

2011

Editorial 8.2

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Abstract

Welcome to the second issue, Volume 8 of the Journal of University Teaching and Learning (JUTLP). We are very pleased to see the way the journal continues to grow and the improvement in the quality of the papers. For this we would like to thank our editorial board and reviewers for their considerable efforts in providing valuable feedback to the contributors. Recently many people farewelled the Australian Learning and Teaching Council at the Opera House in Sydney as they presented the final round of Teaching and Learning awards and citations. Recognition for these outstanding teachers, as well as support through a multi-million dollar grant system, has seen the profile of teaching and learning raised significantly within higher education in Australia and we look forward to seeing further support through the government body who have taken over this role.

Keywords

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In particular there has been significant interest in improving aspects of teaching and learning across many disciplines as evidenced by our first paper by Owen and Davis with their focus on improving assessment practices within law faculties. Their paper discusses the outcomes of a funded ALTC project which identified the need for new approaches to assessment by law academics to meet the needs of the diverse student body in Australian universities. A series of interventions are described to support this change of practice which may be adapted by other professions. Keirle and Morgan's paper draws on the outcomes of other ALTC funded work to examine the impact of changed teaching practices in history. They discuss the move from small tutorials of approximately 10 students to larger groups of up to forty students with a focus on renewal of curriculum design and its influence on aspects of teaching within these larger classes. They offer a guide for managing this transition through a group work approach.

The next two papers focus in aspects of research-based teaching to support student understanding of the role of research. In the first paper in the context of international business subjects, Jiang and Roberts compare two approaches to research-informed teaching.

The first approach uses the lecturer's current research for a case study assessment task whilst in the second approach the students conduct their own research through an examination of the literature. Whilst students valued both approaches greater understanding of the research process came from engaging in their own research. In the second paper, Braber provides a UK case study of undergraduate students' involvement in authentic research activities through funded bursaries during the summer break. Through this engagement with researchers, students develop a real understanding of the role of research and become collaborators and members of the research community.

In a related paper, Coronado challenges undergraduate management students to recognise the importance of developing critical thinking and analytic skills through engaging students in research activity. She offers guidance for students undertaking web-based research that may be adapted by other disciplinary areas.

The next paper moves into the post-graduate arena to examine the challenges and successes experienced by students during the doctoral writing process. Catterall and colleagues identify that key areas of importance for developing academic writing skills include not just written feedback by supervisors but also 'writing for publication' as a key driver for success. They also indicate that the area that receives the most positive response is the use of writing groups and writing retreats that incorporate peer feedback, and they recommend a more systematic approach to using these approaches within universities.

The final paper by Burrows and her co-authors have developed a peer review of teaching model within a Faculty of Health in a regional Australian university. They discuss the development of a framework through the use of consensus informed nominal group techniques to create the structures and processes required to establish peer review processes within their faculty through a pilot study.

I would like to continue to express my thanks to those who consistently contribute to improving our journal: the Associate Editor, Dr Meg O'Reilly for her tireless work in allocation of reviewers, and for her timely

suggestions for improvements to the journal; and the many people involved in the background who keep the journal running through their roles in the editing and layout of the journal.

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