ONCE UPON A TIME IN ULTIMO
Bringing science to the masses

CLEARING UP THE CLOUD
The democratisation of information technology

STARTING THE CONVERSATION
Improving maternity outcomes for overweight women
THE HIGHEST
QUALITY IN
EVERYTHING
WE DO

UTS aspires to be a world-leading university of technology, which means getting better at all our core activities as a university – learning and teaching, research, internationalisation and external engagement – as well as improving the capabilities of our people and processes.

The UTS Planning and Improvement Framework shows how we can do this, via the quality management cycle of Plan. Do. Review. Improve (PDRI):

Plan: What are we trying to achieve? What are we about?

Do: How effectively is the ‘plan’ being implemented?

Review: How well is the implementation achieving the planned approach?

Improve: Are we engaged with understanding our performance in each of the P-D-R dimensions, and using this understanding to improve?

We can be proud of the significant strides UTS has made towards its aspiration over the last few years. UTS will have an opportunity to demonstrate some of these outcomes, and how well we’re applying the PDRI approach, during our second Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audit in May 2012. The audit will focus on the areas of practice-oriented education and internationalisation, and how well we have implemented our 2006 audit recommendations.

AUQA will be looking for evidence we have clear academic standards that we monitor, and that we improve policies, practices and systems when necessary. AUQA will also look at how we use ‘external reference points’ to judge and improve our performance, such as national performance data, partnerships with other universities and examples of best practice.

Preparations for our audit are well under way, with a draft portfolio soon to be released to the UTS community for discussion. The portfolio highlights our achievements and improvements, as well as our plans for the future.

We will conduct a trial audit from 28 to 30 September to judge our preparedness for the ‘real thing’ next May. This will be an opportunity for us to reflect on the significant achievements of the past few years, and to identify areas for further improvement.

From now until September, I will be holding staff forums in faculties and divisions to brief you on preparations and your possible role in the audit. I will seek your ideas for improving the portfolio, particularly additional examples of evidence supporting our improvement claims. I will ask you to do a self-review against the portfolio, so you can gauge how well you would answer questions from the AUQA auditors. This is an opportunity to showcase successful in-practice examples.

It’s time for the wider university to get involved in audit preparations in order to ensure that AUQA learns just how good UTS is.

Peter Booth
(Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Senior Vice-President)
Photographer: Sherran Evans

EXECUTIVE COLUMN

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The University of Technology, Sydney’s vision is to be a world-leading university of technology. Our purpose as a university is to advance knowledge and learning to progress the professions, industry and communities of the world. Our values - to discover, engage, empower, deliver and sustain - guide our performance and our interactions with each other, with students, our partners and the wider community.

NEXT ISSUE
The next issue will be distributed on 26 August 2011.
Send your story ideas, opinions and events to: u@uts.edu.au
Deadline for submissions is 5 August 2011.
“Growing up I wanted to be a professional boxer or a church minister. I was disappointed to learn that the two weren’t very compatible,” says UTS Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Research Fellow Dr Peter Macreadie. “But then I figured that if I could make a living out of my passion for the ocean, I would die a happy man.”

Marine biology fit the bill, and now Macreadie’s research on seagrass ecosystems has seen the UTS scientist nominated as a finalist for the 2011 Australian Museum Eureka Prizes People’s Choice Award. His research, among other things, seeks to gauge the effectiveness of seagrasses as carbon sinks.

“Seagrasses, together with saltmarshes and mangroves, are estimated to capture and store up to 70 per cent of the carbon in the marine realm,” says Macreadie. “That’s five times more than tropical rainforests! And while forests typically bind carbon for only a decade or so, the seagrasses have the ability to store carbon for thousands of years.”

As well as stabilising the world’s shorelines and preventing coastal erosion, seagrasses play a crucial role in cycling nutrients (the storage, processing and acquisition of nutrients – a natural capital worth $2 trillion annually), support 50 per cent of the world’s fisheries and provide habitat for animals such as turtles, fish and birds. “Look after the seagrasses, and they’ll look after you,” says Macreadie.

He has mixed emotions about being nominated for the People’s Choice Award. “I’m really excited about the opportunity to raise public awareness about the importance of seagrass, but I get a bit uncomfortable with the attention on me as an individual. No scientist works in a bubble. Around me I have mentors, collaborators, supervisors, students, family, friends – all of these people contribute to my successes in science, and so I see this nomination as a feather in the cap for all of us.”

“Past recipients of the Eureka Awards have told me that it’s like sticking a rocket under your career,” he says. “Personally, I can expect to have more of my friends calling me ‘Dr Seagrass’.

“The Eureka Prizes help the wider community realise the importance of science by exposing them to what science is doing for Australia,” says Macreadie. “In the words of our Chief Scientist, Professor Ian Chubb, ‘The value of good science to our nation and the world is colossal. Science got us to where we are today and it holds the key to our future.’”

To vote for Peter Macreadie in the Eureka Awards, visit eureka.australianmuseum.net.au

Paolo Hooke
Master of Arts in Journalism
Photographer: Joanne Saad
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/we-love-dr-seagrass
The party balloons will be out in force this month at the Kuring-gai-based UTS child care centre, Kid’s Campus, as it celebrates its 20-year anniversary.

Hosted on 27 August from 9.30am to midday, the morning tea celebrations will kick off with a tour, during which staff will discuss the centre’s education program.

The Kid’s Campus kids will open the official formalities at 10.30am with song after enjoying face painting, balloons, a kindy farm and roving entertainer. As well as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning & Equity) Shirley Alexander attending the morning tea, special guest Barry O’Farrell, local member for Kuring-gai, will be giving a short speech and cutting the cake with the help of two small assistants.

Director of Kid’s Campus Karen Currie says, “It’s very exciting Mr O’Farrell will be attending. Governments are now recognising the importance of the early years and the positive impact good-quality care and education has on the lives of children and their futures.”

The Kid’s Campus anniversary coincides with the recent reforms to the child care rebate (CCR) payments. In what will be a welcome relief to many families, the reforms enable parents to have their CCR paid directly to their early child care centre, or into parents’ bank accounts, instead of having to pay child care fees upfront and wait until the end of the financial year for reimbursement.

“For some parents, this will make budgeting for child care a little easier,” says Currie. “The impact on families is yet to be seen, but anecdotally we expect families will appreciate getting this money back a lot quicker.”

The new CCR structure is not the only benefit to Kid’s Campus’ parents. In order to meet the needs of university staff and students, the centre have introduced flexible enrolment patterns to fit with semester timetabling.

“Some students elect to take their child out of care during non-semester periods. As we are operating at near full enrolment, they would lose their place at the commencement of the following semester. So we enable students to place their position on hold during the major university breaks.”

The centre is able to fund this through UTS grants, which further aid staff and students by offering them a subsidy for their child care fees.

Children from the local community who attend Kid’s Campus too will dually benefit from the centre’s close university ties. In fact, the Kid’s Campus children have a busy social schedule ahead, including an annual theatre show put on especially for them by university drama students. There will also be a yearly ‘thank you’ lunch hosted by nursing students who complete practicums at the centre during the year.

“The Kid’s Campus staff are looking forward to the birthday party as much as the children,” says Currie. “It’s a great opportunity to share with friends, families and children our achievements over the past 20 years.”

Rebecca Lawson
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer (hands): Angie Garrett
Photographer (K Currie): Katia Sanfilippo
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/doing-it-for-the-kids
CLEARING THE CLOUD
The ‘democratisation of IT’ is here with a vengeance. The power of systems is now in the hands of the people. As cloud computing envelops the corporate and commercial world with hype and misinformation, UTS Fellow Rob Livingstone guides us on how to navigate the pitfalls of IT’s newest ‘big opportunity’.

With the soaring popularity and pervasive nature of websites and services such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, cloud computing has truly become a global commodity. While this uptake has been most successful in the consumer space, it is only starting to gain serious traction in the business world.

Cloud is a very broad term for the IT systems accessed via the internet. The various components are all run by an external party and you do not own anything, other than the data you load into the system. YouTube is a great example of cloud computing whereby the user uploads their personal content without needing to bother with the complexities of IT technologies.

The appeal to individuals and small businesses alike is that it grants immediate access to software systems previously only available to larger corporations, at a fraction of the cost (if not free) and with minimal complexity and risk.

In my view, what turbo-charges the whole cloud debate in the business world is the frustration felt by managers and users in dealing with their in-house IT. They can often appear to be inflexible, slow to respond, and possibly indifferent of the apparent potential of cloud technologies.

**This is in stark contrast to the user’s largely favourable personal experiences in consuming IT services in the cloud outside of their business. With ready access to a huge array of cloud apps – all requiring no IT support – the ‘democratisation of IT’ era has truly arrived.**

This is indeed very rich pickings for cloud vendors who are continually enticing businesses with the simple message: ‘Cloud will lower your cost, simplify IT and, by the way, you don’t need to buy any infrastructure – just pay a per-month fee!’ This message has obvious appeal.

Cloud is not necessarily the solution to the challenges of corporate IT – or is it? Businesses will still require on-premises IT (albeit possibly in a different form). In my recent discussions with a range of CEOs in some of Australia’s largest organisations, there is a great deal of confusion about cloud. They are keen to take advantage of the many business benefits. However, their concerns revolve around the uncertainty of actual costs, risks and governance challenges associated with a major move to the cloud.

Some of the more obvious risks relate to who ‘out there’ can access the user’s data, in what country are the systems located, and how secure is my information. More importantly, if the provider goes out of business or ceases to exist, what is the impact on you?

If you’ve placed your most important intellectual property in the cloud, how do you protect this from unauthorised access? You only need to look at the recent PlayStation credit card and personal information hack which affected 77 million customers to understand the dangers.

**Businesses face a number of challenges in the adoption of these cloud technologies. The costs, risks and governance challenges rise significantly with organisational scale and complexity.**

Aspects needing specific focus include the total cost of ownership over the life of the system, backup, escrow, security and compliance to statutory and regulatory mandates, as well as the terms and conditions contained in the cloud vendor’s contract.

This becomes even more relevant in the case of multinational organisations, which may cover multiple legal and regulatory jurisdictions. For example, if your cloud provider is a US corporation, they are subject to the USA Patriot Act. This would allow US federal agencies to access information on the system and, in extreme cases, shut the system down if deemed a national security threat.

The complexities further increase should the stand-alone cloud system be interfaced with any other systems, whether they be in-house or other clouds. Every time a system is upgraded, these interfaces may require re-testing and modification.

Given that the vast majority of discussions are being dominated (and funded by) analysts and vendors, it’s important that businesses looking to adopt cloud consider carefully all the facts and make a fully informed, independent decision.

Once the risks and limitations have been identified and can be managed, organisations should be able to realise the benefits of cloud computing with greater certainty.

Rob Livingstone
Fellow of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology
Photographer (LR Livingstone): Katia Sanfilippo
Photographer (clouds): Sherrie Thai
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/clearing-up-the-cloud
A targeted care program for overweight and obese pregnant women is delivering results for new mothers and healthcare providers. Professor Maralyn Foureur reveals how the discussion around a woman’s weight is no longer off limits.

Obesity in pregnancy increases the risk of numerous problems and complications for mother and child, including gestational diabetes, hypertension and stillbirth. With 61 per cent of Australians now categorised as overweight or obese, the NSW Department of Health has recently invested $200 000 in the development of innovative programs to improve maternity outcomes for women with weight problems.

Having successfully competed for this seed funding, UTS and the former Northern Sydney Central Coast and South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Area Health Services collaborated on an Australian first – a group-based antenatal care, education, motivation and peer-support program.

UTS Professor of Midwifery Maralyn Foureur says the program offers a very different model to current antenatal care. Standard practice consists of a 20-minute visit to either a midwife or a doctor who takes several physical measurements and asks questions about the baby’s movements and the mother’s general wellbeing.

“If you want to learn about healthy eating or healthy activity or anything to do with preparation for childbirth, you’re given an information leaflet to read or referred to books and articles,” she explains.

“In contrast, this group model of antenatal care provides all of this information in a way that’s very accessible to the women and fun for them to engage with.”

The program consists of a series of eight, two-hour sessions for groups of 10 to 12 women, facilitated by two midwives. In addition to the usual physical checks, women participate in discussions about a range of antenatal education, childbirth preparation and early parenting issues, healthy eating and healthy activity in pregnancy and beyond.

In this model, Foureur says the women set the agenda and help motivate each other to make a difference to their weight. “The midwives have a list of topics that are meant to be covered across the course of the whole pregnancy, but fundamentally, they enable the women to take the conversation where they want. They provide them with additional information based on fact and evidence about healthy eating and healthy activity in pregnancy.”

The women also have access to advice from dieticians, physiotherapists and obstetricians as part of the program.

The initial concept for the program was developed by Foureur and fellow UTS Professors of Midwifery Caroline Homer and Nicky Leap. UTSNMH researchers Jane Raymond, Cathy Adams, Vanessa Clements, Ali Teate and Professor Deborah Davis (now with the University of Canberra) also collaborated on the recently completed pilot.

Designed for women with a body mass index (BMI) over 30, the pilot included women with BMIs over 40. The aim for this group of women was to keep pregnancy weight gain to between a recommended five to nine kilograms rather than the 12 to 14 kilos recommended for women in the healthy weight range.

Participants were interviewed at the beginning of the program and again about six weeks after the birth to measure their weight, assess their eating and exercise habits and evaluate any changes. Participants rated their overall experience in the program very positively. On average, they managed to maintain their weight within the recommended guidelines, while many also saw positive changes in their family’s eating and exercise habits.

“They absolutely loved having access to conversations with a dietician to talk to them about what you look for when you go shopping, what you read on the labels, and how to put together interesting meals that are fundamentally healthy,” says Foureur. “You imagine people pick up those skills in life as they go along, but really a lot of us don’t.”

For the midwives leading the sessions, Foureur explains, the experience of facilitating a group was quite different to teaching an antenatal education class. They received training in facilitating groups around a particular agenda and in motivational interviewing.

While not involved in the program delivery, it was also a learning process for the doctors and midwives involved in recruiting participants. The resources developed to support the model, including a facilitator handbook, have also proven popular.

“Most healthcare providers are very reluctant to raise the issue of being overweight or obese with pregnant women, because they fear the women may feel embarrassed,” says Foureur. “Some women get very angry that you’re talking about their weight, and so many health providers just avoid the issue altogether. The program
taught the midwives better techniques for initiating that conversation.”

In terms of reducing pregnancy and birth complications, Foureur says the results were less clear. “We didn’t find the participants did dramatically better than the women who didn’t have access to this program, the difficulty being we only had a small number of women in the pilot study.”

The group now plan to set up a much larger randomised control trial with sufficient numbers of women to be able to establish if the program makes a difference to their childbirth outcomes.

Rachael Quigley
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer [M Foureur]: Joanne Saad
Photographer [Wyong Powering group mothers]: Lyndall Mollart
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/starting-the-conversation

“MOST HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS ARE VERY RELUCTANT TO RAISE THE ISSUE OF BEING OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE WITH PREGNANT WOMEN, BECAUSE THEY FEAR THE WOMEN MAY FEEL EMBARRASSED.”
Many good ideas conceived over a ‘frosty’ are best left as ideas, but not this one. Now in its sixth year, the Ultimo Science Festival is one of the premier events in NSW that promotes the wonders of science.
Six years ago, sitting around at a local pub, a handful of mad-keen scientists from UTS, the Powerhouse Museum, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and TAFE NSW came up with a rather far-fetched plan to run a festival to promote science and technology. Six years later, the festival has transformed the Ultimo precinct into a local mecca for the science-curious.

A 13-day event showcasing the weird and wonderful, the festival aims to engage the non-geek. However, coordinating and running it is only the first step – getting people interested and attending is the hard part. Just ask Tilly Boleyn, Festival Coordinator and Powerhouse Museum Science Education Officer. Boleyn believes a key way to engage audiences, especially those not traditionally engaged with science, comes down to telling stories.

"By story telling, you capture people's interest in a different way – you show that science and technology affect them and the way they live their lives. Then it doesn’t need to be E=mc². Take, for example, the two talks at UTS: Catching Crooks and Outsmarting Superbugs. There's an enormous wealth of science behind these talks. But the main aim is to inspire and inform people by the way we impart this knowledge. Afterall, who doesn’t enjoy listening to a good story?"

Director of the Centre for Forensic Science Professor Claude Roux is presenting Catching Crooks – Guilty before proven innocent at UTS on 17 August. He agrees in the power of story telling when it comes to science communication, putting people's fascination for forensic science down to television shows like CSI.

"There’s no doubt people are fascinated with crime. But they need to understand more than just the ‘who’ of a crime – it’s the why, when and where which is of interest. The best way to find these things out is through reconstructing the events of a crime, which in itself is a sort of story telling."

Using a number of stories and examples, Roux's presentation at the festival this year will look at a more modern application of forensic science in society. As he explains, up until now, the main goal for forensic scientists has been scientific rigor in a courtroom setting. But as he sees it, there is an opportunity to use forensic science in the prevention of crimes.

"Over the years, we’ve optimised all our forensic science work for presentation in court. This is good and important – but it’s not enough. Forensic science could also be used in a more proactive way; we can use forensic science to predict trends, which will allow us to disrupt criminal activity. It then becomes a tool for prevention."

The festival will also be putting the humble bug – bacterium, that is – in the spotlight. Bacteria have been in existence for over three billion years and experts say they’re likely to outlive the human race. Surely a tall tale?

Not so, says Professor Liz Harry, researcher at UTS Science’s ithree institute. She’ll be leading the 24 August public lecture, Outsmarting Superbugs, and says the community needs to know more about antibiotic resistance.

"BY STORY TELLING, YOU SHOW PEOPLE THAT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AFFECT THEM AND THE WAY THEY LIVE THEIR LIVES."

"There are now bacteria causing infections we cannot treat with antibiotics; it’s a huge concern."

While Harry wants people to understand how bacteria are important for sustaining life on earth, she’ll also be looking at how some of these tiny unassuming organisms cause serious diseases. She’ll discuss too the challenges facing science and the latest research being done to find solutions for serious threats to human health.

"Scientific research is playing an increasingly vital role in this area. We’re surveilling what resistant bacteria are out there and how they came about so we can be better prepared to deal with them. That includes new antibiotics to which bacteria are not resistant, effective vaccines to prevent infection and alternative new treatments."

Harry believes the festival is a great opportunity to engage with the community about what UTS researchers do and the application of this research to their lives and wellbeing.

“People don’t care about formulas or what we write in our scientific papers because they don’t understand it. The festival gives the public an opportunity to actually ‘see’ what we’re doing and understand it."

“We can’t see bacteria, so providing an audio-visual about this topic will allow the audience to see what bacteria look like and appreciate their good (and bad) characteristics. If we can put our research into perspective for them, they’ll support what we do here.”

Boleyn, a science graduate herself, notes a major strength of the festival is its appeal to a wide range of audiences.

“It’s not just for geeks, scientists and students – though trust me, they’ll be there. It’s for everybody. There is hands-on fun science for the younger kids, the schools program for structured, curriculum-related learning for high school students and lectures and talks for the late-teens and up.”

The festival will showcase some of the amazing science research and credentials in the Ultimo precinct. It will also prove science isn’t a stand-alone discipline, but rather, intrinsically linked with design, education, communication and entertainment.

Other key activities this year include the Big Night of Science, the Family Science Fun Day, the cheeky Speed Meet a Geek (a rare chance to chat face-to-face with a bunch of astronomers, physicists, biologists, mathematicians and environmental scientists) and the Weird Food Dinner, where TAFE NSW students will apply scientific principles to cooking a la chef Heston Blumenthal and his snail porridge.

"I think this makes the festival really unique,” says Boleyn. "As organisers, we push ourselves to not just focus on one group or audience. Science should be enjoyed by all."

The Ultimo Science Festival runs from Tuesday 16 August until Sunday 28 August. For a detailed program, visit ultimosciencefestival.com

Alex Hyvonen
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer (L Harry and C Roux): Joanne Saad
Science images courtesy of Powerhouse Museum, Shutterstock and Roberto Venturini
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/once-upon-a-time-in-ultimo
Lecturer Laurie Berg’s commitment to inclusion shines through in her language. The words engage, engaging and engagement permeate the conversation as she talks about her current project: broadening student participation in the Faculty of Law’s research culture.

Berg’s career to date includes roles in the New York-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First), the International Humanitarian Law Program of the Australian Red Cross and the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (NSW). Attracted by “the prospect of working in such a dynamic and supportive faculty,” she joined UTS in 2009.

“I saw the faculty as embracing a commitment to excellence in research,” says Berg. “There was a real focus on quality, collaboration and interdisciplinary research. More importantly, the faculty is committed to putting the structures in place to reinforce those things.”

Seizing the opportunities provided, Berg has initiated the Promoting Research Engagement project. Aimed at undergraduate law students, the project encompasses the development of workshops and online materials to engage students at different points throughout their degree to expand their opportunities as students and graduates.

“We wanted to encourage students to see themselves as independent researchers in their own right. These resources draw their attention to the opportunities available to them for critical and creative reflection on the law, both during their time at UTS and after graduation.”

Berg received a 2011 Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching Grant to support the project, which grew out of a one-off workshop she co-organised with colleague Isabel Karpin last year.

“We brought in recent law graduates who were working in the legal profession or journalism, and in one case, a social justice NGO within our own faculty – Anti-Slavery Australia – in order to show students where research can take you. "We wanted to give students tangible examples of how the skills you develop in law school can be useful in your professional life down the path, often in interesting and unexpected ways,” says Berg.

The workshop was enthusiastically received by students, highlighting the need to make the information more readily available on an ongoing basis.

As a result, Berg has developed a suite of online resources scheduled to go live on the law website by the end of Spring semester. Topics covered include legal research and legal method skills, developing a mentoring relationship with academics and the value of postgraduate research.

With UTS due to undergo an Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) audit focusing on the themes of practice-oriented learning and internationalisation in 2012, Berg was asked to present her project at a law faculty meeting by Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) Bronwyn Olliffe.

“These are the sorts of programs and projects UTS does well,” says Olliffe. “AUQA is an opportunity for the university to showcase its approaches and achievements in engaging students.”

For Berg, the project has helped her retain that initial sense of excitement about working for the Faculty of Law. “One of my strongest impressions in being here continues to be how much the faculty fosters people’s individual strengths.”

Rachael Quigley
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer: Joanne Saad

Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/seizing-the-opportunity
Many young boys spend time drawing pictures of terrifying dinosaurs wreaking havoc on cities, but few manage to make a career out of it. This isn’t the case for UTS Masters of Animation graduate Daniel Cohn. He says the only difference between now and then is, these days, he gets paid for it.

Cohn’s degree focused on animation and led him to his career as a computer graphics (CG) artist. It’s also led to some pretty impressive film credits including Kenneth Branagh’s blockbuster *Thor*. Cohn has also directed three theatre pieces for Short and Sweet, the largest short theatre festival in the world (he is currently making one of these into a short visual-effects film). If that isn’t enough, he’s even completed a stunt man course in his spare time.

He explains his varied interests and seemingly diverse career saying, “All these areas are actually deeply interwoven. The approach to theatre and film productions are much the same; first the story and style of the piece are realised, then everything else builds around to support them.”

However, Cohn does concede that screen and theatre offer different qualities.

“Theatre is a one-take production without any camera manipulation, whereas screen is very visual and plays with multiple points of view and effects; that’s what gives it its own unique style.”

Cohn is ultimately interested in working behind the camera. “Being in front of camera creates a pressure to perform flawlessly on the spot, and that can be quite frightening. As an animator or director the performance aspect is no less, but we have time to create that performance and ensure its perfection before allowing it to be seen.”

He says it is the holistic nature of directing which ultimately attracts his attention. “As a long-term goal, I have my eye on directing; it’s the one area where the focus is on the entire work, not just one component. Directing is a craft that requires a lot of honing, and so I want to do as much as I can.”

Directing, however, is further down the career path. Cohn’s focus is currently on his latest gig – working as a layout artist at Polygon Pictures Inc (PPI) in Tokyo. Specialising in the Japanese animation style known as anime, PPI also create work for Western productions.

“At the moment I’m working on a CG *Transformers* show that’s actually an American production. The style steals from both Western and Japanese cultures. It’s been great to have a taste of Japanese style and apply that to a Western production.”

Understandingly, this new position and the international experience are top of Cohn’s career highlights. “The unique thing about Polygon is they’re very open to foreigners and employ a team of translators, but I’m trying to learn what I can of the language.

“While Japanese people are probably the friendliest I’ve ever met, I’m sure I’m missing out by not being able to speak or understand much.

“You have to experience the culture fully when you come to a place like this for work. If you don’t allow yourself to grow with the experience, you really gain nothing.”

Rebecca Lawson
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photo and image supplied by: D Cohn
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/all-round-performer
InSearch External Relations

Andrea Myles, UTS graduate and Project Manager in the External Relations Office, was working as a volunteer in rural China when she met Danma Niu, a driven young Tibetan woman seeking to change the ways of her traditional village. Their friendship has brought Danma on a journey to Sydney to start a university education at INSEARCH and UTS.

I met Danma in April 2010 at the Eastern Tibet Training Institute (ETTI), based on the Tibetan border in rural China. We were both working on a poverty alleviation scheme helping local unemployed young people access the new tourism economy.

I finished a Masters in International Studies at UTS in 2006 and visited Tibet and ETTI on the recommendation of my supervisors, Suzette Cooke and Elaine Jeffreys. ETTI was started by Australian academic Ben Hillman and is locally registered as a community school.

I found their focus on tailoring free vocational training programs to the needs of the local micro-economy really interesting and inspiring, so after working at UTS for a few years I returned in 2009 funded by AusAID. The ETTI Youth Pre-Employment Training program works incredibly well – 90 per cent of the students gain meaningful employment either before or at graduation.

I went back to Australia briefly for a holiday and when I returned, Danma was sitting in my office. It wasn’t a surprise; I’d been getting emails from colleagues saying there was a great new staff member – a Tibetan feminist! Tibetan culture is quite traditional and patriarchal, so for a woman to call herself a feminist is really amazing.

Danma had just completed English training in another province and was recommended to the institute by a teacher who identified immediately that she’s super switched-on. There was actually a lack of Tibetan language skills at ETTI at the time. It sounds funny, but in that area of Tibet, literacy has never been high. Many Tibetans can’t read or write in their native language.

Danma was brought in to translate and teach classes to raise literacy, as well as being involved in development projects. She’d already introduced running water to her village – before that women travelled an hour to fetch 30 kilos of water for their family twice a day.

The very first time I met Danma she told me, ‘I want to go overseas, I want to go to university.’ I didn’t know about the processes of other universities around the world but I definitely knew about UTS, so I started looking into it.

Danma is now in her first year of an accelerated communication diploma at INSEARCH. She needed English preparation training first in order to be ready for UTS, however, INSEARCH were so impressed by Danma they waivered the tuition fees and offered her a homestay at no cost. She’s already been offered a position to study a Bachelor of Communication (Social Inquiry) but funding this study is still a question.

It just goes to show, if you don’t have the right information through the right people it’s very difficult to make something like this happen. The chances for young people in rural China to study internationally are very slim.

It’s quite amazing, though, because none of it would have happened for Danma if she didn’t want it. It was her thirst for education and her long shopping list of experience that gave her these opportunities. I’m really proud of her and hope to work with her again in the future.
I grew up in a small village in the Amdo area of North Tibet. It’s a harsh climate and agriculture is not possible, so we raised livestock for an income.

Education is hard to come by in rural China. Not many girls go to school because of the gender inequality in our society. We’re expected to stay home and help our families herd yak and collect water. The Chinese Government funds nine years of schooling, but after that there’s no opportunity to defer fees like in Australia – we have to rely on our families to pay. It’s really sad that it’s such a big challenge. Even then, the school system doesn’t compare to Australia. The quality of the facilities and teaching here at UTS is so much better.

I started thinking of myself as a feminist after taking a gender class at the Shem Women’s Group, run by Western teachers. Before that, I didn’t notice the gender inequality in our village. I thought everything was just traditional and arranged. But it wasn’t easy. A Tibetan teacher in another class even said, ‘I heard girls are taking these kind of classes – do you think you can go home and tell your grandfather to do this and that?’

I realised I had to think of another way to convince them. At the time I was studying as part of an English training program, and I ended up bringing one of my teachers to my village. My people associate Westerners with money and success, so I wanted to demonstrate I had proper help for the project and that I could speak English. It worked and everyone started asking questions. The village leader even came to my home! While finding money for the project was difficult, I’d say changing the attitude of the village was the hardest part.

Later I started to question and become more outspoken. I always saw the boys doing development projects and wanted to do them too. The first time I decided to do the running water project, no one paid attention. Even my parents were quite shy and ashamed, saying, ‘You’re a little girl, you can’t do that. Maybe you exaggerate what you have learned.’ I was 19.

When I came to Sydney, Andrea took me to see the ocean for the first time at Bronte Beach. It was amazing. I couldn’t believe it at first – the water looks so different to any river we have back home. I found it hard to grasp why the water level was falling and rising without rainfall!

I’m starting to enjoy Sydney. I felt really homesick at first, but I’ve come to realise how lucky I am. Many other Chinese students here only live within their own community, but I’ve started to experience Australian life now and have lots of friends like Andrea. We’ve seen a lot together since I arrived. She even took me to see roller derby, which I had learned about at INSEARCH.

When I finish my course I want to return to my village and start more development projects. With the skills I’m learning here I want to use my local knowledge and connections to make sure things are done well for local people and that more opportunities become available for young women like me.

Learn more about Danma’s journey at teamdanma.com

Xavier Mayes
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer D Niu: Lee Besford
Photo of A Myles: self supplied
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/think-global-act-local
1930s Sydney – with its dark underworld of cocaine-fuelled gang violence, sly grog and prostitution – is an era that fascinates Masters of Writing student Amy Simpson-Deeks. So much so, she’s spent several years becoming well acquainted with one intriguing figure: notorious prostitute Nellie Cameron.

Along with her contemporaries, Tilly Devine and Kate Leigh (both of whom feature as characters in the latest TV series Underbelly: Razor), Cameron was a criminal entrepreneur who racked up 73 criminal convictions in her short life.

Simpson-Deeks, who is chalk to Cameron’s cheese, became interested in the Sydney prostitute after visiting a forensic crime exhibition City of Shadows: Sydney Police Photographs 1912-1948, curated by UTS graduate Peter Doyle. Though Cameron wasn’t featured in the exhibition, it opened up the world she inhabited. With her interest piqued, Simpson-Deeks started to dig.

“I followed up some of the characters from the exhibition and came across Nellie in my reading. She was a colourful, glamorous figure in Sydney’s criminal underworld. She was a freelance prostitute; very famous, very beautiful and interested in being with violent men.

“She arrived on the scene at 14 in 1927, reputedly coming from a wealthy North Shore family, but I don’t think that’s actually true. I think Nellie was from a lower-middle class background, but because she’d been quite well educated, she could do this upper-class impersonation at parties and came across as ladylike.

“She was there for everything – razor battles and gun battles and abductions – but not written about extensively. She was sort of on the periphery and that interested me,” says Simpson-Deeks.

At the time she ‘met’ Cameron, Simpson-Deeks was in Professor John Dale’s Creative Non-Fiction undergraduate writing class. “John suggested Nellie might make a good Honours project, so I had that in the back of my mind, and when I finished my undergraduate degree I decided to do Honours.”

A stellar student (Simpson-Deeks received the University Medal for her double degree in writing and international studies), she says the tutelage she received from Dale shaped her work and set the trajectory for her current Masters’ thesis.

“I really wanted to work with John because his own background spans both fiction and true crime – he wrote the book Huckstepp (about Sydney prostitute and informant Sallie-Anne Huckstepp), so he had a lot of guidance to offer.

“Originally, I intended to write my thesis as creative non-fiction, basically a biographical long story, but that changed. I moved into fiction – partly because there were gaps in the historical record about Nellie’s life, and I felt, stylistically, I’d be freer to play with the story a little more if I called it fiction.”

And while the fact in Cameron’s story reads like fiction, Simpson-Deeks acknowledges filling in the gaps between truth requires a respect for history.

“It’s important to create that sense of place and give these voices a sense of authenticity. I’ve got to constantly have it in my mind that I’m not just playing with these people and they’re not here for me to manipulate.”

Though Simpson-Deeks admits, if Cameron were around now, there’s a good chance she’d be revelling in the attention. “Nellie loved being in the limelight, so having anybody write about her life would have appealed to her greatly.

“She lived an amazing life: she was shot three times, she was slashed with razors, beaten and badly abused – but survived, when most of them didn’t. Sadly, she committed suicide by gassing herself in her apartment, which is an awful ending to her story. But I guess none of the criminals of that time really ‘got away with it’ – they all fell apart. Eventually their lives of crime got them all in the end.”

Izanda Ford
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer: Joanne Saad
Listen to excerpts from the full interview at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/rewriting-bloody-history
Hugo Gonzales’s comprehensive book taps into the broad range of psychological and practical stresses and coping strategies experienced by international students. His research is undertaken in a number of tertiary institutions in Australia and deals primarily, although not exclusively, with undergraduate and pre-university students.

Gonzales’s study focuses on Indonesian and Chinese students – students who come from two of the most populous countries in the world. With the study divided into both a quantitative and qualitative analysis, the reader will no doubt have met many international (and local) students whose lives reflect aspects of the stress and coping strategies Gonzales describes.

Studying is stressful for most students, but the stress is compounded when the person comes from a very different education system and has a range of other stresses in their lives. The tendency to respect the teacher; learn the correct answer and not inject their own ideas in class can be very strong. The students who were interviewed by Gonzales labelled their home-country experience of schooling as more theoretical and less practical compared with their Australian experience. Mastery of the English language was also a major hurdle.

This book is a timely contribution to all tertiary institutions who profit enormously from these young people.

Barbara Leigh
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr Hugo Gonzales is a clinical psychologist and formerly worked as a counsellor in the Student Services Unit.

When Horse Became Saw is Anthony Macris’s engrossing personal account of his young son Alex’s regression into a severe autistic state. It tracks the incredulity, grief and determination he and his wife Kathy experienced as their expectations of normal family life were profoundly challenged and changed.

Great openness defines Macris’s approach. He writes as a father fearful of never being able to understand or connect with his son; as a husband co-navigating not only the emotional territory of Alex’s condition but the pure weight of care; as a citizen of a society which makes distinctions about the worth of each individual’s life and fails to support its most vulnerable; as an academic and writer crafting sense and story from the new life taking shape around him.

The title, a reference to the scrambling which preceded Alex’s loss of language, evokes the nature of this book. It refuses the linearity a journey narrative may suggest by deeply engaging the contradictions of life with Alex and exchanging any inevitable ‘arrival’ with the notion of an ongoing approach. Macris discovers a new way of being, a new idea of normal beyond the barometer set by personal and public expectations. Reading Horse is concurrently painful and vivifying, a deeply affecting experience.

Mathilde de Hauteclouque
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Dr Anthony Macris is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Among other literary achievements, he has published two novels to great acclaim, Capital and Great Western Highway.

Theo van Leeuwen’s latest book is a response to the scarcity of textbooks addressing the use and meaning of colour, and his own self-professed “prejudice for ‘design’ over colour”.

The concise volume offers a social semiotic approach to understanding colour, arguing there is no single language of colour, and that the idea of colour schemes are more important than individual colours.

Van Leeuwen traces the historical development of colour technologies across time and cultures in clear and engaging language well suited for his audience – students of theory as well as practice of colour. Each chapter of The Language of colour concludes with a series of discussion questions inviting thoughtful analysis of visual images and media, as well as some simple tasks that encourage students to create and reflect upon their own colour schemes.

This book is a welcome companion to van Leeuwen’s existing catalogue of textbooks that explore the fundamental elements of visual communication from a semiotic perspective.

Zoe Sadokierski
Faculty of Design, Architecture & Building

Professor Theo van Leeuwen is the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. His past books include Discourse and Practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis, Introducing social semiotics: An introductory textbook and Speech, Music, Sound.
“Parents often say to me, ‘I wish babies came with a manual!’ Well, they do! They are the manual,” says Professor Cathrine Fowler. “You just need to understand how to read their body language and the signals they send their parents. Children’s brains are sculpted by the experiences they have; it’s not just nature, it really is nurture as well.”

Fowler and her colleague, Professor Maralyn Foureur from UTS’s Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, have been involved in essential research over the last few decades. Together they’re providing would-be parents and the early-childhood community with a deeper understanding of the lasting effects of periconception, pregnancy and birth experiences, as well as a child’s first-year of development.

“There is now so much more knowledge about the early years, including those in utero, and their importance. These early stages really do influence a child’s wellbeing,” says Fowler.

For this reason, Fowler and Foureur believe now, more than ever, is the right time for this month’s UTSpeaks public lecture on how to raise babies.

The core of Fowler and Foureur’s discussion focuses on the need for parents, especially new parents, to learn from the available research about pregnancy and parenting.

“Much of my nursing and research career has been about supporting parents as they learn about their children,” Fowler says.

Research shows that a fetus is sensitive to its mother’s stress from the moment it is conceived. “The critical issue is that too much stress in childbearing women potentially affects every cell of their developing baby. We are now becoming increasingly aware that too much stress can even switch on and off parts of the human genome,” explains Foureur.

“Emotions are translated into chemical messages that flood the mother’s body and brain, and in turn the baby’s. If the mother is stressed, anxious, frightened, depressed – or relaxed and happy – those emotions are also experienced by the baby.”

While this new research seems to prove parenting begins before the baby is even born, Fowler believes a new approach to parenting post-birth is also needed. She explains parents need to become more sensitive to a baby’s perspective and tailor their parenting approach to this.

“We often parent for ourselves and not for our children,” she says. “The experiences we give them are often for us. They don’t need to be rushed around on overseas trips or to the zoo or theme parks. They still haven’t experienced normal life. What they really need is to go down to the local park and inspect the leaves or watch the clouds.”

Fowler continues, “My concern is that in not considering our baby’s perspective we are inadvertently quite cruel to children. In the first year of life, babies learn to regulate their emotions by looking at their parents’ face, but we have adopted behaviours that stop them doing this. For example, outward-facing baby carriers and prams. These give babies a bombardment of stimulus while also cutting off their means to process things, creating an incredibly stressful situation for a baby.”

However, Fowler also believes first-time parents spend so much of the first year trying to get everything right, they often make things far more complicated than they need to be.

“We all make errors,” she says. “Mothers need to realise it’s important not to be perfect, because that in itself would be imperfect. This really is an important concept. Often, the most important thing we can teach our children is how to foster relationships and how to repair them. If a child learns these skills, all other achievements will follow.”

Rebecca Lawson
Marketing and Communication Unit
Photographer: Rebecca Lawson
Comment on this article at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/raising-babies
WHAT’S ON

AUGUST

1  SPRING SEMESTER COMMENCES

7  BOOK LAUNCH: BESIDE ONE’S SELF BY CATHERINE ROBINSON
   3.30pm / Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe
   www.gleebooks.com.au

8  NEXTGEN SYMPOSIUM ON THE AUSTRALIAN HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS
   10am to 5pm / Building 3, level 1, Bon Marché studio
   e: nathaliemadeleine.santamaria@uts.edu.au

10  UTS VACATION, INTERNSHIP AND VOLUNTEER FAIR
    1pm to 4pm / Building 1, level 4
    e: careers@uts.edu.au

16  MEN IN NURSING INFO SESSION
    6pm to 7.30pm / Building 10, level 7
    e: nmh@uts.edu.au

ULTIMO SCIENCE FESTIVAL OPENS
    City campus
    www.ultimosciencefestival.com

17  SCIENCE IN FOCUS LECTURE: CATCHING CROOKS - GUILTY BEFORE PROVEN INNOCENT
    6pm for 6.30pm start / Aerial Function Centre, building 10, level 7
    e: lisa.aloisio@uts.edu.au

KURING-GAI CAMPUS INFO EVENING
7pm / Kuring-gai campus, Eton Rd, Lindfield
    e: future.students@uts.edu.au

23  UTSPEAKS: RAISING BABIES
    6.30pm to 8pm / Aerial Function Centre, building 10, level 7
    e: robert.button@uts.edu.au

24  SCIENCE IN FOCUS LECTURE: OUTSMARTING SUPERBUGS
    6pm for 6.30pm start / Aerial Function Centre, building 10, level 7
    e: lisa.aloisio@uts.edu.au

25  UTS: LAW CAREERS NETWORKING EVENING
    6pm to 8.30pm / Aerial Function Centre, building 10, level 7
    e: amy.maguire@uts.edu.au

27  OPEN DAY
    9am to 4pm / City campus
    www.openday.uts.edu.au

FACULTY OF SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIPS INFORMATION SESSION
    10am to 2.30pm / Building 4, level 2, room 34
    e: shima.baradaranvahdat-1@uts.edu.au

30  SOURCING CARE FOR THE ELDERLY SEMINAR
    12pm to 1.30pm / Building 10, level 6, room 430
    e: julie.kirk@uts.edu.au

31  RETIRING WELL SEMINAR
    9am to 1pm / Building 2, level 5, room 27
    e: leonie.glasby@uts.edu.au

Email your events for September to u@uts.edu.au by Friday 5 August 2011.

Said It

A POWERFUL QUESTION

Is nuclear power the answer to meeting global energy needs? Here’s what some of our online readers had to say.

Why go down that high-risk path when other alternatives are available? There will be more nuclear accidents; it is simply not possible to avoid them entirely.

Andersen

We need to keep in mind carbon capture and storage does not reduce emissions; it merely shoves them down the back of the broom closet. As long as the ‘money-equals-debt’ paradigm continues, any institution or government will always promote the quick financial return options over any long-term solutions. Solar and wind are held back in our ‘debt-equals-money’ system as they do not provide a quick return. This paradigm is the cause of our civilisation’s value-system disorder.

Patrick

Chris Riedy’s opinion piece is a welcome contribution and a catalyst for, I hope, more activity at UTS. I have found many of my senior engineering students to be very enthusiastic about nuclear power as a ‘solution’ for reducing carbon. To redress their appreciation of the scope and depth of public debate and the ‘politics of nuclear power’, I have circulated essays giving the ‘against’ and ‘for’ cases respectively.

Bronwyn

I am dismayed by Bronwyn’s news that engineering students are enthusiastic about nuclear power. Lack of vision for a safe future and for the wellbeing of humanity is what’s causing society, and the world, to deteriorate instead of advance. Artist, poets, environmentalists, writers – people with creativity and vision, the ones that can step-out of their own discomfort and see the global suffering – are the people who should lead society.

Vivianne

Share your thoughts about any article featured in U at newsroom.uts.edu.au

Next Month’s Question

With the power of IT systems now in the hands of the people, do the pros of cloud computing outweigh the risks?

Email your name and answer to u@uts.edu.au or comment online at newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2011/08/clearing-up-the-cloud
Max Dupain’s photographs of the Kuring-gai campus buildings, the perfect match of Modernist photography and architecture, have been newly acquired for the UTS Art Collection.

Dupain’s unerring eye for form and light is clear in images such as the view of the stairwell (above), commissioned at the time of the 1978 Sulman Award for Architecture.

Read more about it in the UTS Art Collection blog: http://wp.me/p1bl1q-2P

Image: Max Dupain (1911-1992), Stairwell, 1978, black and white photograph, UTS Art Collection