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Overview - 4(2) contents and editorial

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Overview - 4(2) contents and editorial

Abstract

Welcome to Volume 4 Number 2. The large number of articles submitted has allowed this edition to be primarily concerned with two themes. The themes reflect issues that are very much at the forefront of many teachers' minds. The themes are: Tertiary Literacies or Generic Skills; and teaching students from other cultural backgrounds. In her article Lynne Wright discusses the benefits of integrating generic skills into the curriculum and reports on the outcomes of the Generic Skills Working Party and the Generic Skills Workshop. Elisa Arcioni, the student representative on the working party, adds a student perspective of the need for, and context of, generic skills. This theme is continued with a brief note on the background of the newly appointed Project Officer Tertiary Literacies, Cath Milne. The theme of teaching students from other cultural backgrounds is treated in several different ways. Yuko Ramzan and Will Rifkin et al. provide an abundance of teaching strategies and tactics to assist the creation of an effective and efficient learning environment for students of English and non-English background. David Blackall and Peter White as well as Elizabeth Thomson and Robyn Woodward-Kron in their articles describe new subjects designed to meet the needs of students of non-English cultural backgrounds. Russell Gluck and Kim Draisma report on mentoring for indigenous students and that this process can be employed with mainstream students. The edition is completed with three articles of practical advice to teachers. Brian Ferry discusses the use of concept maps in lectures, Linda Tapsell shares the report of her CAUT funded project and Paul Else details a project where CD-ROMs are lent to students. I hope you find this edition interesting and helpful and as always your comments are most welcome.



University of Wollongong

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OVERVIEW

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- Generic Skills - Tertiary Literacies
 - Teaching students from non-English backgrounds
 - Using concept maps in lectures
 - CAUT report
 - Book lists
- and much more*

1997 Vol. 4 No.2



Overview

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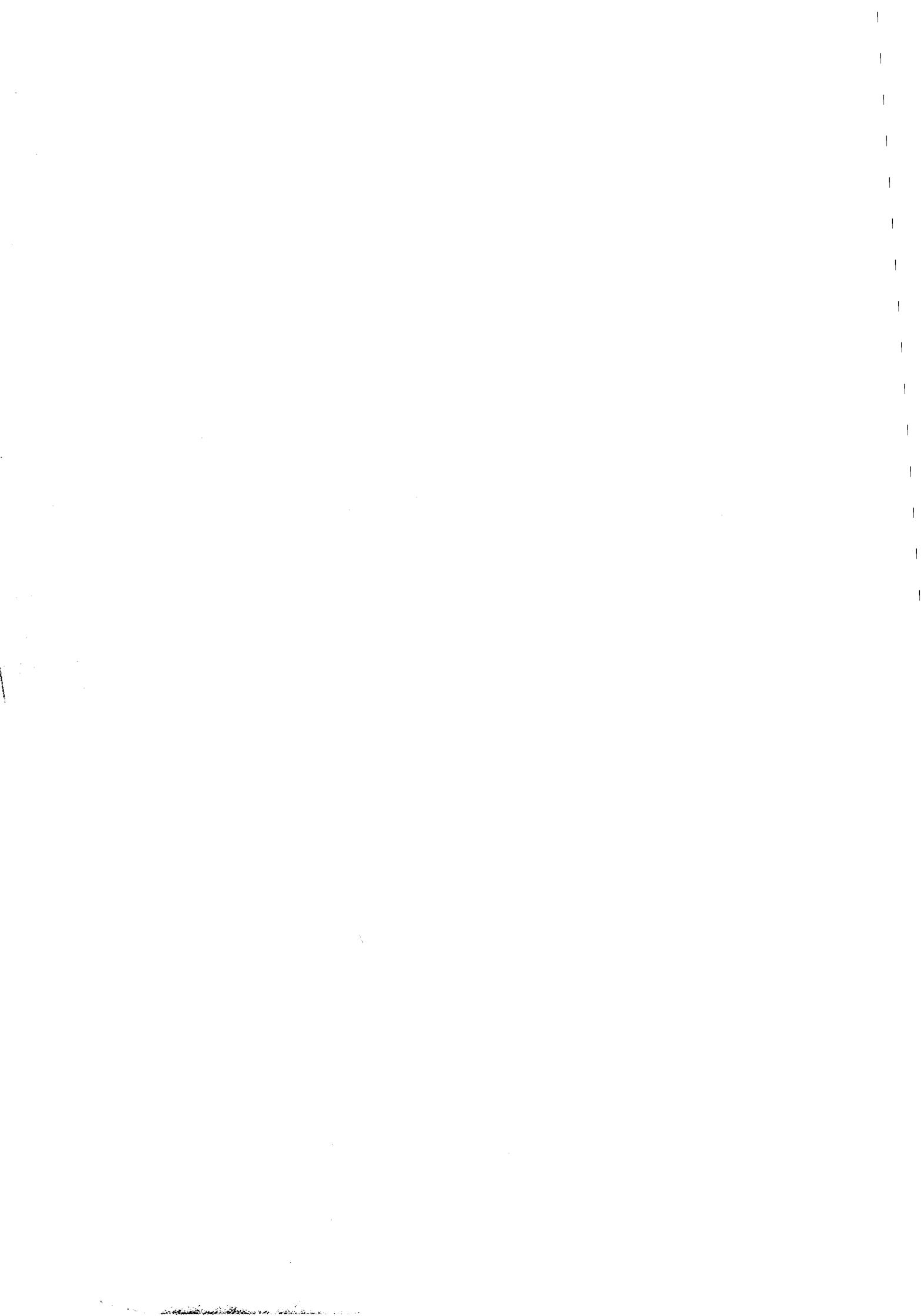
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editor's note



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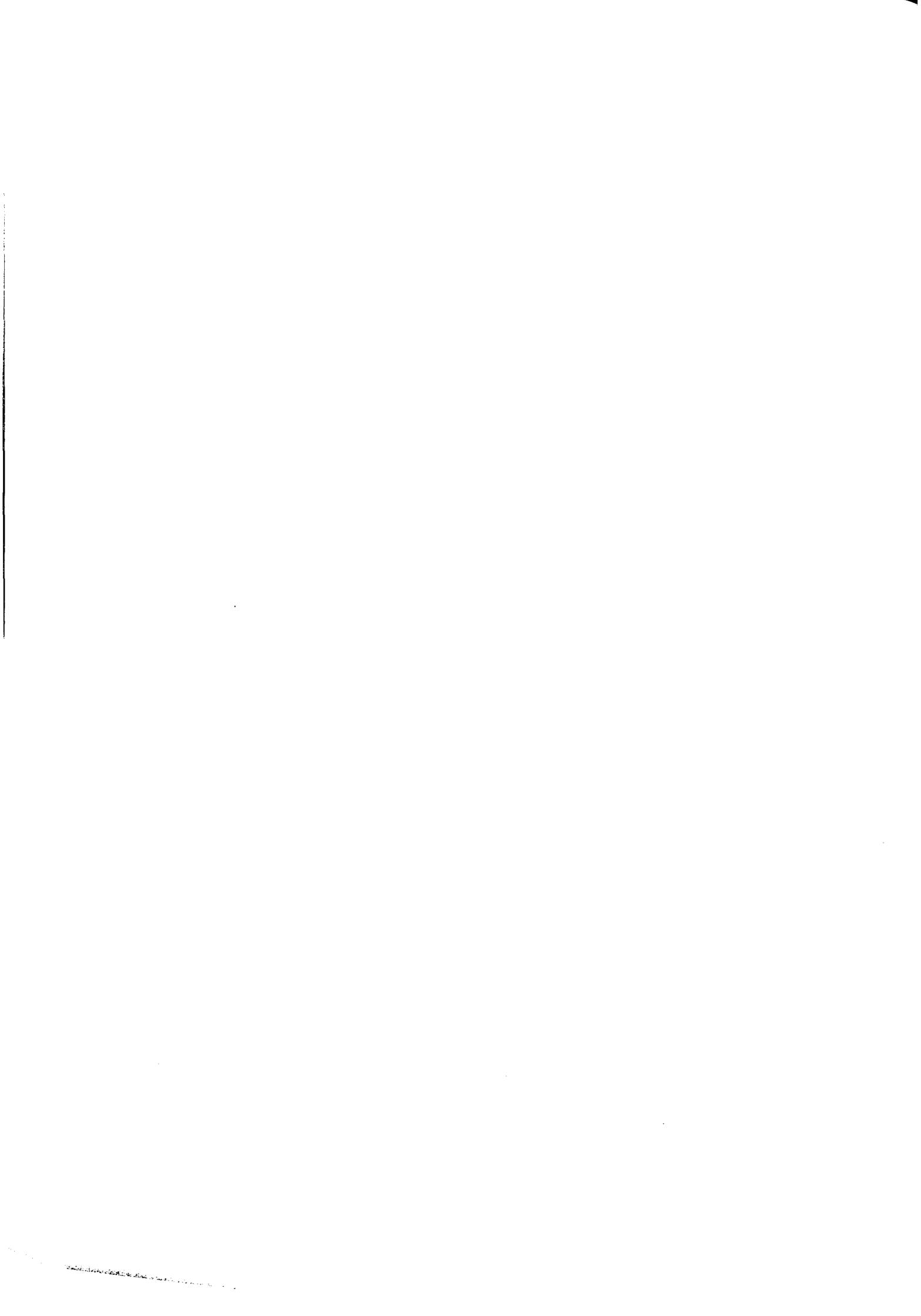
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Richard Caladine



Project Officer Tertiary Literacies

*Made possible by a Vice-Chancellor's
Challenge Grant*

Cath Milne has been appointed to the position of Project Officer Tertiary Literacies for a limited term of three years and will commence duties on December 9th, 1997.

My name is Cath Milne and I am currently working as a Project Officer within the Office of Teaching and Learning at Curtin University. I also work as a sessional lecturer and tutor. I came to Curtin in 1994 as a doctoral student. Prior to this, I had been working in Darwin.

Studying at Curtin gave me the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities including the project on dissemination of good teaching and learning practice at Curtin University. My role in this project is to collect, evaluate and disseminate examples of good practice in areas such as teaching, learning, curriculum design, assessment and evaluation. I have been involved meeting and talking with staff to develop case studies. These case studies align with the objectives of Curtin's Teaching and Learning Plan. So far, I have written case studies in areas such as the teaching of generic skills, assisting students to become independent learners, clinical supervision and cross-cultural education.

These examples will be placed on the World Wide Web so that they are accessible by staff and students.

I am excited by the prospect of working as a Project Officer at the University of Wollongong. I see that there might be some similarities between the project in which I am currently involved, and the Project that I will be involved with at the University of Wollongong.

My other interests are keeping fit and reading. Is Wollongong close to the slopes? I'd love to learn to ski.

Interdisciplinary communications skills project

Made possible by the
University's Educational
Strategies Development Fund

Development of teaching modules in professional communication skills

A pilot project has begun to develop learning **modules** to assist lecturers across campus in **enhancing the professional communication skills of their students**. This project is being guided by the **Teaching and Learning Research Group** under an Educational Strategies Development Fund grant. The project grows from the realisation that communication skills are taught in a number of faculties, yet teaching materials are not often shared. In addition, many non-communication subjects require students to practice professional communication skills, skills for which lecturers have little time to develop or even adapt learning materials. This project aims to establish a base of *materials in modules that can be inserted readily into lesson plans in classes in different disciplines.*

Communication skills that we are addressing include:

- formal **presentations** to groups
- professional **consultation** to individuals
- conducting and participating in public and team **meetings**
- **written** communication in various formats (press releases, etc.)
- providing media **interviews**
- **multi-media** productions (video, Web pages, etc.).

We appreciate any help that you can give in our initial effort, which involves:

- (a) inventory of **communication-skill materials** currently used by lecturers;
- (b) assessment of **needs** for communication skills in different courses, both undergraduate and postgraduate; and
- (c) development of **pilot modules** on professional consultation and facilitating community consultation (public meetings).

At first, we are collecting all subject outlines on campus (or as many as we can readily obtain) and cataloguing them according to communication skills needed to complete assignments. For example, how many subjects require oral reports? In what disciplines do students need to learn to conduct meetings in public settings? Which assignments require work in which students need to conduct group project meetings?

Want more information on this project? Visit our Web site (being assembled by Richard Caladine of CEDIR): <http://cedir.uow.edu.au/subjects/staffdev/comms/>.

Do you have ideas or materials that we should know about? Would you like to test our pilot modules with your class?

Please contact:

Project coordinator: Will Rifkin, PhD, Mgmt, extn. 4740, will_rifkin@uow.edu.au

Project assistant: Mary Johnston, mjny02@uow.edu

You probably need help with statistics

Whether you conduct quantitative research yourself, or are supervising a research student, you will find that the service courses in statistics which you did years ago have left you ill prepared for the task before you. There is nothing shameful about this; would one or two courses in your discipline make someone else as expert in it as you are?

However, the Statistical Consulting Service, based in the School of Mathematics and Applied Statistics, is here to assist you. We will advise on:

- planning an investigation so that your research hypotheses are formulated clearly, the data you collect are appropriate, and the variability in the data is minimised;
- how to collect the data, and to prepare them for analysis in a computer;
- the most appropriate form of analysis, and which statistical package to use;
- how to interpret the output from the package; and
- how best to present the conclusions you draw from the analysis.

The service is funded principally by the Office of Research. As a consequence, if your research (or that of a student you supervise) does not have external funding, you will receive up to ten hours of FREE advice per calendar year. If you receive external funds, the advice is still available, but you have to meet the cost. Naturally, there are some conditions attached. For information about these, ring Ken Russell on extn 3815. To make an appointment, please ring Kerrie Gamble on extn 4308.

The service is available throughout the year, including December and February when most researchers are hard at work. You should take advantage of it. Some points to consider:

- we don't expect you to be a statistical genius;
- we won't talk down to you or use lots of statistical jargon; and
- we won't use a complicated analysis if something simple will do the job.

And one final point . . . Many people think that you only seek advice when it is time to analyse your data. This is **WRONG!!!** No amount of statistical sophistication can salvage a poor investigation. You should see the consultant at the very beginning of your research, so that s/he can help ensure that it is properly planned.



Wollongong UniCentre Bookshop

The Wollongong UniCentre bookshop has a selection of books on teaching in higher education. Some of the practical and helpful titles are:

Assessing Learning in Universities, Peggy Nightingale, UNSW Press, 1996

Creating a Teaching Profile, Graham Gibbs, Teaching and Educational Services, 1992

500 Tips for Tutors, Phil Race, Kogan Page, London 1995

53 Interesting Things to do in Your Lectures, Gibbs, Habeshaw and Habeshaw, 1992

53 Interesting Things to do in Your Seminars and Tutorials, Habeshaw, Habeshaw and Gibbs, 1989

53 Interesting Ways to Assess Your Students, Gibbs, Habeshaw and Habeshaw, 1989

53 Interesting Ways to Teach Mathematics, Hubbard, 1991

53 Interesting Communication Exercises for Science Students, Habeshaw and Steeds, 1987

(All published by Technical and Educational Services Ltd, Bristol)

A Handbook for Teachers in Universities and Colleges, David Newble and Robert Cannon, Kogan Page, London, 1991

Improving the Quality of Student Learning, G Gibbs, Technical and Educational Services, 1992

Key Concepts in Adult Education and Training, Malcolm Tight, Routledge, 1996

Learning to Teach in Higher Education, Paul Ramsden, Routledge, London, 1992

Rethinking University Teaching, Diana Laurillard, Routledge, London, 1994

Teaching Large Classes in Higher Education – How to Maintain Quality with Reduced Resources, Graham Gibbs and Alan Jenkins, Kogan Page, London, 1992

Tutoring at University, Pat Bertola, Paradigm Books, 1994

HERDSA Gold Guide Series

1. *Clinical Teaching*, Rick Ladyshevsky
2. *Making Connections: Using Student Journals as a Teaching/Learning Aid*, Roy Ballantyne and Jan Packer
3. *Teaching and Learning Social Responsibility*, Alan Prosser

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4. *Improving Student Writing*, Peggy Nightingale
5. *Implementing Student Self-assessment*, David Boud
6. *Conducting Tutorials*, Jacqueline Lublin
7. *Lecturing*, Robert Cannon
8. *Assessing Student Performance*, Terry Crooks
9. *Heading a Department*, Ingrid Moses and Ernest Roe
10. *The Desktop Teacher*, John Hedberg
11. *Organising Academic Conferences*, Amy Zelmer & A.C. Lynn Zelmer
12. *Tutoring Distance Education and Open Learning Courses*, David Kember & David Murphy
13. *Developing Students' Library Research Skills*, Christine Bruce
14. *Improving Teaching Through Action Research*, David Kember & Mavis Kelly
15. *Design of University Courses and Subjects: A strategic approach*, Geoff Foster
16. *Multiple Choice Testing*, Geoff Isaacs
17. *Considering Gender*, Peggy Nightingale & Cathy Sohler
18. *Student Centred Teaching: the development and use of conceptual frameworks*, Kym Fraser
19. *Collaborating in Research*, Carol Bond & Briony Thompson
20. *An Introduction to Educational Media*, Alison Viskovic, *Role Play*, Edward Errington

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HERDSA

HERDSA (Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc) aims to bring together and support those people who are engaged in teaching in higher education, in the study of learning, teaching and policy in higher education, and in the continuous improvement of higher education.

Membership of the Society gives you the opportunity to interact with practitioners, learning support staff, academic staff development consultants, and educational researchers who share similar interests and, above all, a commitment to quality in higher education.

Members automatically receive a copy of each volume of the journal, *Higher Education Research and Development*, published three times each year, as well as the newsletter, *HERDSA News*. HERDSA publishes two separate series, the *Green Guides* and *Gold Guides* written by experts and practitioners in specific fields. These are available to members at reduced rates.

The Society holds an annual conference at venues in Australia and New Zealand, and members are encouraged to attend and present papers. Special Interest Groups exist to cater for members' particular needs. Full details are available from the HERDSA Office.

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