Editorial introduction

Geoff Danaher, Central Queensland University, g.danaher@cqu.edu.au

Phillipa Sturgess, Central Queensland University, p.sturgess@cqu.edu.au

This final edition of the SLEID journal for 2010 has two papers continuing the theme from our previous edition on Regional University Futures along with eight un-themed articles.

Dolene Rossi from CQUniversity Australia addresses the Regional University Futures theme by considering the promotion of meaningful learning relationships within online education as one way of addressing declining rates of participation in regional universities. The article considers a range of factors that make such learning relationships meaningful for the student. The second themed paper, from Terry Maybury of the University of Queensland, proposes a psycho-physiological approach drawing on a range of disciplines from neuroscience to philosophy to understand the emergence of a regional mind geared towards addressing the challenges of the 21st century.

The un-themed articles begin with Alice Brown and Shirley Reushle from the University of Southern Queensland, who focus on the notion of 'contextualised learning' in a regional university setting. The authors combine a critical appraisal of the principles of such learning with anecdotal evidence of its application drawn from their own experience, challenging teachers to consider how these principles might be adapted in their own practices. Arlene Barry from the University of Kansas explores the role visual art can play in enhancing literacy programs across a range of disciplines, showing how visual and verbal text can complement each other in enhancing the learning experiences of contemporary students. Evan Ortlieb from Valdosta State University in the United States focuses on growing realisation of the importance of catering for individual learning styles and needs in crafting effective pedagogy, suggesting particular teaching methods that might help to facilitate this aspiration. Ken Purnell, Roslyn McCarthy and Mary McLeod from CQUniversity Australia explore appropriate support structures for beginning university students, focusing on processes that identify 'at risk' students and offer early and effective intervention strategies by staff.

Liliana Rodriguez-Campos, Michael Benson, Aarti Bellara, Corina Owens and Connie Walker-Egea from the University of South Florida focus on the role of community member focus groups in enhancing the relationship between schools and the local communities they serve. The authors consider a range of factors that influence the involvement of community members in their schools. Philip Coleman and Ray Blankenship of Western Kentucky University discuss the transition of community college students to a regional American university, particularly their perceptions of online education. That this focus has been a theme explored in articles from previous editions of SLEID (see for example papers in the edition Volume 5, Number 3, entitled The Ys, the Web and the Wherefores), underscores not only its importance but also the role of a range of contextual factors in shaping the development of effective online curricula and learning and teaching practices. Indeed, Don Altmyer and Sheng-Ping Yang of Black Hills State

University in the United States take on a similar theme in their article, focusing specifically on the way in which student demographic factors such as age and gender influence the relative effectiveness of web-based as against classroom learning and teaching. Colleen Eddy, Barba Patton and Lei-Ann Gindt from different educational institutions in Texas explore the way in which dynamic web-based technology and software can be used to create interactive, electronic mathematics presentations. This paper challenges educators to embrace the opportunities provided by this technology in enhancing the maths learning experience by promoting new and diverse forms of interaction.

Taken together, these ten articles offer a range of perspectives, practical and theoretical, critical and creative, on themes relating to our journal's exploration of evaluation, innovation and development in relation to learning and teaching experiences. We trust you will find much of interest and value in them.

Geoff Danaher and Phillipa Sturgess

Editors

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