

Paul Hager
Susan Holland
Editors

Lifelong Learning Book Series 6

Graduate Attributes, Learning and Employability



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GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES, LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY

Lifelong Learning Book Series

VOLUME 6

Series Editors

David N. Aspin, Em, *Faculty of Education, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia*

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Aims & Scope

“Lifelong Learning” has become a central theme in education and community development. Both international and national agencies, governments and educational institutions have adopted the idea of lifelong learning as their major theme for address and attention over the next ten years. They realize that it is only by getting people committed to the idea of education both life-wide and lifelong that the goals of economic advancement, social emancipation and personal growth will be attained.

The *Lifelong Learning Book Series* aims to keep scholars and professionals informed about and abreast of current developments and to advance research and scholarship in the domain of Lifelong Learning. It further aims to provide learning and teaching materials, serve as a forum for scholarly and professional debate and offer a rich fund of resources for researchers, policy-makers, scholars, professionals and practitioners in the field.

The volumes in this international Series are multi-disciplinary in orientation, polymathic in origin, range and reach, and variegated in range and complexity. They are written by researchers, professionals and practitioners working widely across the international arena in lifelong learning and are orientated towards policy improvement and educational betterment throughout the life cycle.

Graduate Attributes, Learning and Employability

Edited by

PAUL HAGER

University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

and

SUSAN HOLLAND

Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia

 Springer

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Atlay is Head of Teaching Quality Enhancement and Director of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), University of Luton, United Kingdom. Dr. Atlay spent seven years lecturing in chemistry at the University of Glamorgan before moving on to work on the development of distance learning materials at the Open University in the UK. At Luton he has worked in a number of areas including Quality Assurance, Staff Development, Quality Enhancement and Educational Development. He has coordinated the development and implementation of the University's curriculum model involving a revised approach to skills development linked to progress files and personal development planning (PDP). For its work in this area, the University has received government funding to establish CETL, also known as *Bridges* (see www.luton.ac.uk/bridgescetl), which is supporting the further implementation of PDP processes and employability in the undergraduate curriculum, as well as researching and evaluating their impact.

Ronald Barnett is Professor of Higher Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, United Kingdom, where he is also Pro-Director for Longer Term Strategy. In his research, he has been trying to see whether it is possible to construct an educational idea of the university in the contemporary age and to identify conceptual and practical resources to that end. His books include *The Idea of Higher Education*, *Improving Higher Education: Total Quality Care*, *The Limits of Competence*, *Higher Education: A Critical Business*, *Realizing the University in an Age of Supercomplexity* and *Beyond All Reason: Living with Ideology in the University*. The University of London has conferred on him a higher doctorate, the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) has made him a Fellow and he is the first recipient of the (new) annual 'Distinguished Researcher' prize awarded by the European Association for Institutional Research. Among his current commitments, Professor Barnett is Chair of the SRHE (an international society). He is also Chair of the Meeting of Professors at the Institute and Chair of the Research Degrees Committee of the University of London: in the latter role, he is particularly interested in trying to improve the quality of the experience of research students.

Simon Barrie is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute for Teaching and Learning at The University of Sydney, Australia. The Institute carries out research and development

work in the field of teaching and learning in higher education. Dr. Barrie leads the Institute's Teaching Evaluation and Quality Assurance work and the University's Graduate Attributes project (see www.itl.usyd.edu.au/GraduateAttributes/). Dr. Barrie is exploring teachers' and learners' experiences of university with the aim of using this knowledge to improve the quality of student learning outcomes. His previous research on academics' experiences of the teaching of generic attributes served as the basis for the Conceptions of Generic Attributes (COGA) framework, which underpins The University of Sydney's current policy revision and academic development initiatives related to generic graduate attributes. It is also being used by other universities in Australia and internationally. Dr Barrie's current research focuses on an exploration of the core attributes of graduates of research higher degrees and a project exploring alternative theoretical and conceptual bases for academic development work. He is also part of an ongoing investigation of students' and teachers' experiences of teaching and learning through his involvement in institutional research in the evaluation and quality assurance of teaching.

David Beckett is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean in the Faculty of Education, at The University of Melbourne, Australia. His teaching and research centres on educators' professional development, education and training policy analysis, and in the philosophy of workplace and lifelong learning. His students exemplify training, human resource development, nurse education, community and social work, school principalship and academia. Professor Beckett's recent publications include *Life, Work and Learning: Practice in Postmodernity* (with Paul Hager, Routledge London 2002). In 2004, he was made a Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders.

David Boud is Professor of Adult Education at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia. Professor Boud has written extensively on teaching, learning and assessment in higher and professional education, and more recently on everyday learning in workplaces. He chaired the working party to develop Graduate Attributes at the University of Technology, Sydney and was chair of that institution's Board of Studies for Work-Based Learning. Currently he is involved in research on informal learning in workplaces and sustainable assessment practices for lifelong learning. His book, *Productive Reflection at Work: Learning for Changing Organisations* (edited with Peter Cressey & Peter Docherty) will be published by Routledge in 2006.

Catherine Down has worked within tertiary education since 1986. During this time she has been involved in curriculum development, professional development and research across a wide range of disciplines. Her experience includes secondments to

the Ford Motor Company, Automotive Industry Training Board, Victoria, the Australian Competency Research Centre and the Office of Training and Further Education. For the last seven or so years, her position has been that of Senior Lecturer and Projects Director (Educational Development) within the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia. She has now established her own consultancy business in order to work with educational practitioners to enable them, and their learners, to learn more effectively from and through work. Her recently completed doctoral research focused on polycontextual boundary-crossing within situated learning. Her thesis proposed a metaphoric framework in which to better understand how we learn through our work and in particular, how we take what we know and can do and apply it to new contexts and work situations.

Andrew Gonczi is Professor of Education at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia. His scholarly research encompasses vocational and higher education, and learning in the workplace. Professor Gonczi has also published various articles in the area of educational policy. He is particularly interested in the impact of globalisation on educational policy in individual countries.

Paul Hager is Professor of Education, University of Technology, Sydney. His main ongoing scholarly interest is in the emerging field of philosophy of adult and vocational education. This centres on topics such as informal workplace learning, professional practice and the role of generic skills in work. He leads a current Australian Research Council Discovery project investigating context, judgement and learning at work. Paul is also writing another book for Springer on informal learning as it relates to lifelong learning (with John Halliday, University of Strathclyde). He is also researching agency and practical judgement (with David Beckett, University of Melbourne).

Geoffrey Hinchliffe is the Student Skills and Employability Adviser at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in Norwich, United Kingdom. Dr. Hinchliffe also has teaching responsibilities in the Centre for Continuing Education at UEA for the provision of philosophy and politics classes. He is currently exploring the concept of learning as capability drawing on both modern and Aristotelian perspectives.

Susan Holland is an adjunct Professor in Learning and Professional Practice in the Institute for the Service Professions at Edith Cowan University (ECU), Western Australia, where she was previously a Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences. Professor Holland is currently also an auditor for the Australian Universities Quality Agency and a consultant in higher education. Prior to joining ECU she was CEO of a large

vocational institute in Sydney, New South Wales for a number of years and a member of the Council of Macquarie University. She has held several senior executive posts across the educational sectors, in which she was responsible for curriculum development, cross-sectoral policy and equity programs. Each of these roles had a research component. Her current research interests include lifelong learning, leadership development and generic capacities, critical thinking and quality assurance.

Dianne Mulcahy is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, at The University of Melbourne, Australia. Her teaching and research centres on curriculum innovation, education leadership and policy analysis, and in the social theory of work and workplace learning. Over the past decade, she has managed several major funded projects on areas such as competency-based training (*Evaluating the contribution of competency-based training*, with Pauline James, National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), Adelaide 1999), leadership and management (*Leadership and management in vocational education and training: Staying focussed on strategy*, NCVER, Adelaide 2003), and standards of professional practice (*Towards the development of standards of professional practice for the Victorian TAFE teaching workforce*, with Anne Jasman, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne 2003). She has been a team member on other national research projects such as a recent evaluation study of frontline management funded by the NCVER.

Lesley Scanlon is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education and Social Work, at The University of Sydney, Australia. Dr. Scanlon is the First Year Experience coordinator facilitating the faculty mentor programme. Prior to this appointment she spent more than ten years in the Technical and Further Education sector where she taught and pursued her research interests in adult continuing education with specific reference to the segmented world of adult learners and generic competency acquisition. Her current research focus is mentoring student transitions to university and the process of identity construction in transition situations. Dr. Scanlon researches and writes within the interpretive, symbolic interactionist tradition. She is currently engaged in an extensive project investigating the historical, sociological and epistemological aspects of mentoring.

Nicky Solomon is currently Professor and Head of Education and Lifelong Learning in the School of Arts at City University London, United Kingdom. Until recently Professor Solomon has been working in Australia at the University of Technology Sydney. In both places she is involved in teaching, research and consultancy in the broad field of work and learning across various sets of educational

and research programmes. Her current research interests focus on the increasing attempts to link work and learning and the way that these links produce different kinds of students, workers and education cultures.

Ina Te Wiata is currently employed in the Training and Development Unit at Massey University, Palmerston North. She has extensive experience working in staff development in Higher Education both in New Zealand and Australia. Ina has contributed to all aspects of staff development including, working as a consultant with groups and individuals, facilitating workshops and seminars, developing resources, and playing an active role in the preparation and implementation of policy. During her teaching career, she has sought to discover what really happens in classrooms and other learning environments (e.g. workplaces) and how teaching practice affects this. Her particular areas of interest (aside from her doctoral studies) remain assessment, course design and curriculum development, and the evaluation of all facets of the teaching-learning enterprise.

Christopher Winch is currently Reader in Education Management and Policy at King's College, London, United Kingdom. A philosopher by training, Dr Winch is interested in various aspects of vocational learning and education, including professional education, the political economy of vocational education and the integration of workplace and academic learning. Previous publications include *The Philosophy of Human Learning* (1998) and *Education, Work and Social Capital* (2000). His *Education, Autonomy and Critical Thinking* was published by Routledge in 2005. He has worked in further, higher and primary education.

EDITORIAL BY SERIES EDITORS

This volume is a further flowering from the *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*, which was jointly edited by David Aspin, Judith Chapman, Yukiko Sawano and Michael Hatton, published by Springer (formerly known as Kluwer Academic Publishers) in 2001. In the *International Handbook* we laid down a set of agenda for future research and development, analysis and expansion, strategies and guidelines in the field of lifelong learning. It had become clear that the domain of lifelong learning was a rich and fertile ground for setting out and summarising, comparing and criticising the heterogeneous scope and remit of policies, proposals and practices in its different constitutive parts across the international arena. Certainly the scholars, researchers, policy makers, and educators with whom we discussed this matter seemed to agree with us that each of the themes that were taken up in the individual chapters of the original *International Handbook* would merit separate volumes of their own – to say nothing of the other possibilities that a more extended mapping, analysis and exploration of the field might quickly generate.

This volume is an outcome of the important issues that were raised in the *International Handbook*, in particular, by the questions of the development of graduate attributes and their relationship to learning and employability. It is the work of our colleagues Paul Hager and Susan Holland, who have gathered together contributions to this important theme from a range of international scholars and writers in that field. The writers analyse the nature, development and function of generic attributes in an age of uncertainty. They look at the relationship between graduate attributes and changing conceptions of learning, as well as the relationship between graduate attributes and employability, in a world where opportunities for employment and their concomitant requirements are constantly changing. They pay particular attention to the evolution from institutional specifications of skills development to a more student-centred approach, in which the needs, interests and aspirations of the learners themselves play a far greater part in determining the structures and directions of the learning programs that are set up to cater for them. Particular attention is paid to the changing nature, type and function of generic attributes and learning in workplace settings.

Paul Hager and Susan Holland have done us all a signal service in the preparation of this book. Their work has demonstrated a clear commitment to the emancipatory potential of lifelong learning. Their argument is that the contemporary focus on the transition to work and the role of generic attributes, whether for school leavers or graduates, needs to be conceived more realistically and coherently as part of an ongoing and interactive lifelong learning process. The work environment can provide individual and collective opportunities to build on and integrate learnings gained from classrooms, lectures and laboratories. Workplace learning, they argue, is an important part of lifelong learning, as it is a site for personal and general forms of learning, as well as for the further development of technical and professional knowledge. For them, the issue of how to enhance the employability of new entrants to the workforce, by which employers usually mean general capacities like communicating, relating to people, and using technology, is a matter of encouraging better learning, prior to entering and while engaged in the workplace. They believe generic attributes have a valuable role in enhancing learning and hence employability.

We believe that this important work comes forward at an especially significant and fruitful time when the worlds and institutions of learning and work are in a state of considerable, not to say radical change and upheaval. We believe that both employers and institutions will benefit enormously from reading and reflecting on the messages contained in this iconoclastic work. We are pleased that the work helps carry forward the agenda of the Springer Book Series on Lifelong Learning. We thank the anonymous international reviewers and assessors who have considered, reviewed and assessed the proposal for this work and the individual chapters in the final manuscript and who have played such a significant part in the progress of this work to completion. We trust that its readers will find it as stimulating, thought-provoking and controversial as we who have overseen this project and its development have found it. We commend it with great confidence to all those working in this field. We are sure that this further volume in the Springer Series will provide the wide range of constituencies working in the domain of lifelong learning with a rich range of new material for their consideration and further investigation. We believe that it will encourage their continuing critical thinking, research and development, academic and scholarly production and individual, institutional and professional progress.

March 2006

David Aspin and Judith Chapman