

<http://www.plasticityfantasticity.com/about.php>

## 7. Undergrad research #4

The New England Consortium on Assessment and Student Learning (which involves seven liberal arts colleges) has a project underway which, in 2010, is looking at these questions:

- How do students make the transition from high school to college?
- How do students learn?
- How do students make important decisions about their academic program? (e.g., major program, international study, capstone experience)
- How does academic and social integration vary over time?
- How do our institutional practices and policies affect student learning?

Sounds pretty nifty, doesn't it? The particular feature I wanted to point out is that, as the website notes: 'Students are involved at every stage of this project – from developing interview schedules to administering them, from coding the interview data to analyzing it. At six of the seven colleges, students (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) are acting as interviewers for this project; at one, faculty members are conducting the interviews. Student involvement has benefited our work greatly and has served as a model for others interested in educational assessment.'

Even niftier. In addition to general info about the project, there are pdf versions of interview schedules and a generous handful of presentations about the project, going back to 2006: <http://www.wellesley.edu/NECASL/index.html>

## 8. Undergrad research #5

The Centre for Applied Undergraduate Research Skills (AURS) at Reading Uni runs the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme. There's no info up about 2010 placements yet, but you can have a squiz at what kinds of research activities students got involved in for 2006, 2007 and 2008 – access the lists here: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/UROP/PlacementDirectory/Current\\_Placements/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/UROP/PlacementDirectory/Current_Placements/)

AURS has also produced a website called 'Engage in Research – the interactive guide for bioscience students'. The website is a support to undergrads who are still getting to grips with the research gig: [www.engageinresearch.ac.uk](http://www.engageinresearch.ac.uk)

## IT ISN'T OVER YET

After reading the passage below I pondered on the resort to beta-blockers and the race to develop pills that 'improve' intelligence and memory. Given the prodigious feats of recall that the ancients and medieval scholars could perform, I wonder if we'd all be on the ball more often if we just drank camomile tea.

'[Throughout the Middle Ages] medical recipes and dietary advice devoted to memory's maintenance and improvement are common...

'Since the brain is moist and cool, it needs to be protected against overheating of all sorts. Drunkenness is especially bad, but so are all sorts of immoderate or superfluous activities, including the sexual. Too much *meditatio* [memorising what one reads and extracting personal meaning from the texts memorised], however, can also be bad; Arnaldus prescribes "temperate joy and honest delight" as beneficial for maintaining memory (and ... the idea that the memory should not be crammed at one sitting, but fed only until it is satisfied, not satiated, is a commonplace in teaching). A diet which includes fatty meats, strong wine, vinegar and all sour things, legumes such as beans, and especially garlic, onions, and leeks is very bad for memory... These are all very hot foods of the third or even fourth degree.

'Generally, whatever is good for the health of the body also aids the memory, so various purges can be efficacious. Matholeus advises a seven-day regimen of drinking sugared water... Certain herbs, especially ginger and coriander, when chewed or taken in powdered form, are particularly good. Arnaldus and Matheolus also suggest bathing the head in a concoction which contains laurel leaf, camomile, and a honey-derivative, and Arnaldus also recommends frequently bathing the feet in a similar potion. Physical prescriptions, however, are secondary to the need for memory training and practice... Arnaldus says that the chief way to strengthen and confirm memory is through "concentration (*solicitudo*) and frequent recollection of what we have seen or heard".

- Mary Carruthers, *The book of memory: a study of memory in Medieval culture*, 2008 (second edition), New York: Cambridge University Press.

## 9. Standards on the move

If I was to tip an activity that will have far-reaching influence on the daily life of many academics, I'd put money on the outcomes of the ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards Project. The standards which emerge will be a fundamental tool for TEQSA's interrogation of quality. Academic developers, quality folks & institutional researchers will have a lot on their hands with standards, too.

In 2010, the aim is to submit to government the learning outcomes for the first discipline cabs off the rank, which will then be passed on to TEQSA. Professional bodies are inside the tent when it comes to commenting on the discipline drafts. Yep – I'll put a guinea down on the Standards Project being a change-maker. More students, and from a more representative slice of society, is one thing. But standards are about what rather than who, and that's another. The project's home page is here: [http://www.altc.edu.au/system/files/news/LTASP\\_policy%20context%203%20Dec%2009.pdf](http://www.altc.edu.au/system/files/news/LTASP_policy%20context%203%20Dec%2009.pdf)

## 10. Learning teaching

The *Times Higher Ed Supplement* ran an article on 21 January ('You can lecture, but can you teach?') in which Eric Sotto catalogues the reasons advanced by all and sundry about why it's pointless to ask academics to complete a training program for teaching. Sotto then sets himself the task of debunking the objections. I leave you to judge how successful he is. He ends with flourish:

'In addition to teaching a subject, good teachers can foster an appreciation of rational argument and scholarship, inculcate a habit of distinguishing between opinion and evidence, nourish a sceptical rather than cynical cast of mind, seed an inclination to ask questions where others see nothing, and encourage a sense of responsibility for the common good... teaching will be considered important to the extent that both people and knowledge are considered important. And if teachers manage to foster the kind of qualities noted above, it is by how – rather than what – they teach, and that is why appropriate training courses are important. They help to shift some attention from the impersonal to the personal, change an often pretentious university culture, contribute to fostering a new generation of mindful citizens, and return teaching to an activity that merits esteem and respect.' The full article is here: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=410056>

## 12. Fixing the price

Dean Ward from ECU sent along a note to say that under the Obama higher education reforms (nestled in the *The Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2009*), US legislators are seeking greater transparency on costs and so the Net Price Calculator (NPC) became law. In November last, the US Department of Education released the NPC, the purposes of which are explained briefly in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* like this: <http://chronicle.com/article/Education-Department-Releases/49028/>

As Dean observes, the Australian approach is to focus on fee disclosure by citing Unit Tuition fees (that is, excluding incidentals such as books accommodation and so on). The NPC, by contrast, calculates a net price to the student: what it costs to go to this college and do this program. The net price is all costs less financial aid received. You can play with the NPC here: <http://npc.inovas.net/institution/>

## 13. Students doing equity

Last November the European Students' Union (ESU) posted on the web its *Equity handbook: how you and your student union can help give people equal opportunities in higher education*. I don't quite understand how, but the European Commission funded its production. The ESU tallies 47 national unions from 38 countries, which seems to be a surfeit of national unions, doesn't it?

The *Handbook* is just that – a manual that puts a definition around equity, distinguishes it from and relates it to equality, pays attention to how a student union ought keep its own equity house in order, and suggests ways in which students can campaign effectively for equity at national, community and institutional levels.

QA people might take special note of this statement from the *Handbook*: 'ESU also tries to combine the academic with the social aspects of education. The Board of ESU has said that social standards should be part of quality assurance processes at higher education institutions. ESU is currently working on creating a set of social standards and will promote and lobby for the inclusion of them in the quality assurance processes.' Get the *Handbook*: [http://www.esib.org/documents/publications/handbooks/ESU\\_Equity\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.esib.org/documents/publications/handbooks/ESU_Equity_Handbook.pdf)

## 11. Happy Birthday!

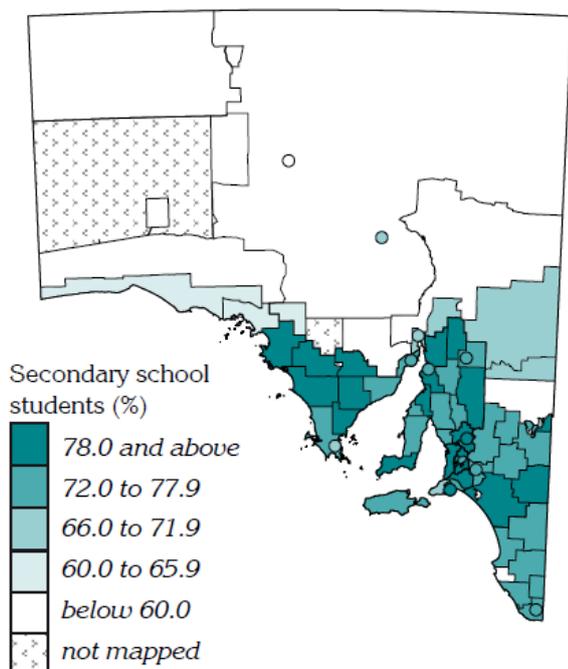
JCU will be breaking out two packets of balloons on 20 April 2010 – the far north Queenslander turns 40. The timeline on the anniversary website is a good read: <http://www.jcu.edu.au/forty/>



## 14. Equity in space

I love a map. So I'm overjoyed to report that there are 95 maps in *Understanding educational opportunities and outcomes: a South Australian atlas*, just like this one...

**Map 32: Secondary school participation, South Australia, 2006**



The Atlas was put together by the Smith Family and Adelaide Uni's Public Health Information Development Unit, with funding from the South Aussie Department of Education and Children's Services. The educational data is extensive, and roams from pre-school to postsecondary participation and performance, and then into lifelong learning. The bibliographies at the end of each section are extensive, too.

It goes without saying that there should be one of these for each state and territory, which is updated regularly. And all of them should have plenty of maps: [http://www.publichealth.gov.au/pdf/atlas/sa\\_education\\_2009/Education.pdf](http://www.publichealth.gov.au/pdf/atlas/sa_education_2009/Education.pdf)

## 15. Equity in Oz

On the national front, the Australian Social Inclusion Board has released *Social Inclusion in Australia: How Australia is faring*. There's plenty here to get you thinking about the links between social inclusion and educational participation, whether that's Year 12 completion or pursuing a tertiary education.

The report also points out some deficiencies in the Socioeconomic Index for Areas, beyond those we are now familiar with in terms of SEIFA's adequacy as an input to educational funding models. It's never very helpful to make data do things it wasn't designed to deliver. So as new policy spaces are entered, or old ones revisited, it does seem best to get the right data rolling in. I get anxious when the cry goes up that legacy data items will do, for now, as a proxy, because it's cheaper. Often enough our data choices tell us how serious we are about the policy outcomes – either we really want to know, or we don't.

Sorry. Meandered into a reverie. You want the report, and here it is:

[http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Resources/Documents/SI\\_HowAusIsFaring.pdf](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Resources/Documents/SI_HowAusIsFaring.pdf)

## 16. Equity in practice

Gee, I felt like I waited for this report for so long – but the wait was worth the return. DEEWR has released *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*. As much as anything, it was worth waiting for because what it contained was a surprise. The National Centre for Student Equity at UniSA has produced a manual that offers a very accessible framework for assessing existing equity programs, and ideas for new equity programs. The framework is built around four program types and 10 characteristics which are brought together in an effectiveness grid.

The report also reveals the dearth of programs that link tertiary providers to kids in their primary and early secondary years. With a few exceptions, this is a new frontier – schools have been waiting at the border posts for a long time for tertiary provider emissaries bearing long term engagement gifts.

The report is here, along with supporting documents:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/Pages/InterventionsEarlyInSchool.aspx>

## 17. Noted.

I haven't looked at any of these yet, but they're on the list. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario has released a swirl of Research Notes in the last couple of months. They are:

- Postsecondary education attainment and participation in Ontario (November, 2009)
- Encouraging participation: trends in pathways to postsecondary education (January, 2010)
- A fine balance: supporting skills and competency development (January, 2010)
- Signalling abilities & achievement: measuring and reporting on skill and competency development (January, 2010)
- 'What about the boys?' An overview of gender trends in education and the labour market in Ontario (February, 2010).

Dip into the swirl here:

<http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/1%20Pathways%20ENG.pdf>

## 18. B2B learning

This goes way back to mid-2008. Older than items I usually drop into the newsletter, but I didn't have cause to look at it until recently. *Interfirm co-operation in training* is an NCVET Report written by Richard Cooney and Michael Long from Monash Uni's Centre for the Economics of Education and Training. The report provides a few pointers for VET providers about how to support training activities which are cooperatively undertaken between businesses (typically those with established business-to-business relationships).

I found two findings from the report instructive:

- 'It is perhaps surprising that even a fifth of firms that currently provide no formal training to their employees would be willing to participate in cooperative training arrangements. It may be that these firms have a need for training that they cannot meet under current circumstances and hope that cooperative arrangements with other firms might make it possible to do so.'
- Firms developing cooperative training arrangements claim to have received little in the way of external stimulus or support for their training activities and most say that cooperation is facilitated by the informal work of human resources personnel within the firm.

Obviously it's easier when VET providers are in the business networks. Here's the report:

<http://www.ncvet.edu.au/research/proj/nr04014p.pdf>

## IT IS WRITTEN

'There are reasons to be hopeful about the revival of the humanities and the reassertion of their authority to lead students in exploring the life of the human spirit with the limited but real confidence that secular humanism allows. But there is one factor pulling in the other direction. That is the continued dominance within the humanities of the modern research ideal.

'Like their colleagues in other fields, today's humanities teachers are, with rare exceptions, graduates of Ph.D. programs at large research universities. They thus begin their careers having already internalised the research ideal. It colors their understanding of professional success and conditions their view of what is important and valuable in the disciplines to which they belong. It defines their prospects for advancement, which depend upon the volume and quality of the research they produce. The research ideal shapes their professional judgments and fixes the terms of their material and reputational success, just as it does those of other college and university researchers today. But from the standpoint of this ideal, and of the values it reveres and rewards, the question of the meaning of life is not a professionally respectable subject. It is not a question that a research specialist can pursue without appearing to be a self-absorbed dilettante, which is just what the research ethic condemns most harshly. So long as the research ideal continues to define the attitudes and ambitions of teachers of the humanities, any attempt to restore the question of "what is living for" to an honored place in these disciplines must therefore be content with a professional culture that is hostile to this question itself.'

- Anthony T Kronman, 2007, *Education's end: why our colleges and universities have given up on the meaning of life.*  
New Haven: Yale University Press.

## 19. e-portfolios for all

Education.au has released *e-portfolios beyond education and training*. It makes the case for extending e-portfolio services to those outside formal education, where it has a number of uses, like informing workforce development. Lots of international examples to consider:

[http://www.educationau.edu.au/sites/default/files/SICTAS\\_epo-rtfolios.pdf](http://www.educationau.edu.au/sites/default/files/SICTAS_epo-rtfolios.pdf)

## 19. Competent innovation

Late last year Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) released *Developing innovation skills: a guide for trainers and assessors to foster the innovation skills of learners through professional practice*. I suspect most good trainers will use, or have a nodding acquaintance with, the kinds of training strategies included in the guide. What's interesting is the way the strategies have been organised within a 'training for innovation' framework – it can help to see a suite of competencies from a slightly different angle: <http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/Resources/CP-INN01%20Developing%20Innovation%20Skills.pdf>

## 20. TED10

IBSA is the Skills Council responsible for developing the TED10 Training and Education Training Package. The expectation is that TED10 will be endorsed next month. Endorsement will bring a revised Cert IV and a revamped Diploma in Training and Assessment, a Workplace Supervisor Skills Set, and a Vocational Graduate qual in Language, Literacy and Numeracy.

The Cert IV looks set to include a unit of competency in sustainability that came along soon after the Deputy Prime Minister laid out the green skills agenda in November 2009.

You can take a tour of TED 10 in its unendorsed state via this link:

<http://www.ibsa.org.au/news-and-projects/news/tabid/112/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/98/Development-of-new-Training-Package-Training-and-Education-TED10.aspx>

## 21. The pink slip

Service Skills Australia has come up with a neat elaboration of the registration/audit process for VET providers in the hospitality game. It's called the Pink Slip RTO Evaluation which is designed to bring industry into the registration/audit process in a way that's manageable and direct. It's a voluntary exercise for a provider, and SSA charges a fee to do the evaluation – but if it works, you might see it adopted more generally across the system. I guess it's one response to Skills Australia's call for industry to have a more persuasive voice in registration and audit outcomes. Here's how it works:

[http://www.serviceskills.com.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=963&Itemid=2268](http://www.serviceskills.com.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=963&Itemid=2268)

## 2010 AIR Forum

29 May-2 June

## Sheraton Chicago Hotel & Towers

Registration is now open for the 50th Forum of the US Association for Institutional Research (AIR).

With more than 400 sessions the Forum offers some terrific educational and networking opportunities, including:

- Pre-Forum Workshops with over 30 half- and full-day intensive sessions addressing IR issues and techniques.
- White Paper Discussion Groups featuring dialogue and debate about critical IR topics with the field's most prominent experts.
- Targeted Affinity Groups (TAGs) where focused topic groups address current IR issues.
- Your social calendar could take in Chicago White Sox baseball, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, & The Second City comedy team.

Visit the AIR Forum Web site for registration, schedules, and travel and hotel discounts – everything you need is here:

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

(This info comes from Bruce Guthrie, the AAIR Committee member who keeps us linked to the US Association for Institutional Research (AIR). On the last page of the newsletter is news from Bruce about the AAIR Fellowship to the AIR National Summer Data Policy Institute.)

## 22. VET away

Study Abroad for Australian VET students is continuing to build steam. Successful bidders for funding from the 2010 Round Endeavour VET Outbound Mobility Program were announced recently and the diversity is terrific. For example:

- The Gordon Institute: Advanced Design and Building – Study Tour and Work Placement (they're off to Singapore)
- Australia City College: Integrated Skill Internship Program for TESOL students (they're off to China).

The full list, with some cursory details on each funded program, is available here:

[http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/outbound\\_mobility/Info/Endeavour\\_VET\\_Outbound\\_Mobility\\_2010Round.htm](http://www.endeavour.deewr.gov.au/outbound_mobility/Info/Endeavour_VET_Outbound_Mobility_2010Round.htm)

## 23. Branded

I just thought this was an interesting diversion. The Nation Brands Index polls the views of people in 20 countries about each other's people, products, governance, tourism, culture, and what each country is like as an immigration and investment destination.

Via drop down boxes you can ask, for example, how highly people in Australia rank people in Australia. Or how highly people in India rank Australia as an immigration destination. Or how highly people in France rank the culture of Estonia.

There's data for 2008 and 2009 located here: <http://www.simonanholt.com/Research/research-introduction.aspx>

## 24. Parental engagement

I've been waiting for the Churchill Fellowship site to get through its upgrade and provide access to Fellow reports. The wait is over. In particular I was waiting for the report from Danielle Cronin, Executive Director at the Council of Catholic School Parents in NSW. Cronin's report is titled *Public policy and parental engagement in education (USA and UK)*. I share Cronin's view that parental engagement in schooling is ready for take-off in Australia. We've had parental involvement for yonks. Parental engagement is a richer and more inclusive notion. The embrace of parental engagement will require a culture shift, and (as Cronin points out) it needs to go beyond 'middle class' notions of engagement.

Cronin's report is here: [http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/site\\_media/fellows/CRONIN\\_Danielle\\_2008.pdf](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/site_media/fellows/CRONIN_Danielle_2008.pdf)

## 25. Sorting out the system

The venerable Tony Mackay is leading an executive education program called 'Leading and managing in education'. Organised by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, it runs in Melbourne on 27 and 28 May and is targeted at senior policy makers and senior operational leaders in education systems. The workshop aims to do no more than focus on the multiple requirements for creating and sustaining change across entire school systems leading to improved student outcomes and greater public confidence'. You gotta think big. Details here:

<http://www.anzsog.edu.au/content.asp?pageld=178>

## 26. Measuring up

Ben Jensen is the School Education Program Director at Melbourne's still newish Grattan Institute. He has written for us *Measuring what matters: student progress*. I'm writing this after returning from a seminar held earlier this evening that was based around the paper, so I'm all fired up to compose an essay for you. Lucky for you it's late and I'm busy as all get out tomorrow. Jensen surveys the data on the MySchools website and invites us to think about whether it's the right data to guide interventions that lift individual student performance.

The success of MySchools speaks for itself – parents and the community generally want access to information that reveals more about school performance and context. The trick is to keep improving the information that's made available, in an accessible manner. Jensen provides a pretty good idea of what the next generation of MySchools data might include. It comes down to the value add. Worth a careful read:

[http://www.grattan.edu.au/publications/016\\_education\\_performance\\_measures\\_report.pdf](http://www.grattan.edu.au/publications/016_education_performance_measures_report.pdf)

### AAIR Committee – 2010

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Josie Palermo, Lecturer, School of Psychology, Deakin University

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#### Treasurer:

Jeff Holmes, Manager, Load Forecasting, QUT

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# National Summer Data Policy Institute (NSDPI)

20-26 June, 2010, in Maryland, USA

## AAIR Fellowship: Call for Applications

**Deadline: Monday March 15 2010**

AAIR is seeking expressions of interest for this development opportunity to advance your statistical analysis skills, and to extend your networks in the USA. Institute participants receive intensive, hands-on training from the directors of national surveys and databases. Participants also partake in policy seminars led by experts in postsecondary education policy analysis.

AAIR has received one Fellowship for the US Association for Institutional Research (AIR) 2010 Summer Data Policy Institute to be held from 20-26 June, 2010, in Maryland, USA. More information is available at: <http://www.airweb.org/nsdpi>

Thanks to a grant from the US National Science Foundation (NSF), hotel, meals, and instructional costs are provided for selected Fellows. US travel is covered in full; international travel is covered up to US\$700.

## AAIR Fellowship selection criteria

The criteria the AAIR Executive Committee will use to assess applications are as follows:

1. Current membership of AAIR.
2. Demonstrated high level knowledge of statistical methods and experience in the use of statistical software packages (such as SPSS, SAS).
3. Demonstrated knowledge of data analysis related to educational statistics and/or other evidence that shows you would be able to contribute effectively from an Australian perspective.
4. Evidence of support from your institution and/or other source of funding to cover airfare and incidental expenses above US\$700.
5. Willingness to make a presentation (in person or in writing) to the 2010 AAIR Forum concerning the experience at the 2010 Summer Data Policy Institute.

## How to apply

Send a brief (3-4 pages) proposal to Bruce Guthrie, AAIR Executive Committee member and 2010 NSDPI Fellowship Co-ordinator at: [Bruce.Guthrie@graduatecareers.com.au](mailto:Bruce.Guthrie@graduatecareers.com.au)

Applications should be sent to Bruce by COB Monday, 15 March, 2010. The AAIR Executive Committee will select a candidate for the Fellowship by Thursday 18 March and this name will go forward to AIR.

Applicants should address all AAIR's criteria (1-5 above), plus the Summer Data Policy Institute instructions for submitting proposals, available at: <http://www.airweb.org/nsdpi>

Applications in the US close on Monday, 22 March 2010. The chosen AAIR candidate will need to complete the online application to complete his or her selection.

Previous recipients of the AAIR Fellowship were: Bruce Guthrie (GCA) in 2008; Bono Poon (ECU) in 2005; Andrew McCann (UTS) in 2004; Rob Rispoli (ECU) in 2003.