

AARE NEWS

ON-LINE Edition

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Editor
Peter L Jeffery

From the President

Improving the Quality and Impact of Education Research

AARE Members are interested in the many issues arising from the Research Quality Framework, the debate around so-called "evidence-based practice," and the increasing significance of partnership-based research.

This issues were explored most eloquently by Professor Mary Kalantzis in the Radford Address at the 2005 AARE Conference.

Professor Kalantzis invited AARE Members to explore the possibilities for an education research science and associated research training that engages the multiple dimensions of micro- and macro- data sets, the policies shaping education and its change, and the broader questions of governance.

AARE Members are concerned that education, education research and research education in Australia be frequently reviewed in order to be improved for the benefit of the nation, as much as the benefit of the international education community of which we are a part.

Since the late 19th century it has been established by scientists (and philosophers) that given the interplay of theory and observation, evidence is deemed more reliable, when researchers makes explicit their viewpoint (and subject it to self-critique) so that users of research-based knowledge can take this into account.

Recent reports on Australia's primary curricula, Year 12

mathematics subjects, and the teaching of literacy have all raised serious questions about the quality and impact of education research.

These works have stimulated widespread debate about the basic standards, validity and transparency of education research processes, as well as the methodological rigour and analytical robustness of research in education.

The debates about this work have focused the attention of AARE Members on whether and how education researchers should attend to the following issues concerning quality and impact.

Research question

1. clarify and maintain the focus of the study, for instance, establishing whether the focus is students' and their learning, or the subjects they are offered for study.

Reviewing the research literature

2. demystify the ways in which the research literature is selected and reviewed.
3. ensure that significant, relevant research is not ignored when seeking to establish gaps in policy or research knowledge.

Conceptual framework

4. explain and justify the use of the key concepts in research projects, including such ideas as "crisis," and "literacy."
5. explore the interconnectedness of educational phenomena themselves, such as reading and writing, as well as their interdependence with social, cultural and economic factors, in order to make clear why it is very hard to describe what and how students learn.

Data selection, collection and analysis

6. establish a solid rationale and provide sufficient explanation for the selection of data sources by providing an explicit explanation and justification for the types of data collected and the procedures for analysing these.

7. ensure comparisons which are made are fair and reasonable, and do not, for instance, ignore synonyms for the researchers' favoured terms.

8. recognise that all forms of comparisons are difficult to make, and that explorations of similarities and differences can provides a better framework for investigations.

9. be based on contact with appropriate people who can provide the relevant evidence and understanding, rather than, for instance, relying exclusively on superficial analyses of websites, recognising that local knowledge is always of considerable benefit to improving the quality of research.
10. ascertain the analytical frame that has been adopted is suited to the context under study, such that for example, an exclusive focus on Year 12 studies maybe be inappropriate where Year 11 and 12 are intimately related.

Indicate the delimitations and limitations of research

11. avoid claims that simplistic, ideologically-driven and divisively framed reports represent quality research-based knowledge.

12. make explicit the limitations of research methods, especially the evidence used to inform policy.

Drawing evidence-rich conclusions

13. explicitly relate evidence to conclusions, by drawing an explicit connection between the data that is analysed and recommendations or findings.

14. drawing of conclusions most often requires the use of verification procedures to minimise the serious risks of misinterpretation and distortions.

15. contributes to enhancing the professional judgments of teachers and other educators

It has been found that models of research which include qualitative-personal, qualitative-general, quantitative-personal, and quantitative-general evidences are necessary to answer the range of questions addressed by health care professionals, including policy-makers (Upshur, van den Kerkhof & Geol, 2001). There is no reason why this would not apply to the work of teachers and other education professionals.

A key issue for AARE Members is to work out processes for integrating and weighing the evidence generated through different research processes. This is in preference to adopting an approach which fails to ensure the use-value of such combined sources of empirically grounded, conceptually informed, value-rational knowledge (Leung, 2002).

AARE recognises that policy makers prefer more general details, for instance about system performance in terms of return on financial investments. Although it is also acknowledge that policy-makers are equally concerned these days with specific instances.

Just like medical practitioners, teachers have to address findings from macro-data sets as well as make use of specific research findings that are of immediate relevance to the context of their school community, using these to inform their work with individual students (Gupta, 2003).

It is in this context that Members of AARE are currently addressing a number of key issues, including:

1. How might a multi-dimensional approach to research and evidence generated through a variety of processes avoid the short comings of exclusionary approaches that, for instance, privilege quantitative-general evidence?
2. What possibilities are there for providing research training that prepares higher degree students to understand, if not undertake multi-dimensional research, so that they are better able to combine the results of studies using a variety of

methods and sources of evidence?

3. How might quality, research-based knowledge be integrated with, and enhance the expertise of teachers (and policy-makers, with due recognition of their differing needs for differing types of evidence) in ways which relate to their particular circumstances?

There would also seem to be much to be learnt from the debates from medical education and research; not all of which is being driven in the direction of reductionist agendas.

References

- Gupta, M. (2003), A critical appraisal of evidence-based medicine: Some ethical considerations. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*. 9 (2), pp. 111-121.
- Leung, W. (2002), Why is evidence from ethnographic and discourse research needed in medical education: The case of problem-based learning. *Medical Teacher*. 24 (2), pp. 169-172.
- Upshur, R., van den Kerkhof, E. & Geol, V. (2001), Meaning and measurement: An inclusive model of evidence in health care. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*. 7 (2): 91-96.

The format and layout of this on-line version differs from the print version which will be mailed to all members of the Association shortly.

We are unable to include inserts with this version.

One of the inserts with this issue of the NEWS is a comprehensive brochure on the forthcoming Adelaide Conference. If you wish to see that please go to www.aare.edu.au next conference and select either overview or pdf brochure.



Reminder of closing dates.

Betty Watts Award 30th of October

Earl Career Researcher Award 30th October

Student Travel Awards 30th April

For further information refer to the Awards section of the AARE website

See further information elsewhere in this newsletter.



Special Interest Groups (SIGs) Coordinator's Report

2005 Conference

The presence and participation of SIGs was highly visible at the Parramatta Conference. This was evidenced by symposia, paper sessions organised around SIG research interests, and the involvement of SIG members in full paper refereeing.

SIG Registration for 2006

Some of the contact details for SIGs on the AARE website are out of date and some previously registered SIGs are no longer included. I have been contacting SIG Convenors directly about this matter and am most appreciative of responses. According to AARE policy, for a SIG to continue in 2007, I need to be provided with the proforma on the SIG section of the website. If your SIG is not listed or details are incorrect on the website, please email me the proforma –

R.Cavanagh@curtin.edu.au

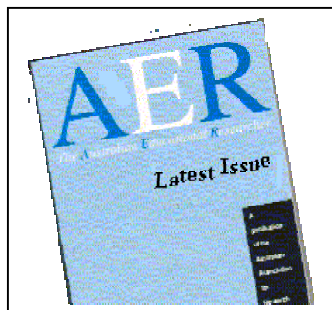
2006 Adelaide Conference

The call for conference submissions is not far away and we need to think about organisation of SIG activities. For example, SIG-based workshops, symposia, and organisation of presentations. SIG meetings and also a meeting between SIG Convenors and AARE Executive members will be scheduled in the program.

My suggestion for SIG meetings is that time be allocated in a session dedicated to SIG presentations. For example, within a symposium that would normally be attended by SIG members. Alternatively, a separate meeting could be programmed.

I will contact SIG Convenors directly about this when the Conference program is being organised.

Rob Cavanagh
SIG Coordinator
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Australian Educational Researchers Report

AER will publish its first issue for 2006 in April. This will be followed by a Special Issue on Middle Schooling currently scheduled for

publication in August. The special issue is the first of several successful submissions received in 2005 following a call for expressions of interest in guest editing a special issue of AER. The Middle Schooling issue is guest edited by Dr Lisa Hunter from Griffith University.

In 2005 AER received twice the number of paper submissions received in any prior year and the journal is continuing to receive a higher than expected number of submissions in 2006, although the number of papers accepted for publication tends to be the same as in previous years.

It is anticipated that the Federal Government's proposed Research Quality Framework will influence academic publishing. When details of the RQF become clear the AER editorial board will consider its impact on the journal and consider ways to better position the journal to maximize the benefits of publishing. Indexing the journal with Ingenta is now well established. Consideration could be given to preparing a proposal for listing with ISI and feedback from membership on this idea would be appreciated.

Annette Patterson
Managing Editor, AER.



RQF – No news is bad news

Every morning for the past three months I've checked the 'Latest News' on the DEST RQF¹ website, to see whether the minister has approved the recommendations of the RQF EAG, or has decided to cancel the exercise, or has opted for something in between. I would rather be getting on with my research and if you've been able to get on with yours, in blissful ignorance of what these acronyms stand for, then good for you – that's how it should be. Sadly, I think it's unlikely, for my guess is that you will already have been caught up in some kind of

RQF preparation exercise, told to find and polish your four best publications, or been assessed and classified in some kind of RQF dry run.

I had hoped to be able to write something useful for this *AARE News* – something based on documents bearing the minister's imprimatur. Knowing my luck, she'll release them the day after we go to press, or it will turn out that the Productivity Commission's latest review² will delay the enterprise. In the absence of something authoritative from DEST, I think we're all in a difficult and worsening position. One of the main problems is that PVCs (Research) don't know what to do for the best. They feel a need to be doing something, but have to second-guess important operational details if they are going to get into nitty gritty preparations. From what I hear, some of them are:

- initiating journal ranking exercises, discipline by discipline – so that people will know where to publish (or where they should have published!)
- identifying areas that will get top grades and redirecting scarce funds towards them
- figuring out how to construct 'research groupings' that, irrespective of any actual working relationships, stand the best chance of maximising RQF income

and doubtless they are doing much more besides. Considering some of the harm inflicted on Educational Research during the last 20 years of research assessment in the UK (and I was there for most of that time), my main worry is that academia will do more damage to itself than any politician or bureaucrat could inflict. We still don't know whether the RQF will be very mechanistic – depending heavily on statistical proxies for research quality and impact – or will allow significant space for expert judgement – with all its scope for disinterested connoisseurship or partisan prejudice. I am optimistic that the people who end up judging our research will be given the freedom to develop working methods, measures and benchmarks that make sense within educational research and, more broadly, the social sciences. I think they will be able to create a shared

understanding about such key matters as
 (a) the significance of ISI-listed journals (and how small a proportion of the best research is reported in them),
 (b) the complex nature of impact in areas of social policy and professional practice (and how hard it can be to trace the links between evidence and action),
 (c) the strengths and limitations of research grant income as a proxy for research quality.

I am not so optimistic about how such matters are being addressed in the RQF preparations in some of our universities. One can understand a need for even-handed treatment across faculties in a university, but if this means riding roughshod over disciplinary differences then it's likely that some significant damage will be done. Assuming we move ahead with a panel-based RQF, it may well turn out that the universities that have been least sensitive to disciplinary differences are the most damaged by the exercise.

Peter Goodyear
 AARE Exec
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¹http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/
²<http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Bishop/2006/03/B004100306.asp>



FUTURE CONFERENCES BIDS RESULTS

On Friday 24th February AARE Executive met in Sydney and among other things decided in which city to hold the 2007 conference. Through Peter Jeffery who had been delegated to collect bids from Brisbane, Canberra and Perth, the Executive was advised of the comparative information collected since mid 2005.

The Executive decided to hold the 2007 conference in Perth or Fremantle and the 2008 conference in Brisbane. Bids are to be collected for 2009 and 2010 from Canberra, Melbourne and Hobart.

- Canberra was eliminated for 2007 due to not having AARE's fixed dates available.
- A great deal of information was collected based on a professional conference specification developed by Dana Rosner working with Peter Jeffery.
- The information was tabulated and presented to the November AARE Executive and AGM.
- At the AARE AGM 2005, Peter Jeffery was asked to obtain bids from universities in Brisbane and Perth.
- With the assistance of the respective cities' marketing units and many direct approaches by Rob Cavanagh in Perth and Peter Jeffery for Brisbane, eventually some indication of interest was obtained from Notre Dame [Fremantle] and University of Queensland [Brisbane] but neither of these bids is complete.
- AARE made its decision between largely equal bids from Perth and Brisbane [2 convention centres approx the same and a university bid unfinished from Queensland].
- The decision was made for AARE reasons in planning our effective presence and growth in terms of Australian and overseas attendances; WA for attracting delegates from Africa, India and the Middle East, and Brisbane for attracting delegates from Asia, Europe and North and South America.
- Our decision was also heavily influenced by the volunteering of a Convenor for 2007, a member of Executive who is located at Curtin University -- Dr Rob Cavanagh. No such academic leadership exists at this time for Brisbane.
- The Executive decided to delay the AARE - NZARE joint conference till 2008 [Brisbane] to suit AARE needs, not only to accommodate our NZ

colleagues regarding travel costs but also to allow longer to prepare a truly joint conference [as opposed to just welcoming colleagues from other countries at any time].

- The Executive also decided to seek bids from Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney [centres and universities] so that we have a calendar of venues at least till 2010 with the order of cities to be determined by AARE not only in regard to financial considerations.

Debra Cunningham
 Hon. Secretary

AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL ALLIANCE - AGM

Peter Jeffery attended the AGM of ADA <http://www.digital.org.au> in Canberra 9th March, for AARE. AARE was a founder member of ADA as its charter to "maintain a balance in copyright between public good and private interests encouraging innovation and authorship" is relevant to an association of educational researchers who are both users and authors.

ADA was highly influential in a High Court of Australia decision concerning TPMs [technological protection measures]. The Court accepted that TPMs could be used to extend the law to prevent the use of personal property legitimately acquired. If the decision had gone in favour of the TPM user then the ability of libraries educational and cultural institutions and consumers would have been limited more than the law states.

Full details can be read at <http://www.digital.org.au/media/07-10-2005.htm>

BOOK EARLY FOR 2006 CONFERENCE ACCOMMODATION





Usage of the website remains at very high levels and in particular the digital archive of members' conference papers is a superb resource for researchers and students of education world wide. A large number of members' conference papers are fully refereed but a large number of excellent papers are not refereed for one reason or another. This does not diminish the value of the site as much of the non-refereed content is equal to or superior to the papers refereed. Several other basic resources published by AARE such as the book *Ethics and Education Research* – Bibby (1997) are often used. **The Association could consider a project to digitize all past RARE publications.** The AER on-line is also accessed frequently.

AARE continues to have a close working arrangement with the ACER Cunningham Library and hence the *Australian Education Index*.

The statistics and search engines on AARE website are equal to or better than many commercial or university systems. AARE search engine for example searches all of all files not just the first 500 words or so. Our members and other users can drill down in the statistics package to ascertain what usage there has been of their work.

The website is under constant adjustment as it operates 24hours 7 days a week 365 days each year. Recently we were asked by a member to take down a 2005 paper which breached an embargo. The 2005 papers had been available for 8 days on AARE website. Of course we took the requested action within 2 hours but a check of Google showed the paper and it cannot be removed by AARE. All AARE website content is cached within hours by Google and many universities around the world.

Our own backup is daily at 2.30am off site.

Out of date content or inaccurate content is the bane of web users. Recently the Carrick Institute posted a closing date for Adelaide proposals on their website that was actually the start date to receive proposals. Carrick Institute received the data from EDNA. Both have been notified and promised to rectify the matter but goodness knows how many potential presenters were put off never to return.

Peter Jeffery
AARE Website Manager
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The Adelaide Conference in November will see an expansion of the use of webex at AARE. Up till now we have been using it to broadcast sound and vision to remote persons from keynote speaker sessions and the Executive uses it to conserve members funds by having frequent efficient meetings without travel time and costs. We have also used it for distributing workshops.

Now we will take another step by using the record facility in webex to record symposia and paper sessions including keynote speakers. The recordings will not be able to be copied but they will be available for members, students of education and the public to view anywhere there is broadband internet connectivity.

Presenters will be approached for permission to transmit and record their presentations to create teaching resources. Prof Fazal Rizvi 2006 Radford Lecture Awardee and former President of AARE is leading the way by agreeing that his presentation can be transmitted and recorded.

Peter Jeffery
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AARE thanks WebEx for their generous sponsorship of educational research.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

2008,2009,2010,2011
2008,2009,2010,2011

CALL FOR TENDERS FOR VENUES AARE CONFERENCES 2008 - 2011

AARE has decided to call for tenders from conference venue providers in Brisbane for the AARE 2008 Conference and from other cities for 2009 - 2011.

The cities selected as possible locations for the 2009 and 2010 conferences are Canberra, and Melbourne. 2011 city has not been determined but it is long time since AARE conference was in Hobart. Also, there is a possibility of a joint conference with Singapore ERA or NZARE before 2011.

Tenders are invited from conference venue providers.

After tenders are collected from hotels, groups of hotels, universities and convention centres in these cities, AARE will appoint a Convenor and form a Committee for the event in the most attractive bidder's city. If a convenor cannot be found in the city of choice, AARE will approach potential Convenors [members] in the next most competitive venue tenderer/city. Several iterations are possible prior to awarding the contract for the provision of conference venue and venue services.

Note AARE is not calling for tenders for professional conference organizers [PCOs] but is calling for bids for the provision of the venue and associated catering and IT support at the venue.

The appointment of a group to provide professional conference organization at the selected

venue will be handled separately.

AARE Annual International Conference attracts upwards of 800 -1000 delegates for the four day event. Ninety percent of attendees are presenters so the conference needs approximately 25 – 30 break-out [teaching] rooms as well as a plenary presentation room capable of accommodating approx. 900 persons. Most presenters desire to use data projectors in their presentations.

Two hundred of the delegates are from overseas and about 600 – 700 do not normally reside in the host city.

The conference always commences on the last Sunday in November with registration, indigenous welcome ceremony and presidents' reception for 300 on the Sunday afternoon. The conference proper runs from the Monday to following Thursday.

Tenders, offers and bids for the AARE Annual International Conferences venues should be addressed to AARE Office attention Peter Jeffery.

Enquiries should be addressed to pjeff@aare.edu.au or 0359649031.

Tenders close 30th September 2006. AARE members are encouraged to contact possible providers in the named cities directing their attention to this notice.

Debra Cunningham
Hon. Secretary



From CHASS newsletter #14
This is an edited version of CHASS newsletter #14. The full version may be had from www.aare.edu.au/chass.htm

1. PADDY MCGUINNESS AT IT AGAIN
Paddy McGuinness' latest diatribe against funding for research in the humanities and social sciences can't be dismissed lightly. He said in his editorial in Quadrant (March 2006): "There would be little loss to society and to genuine intellectual enquiry if the funding of the non-sciences through the ARC (or through any similar body) were simply abolished."

2. "EXPANDING HORIZONS" UPDATE
Nearly 100 early-career researchers and professionals have registered for our event on March 28-29.

3. SIGRID THORNTON CHASS SPEAKER AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
Sigrid Thornton is a talented and eloquent actor, and we are delighted she has agreed to deliver the CHASS address at the National Press Club on Tuesday March 28.

4. SURVEY ON CROSS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH UPDATE
400 people have already responded to our survey of collaborations, as part of our project on cross-disciplinary research and education. You can find this short survey on our home page: www.chass.org.au

5. CHASS BOARD MEETING IN ADELAIDE 3 MARCH 2006: MAIN DECISIONS
The Board endorsed the principle of a new subscription structure for membership of CHASS.

6. CHRIS POWELL VISIT 15 MARCH
CHASS is hosting a visit to Canberra on March 15 by the Chair of the British organization NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts).

7. EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION VISIT 20-30 MARCH
Henk Stronkhorst is the head of the Social Sciences Unit at the ESF. He is visiting Australia with his colleague Claus Nowotny for about 10 days from March 20.

8. PMSEIC FOLLOW-UP
Iain McCalman presented a report to the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council last December. "Imagine

Australia" is available on the DEST web site.

9. PARLIAMENTARY DINNERS: DAVID GONSKI
The next in our series of dinners for MPs is a luncheon at Parliament House on 31 May. The topic is philanthropy and the arts, and David Gonski, Chair of the Australia Council, will lead the discussion.

10. PM: NO TO MEDALS FOR HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENTISTS
CHASS suggested to the Prime Minister that he might institute a medal system to recognise the achievements of people and organisations working in the humanities, arts and social sciences.

11. ARTSPEAK+ MEETING IN ADELAIDE
CHASS has facilitated two meetings for peak organisations with an interest in the visual and performing arts.

CD OF 2005 CONFERENCE PAPERS

After completely cross-checking attendance records with refereeing records and with submitted papers reconciled with the abstracts and correct paper codes, the collection is finally ready to publish.

All registrants will be sent a copy of the CD whether they contributed to it or not.

The CD is the fixed digital proceedings and cannot be altered once printed.

FULL DETAILS ARE ON AARE WEBSITE INCLUDING THE REGISTRATION FORM. READ THE NOTES CAREFULLY FOR NEW CONFERENCES QUALITY IMPROVEMENT POLICIES.





Early Career Researcher News

Joanne Dwyer

I am very happy to be the elected Early Career Researcher representative on the AARE Executive Committee. My role is to act as a representative voice within the educational research arena on behalf of early career researchers as well as to support them in specific ways, for example focused conference workshops.

If you completed your PhD or EdD, and/or taken up your first academic appointment within the last five years, I encourage you to contact me regarding any issues and/or support needed for our group within the research community. My contact details are below.

Something of Interest!

For those Early Career Researchers interested in cross-disciplinary collaborations the Council for Humanities and Arts (CHASS) is holding "Expanding Horizons" later this month. Targeting early career researchers this event aims to give new researchers the opportunity to discuss their work with MPs, with colleagues from other disciplines, and with industry. The program includes individual meetings with MPs and lunch at the National Press Club. More information can be obtained from www.chass.org.au

Share your work with a wider audience

Continuing in the tradition of last year's AARE newsletter, if you would like to share your work with a wider audience please send a 150 – 200 word description about a study you are involved in or a

journal paper you have shaped up. Include with the description your name, position/degree, email address and title of the study or paper. To get the ball rolling a description of a study I am undertaking is below.

Joanne Dwyer
j.dwyer@uws.edu.au

Teachers' practices mediated by ICT: Contexts, pedagogy and change. The long term impact of ICT on the practices of teachers

This study aims to take account of changes in teacher's practices mediated by ICT. It will draw closely on the practice of five case study teachers working in NSW government primary and secondary schools during the period of 2001 – 2005.

The data will be derived from classroom observations, teacher, student and principal interviews within each of the schools as well as from documentary evidence. The study will also use archive data collected for a related study over the successive years 2001 – 2003. Data analysis will involve the continuous shunting back and forth between old and new data; part of which will involve teachers retrospectively making meaning of data detailing their practices and thinking accumulated over the 5 years. This continuous movement between past and present will support building a complex understanding of change that tracks factors shaping change as well as the differing paths of change teachers' practices and thinking may take. This will enable investigating the degree to which individual teacher's pedagogy with ICT affects their students' learning with ICT.

This study draws on contemporary understandings of the evolving and moulded nature of pedagogy, as well as the distinctive contribution ICT makes to the educational environment. Change in pedagogy has predominately been theorised in terms of evaluating the degree of success of ICT integration in schools, generally in terms of whether it has enhanced student outcomes. This study aims to extend current conceptualisations of teacher's practices mediated by ICT, by placing the teacher at the

centre of the study and investigating change from their perspective.



Report for AARE on SiMERR National Summit

The SiMERR summit was the launch of SiMERR as a nationally co-ordinated body concerned with Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia.

The program was organized around a Number of KeyNote addresses (Dr. Gregor Ramsey, Professor John Pegg, Professor Kaye Stacey, Professor Kwong Lee Dow and Dr. Terry Lyons) and a brief brainstorming/workshop session concerned with issues drawn from the KeyNotes that may influence work in Rural and Regional Australia.

The structure of SiMERR is as a National Centre, based around four broad areas, Science, Information and Communication Technology and Mathematics as well as the area of Student Diversity. SiMERR aims to provide a stronger focus for Student Diversity by working in the areas of supporting low-achieving students, gifted and talented students and indigenous education.

The research program currently underway seeks to address those issues most pressing for teachers of these subject areas and seeks to build partnerships with education authorities, professional organizations, industry bodies and stakeholder groups.

SiMERR anticipates being a catalyst for bringing people together, sharing ideas and creating new partnerships for undertaking research. The work of Dr. Terry Lyons was highlighted at the conference and demonstrated an outstanding array of in-depth data and analysis about the nature of Rural and Regional work in universities in these subject areas.

SiMERR hopes that it might grow its relationship with a variety of groups in order to pursue its research agenda, hence members of AARE and particularly SIG chairs are in a good position to follow up with Professor Pegg on any important research links; he would be pleased to pursue possibilities.

SiMERR Hubs for each state
Queensland: James Cook University;
NSW: University of New England;
ACT: Australian Catholic University;
Victoria: Deakin University;
Tasmania: University of Tasmania;
South Australia: University of SA, Flinders University & ASAMS
Western Australia: Curtin University of Technology
Northern Territory: Charles Darwin University.
For further information, browse the SiMERR website
<http://simerr.une.edu.au>

John Loughran

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AARE EXECUTIVE 2006

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2006 Conference Convenor
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For contact details see AARE website.

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AARE Student Travel Awards

AARE Student Travel Awards are available to provide support for research higher degree students to attend the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education. This year several awards will be available to assist outstanding students with travel costs. The awards will be a contribution to defray incurred travel expenses and will be redeemable on presentation of receipts at the AARE 2006 Conference registration desk.

To be eligible for consideration for an award, applicants must:

- be a (student) member of AARE [half cost of full members]
- have not previously received this Award
- have been enrolled as a full time research student in a relevant area of study at an Australian higher education institution (including international students) for at least 12 months

by the time of the conference, OR have been enrolled as a part time student in a program as described above but ineligible for employment-related support to attend the conference

- propose a single-authored paper to present at conference by the 30th of April
- either provide the full paper (for refereeing) by 31 May, or, if the paper is not to be refereed, provide the full paper by 30 June. All applications for Student Travel Awards must be accompanied by a letter of support from a supervisor.
- submit a final version of the paper (on disk and on paper) at the AARE 2006 Conference registration desk.
- be able to attend the **full** conference [students pay 50% of full registration rates]
- be able to present the paper as scheduled

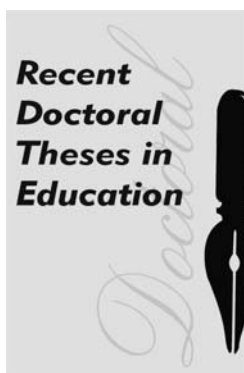
To apply for a post graduate Student Travel Award, please find details on AARE website (www.aare.edu.au)

AARE budgets about \$7,000 each year of members funds to distribute to student as travel awards. In 2005 only one student applied and was granted the airfare from Perth to Sydney [approximately \$900]. That means students missed out on about \$6,000 allocated to assist them last year. This is very sad.

In 2006 we are hoping that many more students will apply for travel awards. The available money will be shared by successful students.

Jinghe Han
PG Representative AARE
Executive.

The next AARE Executive meeting will be held in Sydney on 19th June. All members having business for AARE may contact the Hon. Secretary to suggest agenda items.



RECENT DOCTORAL THESES IN EDUCATION

This is the column in AARE News dedicated to publishing news on recent doctoral theses in education. This addition includes theses from the Cunningham Library ACER Education Research Theses database. These can be accessed at <http://www.acer.edu.au/library/catalogues/theses.html>.

Digital theses can also be accessed via the Australian Digital Thesis Program, coordinated through the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL). <http://adt.caul.edu.au/>

Please encourage the research units in your Faculties/Schools of Education to consider forwarding details of recently completed theses. Abstracts of completed doctoral theses can be sent to me at: vhawwood@uow.edu.au

Guidelines for your submission can be found in AARE News Issue 42 (available on AARE's website). Please note that *we are now publishing the names of candidates' supervisor(s)*, to include them in the celebration of the work completed.

Some key points to remember are:

- the abstract must be no longer than 300 words
- the thesis must be recently conferred by your institution (last 6-12 months)
- the abstract is from a doctoral thesis (PhD or EdD), and from an education faculty/department/school in an Australian University
- Include your name, postal address, email, and the name of the conferring institution
- Include your supervisor(s) names

Valerie Harwood
Executive Member

Dr Peter Cox
Participation and performance in mathematics and science: gender issues revisited
PhD

La Trobe University
Supervisors: Professor Gilah Leder and Dr. Graeme Byrne

Abstract

Gender and socio-economic differences in participation, subject selection and performance in grade 12 subjects were examined in this research project. One of Australia's largest senior secondary schools was the main setting for the study. This project comprised three stages: a quantitative investigation of subject participation and performance, involving 2500 students; an anonymous survey of 800 students, in which students' beliefs and attitudes toward subjects, and their reasons for subject choices were examined; and focus group interviews with students and teachers to probe in more detail selected findings from the first two stages.

Traditional gender-stereotyped enrolment patterns were found in the mathematics and science subjects. Girls and boys chose differing subject combinations and gave different reasons for selecting mathematics and science subjects. Gender differences in performance in favour of girls were found in all mathematics and science subjects and for most types of assessment. Few of these differences were statistically significant when "ability" was taken into account. Enrolments and performance in the key mathematics and science subjects were found to increase with increasing socio-economic group. Socio-economic differences were statistically significant when "ability" was taken into account. Boys, particularly lower socio-economic boys, were found to put in less time and effort into their school work than the girls claimed they did. Boys' peer groups may be a factor in this effect.

Male and higher socio-economic students were found to occupy a high value "niche" in the curriculum which is likely to advantage them post-school. This may, in part, be related to teacher beliefs and expectations. Sex-stereotyped beliefs were found to be prevalent among the students in the study. Boys selected a more limited range of subjects, with choices shaped by their intended career; girls were more diverse in their selections and seemed to be planning for two possible lives — a career, and childrearing. Limited evidence in this study was found to support the crisis in boys' education. However, the media portrayal of this issue probably influences student beliefs.

Dr Beryl Exley
Title: Teachers' Professional Knowledge Bases for Offshore Education: Two case studies of Western teachers working in Indonesia.

Queensland University of Technology
August 2005

Supervisors: Ass Professor Parlo Singh & Ass Professor Sandra Taylor

This thesis examined what two groups of Western teachers said about the students they taught, their own role, professional and social identity, the knowledge transmitted, and their pedagogical strategies. A review of the literature concluded that teachers draw on four interrelated: knowledge of content, teaching processes, and of their own and students' pedagogic identities. The theoretical framework drew on models of teachers' knowledge bases (Elbaz, 1983; Shulman, 1986a, 1986b, 1987; Nias, 1989; Turner-Bisset, 1997, 1999), the sociology of knowledge (Bernstein, 1975, 1990, 1996, 1999, 2000), and notions of pedagogic identity (Bernstein, 2000). This framework theorised the types of knowledges taught, categories of teaching process knowledge, and the range of pedagogic identities made available to teachers and students in offshore education. The teacher participants from both case studies taught a range of subjects and used English as the medium of instruction. Data for both case studies were generated via semi-structured interviews. The interviews focused on the teachers' descriptions of the learner characteristics of Indonesian students, their professional roles whilst teaching offshore, and curriculum and pedagogic design.

The analyses produced four findings. Firstly, the teacher participants drew on all knowledge bases and that these knowledge bases were interrelated. Secondly, teachers' knowledge bases were negotiated in response to their beliefs about their work and the past, present and future demands of the local context. A third finding was that it was only when the teachers entered into reflective dialogue that they questioned the stereotypical views of Indonesian learners as passive, shy and quiet. The final finding was that the teachers were positioned in multiple ways by contradictory and conflicting discourses. The analyses suggested that teachers' pedagogic identities were a site of struggle between dominant market orientations and the criteria that the teachers thought should determine who was a legitimate teacher for offshore Indonesian students.

Dr. Ting Wang
Title: Understanding Chinese Educational Leaders' Conceptions of Learning and Leadership in an International Education Context
PhD

University of Canberra
Supervisors: Professor Carole Kayrooz, Dr. John Collard and Professor Peter Putnis

Abstract
This thesis presents an interpretative study of an Australian offshore program in educational leadership conducted at Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province in China from 2002 to 2003. It is a study of the

influence of international education on the conceptions of the participants in a particular context, where Chinese culture and Western cultures came into contact. The study is significant because it investigated a relatively new aspect of international education, offshore education, this time from the perspective of the participants. It explored the conceptions of learning and leadership brought by a group of Chinese educational leaders to the course and investigated the perceived influence of the course upon their conceptions and self-reported leadership practice. It employed a culturally sensitive approach which recognizes that a complex interaction between Chinese and Western cultures is occurring in the participants of this study.

This study was inspired by the phenomenographic approach and employed a semi-structured and in-depth interview technique. Twenty participants were interviewed twice over a 12-month period. The study sought a better understanding of their conceptions by making a comparison between their perceptions prior to and after undertaking the course.

Participants were from schools, universities and educational departments. The findings showed that most participants developed more complex understandings of learning and leadership throughout the course. Comparison of their conceptions prior to and after the course indicated an expanded range of, and more complex conceptions. There was a general shift from content/utilitarian-oriented learning conceptions to meaning/developmental-oriented conceptions. There was also a shift from task/directive-orientated conceptions about leadership to motivation/collaborative-oriented conceptions. The findings also revealed some differences regarding conceptual and practice changes across the three sectors. This study therefore makes a new contribution to understanding Chinese educational leaders' conceptions of learning and leadership in an international education context.

Dr Graeme Hall

Title: Beyond the Divide: Relations between teachers and academics in a collaborative research partnership

EdD

Queensland University of Technology

15 September 2005

Supervisors: Assoc Prof Susan Danby (Principal Supervisor), Prof Erica McWilliam, Dr Jan Millwater

Abstract

This study examines one school and university partnership that was modelled on the principles of a Professional Development School. Whereas most research investigating school and university partnerships

addresses the outcomes of such partnerships, or attempts to describe and advocate for ideal partnerships, this study considers the actual interactional work of the participants as they engage in the everyday and ongoing activities of partnership. It adopts the view that the work of partnership is an ongoing accomplishment through the activity of the participants. In this way, it shows the local social order of a partnership as it was built, maintained and transformed through the interactional work of the participants. Both the institutional setting and the participants' enactment of partnership work contribute to the establishment of the social and moral order of the partnership.

This study drew on ethnomethodological resources, particularly those of conversation analysis and membership category analysis, to develop understandings about how the participants accomplish the partnership work through their talk-in-interaction. The study shows the resources that the participants use to construct and accomplish their different kinds of expertise, to enact the leadership activities required, and to co-construct the various features of partnership. It offers analytic tools for uncovering the interactional resource of the participants. In showing how the social and moral orders of partnerships are revealed and by offering understandings of the pragmatics of school and university partnership, the social structure of school and university partnerships is explicated. Epistemologically, the study explores and exposes the kinds of knowledge produced from this kind of accounting for school and university partnerships. It shows how the work of partnership *can* be accomplished by participants, rather than attempt to claim how it *should* be done.

Dr Karin Oerlemans

Title: Secondary school students engagement in educational change: Critical perspectives on policy enactment.

PhD

University of Western Australia.

September, 2005

Supervisors: Associate Professor Lesley Vidovich, Associate Professor Marnie O'Neill

Abstract:

This thesis presents the critical analysis of a study of students, perceptions of educational change. Much educational change involves shifts in power and responsibilities between different actors, such as governments, school administrators, teachers, parents, the community and students. Despite widespread interest in educational change it is usually the macro-level policy elite who exert the most influence, using their power, privilege and status in order to propagate particular versions of schooling; students continue to be the

'objects' of policy initiatives, submerged in a Freirean 'culture of silence'. Students are frequently excluded as participants in both the process and decision making phases of change. The research explored their exclusion from educational changes resulting from a top-down policy initiative by the State department of education in WA, the *Local Area Education Planning (LAEP) Framework*. How policy is defined and acted on is explored, and the roles students could have, but often do not, are highlighted. An eclectic hybrid conceptual framework drawing on both critical theory and a postmodern policy cycle approach was used. The research comprised in-depth case studies of three schools undergoing educational restructuring. Key elements of the policy were school amalgamations, closures and the creation of Middle Schools. Data collection methods included focus group with students from the three schools, as well as document analysis, staff interviews and field notes. The research found that students were very perceptive about educational change, that they were deeply impacted by educational change and that they wanted to participate in restructuring agendas. Several meta-level themes emerged from the students' 'voices', including issues associated with disempowerment, and competing social justice and economic discourses. The findings foreground the often messy and contradictory tensions evident in policy processes. The thesis concluded by developing theory on ways in which students could be included meaningfully as participants in educational change.

Dr Susan Beltman

Title: Motivation of high-achieving athletes and musicians: A person-context perspective

Murdoch University

PhD

September 2005

Supervisors: Professor Simone Volet and Dr Judith MacCallum

Abstract

This research explores how motivation in the domains of sport and music is shaped at the interface of person and context. From a social cognitive perspective, motivation research focuses on factors within the individual, whereas a more situated conceptualisation examines motivation within a person in context perspective. This study combines elements of both perspectives. It is proposed that motivation is shaped at the interface of person and context, where individuals make appraisals of social (other people) and structural (physical or organisational) aspects of their environments. A holistic view of motivation is adopted that incorporates initial engagement, ongoing involvement and persistence. In order to capture such a dynamic, complex construct, semi-structured interviews and innovative tasks are used to gather biographical and longitudinal data about

high-achieving athletes and musicians from diverse settings.

The findings reveal that complex personal and contextual factors operate reciprocally and dynamically as individuals make ongoing appraisals of their current situations. For example, personal factors such as aptitude, and contextual factors such as the existence of community programs, operate in a reciprocal way to shape participants' initial engagement in sport or music. Complexity is highlighted when examining the role of onlookers (spectators or audience). A powerful effect on continuing involvement occurs when communities overlap and family members take on roles associated with onlookers. Participants face a range of potential problems in their lives and there are variations in the way these are perceived, in strategies and resources used, and in their impact on persistence. An important finding is the dynamic nature of motivation as participants' involvement in sport or music changes over time. In addition to deepening our understanding of how motivation is shaped at the interface of person and context, the study offers a unique methodological contribution and the findings have implications for enhancing motivation in applied settings.

Dr Song-Ae Han

Title: Effective environments for English language learning and teaching in Korea: A study of adult EFL learners' perceptions
EdD

Monash University
Conferred March 2005

Supervisors: Associate Professor Ilana Snyder and Dr Marie-Therese Jensen

Abstract

This study explores the qualities of effective environments for English learning and teaching by examining the experiences and beliefs of 12 adult EFL Korean learners. Within a qualitative research paradigm, data were collected using a background questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, post-interview notes and learner journals. An interpretive approach to analysis was applied.

The learners believed the following as intrinsic to effective learning: continuous learning, active learning, individual learner effort, learner responsibility for learning, and practice through memorisation and repetition. Importantly, for these learners, effective teaching is built on warm and trusting relationships between teachers and learners, and among classmates, a comfortable and safe classroom atmosphere, and teachers who regard teaching as a mission, not simply as a job, and who are enthusiastic and responsible. The findings suggest that more attention needs to be given to: the

integration of important elements of both old and new teaching methods and of both Eastern and Western values. The study suggests that different varieties of English should be taught and learned as a means of cross-cultural communication and understanding and of conservation of local cultures. The findings also suggest that Korean teachers of English need to be exposed to other varieties of English and recognise that their English is not inferior to, but rather different from, NESs' English. Native speaking-teachers of English (NSTEs) should also learn about Korean culture and language as part of their professional responsibility as teachers of English in Korea. The study highlights cross-cultural understanding between EFL learners and NSTEs as an important element to create desirable learning and teaching environments. Finally, the study offers a range of insights to inform the development of culturally appropriate models of learning and teaching environments not only in the Korean context, but also in contexts similar to Korea.



A full brochure about the AARE 2006 Annual International Education Research Conference is available. It is enclosed with this AARE NEWS. If the brochure is missing, please go to the AARE website to read and down-load almost identical material or email AARE Office for a copy to be posted to you.

Highlights of AARE 2006 Adelaide.

Cross Institutional Planning Committee.

As is normal for AARE Conferences the committee for Adelaide has representatives from Flinders University, University of South Australia, TAFE, University of Adelaide and others.

Venue information

Adelaide conference venue is a bit tricky to describe. Everyone tends to think in terms of the conference being at "this or that convention centre or this or that university campus" but in Adelaide the conference is in 3 buildings on North Terrace next to the CBD. The conference is

operated by AARE with a cross-institutional planning committee.

AARE will pay for the hired venues at the Student Union Adelaide University for catering and exhibits etc. and Bonython Hall located facing North Terrace Adelaide for plenary sessions. The University of South Australia has very generously sponsored [donated] all the 25 – 30 break-out rooms at its City-East campus also located on North Terrace next door to the other hired buildings. Flinders University will not be providing rooms as they are located out of the Adelaide city area, but they have contributed to planning and academic or organizational matters plus a major cash sponsorship.

Don't get confused. Take a virtual tour of the sites being used for AARE 2006 on AARE website and report to Bonython Hall on North Terrace for registration and plenary sessions.

Featured Symposia

The Adelaide Committee is working hard to arrange some exceptional symposia appropriate for the theme. Some other symposia and many papers have been submitted early to secure a prominent place in the program. Make sure all proposals are submitted to AARE Office on the forms that are available on AARE website.

If the Secretariat doesn't have the details then the event/session will not get into the program.

Schools Partnership Day

The planning committee wants to ensure that school teachers are made welcome and brought into the program as partners in the educational research effort and its uptake. Accordingly a special discount registration rate is available allowing school teachers on Tuesday to register at members rates without paying a membership fee. [Saving \$160].

Sunday Workshops are available due to the generosity of UniSA donating the rooms. They are available only to registrants and registrations must be on-line in our SECURE EFTPOS system.

SEE BROCHURE FOR MORE FEATURES AND SEE YOU IN ADELAIDE!

BACK PAGE NOTICES

DATES TO NOTE

Proposals [abstracts] for 2006 conf. CLOSE	30 th APRIL
Full papers for refereeing final submission	31 st MAY
AARE Executive meeting	19 th JUNE
Student Travel Awards application CLOSE	30 th JUNE
Early Bird [discount] registration CLOSE	31 st August
All PRESENTERS wishing to remain in the Program must pay by	30 th SEPTEMBER
End of "withdrawals" period. NO SHOW CATEGORY BEGINS	1 st OCTOBER

Forthcoming AARE publication

'Counterpoints on the Quality and Impact of Educational Research'

This is a Review of Research in Education (RARE) which will be published as special issue of the Australian Educational Researcher. It draws together key local and overseas authors and commentators to provide a range of views on the public assessment of quality and impact of educational research. It is designed to provide information for those involved in education research to assist in formulating individual and institutional responses to the proposed Research Quality Framework exercise.

This book will be distributed free to all AARE members and sold to non-members.

AARE NEWS 2006

NEWS #	Copy Date	Web Publication	Distribution
# 53 March	4 March	8 March	11 March
# 54 April	1 April	10 April	11 April
# 55 July	1 July	8 July	11 July
# 56 October	1 October	8 Oct	11 Oct