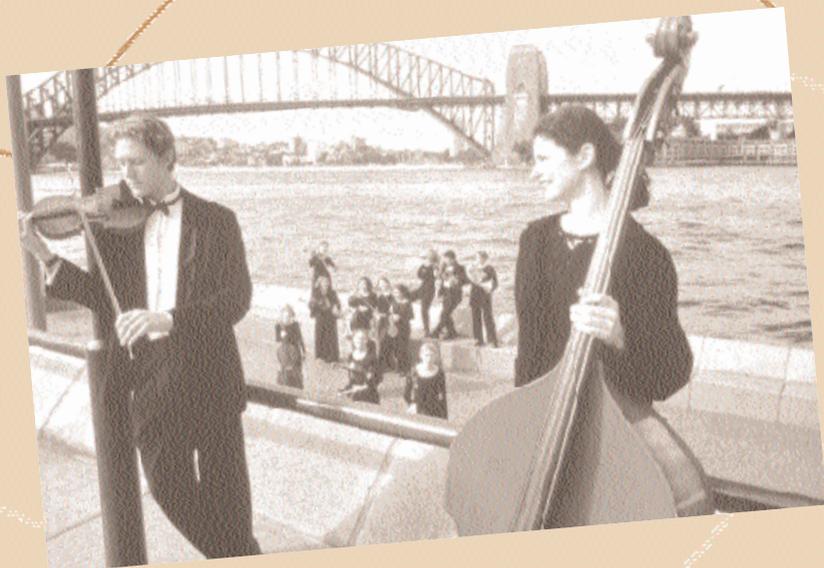


synergy

A forum for the discussion of teaching and learning at The University of Sydney

Issue 14, November 2000



Institute for Teaching and Learning
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SYNERGY

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Feedback and contributions

Readers are invited to respond to this issue of *Synergy* with comments and suggestions in the form of a short critique or a letter to the editor, for publication at the editor's discretion. Readers' responses will help to shape future issues of the magazine. If you would like to contribute an article please contact:

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Enriching teaching & learning

Ros Pesman, Pro-Vice Chancellor, College of Humanities & Social Science

In a graduation address last year, Clive James told of how he had very recently read for the first time Richard Burton's great seventeenth century treatise, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. He was delighted to find that his response conformed to the analysis of the work that he had fabricated in an English examination paper while at this University forty year ago. Margaret Harris, a contemporary student of James and now Professor of English, reminded us after the address that James would have been very lucky if he had managed to read Burton while he was an undergraduate. It might have been a set book for second year English – a class of several hundred students - but there was only one copy in Fisher Library and the work was long out of print. Clive James' student days belong to a time when students more or less educated themselves, or they failed, and high failure rates were tolerated.

Those days, so often nostalgically recalled, are now long gone. Mass education requires public scrutiny and accountability. High failure rates are regarded as intolerable, indeed anything but graduation in minimum time is becoming unacceptable. Our charge is to facilitate good learning outcomes, to graduate students who reflect positively on their learning experiences and who move with ease from university to employment. Our challenge is to achieve this goal in an environment of large classes and high staff student ratios, an environment where academics are also asked to raise their research productivity and act as ambassadors and entrepreneurs for the university in the local and international communities. We have, moreover, to reach these goals with a far more diverse student body than could have been imagined by Clive James and the generations of the Anglo-Celtic hegemony.

In enriching student experience, we also have to embrace the new technologies. Until recently, the debate was between distance and face-to-face teaching and learning. We now know that even if as a university we are committed to face-to-face learning for our undergraduates, this experience must be supplemented by on-

line material, links, chat pages and email communication. Technology is expensive and we need to explore in imaginative and creative ways how it can provide an answer to the challenges that we face in striving for good learning.

The integration of our research and teaching programmes is another area that should claim our attention. The University of Sydney is a research intensive university, on present league tables the most successful in the country. Our students have the right to benefit directly from this environment, to share in the excitement of the discovery and invention of knowledge. How can we do this?

In this new environment of mass education, of accountability and of declining public funding, those of us who embrace the humanities and social sciences have also to cultivate and demonstrate the values of liberal education to ourselves, our students and the community. We hear the message from business and the community that they need graduates who have interpersonal, communication and analytical skills. We claim these as our preserve. We need to demonstrate that our graduates have indeed these skills as well as those more nebulous but socially vital qualities, imagination, curiosity, acceptance of difference and intellectual detachment that prepare them to be future leaders who are committed to social justice and ethical values as well as to wealth creation.

The faculties that comprise Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences are all exploring with energy and commitment the challenges of creating a learning environment that will deliver outcomes that provide students with an enriching experience and prepare them for productive lives in the workforce and as responsible citizens. There will be much variety in the range of solutions. This is as it should be. The disciplines in CHASS are many and of extraordinary diversity. The papers in this issue of *Synergy* provide a sample of some of the innovative and productive initiatives that are being taken.



Ros Pesman

Too busy to learn?

Nerida Jarkey and Colin Noble, Department of Japanese and Korean Studies, and James Dalziel, Department of Psychology



Colin Noble & Nerida Jarkey

When it is used in relation to university study, the term “workload” is generally equated with academic workload. When it is used in relation to the life of a university student, however, the term takes on a very different sense. It’s a truism, though probably true nonetheless, that many students today spend a far greater proportion of their time doing paid work than we, their teachers, ever did in our own student days.

It would seem to be a fair assumption - and assume it we certainly do - that if our students are spending more time working outside the academic world, then they are bound to be spending less time studying in it. Little wonder then that academics feel that students just aren’t as committed as they used to be, and that standards are slipping. And little wonder too, that when students complain that their academic workload is too high, we are quick to blame their perception on the fact that they are probably just too busy earning money to focus on their studies. This problem of lack of focus is often seen to be most serious amongst our first year students. The most striking finding of the recent follow up to McInnes and James’ first year experience study of 1994 is the increase in part-time work among full-time university students, and associated feelings of disengagement from university life (McInnes and James, 2000).

In 1998, the School of Asian Studies Teaching Committee conducted a survey and a number of focus-group interviews which attempted to test some of the assumptions about the relationship between students’ workloads and their academic performance. The survey was

administered during class time to just over 300 students in the second semester of their first year of study of an Asian language. It focussed on three areas of first year students’ experience: their perceptions about their workloads, the amount of time they spent on academic and non-academic work, and the learning strategies they adopted outside the classroom. With students’ permission, we were also able to examine relationships between what the students reported in these three areas and their academic results in the first semester.

When we began to think about the issue of workloads, academic work and paid work seemed to be the obvious areas of inquiry. However, after discussions with students and other staff, we realised that we would need to go beyond this narrow definition of “work” and examine the impact of students’ overall regular time commitments - including paid work, voluntary work to which they are committed, and family responsibilities such as childcare or care for elderly or sick relatives - in addition to academic workload. We tried, in other words, to perceive workload from the students’ perspective i.e. the total time pressure of study combined with other regular commitments which take away from possible study time.

The inclusion of *unpaid* work (both voluntary and family related) in defining student workloads is critical. Teachers may consider some kinds of non-academic work (say paid work) to be a more legitimate claim on student time than others (say voluntary community service, looking after siblings, or acting as interpreter for NESB parents). Regardless of this, for students who place a high priority on an activity, it represents a restriction on the amount of time available to be allocated to academic work.

This broad definition of the notion of “work” served only to strengthen our already well-entrenched hypothesis that the more students busy themselves with non-academic work, the less time they will spend on academic work, and the poorer their results will be. To our considerable surprise, far from supporting this hypothesis, our results disproved it.

Perceptions

A picture which the study did support, though, was that students and teaching staff are not far apart in their beliefs on this issue. The study showed a fairly strong relationship between a student’s non-academic commitment and his/her perception that those commitments have a negative impact on results ($r=.47, p<.001$). This suggests that students who have a high non-academic workload believe, like their teachers, that this hinders their academic success.

Students who had a high non-academic workload not only believe that their results will be

consequently poorer, but they also seem to perceive their academic workload as higher than do their less busy classmates. The study showed that non-academic *paid* commitments were related to perception of high workload ($r=.15, p<.05$), as were *total* non-academic commitments ($r=.16, p<.05$). In other words, students with high non-academic commitments seem inclined to perceive their academic workloads as high, regardless of whether those non-academic commitments involved paid work or not. This result highlights the fact that, when we assess factors which impact on student experience, we must, indeed, pay attention to non-academic commitments other than just paid work.

Reality

Well, what about the reality? It must be acknowledged that concern about results and the perception of a high workload are clearly important factors in the student experience. However, our results indicated, contrary to our expectations *and* those of the students, that when it comes to actual academic performance these factors are not necessarily so important. There was not, in fact, a significant relationship between the perception of a high academic workload and poor academic results ($r=.08, ns$). Neither was there a significant relationship between the perception that *non-academic* commitments impact on results and poorer results *per se* ($r=.11, ns$). Finally, and perhaps most surprisingly of all, there was also no significant relationship observed between non-academic commitments themselves and poor results ($r=.03, ns$). So the fact that many students in

our study had high workloads outside of university did not necessarily mean that their results suffered. Again, this runs very much contrary to the

general perception of the students concerned, and to our expectations of what the survey would reveal.

We must recognise the reality that more students have significant non-academic commitments than students in previous years. 50.2% of respondents to our survey reported doing more than 6 hours per week of paid work on average during semester. 12.5% spent at least the same amount of time on voluntary work. In addition, 23.7% had other areas of responsibility (such as family duties), and of these, 37.6% reported that they had primary or sole responsibility in that area. Both these students and their teachers are concerned about the impact that this level of

“...We must recognise the reality that more students have significant non-academic commitments than students in previous years.”

commitments will have on academic results. However, on the basis of our findings we have to question whether those commitments themselves make any real difference to academic performance.

The question, is why does non-academic workload really make no difference? Is it perhaps that those with greater non-academic commitments know they have more on their plates, and therefore work harder, manage their time better, and consequently do their university work more efficiently or in a more concentrated fashion? Or do only students who can cope, and who know that they can cope, take on non-academic commitments? Follow up focus group interviews seemed to point to a combination of these factors being relevant to some students. However, the quantitative data collected revealed an interesting trend over the entire cohort surveyed.

Too busy to study?

As already mentioned, our expectation was that an increase in non-academic time commitments would lead to a drop in time spent on the kind of study habits which teaching staff indicated were desirable in language students. In fact it would seem that the reverse is true: there was a significant relationship ($r=.20$, $p<.01$) between a student's regular paid work commitments and the amount of time spent on study, and an even more significant one ($r=.25$, $p<.001$) between *all* non-academic commitments and time spent on study.

One of our early hypotheses was that perhaps students with greater non-academic commitments are able to handle their academic commitments because they plan their study time well, and hence are able to complete their academic work in less time. Quite the contrary in fact: these students actually seem, if anything, to be spending more time studying than their less busy classmates. It is possible, then, that students who have more time commitments know they do and therefore work harder; it is perhaps attitude rather than level of

commitments which plays the greater role in determining academic performance. There must be a ceiling on the time which can be allocated to non-academic commitments without impinging on results, even for the most well organised and highly motivated students, but perhaps this ceiling is somewhat higher than we had originally thought.

Focus group feedback indicated that predictability of both academic and non-academic commitments, rather than simply the time they involve, is seen by students as a critical factor in their academic success. If that is the case, then it is beholden on teaching staff to ensure that a clear and predictable schedule of assigned academic work is a priority in unit of study planning and is made clear in information given out to students.

In summary, the results of this study suggest that neither reducing the workload we give to students at university, nor nagging our students to reduce their own workload outside the university, are likely to improve their academic performance. We might, however, assist students to achieve their academic goals by helping them to learn to organise their time effectively, and perhaps by being a little better organised ourselves!

Note: This study was conducted with the assistance of a Faculty of Arts Teaching Initiative Award.

Reference

McInnes, C., James, R., Hartley, R. (2000). *Trends in the First Year Experience in Australian Universities*. Canberra: DETYA, Commonwealth of Australia. Online at: http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/eipubs/eip00_6/fye.pdf

Dr. Nerida Jarkey is a lecturer in Japanese Linguistics. Colin Noble is a lecturer in Japanese and received the Arts Teaching Excellence Award in 2000. Dr. James Dalziel is the Director of First Year Psychology.

Rewarding individual effort in collaborative learning

Christine Crowe, Social Work, Social Policy and Sociology

One of the assessment strategies used in a large undergraduate unit of study in Sociology involves the use of a group research project. In *The Social Construction of Difference* students are encouraged to engage in critical analysis of the relationships between various theoretical perspectives and case studies which highlight theoretical strengths and shortcomings¹. Collaborative group work encourages students to rely on their peers as another intellectual resource for their learning, and promotes social relationships which may continue throughout students' university life. Setting a collaborative assessment task also encourages the development of generic attributes or transferable skills such as the ability to work with others and the development of written and oral communication skills.

The assessment technique used in *The Social Construction of Difference* is an attempt to enhance the quality of student learning, to discourage 'free-riding', and to reward individual input and effort. The challenge was to derive an individual mark from a group project mark. In particular, we wanted to allocate marks so that individual input and effort is reflected. This is relatively straightforward for cooperative learning, in which individual students take responsibility for, and are assessed on, one section of a project. It is much more complex in the case of collaborative learning, in which students engage collectively in the entire enterprise. Collaborative learning is more suitable for the purposes of this unit of study, as it is recognised as more successful in bringing about conceptual change and the promotion of metacognitive skills.

The following technique has been developed over the past two years and has proven to be very successful. Its focus is on process, rewarding input as well as the final product. The approach is firstly to award students a group mark for the group project. An individual mark is then derived from the group mark by using peer assessment. Students are fully informed of this process in the induction to the unit of study and the course outline. Students may use the ten-point criteria suggested in the course outline, and are also encouraged to offer their own suggestions for alternative criteria. The criteria indicate issues such as attendance, preparation, initiation, achievement of tasks, contribution to group discussion (in light of the learning outcomes rather than 'off the cuff' speculations), and evidence of contribution to the learning of the group (summarising articles, distributing photocopies, book reviews, research initiatives etc).

On the day of submitting their project, students are asked to give all members of their group a mark out of ten for all ten criteria. To ensure as much confidentiality as possible, we ask students to sit apart from other members of their group while they complete their peer assessment. Students take their obligations very seriously, and the process takes at least one hour to complete. The judgment is made according to how much they think that a particular member of their group has contributed to the learning of the group and the submission of the group project. If all students contribute equally, then all students are entitled to 100



Christine Crowe

per cent of the group mark. If, however, some students in the group had poor attendance, or the quality of their input was poor for some reason (lack of preparation, failure to fulfil task obligations, for example) then they may receive a proportion of 10 for each criteria, such as 5, for example.

The overall mark for an individual student consists of the total percentage that students give each other *in relation to* the input of other students in the group. The judgment for the distribution of marks is for the students to make. This must relate directly to the number of people in the group. If the group consists of five students, then the sum of the each criterion must add up to a total of 40 (ie students do not give themselves a mark). To demonstrate how this example might work, imagine one student in the group receives 7 out of 10 for each criteria. This means that another student, who made more of a contribution, can be rewarded for his or her effort by receiving an assessment of 13 out of 10. Another scenario in this example could entail three other students receiving 11 out of 10. Students invariably give a range of marks according to the criteria and are asked to provide evidence for their assessment. This is one or two sentences, relating to the particular criteria, as to why they gave the specific mark. Some students initially balk at the idea of providing written evidence. Once they begin, however, the majority usually provide much more than the required two sentences.

Using a ten point criterion, with marks out of ten for each criterion, means that an overall mark out of 100 is achieved. If the group project received a mark of 70, and all students contributed equally, then this would also be their individual mark. If, on the other hand, an individual student's mark, as derived from the above method, is that of 80 out of a possible 100, they have not performed as well as others in the group. In this case the individual student receives a mark which is 80 per cent of the group mark of 70, or 56%. It is this mark, in this case 56%, which is recorded as the student's mark for the group project.

At the same time, and according to the distribution of the other marks in the group, some or all others, who have worked and contributed more, will receive an individual mark which is more than the original group project mark of 70. A student who receives an overall peer assessment mark of 110 out of 100 will receive an individual mark of 77% for their group project.

Staff remain the ultimate arbiter should there be disagreement. Initial concerns relating to the number and quality of disagreements proved to be unfounded. Over the last two years, there has been only two cases, from forty-eight groups, where staff intervention was called for. Both these cases were satisfactorily resolved. The lack of disputes is possibly the result of the clarity of the assessment strategy and the high degree of congruence between the individual mark received in the group project and the subsequent mark (teacher-assessed) in individual essays. The comments given by students as evidence for marks can provide insight into the process of collaborative learning in general, and can indicate possible reasons for non-congruence.

Using this technique has many benefits. It promotes students' confidence in their ability to assess the work of others and provides the opportunity to develop skills for working in a team. The feedback from students has been positive. They felt that this technique, in comparison with a 'blanket mark' where all students in the group received the same mark, was fair. Students also pointed to the benefits of 'finding out about how they work with others', some, admittedly, with a greater degree of approbation than others.

The next step in the implementation of this technique is to reduce the amount of manual calculation done by staff in the formulation of the individual mark from the group mark². Here the use of information technology is vital. An ideal scenario involves students' having access to a web page which is confidential, and accessed by user name and individual password.

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Economics & Business Teaching Awards

The Faculty of Economics and Business

A large and discerning student body demands the best of us in the Faculty of Economics and Business. There are four recipients of University Teaching Excellence Award in the Faculty. Each year the faculty recognizes outstanding achievements in teaching with its own award.

Below are four postcards about teaching from some of the Faculty's most reflective practitioners. If a theme unites these notes, it is that teaching is about learning. With teachers and students learning together much of the time.

Professor Michael Jackson, Ph.D.
Associate Dean (Undergraduate)
University Teaching Excellence Awardee in 1989

First year in Commercial Law

Patty Kamvounias
Lecturer in Commercial Law
University Teaching Excellence Awardee 1999

Written communication is greatly valued in commercial law. For this reason the core commercial law unit for first year students has a focus on writing. An early diagnostic assessment identifies students weak in written communication. After a visit to court to consider a real case, students write a short report about what they learnt by the end of the fourth week of the semester. Students find the task interesting and enjoyable but more importantly it allows teachers to give early feedback on the quality of their writing. Those students who need improvement get advice and referrals for more assistance. Their progress is also monitored.

Students have to understand what others write, and they have to be able to write for different purposes: short, descriptive reports, analysis of legal arguments, expository essays and the like. These exercises occupy the remainder of the semester. We have been doing this for a number of years, and find it effective.

First Year in Accounting

Linda English
Senior Lecturer, Accounting
University of Sydney Teaching Excellence Awardee in 1997. Faculty of Economics Teaching Award in 1995.

In 1994 the tutorial program of the first-year accounting unit was completely redesigned to embed the development of literacy and communication skills into the content-base. These skills included knowledge access, conservation, processing and application, teamwork, leadership and autonomous learning.

Teamwork enables students to develop written and oral communication skills, and helps learning, but is often unsatisfying when members do not contribute equally. To encourage students to take responsibility for the effective functioning of group processes and product, the following strategies were adopted:

- Study groups outside class – to promote discussion and support
- Group tasks – to encourage negotiation and joint problem-solving
- Reporting on group process – to encourage reflection on interactions
- Team assessment of individual contribution to group tasks – to recognize individual contribution

Approximately half a semester is spent preparing for and monitoring teamwork, including presenting and discussing information about team dynamics and the characteristics of effective teams. Changes have been made over the years based on student feedback.

All the feedback from students and other teachers indicates that this is a valuable and effective means to approaching first year teaching.

Case Studies in Econometrics

Associate Professor Denzil G. Fiebig
Econometrics and Business Statistics
Faculty Teaching Award 1997

In a Faculty teaching students who are primarily interested in professional careers, lecturers are keen to maintain links with the "real world". Students want to see the relevance of the lectures to something that they can associate with their future careers. For me one of the key methods of maintaining these links is the use of case studies.

A case study puts real examples into the context of a more completely developed problem. This provides an opportunity to emphasize the relation between different components of the unit, helping students to gain an overview of where we've been and why. The opportunity is also there to make associations with other disciplines by drawing the problem, for example from marketing or finance.

Case studies also develop an ability and confidence to do critical evaluations. This is somewhat daunting for undergraduate students who are used to devouring large amounts of textbook material and taking it at face value. Case studies can be guided tours of published work with critical evaluation being prompted by specific questions set by the lecturer.

On the Pleasures of Teaching

Associate Professor Frank Stilwell
Political Economy
University of Sydney Teaching Excellence
Awardee in 1992

Recent years have seen more pressure on academics 'to do more with less' in a tertiary education system starved of public funds and increasingly driven by commercial imperatives. However, there are still significant pleasures of teaching.

It is not just coming out of a lecture and thinking 'that went OK' or 'I think I could have explained that better'. Rather, the pleasure comes from developing a better

general understanding of teaching and learning processes and of how to improve their effectiveness. In my case these have been aided recently by taking some postgraduate units of study taught by the ITL and the Faculty of Education.

Studying the psychology of learning is sobering for anyone used to thinking in terms of a teacher-centred process in which the implicit model is one of knowledge-transmission. A constructivist view of learning, seeing it as a personal process of knowledge-construction shaped by the prior perceptions and values of the learner, calls for more student-centred practices. Making assessable tasks a central feature of unit design, rather than incidental measures of progress, is one of the important aspects of this orientation. Developing course materials that provide for students' active participation, encouraging students' reflection and self-monitoring, and providing bridges to real-world experiences are more ambitious aspects.

Meanwhile the basics of good teaching stand the test of time: like clear organization of unit goals, subject matter and study materials; an emphasis on motivating students by structuring and presenting each unit as a voyage of discovery; and staff-student relations that are convivial and cooperative. Personally I have been fortunate to be teaching in Political Economy where my colleagues generally share these concerns. That collective commitment fosters a cooperative learning environment with students.

How do you know when it has borne fruit? When students develop a growing interest in the subject and a growing understanding of its complexities. When individual students engage in critical inquiry. When some of them go on to do fine honours theses or postgraduate studies. When former students with successful careers and interesting lives acknowledge the contribution of their university studies. These are just some of the moments when it all seems well worthwhile.

A/Prof Stilwell has recently been promoted to Professor partially due to the strength of his teaching portfolio.

Empathic intelligence in pedagogy

Roslyn Arnold, Faculty of Education

It is not so surprising how accurately students can pick a good teacher when you consider that twelve years of schooling exposes a school student to a range of teachers and many different styles of pedagogy. Commonly students remember favourably those educators who were enthusiastic, engaging, demonstrated expertise and could empathise or understand the student's point of view. For most of my professional life, I have been curious to know what makes the difference for students between mediocre teaching and inspirational teaching. In recent years, arising from my own research, teaching and postgraduate supervision, I have been developing a concept called 'empathic intelligence'. There are many qualities and attributes embedded in those terms but let's just consider what 'empathy' means in pedagogy. In a teaching situation it means that an educator is able to hypothesise how students might be thinking and feeling and adapt the pedagogy accordingly. To do this, the educator has to be emotionally aware, knowledgeable about how learning can happen and attuned to the dynamics of the context. Ideally, the educator will be able to create a dynamic or energy between students' thoughts and emotions so that the learning is deep and lasting.

What is empathy?

Naturally, a capacity to be empathic underpins empathic intelligence. People commonly think sympathy and empathy are the same thing. Empathy, although it shares some characteristics with sympathy, is a more sophisticated and complex concept than sympathy. The latter is an ability to feel something akin to what you might imagine another person is feeling, usually when you witness some distress in them. You might feel sorry for their plight

and spontaneously express your sorrow in a comforting way. Such expressions of sympathy acknowledge a human kinship which may be soothing to the person in distress.

Conversely, I define empathy as an act of heartfelt, thoughtful imagination. By calling it an 'act' I wish to indicate that it is more than just emotional contagion, or sympathy and I want to indicate that it involves both affect and cognition, or both feeling and thought. It requires emotional intelligence to begin to be empathic because you need to understand your own emotions before you can imagine what another might be feeling. You also need a measure of critical thinking to know that how you think may not be the way others think. That capacity for disinterested engagement, or attunement, is an important part of an empathic approach. It means you have to be alert to the shifting dynamics within yourself, the students and the context. All this concomitant with managing the subject matter of the class or seminar!

How does an empathic predisposition become empathic intelligence?

One characteristic which distinguishes empathic intelligence from other kinds of intelligence, is the commitment of the educator involved in applying empathy, along with enthusiasm, capacity to engage and expertise, to the development and welfare of others. That sustained, professional involvement in activities which help, sustain, develop and teach others through the application of empathic intelligence, defines work which goes



Roslyn Arnold

beyond education, of course. An important outcome for education is that in the process of experiencing empathic intelligence in action, students experience models of effective learning which actually empower them to become effective learners, and perhaps empathically intelligent, themselves.

Empathic intelligence is more sophisticated and habituated than an intuition, albeit intuition or a predisposition to empathy plays a part in its development. It calls for an attuned way of both seeing the world of experience and relationships, and acting in that world. To do so requires sustained observation, reflection and introspection, at least. Introspection also tells me that no theory lives up to its promise in every case. In critical moments in pedagogy, disaffected students can thwart our best intentions and our resolve to be empathic just fails. But a good theory has sufficient explanatory power to contain and compose complex realities. It will also be sufficiently fluid to incorporate new insights.

The qualities of an empathically intelligent educator

Let me give you some examples of one aspect of empathic intelligence, mirroring. The concept of mirroring features large in early childhood studies and self-psychology. I use the term here to refer, at its most precise and powerful, to the strong eye gaze behaviour of mothers and infants; that mutual bonding behaviour which is so vitally important in infant self- and affective/cognitive development. But mirroring can take other forms, less intense than the mother-infant exchange, but often important to both participants and observers in conveying tacit or overt messages.

Mirroring can function socially and psychologically to convey attunement between individuals. Attunement creates a sense of preparedness for exploration, for risk taking, for concentration, for rapport. It can reactivate the pleasurable experiences of learning self-awareness in the maternal ambience. It can reassure one of the presence of the other. The need for affirmation of self is evident whenever we reveal or display ourselves.

The role of mirroring is understood by those with empathic intelligence and such knowledge is used for ethical purposes. To use mirroring for purposes other than validating or appropriately modifying behaviour would be Machiavellian.

“...the empathic person by definition has a wish to empower the other.”

Mirroring an other can be mutually beneficial. The other is recognised and validated, but the self too is validated in the role of educator, mother, father, friend,

audience or observer. In some situations the power relationship will be unequal, but the empathic person, by definition has a wish to empower the other. As teachers know all too well, if disenchanted students choose to ignore us, we become disempowered. Mutuality is an important characteristic of an empathic engagement. Mutuality, in some circumstances becomes intimacy.

Mirroring can take many forms. It can be unconscious or quite deliberate as when people choose to dress alike. In pedagogy, mirroring can be verbal, as in echoing words another might have used in an exchange or elaborating them, or even seeking elaboration of them as often happens in classroom dialogue. A teacher who selects students' words and assists their learning by either seeking or offering some elaboration of the words or concept, is demonstrating both mirroring and scaffolding.

Scaffolding is Vygotsky's term (1978) for the process of empathically structuring learning tasks so they fall within the student's 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). Knowing how to judge students' emotional and cognitive 'zone of proximal development' is a challenge for educators but those who do it well are probably empathically sensitive, if not empathically intelligent. Naturally, judgement has to be both evidence-based and sensitive. Educators need to be attuned to the kinds of evidence which count towards astute judgements.

Research completed or currently being conducted by postgraduate and doctoral candidates attests to the value of living professionally a theoretical position which sharpens observation, composes dynamic data and supports both professional expertise and student learning. When theory arises from practice and is enacted and elaborated through practice, it can mirror and scaffold too. Dynamism, in the sense of a commitment to change and an ability to mobilise change inter-subjectively and intrasubjectively, has to be inherent in both the theory and the practice. The best this theory can do is capture and explain fleeting, moment by moment shifts in intrasubjective and inter-subjective experiences, or what happens inside people and between them.

Why does Empathic Intelligence matter?

Empathic intelligence with its underpinnings of imagination and logic, is fundamentally hopeful and realistic, generative, dynamic and analytical. It is inspired by intuition and grounded in critical structure. It can function in situations where intelligent, reflective people are engaged in relationships, creative and performative enterprises, client-centred work, leadership, education and spheres of influence. At its best, empathic intelligence

enhances the performance of its practitioners, and benefits those responsive to its ambience. The more it is observed in practice, discussed and researched, the better structured it becomes. Like its practitioners, it grows through recognition. It functions well where excellence is the aspiration.

The words and concepts related to its structure tend to be complex and relevant to a deeply felt, meaningful existence. That should be a challenge rather than a deterrent to those who enjoy engaging with ideas and reflecting upon experience. Empathic intelligence is theorised and elaborated here to explain a particular phenomenon, namely how some people can influence others in ways not yet accounted for systematically. Readers might discover possible connections with their own stories of life and work at the beginning of a new millennium. In discovering such connections, it is intrinsic to empathic intelligence that it both heartens its adherents and encourages them to be rigorously sceptical. That scepticism and rigour can enhance the logic and intuition informing the concept, honouring its robustness and its significance.

Reference

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

A/Prof Roslyn Arnold is the Pro Dean, University Relations in the Faculty of Education with a long time interest in the professional development of teachers. Her book "Empathic Intelligence" will be published by Kluwer Academic in the new year.

Implementing choice for First Year English students

Dr Peter Marks, Department of English



Peter Marks

The ancient philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus argued that you cannot step into the same river twice; he might equally have been speaking about the First Year programme in the Department of English. Since 1996, substantial changes have taken place in the structure, content, personnel, administration, student evaluation, assessment and teaching philosophies of First Year units of study. Many

of the modifications are the result of internal rethinking, discussion and adjustment to student feedback, while others (most obviously, semesterisation) have been determined from outside. Given the fact that the initial cohort in English averages around 800 students, major changes cannot be made haphazardly. So, as the department embarks on radically reforming First Year for 2002, it seems useful both to trace some of the history of the last five years, and to give an early progress report on the processes already set in play.

In 1996, all First Year students took English 101, a full year course which attempted to give them 'an overview of developments in writing in English from medieval times to the present'. By 1997 the First Year had been semesterised, with all students taking a 'Foundation' course in the first semester, and then choosing from one of three options in second semester. Options were based on the three major areas of departmental research and teaching: English Language and Early English Literature, English Literature since 1500, and Australian Literature.

While English 101 still attempted to give a broad grounding in the discipline, the foundation element necessarily was limited

by the one semester time frame. Nevertheless, the options provided 1997 First Year students a degree of choice unavailable to their counterparts the year before. Nomenclature was changed in 1998, so what had been 'courses' were now 'units of study'. A more substantial development involved a new language-centred unit, ENGL 1050, which was made compulsory for Liberal Studies students. 1999 saw a refreshing of the ENGL 1001 foundation unit, so that none of the individual 1998 texts was retained.

This in turn brought new lecturers into a unit which had long been team taught. In their First Year units, students were likely to be taught by at least 15 different lecturers, presenting them with a variety of approaches. At the same time, an increase in the number of assessment tasks allowed students more opportunity to develop their writing skills, skills critical to their ability to analyse and communicate effectively.

At the end of 1999 the department's Teaching and Learning Committee organised a forum on the First Year Experience, with perhaps the most significant outcome being the decision to revamp the tutorial programme. Students and staff alike recognise tutorials as essential to the success of teaching and learning, but there was a consensus that tutorial activities needed to be more clearly defined than previously, and that greater oral participation should be encouraged. Brief tutorial papers and a general tutorial participation mark were introduced in 2000, the success of these measures leading to them being adopted in some upper level units.

For the first time, students receive an assessment for tutorial work (20%) as well as for their assignments and an exam. In this way, the development of both oral and

written skills is rewarded. Additionally, in 2000, a new option replaced one of the three which had taught since 1997, once again drawing on different lecturers and expertise. As part of the Faculty of Arts Strategic and Operational Plan, the First Year cohort in English was surveyed to find out the factors which influence non-continuation within the University. While much of the information gained was of a practical nature (such things as the amount of time spent working, for example) some of it touched directly on teaching practices in the department. This information was distributed and discussed at several departmental meetings, and will inform our planning for the new First Year programme to be implemented in 2002.

Probably the most radical aspect of the proposed structure will be the abandoning of a single Foundation unit taken by all students in their first semester. Instead, First Year will comprise four units, two to be taught in each semester. While all will contain foundational elements, none will be compulsory, so that students will have a choice unprecedented in the department's history. It was decided that the units themselves would be completely new, and that no section of the department would 'own' a particular unit. So, though the three major areas of departmental expertise are represented in the units to be offered, the amount of cross-pollination between areas has increased.

This strategy also takes account of the unwelcome fact that staff numbers have been decreasing and will continue to do so, while student numbers rise; a greater flexibility in deploying limited resources is required to cope with the increased strains. The units are being built from scratch, and calls of interest were requested earlier this semester from those keen to establish working parties on loosely defined areas. These groups, of up to half a dozen staff members, were allowed to refine the areas in a preliminary fashion, the expectation being that they would each provide a rough blueprint which could then be discussed more widely within the department. Because the units will not be taught until 2002, there is sufficient lead time for input from those not involved in the initial working parties.

The preliminary working parties, which met two or three times, were given the opportunity to discuss independently questions of content, unit structure, teaching strategies and assessment. Diversity of approach was encouraged by this process, and was evident at a meeting called to consider the initial reports of the groups. While a certain degree of parity between units will be necessary, especially in terms of assessment, a suggestion was accepted to reconfigure the teaching programme in one of the units. This unit, titled *Language and Text*, will modify tutorials so that language analysis can be taught intensively in group situations.

As the other units continue to consider their structures and procedures, further innovations may take place. These subsequent developments will also involve students, for it was decided at the general meeting to invite students to provide feedback at an early stage. The findings of this semester's survey will add another form of student input to the mix of the programme, and the incorporation of the university's guidelines on Generic Attributes of Graduates will add to a greater emphasis on student-centred learning.

Much still has to be done, of course. While some working party reports suggest a relatively advanced stage of planning, others (including one I convened) offer a consciously sketchy picture, the better for later adjustments. Many more meetings, both of individual units and of the department as a whole, will be necessary before the final programme is finalised, but the early signs are encouraging. By giving ourselves plenty of time to plan and consider, we avoid the sense and situation of making decisions on the run. Given the recognised importance of First Year, this approach should provide a healthy and challenging environment for students and staff in 2002, and beyond. If we accept the view of Heraclitus, we can't stop the river, but neither need we be swept away.

Dr Peter Marks is a Lecturer in the Department of English.

Supervising the Sausage Machine?

Penny Russell, Department of History



Penny Russell

When I compare myself with objective standards of good supervision, I am aware of lapses. I know that postgraduate students are entitled to regular communication with their supervisors, a flow of productive exchange and constructive feedback, and the structure of deadlines and clear, specific requirements. These elements of supervision are critical in the contract into which students and supervisors enter: they are basic entitlements for students and minimal processes for encouraging efficient and effective completion of postgraduate theses. So I strive conscientiously to live up to these standards - but occasionally I do temporarily lose a chapter under a mountain of essays, fail to notice a prolonged, significant silence on the part of a student, allow an agreed, negotiated deadline to pass without notice, especially at exam time.

So when my students nominated me as SUPRA Supervisor of the Year in 1999, and presented to me (along with a silly hat and an inflatable toucan) a copy of their painstakingly prepared nomination, my gratification was tinged with curiosity as to the qualities they had seen as marking good supervision. The answer emerged clearly in the nomination. In collective and individual submissions they constructed an ideal supervisor who recognised and respected the complexity of their lives, the intellectual and emotional challenges they faced, and the importance of their scholarly projects. This ideal figure entered sympathetically into their difficulties, but also offered a range of structures - from lessons in grammar to thesis plans scribbled on a table napkin - which enabled them to deal constructively with those difficulties. The students defined themselves

simultaneously as adults making complex, independent decisions about life and learning, and as novices who took hesitant steps along an unknown, hazardous but enticing path, and demanded guidance, aid and reassurance along the way. For me, the nomination clarified the central paradox in postgraduate supervision, the tension between independent scholarship and guided learning.

The culture of supervision is changing. Gone are the days, we hope, of the twelve year thesis, product of the student's directionless and undirected research. Gone are the days, we hope, when some students were groomed, guided and promoted by mentors who favoured their work, while others struggled for years in isolation, not even aware that they were entitled to notice from godlike 'supervisors' immersed in their own research. Growing numbers of research students and increased pressures towards their rapid and successful completion have seen faculties and departments introduce structures to review and encourage the progress of all students. These structures are crucial in that they guard students from the worst abuses of neglectful supervisors. They also help to maintain the students' own focus on what is, after all, the central purpose of their degrees: the production of an original, effective, finished thesis.

But there is a danger that the culture could shift too far, and students might come to see themselves, not as independent scholars whose research and learning is valued in their academic community, but rather as the meat in a sausage machine. There is a growing perception that students are inclined to take 'too long' over a thesis—and it is certainly true that many of them can extend research indefinitely,

whether from sheer love or from lack of direction, and thus avoid or postpone the confronting moment of writing. DETYA has responded to this perceived problem by reducing funding for PhD students from five years to four, and the University of Sydney Senate has accordingly adjusted the length of the degree, professing that this will result in the development of a 'better, shorter thesis'. One of the implications arising from this is that departments and supervisors must provide effective guidance at the outset to ensure that students' topics are viable, focused and bounded. Another is that students are increasingly valued for the quantity and pace, rather than the quality, of their 'output'.

We may see, in consequence, the smooth, efficient production of streamlined, defined theses. But I have some doubts. The most time-consuming element of thesis writing is an intellectual struggle which cannot be hurried. An Arts thesis does not begin with a preset topic, its boundaries already clearly defined. No matter how restricted its scope may at first appear, a good student will—and should—continually discover its wider significance, its relevance to scholarly debates, its theoretical and practical possibilities.

At some point, almost all students undergo a crisis in confidence, as they compare what now seems an almost limitless topic with their own human limitations. They must then recover a sense of authority by conceptualising what is significant and achievable. Only at this point does the 'thesis' emerge. The process takes time. But I suspect that attempts to circumvent it by

delimiting the scope of the thesis in advance will diminish the quality of the final thesis, and may indeed prove counterproductive.

What a student needs in defining and refining the thesis is not externally imposed boundaries or imperatives to haste - both of which can undercut the critical sense of authority - but confidence and a sense of power. This is where a supervisor can help - by keeping the project in perspective, certainly, but more importantly by maintaining enthusiasm and respect for the enterprise. Only through confidence in their own ability, confidence in the ultimate value of the thesis, and sustained, legitimate interest in the project will students learn to manage the burden, and convert it into a scholarly achievement.

If we lose, in these straitened times, our capacity to enter into our students' projects with enthusiasm, interest, support and engaged criticism, if we seek to replace that level of intellectual engagement altogether with bureaucratic formulae which emphasise only the mechanics of progress, our completion rates will not rise, but fall. Our students may never break records for speedy completion. But they will continue to produce substantial, important contributions to scholarship so long as we, as supervisors, can help them achieve the confidence and authority they need to write the thesis they want to write.

Penny Russell is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History.

A collection of case studies by supervisors at the University of Sydney is available at: www.itl.usyd.edu.au/pg/casestudies

Learning at the Department of Performance Studies

Ian Maxwell and Laura Ginters,
Department of Performance Studies



Ian Maxwell

Studying performance is fraught with difficulties, not the least of which is determining just what performance is— does everything, from everyday social encounters to, for example, high opera, count, or do lines need to be drawn? And even once those kinds of questions are answered, how does one isolate the performance event itself, to make it available for analysis?

This is the fundamental methodological issue confronting students (and researchers) at the Department of Performance Studies. We set out from the premiss that performance is not limited to those forms traditionally marked as being 'artistic', and that any theory of performance must, accordingly, be generalisable to a wide range of performative practices, across and between cultures, history and conventional social categories. On this view, then, theatrical texts— those artefacts around which theatre studies has traditionally organised its teaching and research— are considered, at best, the traces of past, or (often highly significant, but nonetheless partial, contributory) ingredients of possible performances. This means that scholars and students in Performance Studies need to develop new tools with which to develop a sense of the object of their analysis: not a text, but the living, breathing (and often ephemeral) performance itself. The undergraduate teaching programme at the Department of Performance Studies is

constructed around developing students' skills precisely in terms of this methodological concern.

Performance Studies has developed over the last twenty years from an interdisciplinary exchange between traditional theatre studies and anthropology, in particular at New York University. At the University of Sydney, the Department has grown out of a collaboration between, initially, scholars from French Studies, Italian Studies, English, Asian Studies, Architecture, and a range of professional practitioners. Over the years, that initial core group expanded to include scholars from Anthropology, Music, Electrical Engineering, Semiotics and, more recently, contributions from History, Archeology, Germanic Studies, Modern Greek, Classics, Medieval Studies and the Faculty of Law. At the same time, the discipline itself has evolved through a range of approaches, from semiotics to phenomenology, from functional linguistics to sociology, all of which have left their trace on current practice. Additionally, the department's staffing profile now includes permanent and casual teachers with backgrounds in a range of performance practices, in addition to their scholarly work. All of this adds up to a rich, varied, challenging and colourful learning experience in a discipline which is still very much in the early phase of its development.

Unlike theatre departments at other universities, students at Performance Studies do not learn by 'doing' plays; we are

not in the business of teaching people how to be performers themselves. Instead, students learn how to watch and write about 'professional' practice. In early units of study students develop an historical and interculturally informed understanding of a broad spectrum of performance practices, within which they can contextualise those with which they might be more familiar. We introduce students to the idea of doing fieldwork by setting a series of observational tasks— some basic level ethnography— to develop their watching and note-taking skills, and to help them reflect upon what may be thought of as the essential features of any performance. These tasks are extensively discussed in tutorials, where students share their work, learning useful observational and descriptive skills from each other; in discussion it becomes very clear what "works"— that is, what helps others to understand performances at which they were not present— and what doesn't.

This early coursework is developed into a semiotic model of analysis, the basic tools with which to be able to describe and write about performance. Through a guided process involving practical workshops, in which embodied, experiential learning is connected with propositional/theoretical knowledge, students are introduced to the material components of performance-making, and then asked to attend some live theatre work in order to produce their own analyses. By the end of their first year of Performance Studies, our students are equipped with the analytical tools to approach, in theory at least, any given performance genre.

In third year, having completed these core methodological units, students choose between a range of specialist units of study. Central to the learning experience is the acknowledgement that embodied, experiential learning is a powerful

complement to propositional learning: students are asked to participate in exercises and explorations, not in order to accumulate performance skills, but to develop the capacity to critically reflect on those experiences, and to flesh out the ideas they are encountering in theoretical texts.

The key area developed in methodological terms, however, involves the documentation and analysis not only of performance, but of the preparation for performances: here the department is doing ground-breaking work in the field of Performance Analysis. Two courses— Rehearsal Studies and Rehearsal to Performance, pre-requisites for students intending to do 4th Year Honours, are structured around a project involving professional actors and a director, conducted in the Rex Cramphorn Studio, at the Department. The project is never a 'staged' rehearsal, put on for the benefit of the students. Ideally, it is part of a rehearsal leading to a full professional production, and is conducted over a fortnight in the mid-year break, which students are required to attend full-time.

In the first semester of classes, theoretical and methodological groundwork is laid for the project. Accounts of rehearsal by participants and observers, ethnographic theory, video recordings of rehearsal, prompt books and other materials are examined with a view to establishing an appropriate level of awareness of the task and a methodological approach. Students work with different recording and documenting technologies, developing hands-on skills and reviewing their results. Briefing sessions with the practitioners involved in the project are also included, helping the students to develop appropriately sensitive and productive ethnographic techniques: listening, questioning and observational skills in particular.

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"...embodied, experiential learning is a powerful complement to propositional learning."

Notes of optimism

Craig Scott and Michael Halliwell, Conservatorium of Music

This year was the first time academic staff from the Conservatorium have participated in the ITL's Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education), and the course was considerably enriched by their contributions.

The course is currently being revamped to take account of factors such as increasing academic staff loads; the need for more flexible delivery; and ways to accommodate the diverse learning needs of our colleagues. In the context of the recently-announced Scholarship Index, with its emphasis on the acquisition of formal teaching qualifications

Craig Scott

I have been teaching at the Conservatorium of Music since 1985, initially as a part-time bass teacher, later on a 0.6 staff contract and most recently as a full-time lecturer. I teach improvisation classes, principal study, small ensemble studies, ear-training and jazz analysis and transcription. I have always held the view that to be an effective teacher is not a simple issue, and requires a process of constant reflection about one's own performance. I came to teaching from the professional music arena rather than from a formal educational background and I suppose my teaching technique has been mostly shaped by my experience as a musician - I have 25 years worth of experience to 'dip' into.

Without meaning to blow my own trumpet (sorry) I think that I have made a reasonable fist of educating our graduates from the jazz degree programs because I know what will be required of them once they become professional musicians themselves. I have taught them in the same manner that I learned myself - by replicating professional practice as much as possible.

Early this year I became aware of the existence of the I.T.L. and the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies. I

and scholarly approaches to teaching, we expect (and, indeed, are already experiencing) a rise in interest in the Graduate Certificate. Partly in support of the renewed institutional focus on scholarly teaching, participants in the course will be able to negotiate assignments in such a way that by the end of the year they should have produced a conference paper or draft journal article, anchored in their own discipline area. We are looking forward to an interesting year.

Christine Asmar, Graduate Certificate Coordinator, ITL

decided that it was high time to get some educational qualification under my belt. I also felt that my teaching needed some direction and broadening.

So, how was the Grad. Cert? *Taking a holistic view of the learning outcomes that I achieved in motivating myself through the deep orientation that I adopted towards my self - assessment in constructing knowledge based on generic skills, coupled to my SOLO effort in redefining the taxonomy of education in practical knowledge transmission, using feedback in the formative years as a criterion based assessment of phenomenological issues, I feel that I have embraced the scholarship of teaching to the point where I actually know something about it.*

Actually, the course was fantastic. I had little idea about the process of learning - how it is driven by appropriate assessment & timely and constructive feedback. I didn't know about different orientations towards learning adopted by both student and teacher. I didn't realise that there were so many ways to encourage students to be active learners instead of just 'blatting' at them. I was blissfully unaware of the existence of the incredible research that is freely available to the reader written by people like John Biggs, and 'our own' Mike

Prosser and Paul Ramsden. That is now no longer the case. If I am a little short of specifics in this small paragraph then go and do the course. It's the best thing I ever did for myself as a teacher.

Craig Scott is a lecturer in Jazz at the Conservatorium of Music.

Michael Halliwell

It was with some trepidation that I embarked on the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education at the beginning of this year. I found the course demanding and rigorous and sometimes difficult to find the time to devote to the reading round the subject. However, when the Friday seminars came round, the stimulation of the discussions soon replaced the exhaustion of a long week! The course, while being most interesting and useful on many different levels, has forced me to reflect on many aspects of my own teaching practice as well as many wider educational issues.

The projects that I have completed as part of the course have been most useful. A central issue has been the contentious issue of assessment which is particularly fraught in music education. In fact, we have an ongoing research project dealing with assessment policies and practices at the Conservatorium and I have felt much more qualified to contribute meaningfully to this project as a result of my reading in this area. The seminars devoted to assessment in the Graduate Certificate have also been most useful in this regard. My realisation that some element of subjectivity is inherent in virtually all forms of assessment has strengthened my belief in the validity of many of our assessment practices while highlighting areas where improvement in our methods certainly is necessary.

My project on curriculum development has probably been of the most immediate benefit to me. I am currently directly

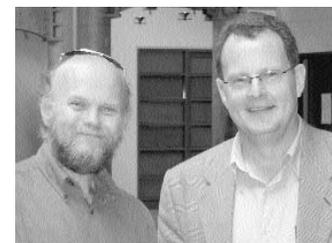
involved in a major course review of opera training at the Conservatorium. By a happy coincidence this course review has occurred while I have been engaged in the Graduate Certificate and I have felt that much of my reading as well as the many discussions in the seminars have enabled me to contribute in a more useful and rewarding manner than would have been possible before. With the introduction of its new opera courses the Conservatorium will be setting the benchmark for opera training in Australia in general, and my contribution to this process has been enriched by the activities of the course.

The whole question of the kind of education we offer students has been highlighted for me during this course. In our opera training in particular, the tension between a broad capability approach on the one hand, and a more narrowly focused

competency approach on the other, is most clearly apparent, and it is our duty to develop courses which complement both these approaches.

I think the flexibility in the structure of the Graduate Certificate has allowed me the opportunity to reflect on my teaching through being forced to examine and articulate prior attitudes and assumptions. Many of the theoretical concepts that have emerged in the seminars as well as the projects have provided me with the basis for developing different approaches and strategies to implement in my own teaching. What has also been of great benefit has been the constant interaction with colleagues from a variety of different disciplines and the realisation that while our disciplines may differ markedly, the variety of strategies we pursue have a surprising amount in common.

Dr Michael Halliwell is a lecturer in Vocal Studies and Opera and is the Coordinator of Graduate Studies at the Conservatorium of Music.



Craig Scott and Michael Halliwell

Christine Crowe, *Rewarding individual effort in collaborative learning.*
continued from page 6...

Allowing students to take significant control and responsibility for their assessment may initially be viewed as challenging (by teachers and students). The success of this technique depends upon students having an appreciation and understanding of how this process will be accomplished. The students' induction to the assessment strategies during the introduction to the unit of study, the clarity and of the strategies in the written course outline, and the availability of teachers for consultation are essential ingredients. The clear criteria and the request for 'evidence' assists students to make informed judgments about the contribution of others, and works against students 'colluding' to give each other full marks.

The benefit for teachers is evident; the validity of assessment strategies is enhanced when more than one assessor is used. Who better to include in the assessment of students' work than those students who have engaged in collaborative projects? This technique reduces the amount of staff marking whilst at the same time delivers an individual mark and enhances student learning.

¹ I team teach this unit of study with Dr Alec Pemberton, and I wish to thank Dr Pemberton for his support and encouragement in this venture.

² I wish to thank our office staff: Pep Prodromou, Lisa Campano, Charlie Reimer and Robyn Longhurst for their helpful advice in the calculation of these marks, and my thanks especially go to Tanya Bulat, whose diligence, efficiency and enthusiasm contributed greatly to the successful outcome.

Christine Crowe lectures in Sociology. She is a recipient of the Faculty of Arts Teaching Excellence Award (1999), the Vice-Chancellor's Special Award for Outstanding Teaching (2000) and is a co-winner, with Dr Alec Pemberton, of a Faculty of Arts Teaching Innovation Award (2000).

Ian Maxwell & Laura Ginters, *Learning at the Department of Performance Studies*
continued from page 17...

During the project, the students observe, and are responsible for documenting and recording, proceedings. They are also sensitised to the often very secretive, hallowed space that is the rehearsal room.

This is absolutely vital preparation for their Fourth Year work, in which they will be placed, 'in the field' as it were, with a professional company. The sensitivities they learn through the (relatively) controlled environment of a rehearsal conducted at the Department itself are a core part of the learning experience.

In classes after the project, the experience is extensively debriefed and analysed, once again collectively, guided by the lecturer, with a view to the major assessment task: a 'casebook' of the project, the preparation of which involves a careful analysis of both the experience of having been in the rehearsal room and of the documentation (itself produced by the students). The students are thus involved, at every level, in what amounts to a research project; the learning they achieve is learning applicable not only in their fourth year (and often post-graduate) work, but more generally, as generic research and analytical skills, useful in any number of contexts.

Dr Ian Maxwell has been applying learning paradigms taken from theatre practice and acting training are applied to different disciplinary contexts.

Dr Laura Ginters is the Project-Coordinator in the Department of Performance Studies.

ITL Bookshelf

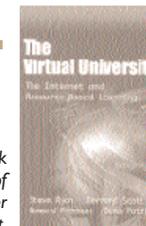
The ITL Bookshelf presents a selection of materials on aspects of teaching and learning available in the Institute's Resource Room. These include titles on personal and professional development, as well as quality and evaluation issues. University of Sydney academics are invited to visit the Resource Room and to consult with our staff on their interests.

Peter Kandlbinder, ITL Bookshelf Editor, email: synergy@itl.usyd.edu.au

Learning Technology

The Virtual University: The Internet and Resource-based Learning.
Ryan, S., Scott, B, Freeman, H. & Patel, D. (2000).
London, UK: Kogan Page.

Many universities are looking to new technologies to strengthen their face-to-face teaching. This book examines the ways in which communications and information technology particularly through the growth of the Internet is having a major impact on higher education. It is these technologies that the authors consider have enabled the increased use of resource-based learning. While reflecting on the impact of the Internet, this book is not dominated by technology but focuses on the role of university teachers in course development. It is argued that with appropriate models of teaching and learning these technologies can result in high quality student learning.



Student Motivation

Inspiring Students: Case studies in motivating the learner.
Fallows, S. & Ahmet, K. (1999).
London, UK: Kogan Page.

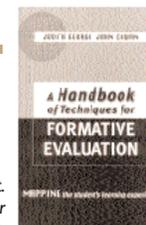


This book is a collection of case studies of teaching in areas where the students might come with little intrinsic enthusiasm for the subject. They are usually, but not always, units of study that "service" other disciplines. Though the students' interest lies elsewhere, university teachers consider these subjects important foundations to their discipline. Each chapter in this book refers to a specific group of students but the conclusions drawn by the authors are applicable to motivating students in a wider range of settings. Rather than focussing on incentives and rewards, the case studies illustrate the benefits of clear communication of learning outcomes, active learning tasks, positive feedback and targeted assessment in motivating students to learn.

Assessment

A Handbook of Techniques for Formative Evaluation: Mapping the students' learning experience.
George, J. & Cowan, J. (1999).
London, UK: Kogan Page.

Formative evaluation is undertaken when the intention is to identify the potential for student improvement. This handbook provides the university teacher with a range of techniques which can be built into their everyday teaching. The authors seek to avoid exotic approaches to assessment, which require high levels of commitment or resources from the teacher. Each method has been tested by the authors or their colleagues, and applies to a conventional teaching settings. They suggest each technique asks a different question about the students' learning, so the handbook starts with how to choose the appropriate method of evaluation before providing examples of how to collect information about the students' learning experiences.



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Tel: (08) 9266 3917 or
<http://cea.curtin.edu.au/tlf2001/>

2001 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

American Association of Higher Education
24- 27-Mar-2001
Washington, DC
<http://www.aahe.org>

GLOBALISATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION: VIEWS FROM THE SOUTH EPU & SRHE

27- 29-Mar-2001
Cape Town, South Africa
email: toppel@uwc.ac.za
tel: 00 27 21 959 2580

AUSWEB01

Seventh Australian World Wide Web Conference
21- 25-Apr-2001
Coffs Harbour, NSW
Norsearch Conference Services, tel:
(02) 6620 3932 or
<http://ausweb.scu.edu.au>

ENLIVENING TEACHING: USING DISCIPLINE-BASED CASES AND CLASSROOM RESEARCH TO IMPROVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Centre for Case Studies in Education
11-15-Aug-2001
Vancouver, Canada
email: rsilverman@pace.edu
<http://www.pace.edu/CTRCaseStudies>

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SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

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LECTURING

Thursday 15th February
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Facilitator: Michael Prosser

TUTORING

Friday 16th February
9.30 - 12.30
Facilitator: Peter Kandlbinder

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PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF UNIVERSITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

In this 3-day program facilitated by ITL academic staff, you will be given a basic introduction to higher education teaching and learning principles. In teaching how best to

facilitate the learning of your students you will develop some practical teaching skills.

You will receive a certificate of attendance from the ITL upon completion.

Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education)

The second level of study is the Graduate Certificate in Educational Studies (Higher Education). This is a 2-unit part-time Faculty of Education course facilitated by ITL academic staff over 2 semesters. The 3-day program forms part of the first unit, so you would have to do that program before Semester 1 starts.

Upon successful completion of both units you will receive a Graduate Certificate awarded by the University - a recognised qualification in university teaching.

For further details and registration for our workshops and programs please contact the ITL on (02) 9351 3671 or visit our website at: <http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au>

Please send details of conferences on aspects of teaching and learning for listing on the Noticeboard to:

Synergy

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