# Telling our stories: An editorial introduction

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The theme for Central Queensland University's 2005 Teaching and Learning Showcase, 'Telling our stories: Learning from change', recognises not only the changing nature of the higher education sector but also the importance of reflecting on our response to those changes and sharing our insights with others by 'telling our stories'. Schon (1991) in his advocacy for reflective practice, suggests that technical rational thinking alone is not sufficient to solve the unique and complex problems that occur in the practice of teaching. Reflection, both at the time of teaching and after, is an essential element for making sense of what is happening and improving future experiences. This is particularly true in face of the rapid changes that are occurring in the higher education sector. These changes often force us to re-examine our purpose, our preconceptions about teaching and our expectations of our students. By sharing these insights with our colleagues in the academic community, we begin to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning as described by Boyer (1990). Many of the articles in this issue are based on practitioners' reflections on the new challenges in their changed teaching context.

The Showcase provides an opportunity for the academic staff of CQU to not only share their own experiences and insights with colleagues, but also to consider a broader view of current practice in the sector by the inclusion of invited guests as keynote speakers. Two of these speakers are represented in this issue. We have invited one of the keynote speakers, Jimmy Botella, winner of a University of Queensland Teaching Award and three time finalist for the Australian Awards for University Teaching, to share his impressions of the Showcase. His passion for teaching, which made him an interesting speaker, shows through in this short reflective piece.

We are also pleased to include an article by Jan Herrington, who was a keynote speaker at the Showcase in 2004. Jan's presentation focussed on the importance of engaging with the potential of the Internet to develop effective approaches to teaching and learning. She discusses the use of authentic learning approaches and calls for creativity in the design of online courses in order to make best use of the technology.

The introduction of technology into teaching is a challenge that many teachers are facing. Although the use of technology in education has become more widespread, each teacher introducing new technological elements to their teaching must make their own journey of discovery. Personal accounts from less experienced users of technology speak to the issues, the costs and the benefits that must be considered when undertaking such an endeavour.

Rossi and Hinton reflect on their initial experience of using online discussion forums as a means of communication for nursing students. They discuss the issues that arose in the development and delivery of an online course, and the challenges and rewards that this offered for both them and their students.

Reid-Searle and Moxham also discuss the experience of being a first-time developer of technology, in this case a CD-ROM designed to address the needs of industry based trainers. The role of the content expert in such development and the costs involved are discussed.

Luck's reflection looks back over a longer association with educational technology, in this case the use of videoconferencing in a distributed classroom. She uses the framework of the *Hero's Journey* to reflect on her own journey from novice to experienced user of this technology.

The focus moves away from technology in Bradshaw and Moxham's article. They describe the use of students' own stories and experiences to inform the development of a course which focuses on values.

Cleal also focuses on the student, with a discussion of issues related to referencing and plagiarism. She describes an institutional response which is based on educational rather than punitive measures.

The articles included here, and those in the previous issue of this journal, are informed by what Schon (1991) describes as reflection-on-action, a willingness to examine one's own practice and beliefs in the light of current relevant theory. We would like to thank the authors for their openness to self examination and willingness to share their experiences and insights with others, thus engaging with the world of professional scholarship in which reflective experience is distilled and presented to one's community of practice for critical review, evaluation and for use in building the knowledge of the community.

# References

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Schon, D. (1991). *The reflective practitioner* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.