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2012

# Heightened potentials: assisting students to work independently and collaboratively in the creative and performing arts disciplines

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## Publication Details

Latukefu, L., O'Donnell, M. & Ellmers, G. N.. Heightened potentials: assisting students to work independently and collaboratively in the creative and performing arts disciplines. Guildhall School and Barbican Centre. 17 March. 2012.

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## **Heightened potentials: assisting students to work independently and collaboratively in the creative and performing arts disciplines**

Australian universities are currently engaged in a number of important intersecting curriculum review and quality assurance process. These include development of university-based Graduate Qualities and development of national, discipline-based Standards. It is increasingly apparent that identifying, clarifying, measuring and promoting these markers of quality will play a vital role in the evolution of rigorous curriculum standards in the next few years. The aims of the current research project are to identify how learning and assessment are organised in music, theatre, graphic design and journalism programs in a Faculty of Creative Arts to assist students to work independently and collaboratively in the creative and performing arts discipline in response to project demands.

The following questions have been developed as guiding objectives for the project:

1. How and where is learning and assessment organised to assist students to develop skills to work independently and collaboratively?
2. What strategies motivate meaningful engagement of staff and students with collaborative learning?

Methods include:

- Identification of discipline stakeholders including participating lecturers, students and other scholars in the field prior to the commencement of the project.
- Focus groups held with stakeholders to conceptualise what it is understood by the terms standards and graduate qualities in relation to discipline and course specific outcomes.
- Workshops with staff to develop activities and assessments that encourage collaborative work.
- Strategies developed for developing meaningful engagement of students with collaborative learning.

Expected Key Outcomes:

The project will produce a developed matrix in which threshold learning outcomes (such as students working independently and collaboratively) are mapped with the curriculum being taught. The development of this matrix engages staff and students in a participative process to ensure the detailed and common understanding of curriculum processes, standards and outcomes. An articulated framework for methods to implement graduate qualities and threshold learning outcomes into curricula and assessment is another expected outcome of the project. A carefully documented process will show methods and strategies the researchers found useful to deal with multiple perspectives and goals from the different people contributing to the process.

## **Biographies**

Lotte Latukefu lecture in Voice in the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. She has performed at the Lincoln Centre in New York, Opera Australia, State Opera of South Australia, as well as appearing with the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra and in numerous Australian music festivals. Lotte regularly premieres and records new works by Australian composers. Lotte holds a PhD in Music Education from the University of Wollongong. Her research interests include socio-cultural theory and its application to vocal pedagogy and the study of musical performance as creative practice.

Grant Ellmers lectures in the Graphic Design program in the Faculty of Creative Arts at UOW. Grant has a sustained interest in teaching and learning both in research and practice. Grant is completing a PhD titled, *Creative Arts Education: Employing structured critical reflective practice to support the identification of knowledge and thinking inherent in the creative artefact* (due for completion March 2011). Grant has published and presented nationally and internationally in the area of Teaching and Learning

Marcus O'Donnell lectures in Journalism in the Faculty of Creative at the University of Wollongong. He worked as a journalist and editor for fifteen years and has written widely about art and architecture, gay/lesbian issues, religion, classical music and film.

Most recently he was the editor-in-chief of SSO Media the publishers of Sydney Star Observer Australia's oldest and largest circulation gay and lesbian weekly newspaper.

Before settling on a career as a journalist he worked as a health educator and researcher. He also studied visual art, exhibiting and curating painting and multimedia work.

He is currently completing a Ph.D on apocalyptic narratives in journalism and film in a post September 11 world, at the University of Technology Sydney.