Welcome
To
The University of Queensland
School of Education
Postgraduate Research Conference 2009
Education Revolution: Global Issues, Local Impacts, National Solutions

This conference is an opportunity for postgraduate students to present their research. A broad range of research interests are represented. We appreciate the effort of the presenters who have contributed to the interesting program. We also appreciate the willingness of the academic staff members from the School of Education at The University of Queensland, who have offered to chair sessions and contribute to the panel discussion.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to:
- ➢ Professor Jo-Anne Reid for delivering our Conference Keynote Presentation and the Carolyn D. Baker Memorial Lecture,
- ➢ Professor Robyn Gillies for facilitating the panel discussion,
- ➢ Professor Peter Renshaw for being our Master of Ceremonies,
- ➢ Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences for their support of the conference and the Carolyn D. Baker Memorial Lecture,
- ➢ The Graduate School for their support of the conference.

Thank you all for contributing to the success of the School of Education's Postgraduate Conference - *Education Revolution: Global Issues, Local Impacts, National Solutions*. We hope you enjoy the conference.

Conference Committee
Kalani Eggington
Stephen Heimans
Darren Iselin
Harry Kanasa
Rosie Scholl
Neville Smith
Dr Mary McMahon
Dr Kim Nichols

Education Revolution: Global Issues, Local Impacts, National Solutions
Program

8.30 - 8.45	**Registration:**			(Social and Behavioural Sciences Building 24: Room S402)	
8.45 - 9.00	**Welcome and Overview of Proceedings: Professor Peter Renshaw & Kalani Eggington**			(Room S402)	
9.00 - 10.00	**Keynote Address: Professor Jo-Anne Reid**			(Room S402)	
10.00 - 10.30	**Morning Tea**			(SS&H Library Courtyard)	
10.30 - 12.10	**Parallel Sessions**				
	S302 **Kim Nichols**	S303 **Shelley Dole**	S328 **Eileen Honan**	S504 **Simone Smala**	S506 **Robyn Gillies**
10.30 – 11.00	**Kalani Eggington** Components for effective teacher - scientist collaborations	**Geoff Hilton** Student digital video production in science: A collaborative process	**Christina Gowlett Subject**ification: Student perception of senior schooling subjects	**Stephen Heimans** Conceptualising a practice-based approach to analysis of public policy in education	**Shiralee Poed & Deb Keen** Special provisions … The risky business of education policy and disability discrimination
11.05 – 11.35	**Kelly E Matthews** Designing an instrument for assessing the quantitative skills of university science students	**Annette Hilton** Learning about and with multiple representations: Instructional strategies to support learning and teaching in chemistry	**Sharon Mullins** Education and the newsprint media	**Robyn Torok** Understanding the instruments and rationalities of governmentality in Australia: The case of the public verse private school debate	**Thanh Pham, Robyn Gillies & Peter Renshaw** Effects of different assessments on cooperation among students: The case of Vietnamese students
11.40 – 12.10	**Eng Chan** Developing a unit on Microorganisms with the Teaching for Understanding (TfU) framework for a Year 6 science class	**Michelle Mukherjee** Everyone needs a PET – a Predictive Evaluation Tool to help teachers select technology	**Sarah Loch** Moving in the direction of your dreams: Middle years students and educational decision making	**Darren Iselin** Cultivating sustainable cultures: Principals as cultural and symbolic meaning makers in an era of change	**Thuy Thu Vu & Gloria Dall'Alba** Investigating authentic assessment practices for student learning in three professional courses in higher education

12.10 - 1.00	**Lunch**				(SS&H Library Courtyard)	

1.00 - 2.05	**Parallel Sessions**					
	S302 **Jana Visnovska**	S303 **Pam Christie**	S328 **David Geelan**	S502 **Rob Gilbert**	S504 **Dick Baldauf**	S506 **Carmen Mills**
1.00 – 1.30	**Lisa Lynn** Self-regulation in extremely low birth weight/very preterm 2 year olds: Preliminary findings from a comparison study	**Lorraine Thompson** Coaching: A learning and development approach for engaging health professionals	**Rosie Scholl, Kim Nichols & Gil Burgh** Philosophy for children: Pedagogical transformation	**Paula Dunstan** Transnational, temporary, influential: International students in Melbourne since 1989	**Marie Boden** Spelling Bug - Learner-adaptive computer software designed for classroom environments	**Gerard Feltoe** Influence of disruptive student behaviour upon teacher stress
1.35 – 2.05	**Julie Lewis** Communication disorders in students with school refusal behaviour	**Anthony Leow & Doune Macdonald** Winning the battle of the bulge: The importance of a classroom teacher	**Michael Boyle** Looking for Loretta: The process of judging the authenticity of a case study	**Hossein Bozorgian** The impact of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening comprehension through First Language (L1) listening strategy training	**David Nutchey** An operational model to support knowledge building in the context of early number	**J-F** Pathology of offending to living crime-free: A phenomenological study

2.10 – 3.20	**Facilitated Panel Discussion: Constructing Academic Career Pathways** **Facilitator: Professor Robyn Gillies**	(Room: SBS 502)
3.20 - 3.30	**Publication Award Presentation and Conference Close by Professor Peter Renshaw**	(Room: SBS 502)

Presenters in Alphabetical Order

Marie Boden   **Spelling Bug - Learner-adaptive computer software designed for classroom environments**

Computer software that can complement teachers' teaching and support individual students' needs is well within reach of today's technology but nevertheless still missing in most primary school classrooms. Several examples of successful adaptive educational techniques can be found in the literature but few show tests conducted in real classrooms. Moreover, there is usually no evaluation of how teachers and students have experienced working with such software. In particular, learner-centered designs may be ill-suited to collaborative classroom environments. This report argues the importance of investigating the usability of learner-adaptive software when used in collaborative primary school classrooms. For a better understanding of the use of intelligent educational software in such environments, the proposed research aims to develop and evaluate learner-adaptive software in situ. We use spelling training as a domain in four Grade 4 classes (a domain and age group where natural collaboration occur). Two versions of a learner-adaptive spelling training software are implemented: one version adapts a student model while the second version is based on a semi-random evolutionary algorithm to choose spelling exercises. The widely different nature of the adaptation allows us to unearth the potential that collaboration between students might have on technology. Conclusions from the proposed research can be vital for research in adaptive techniques as well as for quality control, and for research of new teaching support for teachers.

Michael Boyle   **Looking for Loretta: The process of judging the authenticity of a case study**

Case studies of exemplary teaching can be the catalyst for teachers perceiving how they might improve their own practice. The overall purpose of this research is to create individual case studies highlighting the exemplary practice of 6 STLD teachers (Support Teachers Learning Difficulties). Phenomenological methods, derived from the work of van Manen and Moustakas have been adopted as the vehicles for "mining" the nature of this practice. A community of STLD teachers based in south-east Brisbane was the starting point for the selection of the teachers for in-depth study and for the subsequent critiquing of the case studies, referred to as portraits, for their authenticity. Of particular interest here is their resonance for teachers in the community in reflecting significant aspects of their learning support practice.To explicate the research process pursued in this research, the portrait of Loretta is presented. The narrative account of research provided explores the experience of reaching a point in the research where the authenticity of the account is questioned by the researcher.

Hossein Bozorgian   **The impact of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening comprehension through First Language (L1) listening strategy training**

Listening is the basic and complementary skill in second language learning. The term listening is used in language teaching to refer to a complex process that allows us to understand spoken language. In langauge communcation, listening, the most widely used language skill, is often used in conjunction with the other skills of speaking, reading and writing. It has been recognised in langauage learning literature that listening is not only a skill area in primary language performance (L1), but is also a critical means of acquiring a second language (L2). Listening is the channel in which we process language in real time – employing pacing, units of encoding and decoding (the 2 processes are central to interpretation and meaning making) and pausing (allows for reflection) that are unique to spoken language. Despite the wide range of areas investigated in listening strategies during training, there is a lack of research looking specifically at how effectively L1 listening strategy training may transfer to L2. To investigate the development of any such transfer patterns the instructional design and implementation of listening strategy of L1 will be critical. This presentation will discuss the improvement of foreign language listening performance thereby first language listening strategy instruction.

Eng Chan **Developing a unit on Microorganisms with the Teaching for Understanding (TfU) framework for a Year 6 Science class**

It can be argued that knowledge does not come into its own until the learner can deploy it with understanding. When asked the question about how one came to understand whatever it was, people often respond by saying that they are able to function well, deal with problems effectively, explain things to others and make reasonable decisions. As such, learning for understanding presents a picture of learning as an active, involving, thoughtful enterprise which is identified as "a matter of being able to think and act creatively and competently with what one knows about the topic" and calls such thought demanding activities "performances of understanding". The development of a unit on Microorganisms uses the Teaching for Understanding framework as instructional design aimed at helping students deploy knowledge with understanding, active use, transfer and retention.

Paula Dunstan **Transnational, temporary, influential: International students in Melbourne since 1989**

The population of the City of Melbourne is 81,144, of which about 40,000, or nearly 50 percent, are students. It's a simple statistic, but has significant meaning for the city's educational institutions and the city of Melbourne as a whole. Transnational and Temporary reports research conducted between 2006-2009 which explores the world of international students and their daily life in the city of Melbourne, their social interactions, their use of public and residential spaces and their personal observations of the environment. The report offers us valuable insights into physical and social mobility in relation to the city environment, and identifies a range of influences on the student experience; including lifestyle, practical and economic perspectives. While the report's focus is primarily on the impact of public space and housing conditions on social interactions and student perceptions of place, it is suggested that there are other relevant dimensions of international student experience which contribute to a more complete picture of city and community development over time. This paper uses an overview of the research report as a springboard, and attempts to describe the dynamics of students as consumers but more importantly as well as producers of space, place and community. It introduces the focus of this study which considers the impact that international students have had on the city of Melbourne since 1989.

Kalani Eggington   **Components for effective teacher-scientist collaborations**

Teacher - scientist collaborations offer teachers the opportunity to learn more about current science practices. This experience helps to enhance teachers' implementation of contemporary science into their teaching. Past studies conducted on teacher-scientist collaborations have primarily focused on teacher outcomes. This study not only explores outcomes but also examines the characteristics of participants and factors which enhance the collaborative experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and scientists who had previously worked together. Participants were selected from 7 different teacher-scientist programs so that a range of circumstances could be considered. The findings show that teachers' content knowledge and lab skills improved as a result of working with scientists. These improvements increased the teachers' confidence to include more contemporary science in their curriculum. The findings highlight the effect these collaborations had on participating scientists such as developing their communication skills. Factors that enhanced the collaborative experience were also identified. These include focusing on real-world applications of science and offering interactive, hands-on experiences for teachers. This study contributes to the understanding and promotion of teacher - scientist collaborations as a valuable professional learning model by providing information that can help maximize the experience for participants.

J-F   **Pathology of offending to living crime-free: A phenomenological study**

A phenomenological study from pathology of offending to living crime-free was conducted at The University of Queensland with a group of male ex-inmates living in Queensland. A phenomenological methodology was used to explore experiences from childhood through to adulthood and subsequent crime-free living. All participants (n=20) took part in a face-to-face interview. A novel finding of this study was that it distinguished and discriminated between factors that were motivating and supporting ex-inmates to live crime-free. Results found that a majority of participants spent most of their life incarcerated and report of being involved in crime at an early age; having difficulty at school, having poor family relationships and using drugs and alcohol at an early age. Further results also showed that self-efficacy and faith are intrinsic motivating factors that are able to sustain a crime-free life. Other factors such as family, friends, employment, support groups, significant life events and specific individuals were found to support the process of crime-free living. Future studies should explore how positive intrinsic factors can be used to desist one from offending.

Gerard Feltoe   **Influence of disruptive student behaviour upon teacher stress**

This literature review presents research pertaining to disruptive student behaviour and teacher stress. Literature reviewed originates from the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, Israel, Greece, Europe, Scandinavia and China. Research literature has been selected from both education and psychology publications in order to present a balanced research perspective. The literature supports the argument that disruptive student behaviour has a negative impact upon teacher stress and self-efficacy. This appears to be most prevalent in the middle school years. Directions for future research are suggested.

Christina Gowlett   **Subjecti**fication**: Student perception of senior schooling subjects**

The educational opportunities offered and taken up by students while in high school can and do affect the options made available to them after leaving. Within Australia, secondary schooling has become closely associated with work. Schools have seemingly become vehicles to help students gain access to avenues which will lead them into employment, thus constructing students as human capital, a driving force behind educational policy-making. Examining the practices and processes taking place in schools to help transition students from high school to employment is important, especially in light of the highly sex-segregated labour market within Australia. Asking students how they perceive subject areas and curriculum pathways within the senior years of schooling is an important aspect of this issue since it likely affects the choices they make. Using the tenets of feminist post-structural theory, this paper examines how students at an outer-metropolitan high school in Queensland speak about their senior subjects, with specific attention being given to the labeling of certain areas of study as being male, female and unisex.

Stephen Heimans   **Conceptualising a practice-based approach to analysis of public policy in education**

Different policy contexts have different 'logics of practice'. This paper presents a theoretical conceptualisation of practice which will be used for researching 'logics of practice' in different public education policy contexts. Three theoretical perspectives which have a practice component are proposed in order to organise a framework for the research. These include a perspective derived from the work of Bourdieu which offers a way of understanding practice in relation to field, habitus and capital, a critical semiotic perspective within a dialectical relational view of practice and, a multimodal perspective on the semiotic aspects of practice. Central to the work presented here is the notion that a practice perspective is useful for research on public education policy, because what people do (and how and who and what with) in different policy contexts changes depending on the 'logics of practice' in that context. Practice allows a focus both on these different logics and the 'social conditions' of the context of which policy will be one aspect.

Annette Hilton   **Learning about and with multiple representations: Instructional strategies to support learning and teaching in chemistry**

This presentation reports on a study that examined the use of digital technologies to enhance learning in chemistry. In chemistry, the macroscopic behaviour of materials must be explained in terms of unobservable phenomena, which requires the integration of submicro and symbolic representations. Linking and interpreting the three levels of representation (i.e. macro, submicro and symbolic) is essential to understanding chemistry and yet many students find this a challenge. Findings are presented from the first phase of the study in which students' alternative conceptions in chemical bonding were identified and digital learning resources employed to address them or to enhance their understanding and representational competence. Two Year 11 chemistry classes (N = 49) participated in the 10-week study. Pretest data were used to identify students' alternative conceptions and to inform the design of learning materials and strategies. Pretest-posttest comparisons revealed that some of the students' alternative conceptions were remediated and their representational competence was enhanced. Interview and video data provided insights into the reasons for the effectiveness of the instructional strategies. This research has implications for the design of chemistry instruction, that utilises digital technologies, and for the professional development of teachers, about effective ways to integrate digital technologies in chemistry.

Geoff Hilton   **Student digital video production in science: A collaborative process**

Producing in-class digital videos is now a possibility in many science classrooms. A study into this technology's learning benefits for science students was conducted. This paper reports that digital video production is an inherently collaborative process. Two Year 7 classes (n=21, n=22), worked in mixed ability and gender groups of three as they conducted a science investigation. One class reported their findings using a written text (poster) and the other produced digital videos. Two groups from each class were video tracked throughout their investigations and were later interviewed. Transcripts from these data sources were analysed. Pretests, posttests, delayed posttests, and repeated question instruments were administered. Results of quantitative instruments revealed learning gains were greater for the video producers than poster makers. Analysis of transcripts showed video producing students were highly collaborative during the production process and more importantly while engaging in the target science concepts. Collaboration enhances students' science learning. It is also a characteristic of scientists, and the modern technology-based workforce. Producing digital videos in science gives students opportunities to collaborate while engaging in a contemporary text form relevant to them, to science, and to their futures.

Darren Iselin   **Cultivating sustainable cultures: Principals as cultural and symbolic meaning makers in an era of change**

The preservation and perpetuation of core cultural vision and values within organisations has been recognised as a critical determinant in the on-going effectiveness and productivity of highly successful enterprises within the organisational theory literature. Commencing in the 1970's out of the effective schools movement, researchers have increasingly explored the role of culture and organisational efficiency within schools and the crucial role that school leadership and the preservation of core cultural values and vision play in the maintenance and perpetuation of highly successful school cultures, especially when responding to change imperatives and reform initiatives. This paper presents preliminary findings of a multiple case study that investigated how principals within 6 private schools in Queensland seek to preserve and perpetuate their core cultural values and identity whilst simultaneously responding to change, innovation and development within an ever increasingly complex and market-driven socio-cultural milieu. This paper also outlines a meta-conceptual model for preserving core cultural values that emerged from the data corpus and articulates 4 interrelated processes that principals can use within a technical-relational/tradition-innovation continuum.

Anthony Leow & Doune Macdonald **Winning the battle of the bulge: The importance of a classroom teacher**

Schools are increasingly being asked to play a lead role in public health promotion. In Queensland, policies have been introduced specifically to address the issue of increasing childhood obesity. Predominantly, we have witnessed the emergence of The Eat Well Be Active campaign which is an initiative that emanated from inter-sectoral collaboration in Queensland during the last 7 years. Under the Eat Well Be Active umbrella, several health initiatives were targeted for delivery in schools. Chief among these are Smart Choices and Smart Moves, which were legislated for implementation in Queensland schools, in an attempt to improve the nutrition and increase the physical activity levels among Queensland children. Through the implementation of these programmes, the Queensland government seeks to address the issue of the obesity epidemic caused by what it believed to be the twin causes of a lack of physical activity and proper nutrition. Although the improvement of the obesity situation in schools has regularly been viewed as the domain of the HPE teacher, as evinced by the results of our study, we argue that the role of a classroom teacher within the obesity discourse is equally important, if not more important than that of the HPE teacher.

Julie Lewis **Communication disorders in students with school refusal behaviour**

School refusal behaviour (SRB) is a common, worldwide problem which can have significant, negative short and long term consequences for students, their families and associated stakeholders. The role mental health disorders play in SRB has been researched extensively. Conversely, there is a paucity of research addressing the role communication disorders (CD) play in SRB. This is despite the fact that ample evidence exists that CD are commonly associated with the mental health disorders students with SRB present with. Similarly, CD have been linked to the learning and social interaction difficulties which can be triggers for SRB. This research will use a mixed methods design to clarify the role CD play in the onset, maintenance and management of SRB. The prevalence and nature of CD in students with SRB in the middle years of learning in south-east Queensland education district will be investigated. The effectiveness of individual and group intervention for a sample of students with SRB and CD will then be examined. It is anticipated that this research will provide important information about the prevalence, nature and management of CD in students with SRB for the benefit of students, their families and other stakeholders.

Sarah Loch   **Moving in the direction of your dreams: Middle years students and educational decision making**

This presentation will discuss ways that middle years students speak about educational decision making and how they see the future before them. The study has focused on the event of subject selection which sees students move from a compulsory and non-negotiable curriculum into curriculum which can be personalised through elective subject choices and co-curricular decisions. This opportunity usually always takes place for the first time during the middle phase of learning; however, there has been relatively little inquiry into the process of educational decision making and subject selection within the transformational middle years. Ongoing research has been conducted at a girls' school in Sydney, NSW, to give voice to the discourses students use, create, struggle with and reject in order to create meaning when making and reflecting on their educational decisions. Results indicate this group are highly engaged in school and see school as a pathway to success in the world beyond. Data from a second school, a performing arts school, is currently being collected. Preliminary findings indicate a complex view of future pathways although students' goals are strikingly clear. It is suggested that alternate discourses of middle schooling may need to develop to adequately describe the experiences of the diverse middle years students in this study.

Lisa Lynn   **Self-regulation in extremely low birth weight/very preterm 2 year olds: Preliminary findings from a comparison study**

Recent advances in maternal and neonatal interventions have dramatically improved survival rates for the most vulnerable premature infants. Children born at extremely low birth weight (ELBW; >1000g) or very preterm (> 28 weeks gestation) are more susceptible to neurodevelopmental difficulties. Despite the majority of these children having cognitive abilities within the average range, 50-70% will exhibit later academic or behavioural problems that may continue into adolescence. Although deficits in executive functioning (EF) contribute to problems with learning, investigating the integration of these components through the over-arching construct of self-regulation aims to improve our understanding of the problems faced by these children, and to inform subsequent interventions. Improving self-regulatory skills may compensate for deficits in EF and help alleviate the learning and behavioural difficulties many ELBW/very preterm children experience. Preliminary analysis conducted with 29 ELBW and 16 comparison two year olds indicated no significant differences between groups for cognitive, language and motor scores, or on measures of self-regulation such as inhibition and delay of gratification. Correlations among ELBW group scores suggest different processes may be involved in self-regulatory tasks for children born with ELBW. Another contributing factor to differences in self-regulatory abilities may be greater variation in language scores between groups.

Kelly E Matthews   **Designing an instrument for assessing the quantitative skills of university science students**

The technological advances of the past few decades have transformed science in general and the life sciences in particular. Thus, modern scientists require increased levels of quantitative skills, resulting in the need for educators to rethink science curricula. In 2006, a major review at the University of Queensland resulted in a new undergraduate science curriculum that aimed to instil in graduates those quantitative skills required for modern science. Within this context, a comprehensive strategy for assessing student learning outcomes is being developed. This paper presents one component of this strategy: the development of an instrument that will allow graduating science students to demonstrate their quantitative skills. Through informal "participatory" interviews, academic staff identified what quantitative skills graduating students should have, and contributed to development of the instrument. This study highlights the challenges and opportunities of designing a universal instrument for assessing undergraduate students' learning at a program level. There are also important implications for the higher education sector more generally, as recent government policy (and subsequently funding) is seeking more robust evidence of student learning, extending beyond the traditional approach of assessment being embedded solely in individual courses.

Michelle Mukherjee   **Everyone needs a PET – a Predictive Evaluation Tool to help teachers select technology**

There are many studies of technology use in science classes e.g. dataloggers, probes and simulation software. However, there is very little formal research work on how teachers identify productive technology for use in the classroom. The research question for this study is: What are the explicit and tacit bodies of knowledge that teachers (should) consider when selecting technology for science classrooms? It proposes that for successful implementation of technology, there must be a match between the technology tool, the teacher, the students and the classroom environment. The study integrates data from interviews with experienced teachers discussing their approach to acquiring technology, existing inventories for the evaluation of classroom technology, usability theory to examine the "user friendliness", set up and maintenance of the technology, and Activity Theory to examine the physical classroom constraints together with the learning goals and the characteristics of the teacher and students. The study syntheses the data to produce a Predictive Evaluation Tool (PET) intended to help teachers evaluate technology before acquisition. Preliminary results from the evaluation of PET suggest that experienced teachers agreed with the choice of included items, whilst novice teachers discovered new, previously unconsidered areas for evaluation which they found valuable.

Sharon Mullins   Education and the newsprint media

The moral evaluation that it is desirable for young people aged 15 – 17 to be participating in education or training has been a prominent theme for public policy for several decades. In 2002, the Queensland Government announced a raft of reforms that required young people to be 'earning or learning'. More recently the Rudd Government announced a youth compact which echoes this requirement for young people 17 to be 'earning or learning'. This investigation aims to examine the way the newsprint media has constructed discussion about this issue. It specifically examines the period leading up to, and after the announcement of the Queensland Government's Education and Training Reforms for the Future. This presentation will describe the macrostructures and the narratives that were used by the newsprint media to develop stories, themes, characters and legitimations related to young people's participation. The presentation will include a discussion around the way in which young people who are not engaged in education, training or employment are predominantly attributed as vulnerable or at risk, and conversely the Queensland Government is constructed as the noble agent, intervening to solve the problem of "10 000 young people who are not participating in education or training".

David Nutchey   An operational model to support knowledge building in the context of early number

An operational model of knowledge and understanding based upon the educational theory of knowledge building is proposed. A review of literature pertaining to educational philosophy and practice in the context of early number mathematics reveals a repeating pattern: Assumptions regarding the nature of the learner and learning (drawn from ontological and epistemological theory) form the basis for the development of operational models that inform classroom practice. This pattern is evident when considering objectivist, constructivist and social-constructivist theories. The post-constructivist theory of knowledge building, which draws upon the Popperian notion of 3 knowledge worlds, remains largely without a supporting operational model. The proposed operational model fills this gap. The model integrates notions of Piagetian reflective abstraction, the role of social discourse in the learning community, and the conceptualisation of understanding as the relationship between the learner and the shared World 3 knowledge. A visual nomenclature is used to express the model. The proposed model has potential significance for classroom practice, pre-service teacher education, and the development of computer-mediated learning environments.

| Thanh Pham, Robyn Gillies & Peter Renshaw | **Effects of different assessments on cooperation among students: The case of Vietnamese students** |

The study investigated the behaviors and interactions of university students as they coped with ill-structured and well-structured assessments based on the social science curriculum that they had been studying. Twenty students participated in an 8-week study. The students worked in 5-person, gender-balanced and heterogeneous achievement groups. The results show that when the students coped with ill-structured assessments, they were more cooperative, provided more helpful assistance to each other and perceived small-group work as more enjoyable than when they were engaged in well-structured assessments. The findings also show that when low-achievers were encouraged to make contributions, they demonstrated marked increases in perceptions of cooperative learning and behaviors and interactions with others.

| Shiralee Poed & Deb Keen | **Special provisions … The risky business of education policy and disability discrimination** |

In Australia, the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) (Standards) outline how specific areas of education are to be made accessible to students with disabilities. The central tenet of the Standards is that students with disabilities are treated "on the same basis" as a student without a disability. The Standards include statements of the rights of students with disabilities, descriptions of the legal obligations of education authorities, and measures which can be taken as evidence of compliance. To meet their legal obligations, all educational statutory authorities across Australia have published policies that define the types of adjustments that teachers can make to enable students to engage with curriculum and demonstrate their learning on the same basis as their peers. This paper examines how Australian educational authorities define what is "reasonable" when adjustments are made to assessment and how this definition aligns with the Standards. Implications for educators and educational authorities are considered.

Rosie Scholl,
Kim Nichols &
Gil Burgh

Philosophy for children: Pedagogical transformation

Teachers who can think themselves and name and manipulate their thinking and problem solving processes are equipped to inspire and facilitate thinking with their students. Through Philosophy for Children, transformational learning opportunities are constructed for teachers and students by regularly engaging in critical, creative and caring communal dialogue. Two groups of primary school teachers, 59 in total, have been involved in a prospective, longitudinal comparison of pedagogical transformation. The focus of this comparison was teachers who engaged students in communities of philosophical inquiry, to teachers who used thinking tools (graphic organizers). An experimental approach, using mixed methods, including questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, prior to, during and after the implementation of the intervention, was used to gauge the impact of facilitating communities of philosophical inquiry on the teacher and their pedagogy. Empirical evidence presented here confirms that implementation of Philosophy results in improvement in teacher perceptions of their pedagogy, their thinking, and student engagement. The primacy of self in pedagogy demands that teachers' voices be present in this evaluation. Interview data reveal that teachers are complimentary in their appraisals of Philosophy and intend to continue their professional and personal transformation through engaging in Philosophical inquiry with students.

Lorraine Thompson   **Coaching: A Learning and development approach for engaging health professionals**

A global shortage of health care staff, particularly nurses, has stimulated a plethora of studies on workplace stress and burnout, highlighting the deleterious effects these have on staff health, their morale and their intention to remain in the post. Previous research clearly indicates that employees who are stressed and burned out are more likely to leave their profession, than those who are engaged and satisfied in their roles. Despite the nursing profession facing immense challenges in stress, burnout and subsequent difficulties in retaining staff, little attention has been paid to exploring the work engagement of nurses or potential interventions that are likely to promote this positive state. Coaching is an approach to staff development which has the potential to reduce stress and increase employee engagement. This paper provides an overview of a pilot study which tested a telephone coaching intervention over an 8 week period, with nurses working in clinical practice. The study was a pre and post test design, with an intervention group, an attention control group and a non contact control group. All participants achieved their goals set during the coaching and the psychometric properties of the instruments used were established. Results from this pilot study were utilised to inform the development of the major study.

Thuy Thu Vu &   **Investigating authentic assessment practices for student**
Gloria Dall'Alba   **learning in three professional courses in higher education**

As interest in the quality of teaching and learning has grown, attention is being directed to ways in which student learning can be enhanced. Recent research proposes a need for a shift in focus in higher education, particularly in professional programs, to integrate epistemology — what students are expected to know and be able to do — with ontology — who students are becoming. In line with this integration, an authentic approach to assessment is appropriate that aims to increase students' awareness of who they are becoming and contributes to this process. Conventionally, authentic assessment has generally been conceptualised as an educational intervention that aims at improving students' performance. Authentic assessment practices sample real-life activities and/or have real-life value. Drawing on the work of Martin Heidegger, it is argued that beside a real-life quality, an ontological character is central to authenticity. From this point of departure, this paper reports a study that uses an ethnographic design to investigate university teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment for student learning and professional development. Participants of the study were 3 university lecturers and a tutor who incorporated authentic assessment practices in their courses. Data were collected from written documents relating to assessment policy and practices in the courses studied; multiple interviews; and observations of assessment-related sessions. Analysis of data, together with a synthesis of relevant literature, is expected to point to principles and processes of authentic assessment for enhancing student learning in higher education in general, and in professional programs in particular.

Robyn Torok   **Understanding the instruments and rationalities of governmentality in Australia: The case of the public verse private school debate**

Governmentality of education in Australia particularly at the federal level has largely focussed on the public verses private school debate. Shifts in government rationalities toward privatisation saw a major turn around in the fortune of private schools from the late 1970's. Even so, these rationalities were closely intertwined with the political and social context of the time. This paper serves to historically examine these complexities from a mirroring of global trends toward more neo-liberal governmental policies to the changing social landscape that includes the rising influence of fundamentalist Christianity. Furthermore, such policies included important economic rationalities used to justify increasing proportionality of funding to private schools. Through an understanding of the socio-historical context of this particular issue, insight can be gained into the responsiveness of government to influences at the international, national and local levels. Here, the government is subject to various forms of power, from the normalisation of international standards to local political pressures. Equally important, are the instruments of governmentality used to modify and influence identity formation such as discursive formations that criticised the values neutrality of public education. Finally, the paper will conclude with implications for current government policy on the education revolution.