

## Submission to the Higher Education Standards Panel's Discussion

### Paper *Improving retention, completion and success in higher education.*

**Note:** The following response to the HESP's Discussion Paper contains extracts from an article in progress. It is a commentary on the critical issues that require a radical change in higher education thinking, design and implementation.

This submission is made in reference to the selected issues within the discussion paper which are highlighted as sub-topics in the commentary.

### Institutional Culture

#### "A healthy university culture that embraces diversity and flexibility"

1. *Institutional culture* should also include Equity and Sustainability which are the missing links in institutional culture. Institutions are not held accountable because equity and sustainability are flouted on various levels of institutional engagement.

#### "A supportive university learning environment that puts the student first"

2. Student first has become a cliché! For students to benefit from a quality education experience, institutions should also give academics and professional staff, who support students, better resources, more funds and adequate research time so they can be more effective in their roles and responsibilities.

Academics are particularly overworked and under-resourced, burdened with poorly planned curriculum transformation processes that are exhausting and which are distracting them from their main business: to ensure that learning and teaching design and implementation is creative, innovative and inspiring.

### 3. I contend, under the following specific areas of focus,

#### "Teaching and learning

- **More senior academic staff**
- **High teacher quality and teacher ability**
- **A focus on effective learning and teaching strategies**
- **An early assessment task prior to the student withdrawal census date**
- **Sharing best practice across the sector**
- **A willingness to offer nested courses "**

That

- there should not be any dichotomization among research and teaching staff: this is our major weakness in the higher education system
- collaborative partnerships between the research and teaching components of education should be encouraged and supported so that we can ensure that teaching impact is innovative and creative as appropriate to the discipline context instead of an over-emphasis on 'best practice' which is another weak link in education.
- best practice limits potential for creative and innovative practice and is a "one size fits all" approach which does not work in the current diverse stakeholder community needs, disciplines and perspectives in higher education.
- "best practice" approaches work in certain disciplines such as medicine and sciences but not in every other discipline.

#### 4. I agree with the accountability statement below

- "Collect exit data on why students have withdrawn from study
- Hold institutions to account for entry standards and student outcomes."

however collecting data is not the answer because we have countless studies and research that already tells us that "students withdraw from study, and disengage with learning and teaching strategies" when they are

- taught by teachers who have little expert knowledge in their area (lack of research to back up teaching so that's why researchers and teaching staff should form partnerships as part of a holistic educator framework)

- wrongly targeted as "students at risk" instead of targeting "courses and programs and teachers at risk"

##### Note:

- **Courses and programs at risk** are those courses and programs that perform poorly with low scores for 2-3 consecutive semesters and require immediate intervention, review and refresh by the course /program team with adequate support and resources.
- If we identify which courses are at risk we can include interventions such as the Australian adapted version of the American program titled Supplementary Instruction (SI) that provides peer assisted student sessions which is called PASS (peer assisted student sessions at the University of Wollongong, NSW)
- **Teachers at risk** are those teachers who under-perform with low scores for 2-3 consecutive semesters not because they are ineffective teachers but because they do not have the necessary resources, skills and funds to conduct their teaching at the acceptable and desired quality and level.

In conclusion, courses, programs and teachers "seem" to under-perform only because the institution, Faculty and Department did not adequately distribute funds, resources, and opportunities for ongoing professional development on an equitable basis in a sustainable framework. It is not the teachers and students who have failed to embrace quality education design but it is the institution and leadership who have failed in providing a conducive learning and teaching environment that is resource-rich to inspire innovative practice and creativity.

The focus on technology - enabled learning is dis-enabling and disempowering learners and teachers to actually use their minds and their local and global contexts to study phenomenon that impacts their collective communities across all aspects of diversity wherever they are located. The over emphasis on technology and online learning has taken away the focus on the pedagogical value of engaging stakeholders on the basis of a moral and ethical values framework in higher education.

We should not be preparing students for employability and for digitization but we should be preparing them for engagement in the highest moral sense so that as good citizens they will serve their societies at a deep level of moral commitment thereby helping their communities improve their quality of life.

**Author:** Dr Fay Patel  
International Higher Education Consultant  
Sydney, Australia

##### Biodata:

Dr Fay Patel has thirty years teaching, research and educational development experience in international higher education (Bangladesh, Malaysia, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA and South Africa). Fay contributes to external peer review quality assurance panels in Bangladesh; keynote presentations on assessment as learning at Taylor's University and the Online Learning Forum, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; as education consultant on online and open distance learning and MOOC development at UNESCO Asia forums in Bangkok, Thailand and in Chengdu, China; and as curriculum transformation facilitator in the World Bank Quality Assurance Training program (coordinated by HELP University) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Fay's co-authored and co-edited publications include books and journal papers on deconstructing internationalization, HE as a catalyst for social change, online learning, intercultural communication, international development, technology innovation, and decolonization of the curriculum.

## References

Research to support the above contentions:

### Books (Co-authored and Co-Edited)

Patel, Fay. (October 2014). *Online pedagogy: An educational development perspective* N.Y., USA: Nova Science Publishers Retrieved from [https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=50037](https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=50037)

Patel, F., Sooknanan, P, Rampersad, G. & Mundkur, A. (April 2012). *Information technology, development and social change* Routledge USA More information [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Information+technology%2C+development+and+social+change](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=Information+technology%2C+development+and+social+change)

Patel, Fay. (2017). Deconstructing Internationalization: Advocating for glocalization as a socially responsible and sustainable framework *Journal of International and Global Studies* Spring/Summer 2017 Volume 8 Number 2 St. Charles, Missouri, USA: Lindenwood University Publishers More information <http://www.lindenwood.edu/files/resources/64-82-deconstructing-internationalization.pdf>

Patel, Fay. (2017). International higher education as catalyst for social change *Education Leadership in Action Journal* Spring 2017 Volume 4 Issue 2 St. Charles, Missouri, USA: Lindenwood University Publishers

More information

<http://www.lindenwood.edu/academics/beyond-the-classroom/publications/journal-of-educational-leadership-in-action/all-issues/volume-4-issue-2/faculty-articles/patel/>

Nicotra, Alberto & Patel, Fay. (2016). Contesting the Political Economy of Higher Education: Educating the Good Citizen, *Journal of International and Global Studies* More information <http://www.lindenwood.edu/jigs/docs/volume7Issue2/essays/22-39.pdf>

Aspland T & Patel, Fay (April 2014). Enabling Leadership in Teaching and Learning: Balancing Creativity and Compliance Agendas in Australian Higher Education *International Leadership Journal* More information: [http://www.tesc.edu/documents/ILJ\\_Winter\\_2014.pdf](http://www.tesc.edu/documents/ILJ_Winter_2014.pdf)

Patel, Fay, Li, Mingsheng & Piscioneri, M. (2014). Cross-Institutional and Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Curriculum for Global Engagement: Emerging Perspectives and Concerns [PDF Version \(357 kB\)](#) *Journal of International and Global Studies* Retrieved from <http://www.lindenwood.edu/jigs/docs/volume5Issue2/essays/40-52.pdf>

Rampersad, G. & Patel, F. (2014). Creativity as a desirable graduate attribute: Implications for curriculum design and employability *Asian Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education* More information: [http://www.apjce.org/files/APJCE\\_15\\_1\\_1\\_11.pdf](http://www.apjce.org/files/APJCE_15_1_1_11.pdf)

Patel, Fay and Lynch, Hayley. (2013). Glocalization as an alternative to internationalization in higher education: Embedding positive 'glocal' learning perspectives. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (IJTLHE)* 25 (2) Summer 2013 More information: <http://www.isetl.org/ijthe/past2.cfm?v=25&i=2>

Patel, F. (2013). Promoting a culture of scholarship among educational developers: Exploring institutional opportunities *International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD)* June 2013

Patel, F. (2012). Embedding an internal evaluation culture: Critical issues for consideration from an innovative model *Studies in Learning, Evaluation Innovation and Development*9(1), pp. 22–32. November 2012 Retrieved from <http://sleid.cqu.edu.au> Paper presented at the Australian Higher Education Evaluation (AHEEF) Conference, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton, QLD, Australia

Patel, F. (2012) Whither scholarship in the work of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning? in *Teacher Education and Practice*, Fall 2011 Vol. 24, No.4 More information <http://www.sfasu.edu/education/departments/secondaryeducation/doctoral/teacheduandpractice.asp>

Glenn, D, Patel, F., Kutieleh, S., Robbins, J., Smigiel, H., & Wilson, A. (online August 2011 and print April 2012). Perceptions of optimal conditions for teaching and learning: A case study from Flinders University *HERD*, August 2011 iFirst Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07294360.2011.555390>

Glenn, D, Patel, F., Kutieleh, S., Robbins, J., Smigiel, H., & Wilson, A. (2012). Perceptions of optimal conditions for teaching and learning: A case study from Flinders University *Higher Education Research & Development* Vol. 31, No. 2, April 2012, 201 -215

Patel, F., Saipul, F., & Chan, R. (2017). Enhancing the 21st Century Learning Experience: Enabling Learners. In N. Alias, & J. Luaran (Eds.), *Student-Driven Learning Strategies for the 21st Century Classroom* (pp. 160-168). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-1689-7.ch011

Patel, F. (October 2012). Equity, Access and Ethics in Higher Education Online Research in the Asia Pacific Region: Challenges and dilemmas In Peterson, J., Lee, O., Islam, T., & Piscioneri, M. (Ed.) *Effectively implementing Information Communication Technology in Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc. More information at [https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=31130](https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=31130)

Piscioneri, M. & Patel, F. (2016). Global citizens or good citizens? Matthew Piscioneri and Fay Patel 10 June 2016 Issue No:417 University World News Global Edition More information <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20160610150253631>

Patel, Fay (2014) The HERDSA Fellowship: Enabling facilitators of learning and learners pp 16-17 HERDSA News Volume 36 Number 1 April 2014 More information: [http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page\\_id=140](http://www.herdsa.org.au/?page_id=140)

Briggs, Saga (2014). Here's How Successful Educators Balance Creativity and Compliance Invited article contribution from Patel, Fay (2014) More information: [www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed](http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed) and <http://www.opencolleges.edu.au/informed/news/balancing-creativity-and-compliance/>