Higher Education in the Corporate Century: Choosing Collaborative Rather than Entrepreneurial and/or Competitive Models

Donna Lee Brien
School of English, Communication and Theatre, University of New England, Armidale, NSW, Australia

At a time when many in the higher education sector are being directed to imitate corporate models of behaviour, this paper suggests that instead of responding to such dictates with aggressive resistance or passive helplessness, such directives can be reinterpreted and utilised to the advantage of all those in the higher education system. The adoption of selected modes of corporate behaviour can, moreover, not only benefit teaching and learning practices and outcomes, but can also increase the satisfaction of both students and their teachers. Importantly, the empowering strategy necessary to employ is not one that is forced, combative or underhand but is, rather, a process that utilises the kinds of strategic creative and lateral thinking that writing programmes promote.

doi: 10.2167/new491.0

Keywords: writing programme design, approaches to learning and writing, collaboration, collaborative practice, teamwork

real value in the sciences, the arts, commerce, and indeed, one’s personal and professional lives, comes largely from collaboration. (Schrage, 1990)

At a time when many in the higher education sector are being directed to imitate corporate models of behaviour, this paper suggests that instead of responding to such dictates with aggressive resistance or feelings of passive helplessness, such directives can be reinterpreted and utilised to the advantage of academics and students working in the area of writing. Moreover, the empowering strategy necessary to employ is not one that is combative or underhand but is, rather, a process that utilises the kinds of strategic creative and lateral thinking many writing programmes promote.

In the introduction to a collection of articles generated by the second International Conference on Teamworking, the editors assert that ‘so many’ organisations have embraced the concept of teamwork because it is accepted as an ‘[i]mproved utilisation of human resources . . . which some claim as the most important resource organisations have, and ultimately the only competitive advantage’ (Park et al., 2000: 5). A team working together, whatever its size or connectivity to other teams, management literature forcefully insists, is
the paramount organisational structure to ensure the satisfaction of customers, employees and other shareholders in the corporate world. Could, then, the adoption of such principles by the higher education sector lead to similar high levels of satisfaction for all stakeholders: students, staff and university management structures, as well as the wider community?

Teamwork as a Corporate Model

When corporate behaviours are invoked, two models often spring to mind. These are either an entrepreneurial paradigm in which decisions are taken to maximise short-term profits or the competitive, fittest-will-rise-to-the-top model. While this paper rejects both of these as inappropriate for teaching and learning in the higher education context, it is stimulating to reflect on how even the latter model can be strategically reconceptualised to support a collaborative teamwork mode of practice. The competitive prototype of free-market enterprise is based on the common understanding of Darwinian natural selection in which competition ensures survival: successful fighters breed and pass on their individual genes while more passive, weaker strains do not. Yet, biologists from Darwin onwards have also noted that members of some species work together for outcomes that benefit the group as a whole rather than those more cooperative individuals as singular entities (Klarreich, 2004: 90). Obviously, given evolutionary theory, such altruistic collaborative behaviour must also be of benefit to those individual givers as well as the receivers of such largesse – otherwise those less selfish individuals would never survive to breed. Contemporary game theorists are working with biologists on this paradox, which has been identified as ‘a fundamental problem in evolutionary biology’ (Hauert & Doebeli, 2004: 643). The findings of these game theorists regarding such cooperative behaviours have graced the covers of Nature and Science News, the articles therein making this cutting-edge research accessible to general readers. Cooperative behaviour, it appears, is not merely an anomaly in the evolutionary struggle, but is so central and crucial as to perhaps hold the key to the ‘emergence . . . of life itself’ (Klarreich, 2004: 90).

Although such discussions of evolution and game theory seem remote from corporate modelling, this fundamental centrality of cooperative behaviour has also been recognised and embraced by a series of business theorists who actively advocate collaborative teamwork as a model of workplace organisation. In The Fifth Discipline (1990), the groundbreaking work conceptualising personnel-employing organisations as complex living systems rather than Metropolis-style machines, Senge argues that teamwork is a key reason why some organisations are able to learn and evolve (and thus survive and thrive), while others never progress beyond a certain stage of performance and achievement. This text was, and remains, important in business and industry contexts as Senge’s argument is future-focused, seeking to shift corporate concentration away from profit-driven, but often short-term, planning.

Building on this idea, management consultants Katzenbach and Smith’s best-selling The Wisdom of Teams (1992) has become so entrenched in business and management theory that even their subtitle, Creating the High Performance Organization, has become an aim in corporate circles. In Katzenbach and
Smith’s terms, a ‘high-performance’ enterprise not only improves faster than its competition and sustains that rate of improvement, but, importantly, also satisfies all its stakeholders. As these stakeholders include the organisation’s employees, this model seems at least worthy of consideration in the higher education context. Katzenbach and Smith’s (1994: 45) team, moreover, is not just any group of people who work together on a specific task or project but, rather, ‘a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable’. These essential elements – complementary skills, mutual accountability, a common approach, and shared (and concrete) goals – are stressed throughout this, and later, work on corporate teamwork. Katzenback and Smith’s (1994: 92) major refinement of Senge’s theory is to suggest that there are levels of teams, with the members of the to-be-aspired-to peak ‘high performance’ team not only dedicated to a common task or purpose, but also ‘deeply committed to one another’s personal growth and success’. Such teams, while obviously completing the task at hand, simultaneously become ‘vehicles for personal learning and development’ (Katzenback & Smith, 1994: 48): a very attractive notion for those who, in the task-rich, time-poor environment of the 21st century academy feel personal development is the ever-unfulfilled last item on our constantly growing to-do lists.

Recent work takes the next logical step in this progression, looking beyond the building of effective, but separate, workplace teams to viable ways of networking these into a ‘collaborative organisation’ as in Beyerlein et al.’s (2002) Beyond Teams: Building the Collaborative Organization. Such an organisation, Beyerlein et al. assert, will have teamwork, communication and personal growth at its core, rather than operational in only some of its parts. Working again from Senge’s premise that having the maximum numbers of members of an organisation working together collaboratively provides the key to competitive advantage, the central shift here is in moving from developing individual teams to a synergistic environment where the result of collaboration between, and across, these teams is always greater than the sum of individual teams’ efforts and capabilities.

**Applying Corporate Teamworking to the Higher Education Context**

Applying his understanding of teamwork (focusing on relationships, clearly articulated purposes and evolving working processes) to education, Senge articulates a vision for the future in terms of ‘collective agendas’, ‘shared vision’ (Senge, 1998: 60), ‘partnerships’ and ‘collective responsibility’ (p. 64). I believe a feasible and effective approach to higher education in the discipline of writing can be based on these principles of collaborative endeavour, with an advanced teamwork model, as gleaned from the business and management literature, at the fore. Underlying this assertion is a belief that all teaching and learning already happen – or do not – jointly, with neither teachers nor their students (or the administrative units that govern many of their activities and interactions) solely responsible for the success, or failure, of any particular
teaching and learning experience. It is also based on an assumption that a reconfiguring of workplace culture is necessary, as academics in the creative arts (highly creative as well as scholarly individuals) will only continue to actively participate in this profession where there is at least the potential for personal growth, development and satisfaction. I also recognise that while many in higher education are working within, or towards, a variety of collaborative frameworks, it is rare outside of management circles for such practice to be articulated using such corporatised idiom. Nor is it common to holistically conceptualise our higher education institutions as organisations in this manner.

Collaborative work practices (and especially those which seek to function across institutional hierarchies and silos of teaching, learning, research and administration) have been largely underexamined outside the business environment (Brien & Brady, 2003). Ramsden’s (1992, 2003) foundational guide, *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*, for example, urges teachers to be deeply engaged in their students’ learning, but largely presents this as a task where teachers scrutinise and evaluate their students, rather than offering students a more active role in this process. At the beginning of *Rethinking University Teaching*, Laurillard (2002: 1) proclaims: ‘It is the teacher’s responsibility to create the conditions in which understanding is possible, and the student’s responsibility to take advantage of that’, but does not elaborate on how these two sets of responsibilities intersect with, and depend upon, each other. Material is available exploring how teachers can support each other (for example, Albrecht, 2000) as well as ways to promote collaboration between educational institutions and the communities they serve (Bergman, 2000) and more actively involve business/industry in funding educational institutions and delivering vocationally focused programmes (Lawrence, 1990; Tovey, 2001). However, information on how the core business of higher education – teaching, learning and research – may be enacted as collaborative activities is much more difficult to locate.

As ‘teamwork’ is a frequently recognised generic attribute for students, there is a growing literature addressing the reasons and methods for encouraging students to work together (for example, Davis, 1993; Street & Temperley, 2005; Thousand et al., 2002; Tinzmann et al., 1990). This material supports the proposal that students working in groups not only learn better, and more, and retain what they have learned for a longer period (Collier, 1980; Slavin, 1983), but that they are also better prepared for life after study (Beckman, 1990). The discipline of writing’s confidence in such work is revealed in the centrality of the writing workshop and team-produced anthologies, journals, zines and other works which allow students to rehearse the roles and responsibilities of professional practice. Despite this, many students are resistant to even the notion of group work, especially when individual assessment is based on group performance (Cooper and Associates, 1990).

Nor, in the discipline area of writing, is there a significant literature on either how writers as creative producers, and/or those involved in the creative industries that employ and support these writers, collaborate. A core of work on co-authorship (see, for example, Blain, 1996; Chadwick & De Courtivron,
1993; Clemens & McCooey, 2000; Cross, 1994; Ede & Lunsford, 1992; Gollin, 1994; Koestenbaum, 1989; Lay & Karis, 1991; London, 1999; Perry & Brownley, 1984; Styles, 1989) and a fascinating (but too concise) series of memoirs by, and biographies of, editors and publishers, and histories of publishing houses (including those by Athill, 2000; Baines, 2005; Griffen-Foley, 1999; Kent, 2001; Lewis, 2005; McPhee, 2001; Munro, 1998; Robb, 2003; Willis, 1992), are supported by even fewer texts by, or about, literary agents (Chambers, 1998; Fisher, 2004; Greenfield, 1995; Jackinson, 1987; Kreyling, 1991; Lazar, 1995; Lewis, 2000; Liepman, 1998; Wasserman, 1997); ghost writers (Erdal, 2005; Fu, 2003; Humes, 1997; McDonald, 2002) and book dealers and sellers (Almon, 1974; Burton, 2005; Ettinghausen, 1966; Hanff, 1970; Knight, 1990; Matthews, 1989; Meyer, 2001; Rota, 2002; Stern & Rostenberg, 1997). Despite this by no means exhaustive list of descriptions of the collaborative working relationships at the heart of the writing and publishing industry, the idea of the lone individual genius as the creator of the literary work is still very pervasive. Bennis and Biederman (1997: 2) discuss this paradox:

In a society as complex and technologically sophisticated as ours, the most urgent projects require the coordinated contributions of many talented people . . . And yet, even as we make the case for collaboration, we resist the idea of collective creativity. Our mythology refuses to catch up with our reality. We cling to the myth of the Lone Ranger, the romantic idea that great things are usually accomplished by a larger-than-life individual working alone. Despite the evidence to the contrary, we still tend to think of achievement in terms of the Great Man or Great Woman, instead of the Great Group.

In this context, it is telling that there are so many more guides on how to become a writer, editor, agent or (self)-publisher, than useful material (as that included in the works cited above) on how these literary workers interact and work collaboratively with each other.

These mixed messages are echoed institutionally in the common inclusion of such skills as ‘teamwork’, ‘collaboration’, ‘communication skills’ and similar terms in university statements of generic graduate attribute skill sets while the vast majority of work engaged in by, and required of, students in most disciplines at those universities is completed individually. This inconsistency is mirrored in the current situation whereby academics are urged to engage in collaborative and multidisciplinary research projects (and rewarded through grant funding for such group work) at a time when the single authored scholarly monograph remains the apex marker of distinction and achievement in many disciplines.

A Profit and Loss Assessment in Adopting Collaborative Practice

My recent experiments in adopting teamwork frameworks for teaching and learning, and some research practice, have focused on trying to achieve maximum ‘profit’ in corporate terms – that is, the greatest gain for all involved in exchange for the least additional expenditure. In this, I was aiming for the
features of Katzenback and Smith’s (1994: 48) peak ‘high performance’ team, investigating if such a model could also promote my own ‘learning and development’ and, therefore, personal enrichment and satisfaction, in exchange for the seemingly ever-increasing expenditure of effort and energy demanded of me as an academic in the contemporary context. If this were achieved, the ledger in my case would be, I believed, undeniably in the black.

**Case Study 1: Undergraduate units**

To cite an example of how such a teamwork approach can operate in relation to undergraduate teaching, my students and I have, since 2004, in two different units, been exploring together the rapidly shifting environment of copyright and intellectual property law. This has taken us into the realms of quotation, citation, homage, sampling, ripping, plagiarism, piracy and other legal, ethical and moral rights practices and infringement. Class discussions in these units consistently reveal that many students already possess a rich experiential understanding of these concepts gained from their personal interests in such processes as file-sharing and weblogging, an understanding which often transcends some aspects of my more theoretical and historically informed knowledge. Starting from this personal understanding, students are organised into small groups and set research tasks involving the preparation of class presentations and practical demonstrations of their findings. These presentations lead to relatively sophisticated class discussions of the moral and ethical dimensions of these issues, as well as to group outlining of best practice processes in academic, professional and community contexts. The small group presentations and ensuing larger group discussions, as well as the submitted assessment work on this topic, have revealed that, by building on existing knowledge, students have learned a great deal from this exercise. They reinforced the established idea that ‘to teach is to learn twice’ (Whitman, 1988) – teaching me as well as each other. As the teacher in this group, I was not only released from the time-consuming task of ‘brushing up’ on the latest technological developments and locating related readings (as the small groups brought such knowledge and resources to the class), but was also free to concentrate on (and then feed into the group as well as my own research work) what I, as a motivated coleaner (to use Lave & Wenger’s (1991: 15) term) was most interested in spending my time investigating: the rise, and potential, of the creative commons and the effects of weblogs on traditional media forms. In terms of ‘gain’, the student-gathered readings form a rich collection of information and resources for ensuing classes and also regularly include much material that I would have only located after much attenuated searching. As these resources were found by students, much also has that all-important high interest value that is often the difference between whether an undergraduate student engages with a text or not (Brien & Neilsen, 2001).

In another unit in which I co-teach, which mixes professional and creative writing, the class structure has been reconfigured so that the traditional, but relatively unsuccessful in our situation, ‘discuss the week’s readings’ tutorial format has been replaced by a weekly committee meeting. These meetings are chaired and minuted by students, following agendas the class creates from a
range of suggested readings, questions and activities. Following this procedure since 2003, student attendance and participation in tutorials has improved and individual students are much better prepared for classes. A recent peer observation notes that students:

took on the organisation and running of the meeting … this placed the focus upon the students, their input and interaction … the students were taking on responsibility for their own learning. (Stein, 2005: 2–3)

Although the committee meeting may seem a rigid structure for group communication, it does not straightjacket interaction but instead creates an accessible environment that encourages all to participate. The peer observation noted that ‘even the quieter students were active and engaged’ (Stein, 2005: 2), with the group discussions that result fostering a much deeper engagement with the unit objectives than had been previously achieved utilising the traditional tutorial format.

This experiment has resulted in a number of enhanced learning outcomes for students, not least of these that this format offers considerably more scope (than the traditional tutorial) for students and tutor to work together as a group to build on their individual strengths and existing knowledge, address individual learning needs and focus on individual interests. In terms of a profit-and-loss model, however, what did the teaching team ‘gain’ from the extra energy necessarily invested in developing and initiating this diversion from usual practice? At its most basic, there is a considerable time-saving ‘payoff’, as once the meeting structure is in place, it becomes a self-sustaining and, indeed, evolving system with students taking considerable, and increasing, responsibility for the day-to-day running of their classes. The creation of detailed agendas for each meeting, for instance, was a student-initiated development, with group discussion deciding what articles are read by whom, what activities completed for homework and which worked on in class, which mini-presentations prepared and when, and what additional resources are to be located and shared with the group. Tutoring itself is also made much more interesting, pleasurable and rewarding as students’ commitment to completing tasks decided by the group is considerably higher than when ‘decreed’ by the tutor. In addition, as there is inevitably a number of students who are already familiar with formal committee-style meetings, tutors are once again released from the role of expert and can work collaboratively with the group to investigate and maintain correct procedural forms.

Various peer-moderated feedback mechanisms also inevitably evolve during the course of the semester, taking considerable pressure off staff in terms of providing support to individual students. One example of such a mechanism developed around the requirement that every student either chair or minute at least one meeting. Student numbers, plus the desire of some students who had already chaired a session to also gain experience in taking minutes, meant that more than one student noted the minutes in some weeks. Yet, as correct procedure requires that only one document be circulated to the meeting’s participants, students solved this ‘problem’ by initiating collaborative mini-workshops to produce a single set of minutes. This improved the minutes as written documents (and their ability to serve as
vehicles for clarification and revision) and also led to a considerable enhancement of students’ spelling, grammar and punctuation as well as their ability to utilise advanced word processing formatting tools such as numbering, bulleting, track-changes, document merging and the relatively advanced skill of creating, sending and managing dated attachments. On the level of unit administration, these student-generated minutes (with their record of those present and absent, and any apologies tendered) make the keeping of an accurate attendance record redundant, and also provide a weekly documentary record of student participation for use in accurately calculating tutorial marks.

A completely unexpected positive outcome of this experiment was how the utilisation of the formal meeting structure prompted unit teaching staff to draw upon the skills, knowledge and energies of an untapped resource in terms of classroom teaching – our university’s administration staff. When approached, a number of these, including the then-Vice-Chancellor and other senior staff members, have willingly made a direct contribution to the teaching of this unit. This delivered an obvious profit for teaching staff (we did not have to prepare this material) and our School (which did not have to pay for these ‘guest lecturers’), while students gained in terms of content and a unique insight into the university’s institutional power structure. In a further ‘payoff’, a work placement opportunity for students in our Faculty’s administrative unit has been developed directly from this contact. Many other benefits have accrued for the teaching staff, not least that of building (and developing) networks of contacts into the higher levels of university management and administration. In terms of research, the distinctiveness of this teaching experience has prompted the reporting of the results of this experiment in a number of collaborative scholarship of teaching presentations and forthcoming publications by the unit’s teaching staff (Brien et al., 2005a, b).

Case Study 2: Postgraduate teaching and research

In developing new postgraduate research courses in creative and professional writing, I have also attempted to utilise a teamwork model. Described in detail elsewhere (Brien, 2005), these programmes, in essence, seek to involve supervisors more closely in providing the feedback and scholarly, professional and vocational mentorship (Krauth & Baranay, 2002) research postgraduate students increasingly demand, and need, in order to prepare themselves for employment after their studies (Modern Language Association, 1997). However, they also seek to balance this extra input ‘loss’ with various ‘gains’ for the supervisor. In this context, the teamwork model promoted is the collaborative ‘community of practice’ environment as described in Lave and Wenger’s theory of legitimate peripheral participation situated learning (1991), which is sometimes characterised as an apprenticeship model.

Of course, the research candidate’s work must ultimately be original and his or her own, but joint cooperation can provide a useful model for the complex, awkward and sometimes problematic relationship between writing student and teacher at the postgraduate level. This is well described by Dibble and van Loon (2004: n.p.) as a ‘three-legged race . . . most exhilarating . . . when
they [student and supervisor] become equal partners with different learning and production goals’. Nightingale (2005) has suggested that the term ‘advising’ be utilised in preference to ‘supervising’ postgraduate students as the latter term implies an unequal power relationship, but equality between team members is not a necessary part of productive collaborative work (Brien & Brady, 2003). A recent study has, indeed, suggested that the most successful postgraduate supervisory relationships are those in which the obvious power differentials are openly acknowledged (Neumann, 2003: 139), although I would add, ‘but valued equally’ (Winer & Ray, 1994: 25) to this, as in the apprenticeship systems discussed by Lave and Wenger (1991).

While supervisors expect their research students to leapfrog them in terms of content-related knowledge during their candidatures, these same supervisors continue to have much to offer at a time when students are attempting to join scholarly and/or professional communities as entry-level members. Rarely, however, do supervisors have the time to provide any sustained guidance, advice or mentorship in these areas. Much of this more future-relevant knowledge that supervisors could share with their students is, moreover, not examinable, and therefore, the sharing of such information and experience is not seen as a necessary part of many postgraduate research degrees in writing. These new degree courses, therefore, urge candidates towards completion in an orderly manner while also encouraging the accumulation of professionally focused skills and experience. While groups of supervisors work together to offer feedback to students on a series of formatively assessed tasks (an approach which, in itself, provides numerous benefits in terms of efficiency and networking opportunities), peer student groupings are also created to contribute to, and support, these feedback mechanisms. These degrees also promote the completion of a programme of co-authored scholarly research papers by students and supervisors. Although this has not been an accepted, or even mandated, practice in writing as it has been in the sciences, medicine, psychology and other disciplines, such co-authorship offers candidates much in terms of mentorship and CV-building, while supervisors gain measurable outputs at a time when they are not only being encouraged to publish more scholarly material, but when the collaborative research process is being privileged over individual work.

Also proposed is a professional practice module for research postgraduates, comprising an internship, study elsewhere in the institution and/or research in a professional area. Two elements are important here: that the learning/work in this module provides research and/or other material for their theses while also enhancing candidates’ prospects upon graduation. The benefits for undergraduate students of gaining professional knowledge are persuasively argued (Tovey, 2001) but such knowledge and experience is often of even more relevance to postgraduate students. As well as gaining resume-improving experience, pinpointing transferable skills gained through education and other work, and gaining organisational and/or institutional knowledge that can only be accessed in the workplace, interns have access to industry-based contacts and knowledge which not only directly increases their prospects of publication and/or employment, but is also valued (and rewarded) by universities and funding bodies. The workplace benefits from the accumulated
skills, maturity, advanced education level and cutting-edge knowledge of the postgraduate intern, in the process also gaining access to university staff and other students in its professional area. Supervisors make (or maintain) industry contacts and gain up-to-the-minute knowledge of a range of professional contexts while also increasing their access to possible future guest lecturers, research partners, consultancy work and other opportunities. The educational institution benefits by meeting strategic goals in the areas of professional/industry linkage and the enhancement of work-readiness in their graduates. Dual recruitment pathways are also formed whereby the intern may progress to more lasting work arrangements with a particular workplace, and individuals from that workplace may be attracted to study at the intern’s university because of their personal contact with the intern. Mezirow (1991: 223) suggests that transformation is one of the foundational dimensions of adult learning, whereby more mature learners reflectively transform their ‘beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and emotional reactions’, but while such transformation is usually discussed in terms of student cohorts, the above suggests that the postgraduate experience can be transformational for a much wider range of individuals and institutional and professional units involved in the process.

Case Study 3: Curriculum design and redesign

Toohey (1999: 28–38) describes how teachers can, and should, work together on any higher education curriculum development but, in a fully functioning teamworking collaborative system, all higher education curricula would be conceived, designed, developed, taught, learned, evaluated and redesigned by engaged and interested teams of teachers, students, administrators and professional representatives. While the benefits of input from other university staff as well as suitable professionals into the development of curricula are obvious, I believe our students can also be closely involved in an on-going process that could be characterised as curriculum ‘evolution’. As suggested above in the small example of the student-demanded agendas, the negotiation, and renegotiation, of what (and how) content is to be addressed and assessed, as well as the responsibilities, quantity and quality of work required of both teacher and students is possible during a unit or course of study. Such modification will, however, only work if all members of the team agree that the changes are fair and, of course, if such modification is allowed within equity and other institutional restrictions. Transferring some control over what they are being taught to students fosters increased engagement in, and responsibility for, their own learning, and should enhance the outcomes they achieve (Gibbs & Habeshaw, 1989: 37). Teachers gain useful input and support during the curriculum development process, and should also reap the rewards of increased student satisfaction with units and courses of study. These rewards not only include increased pleasure and satisfaction, but also institutional recognition (in terms of promotion and teaching grants) and wider acknowledgement in terms of awards and other opportunities. The institution, of course, gains much by having more engaged and satisfied students.
A broader rationale for pursuing subtle adjustment of content, teaching and learning activities and/or assessment during the active teaching and learning period (rather than once this is completed, in response to reflection or evaluation) builds on Biggs’ (1999: 11–32) influential concept of constructive alignment, in which learning activities and assessment tasks must be directly aligned with the intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Situating the possibility of such modification within a collaborative teaching and learning schema means that this constructive alignment is not teacher-instigated (and often adjusted retrospectively) but is, instead, directly responsive to students’ growing awareness of their academic, professional/vocational and personal needs during the learning experience.

Conclusion

The above discussion attempts to demonstrate the range of benefits possible for stakeholders if higher education institutions were to become high performing collaborative, teamwork-based organisations as discussed in one currently influential strand of corporate and management literature. Such a system may well deliver on Delors’ (1996: 80) stipulation that beyond ‘providing a skilled workforce… [b]ringing out the talents and aptitudes latent in everyone fulfils … the fundamentally humanist mission of education’ with the resource-efficient outcome that not just students’ talents and aptitudes are fostered and developed. Moreover, at a time when academic and professional disciplines are mingling and morphing, and the entire higher education environment seems to be in a state of constant change, the potential learning and personal growth delivered by such collaborative teamwork may well be essential if academics are to continue, let alone enjoy, practising our profession.

Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Dr Donna Lee Brien, School of English, Communication and Theatre, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia (dbrien@une.edu.au)

References


