SURPASSING, NOT PASSING
How feedback can make a mark

GIRLS GOT GAME
Conquering the realm of gaming

MAKING IT MEMORABLE
Why joining in beats blending in

FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS
This is an especially exciting year for me as UTS opens three stunning new buildings. But it’s not the look of these buildings that I’m excited about – it’s the innovative and distinctive approaches to learning made possible through the careful design of the spaces within.

In designing the spaces, we have been focusing on the experience of being a student. How can we create places to facilitate transition from work to study? How can we make UTS a place to socialise? And how can we combine the kinds of formal and informal learning spaces needed for our new approaches to learning? It’s about giving students the best possible opportunities to engage with each other, with staff and with the support services at UTS.

This distinctive approach is termed Learning2014 and it brings engaging, interactive learning experiences, which build on the UTS Model of Learning and Graduate Profile Framework. This special issue of U: magazine showcases some of the learning strategies that make up Learning2014.

When most students arrive at UTS for the first time, they look around and think: “Is this a place for me?” The article ‘First year minus the fear’ (page 12) shows the great range of projects we are engaged in to help students feel comfortable enough to say ‘yes’. Many of our new and existing courses are being designed – or redesigned – in much more innovative ways. Gone are the long hours spent in large lecture theatres trying to memorise content for exams. Instead, courses such as the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation (page 16) are designed around developing the skills to solve problems from multiple disciplinary perspectives, to build teamwork and networking skills, as well as collaborative problem-solving skills. Students work with others from a wide range of disciplines in new spaces that are purpose-built for these kinds of activities.

In the past, the term ‘assessment’ conjured images of big, cold exam halls with long rows of desks, filled with students anxiously reproducing what they had memorised (in my case, often the night before). But assessment is improving and is now seen as a valuable tool for learning (page 10). One of the most important things students can do, both for personal satisfaction and to demonstrate their attributes to potential employers, is participate in extracurricular activities like The Big Lift and BUiLD (page 6) – both excellent ways of building interpersonal skills and networks.

Three of the articles in this issue clearly illustrate how strongly UTS values inclusive environments and diversity, including awareness of issues arising from gender gaps in a workplace (page 8), mental health issues (page 19) and Indigenous perspectives (page 18).

And finally, we are fast moving to a 24/7 campus – as beautifully depicted in the ‘A day in the life’ photo essay (page 14). So curl up on our pods and dive into this issue of U: for a taste of everything UTS has to offer.

Professor Shirley Alexander
Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Teaching, Learning and Equity)

Coach: Jesse Taylor

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.

Cover design: Feedback is more than just a description attached to your results at the end of an assessment. It is a continuous process that builds upon itself in order to consolidate the skills learned from various tasks and create opportunities for learning and development. The revolving arrows represent the nature of feedback, how it is received from various sources and the way it comes together in order to help students make the most out of their education.

Richard Setiadi
Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication

EXECUTIVE COLUMN: SHIRLEY ALEXANDER
FLIPPED LEARNING: REAL-WORLD REWARDS
STUDENT PROFILE: GEARED FOR SUCCESS
FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE: FIRST YEAR MINUS THE FEAR
HI-TECH HEALTH
A DAY IN THE LIFE...
INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES: SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE
LEARNING2016: HI-TECH HEALTH

ISSUE 6 – written and designed by UTS students
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Women pursuing their passion are adding new dimensions to game development

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Natalia Nikolaeva believes flipped learning is the way of the future. Driven by “a passion for student learning, as well as a passion to contribute to the community sector and develop students’ social responsibility”, Nikolaeva has found success using the flipped learning approach. “It’s about asking students to prepare and read a range of materials outside the classroom, so when they come to class, we’re ready to do the more high-level learning such as problem-solving and solution generation,” explains Nikolaeva, a Senior Lecturer in Management.

Using these principles, Nikolaeva delivers the subject Management Consulting in collaboration with UTS Shopfront’s Community Engagement Coordinator Lisa Andersen. Shopfront links non-profit organisations with UTS knowledge, resources and partners and thousands of UTS students.

As part of the Management Consulting subject, each team of students has the opportunity to work with an experienced industry consultant to coach them through consulting methodologies and practices. “It’s not about the coaches solving the problems and telling the students, ‘This is how you do it’,” says Nikolaeva. “It’s about the coaches giving feedback and advice to inform students’ decision-making.”

Each project every semester is different, coming with its own set of real issues and challenges,” says Andersen. “That’s the strength of this approach and students regularly tell us Management Consulting is both the most demanding and the most rewarding subject of their degree.”

In recognition of their success developing students’ professional skills and social responsibility, Nikolaeva and Andersen were awarded the 2013 UTS Learning and Teaching Award for Team Teaching. “UTS prides itself on being more practice-oriented in our education,” says Nikolaeva, “I think this subject is a clear example of how well this is done.”

Casey Lennon
Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism) / Bachelor of Arts in International Studies

Being a mentor as well as a peer is a difficult balancing act to master. However, Bachelor of Engineering and Biotechnology student Albert Ong takes the challenge in his stride.

Currently in his final year majoring in Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering, Ong has juggled his own learning with a number of mentoring positions throughout his university career.

This has included his role as a U:PASS (UTS Peer Assisted Study Success) leader for four years, being IT Director for a student club (the UTS Australian Collaborative Entrepreneurial Society) and work as a laboratory demonstrator for the subject Physical Modelling in the Faculty of Science.

“The high degree of flexibility UTS provides in student timetabling has allowed me to easily manage my range of commitments,” says Ong. “It will even allow me to find the time to take on future opportunities!”

An advocate for collaborative learning, Ong encourages teamwork within his lab classes. After grouping his students into teams of three, he moves between each group as they solve theoretical physics problems together: “I get my students to bounce ideas between themselves to encourage collaborative learning, so they are open to multiple opinions. This challenges their own ways of thinking.”

Albert Ong
Bachelor of Engineering and Biotechnology

Comment on this article at UTS NEWSROOM

Comment on this article at UTS NEWSROOM

Ong believes this approach also helps students feel more comfortable asking questions to make sure they understand the topic.

He says, “In lectures, students struggle to ask questions – they find it daunting in a room with 400 other students.”

Within smaller, more intimate environments such as the U:PASS sessions Ong conducts, students feel less exposed to judgement when they ask for help.

The U:PASS program helps students with subjects that have been identified as particularly difficult to understand or pass. U:PASS group study sessions are facilitated by trained Peer Leaders – high-achieving UTS students who have recently completed the subject.

“U:PASS consolidates what’s in the lectures and helps people understand it using their own methods of learning and remembering,” says Ong.

Research conducted by the U:PASS team over the past 12 semesters shows U:PASS attendees have seen a substantial increase in their course results, gaining on average, 14 to 15 per cent higher marks than other students in the same subjects.

As a mentor and a teacher, Ong is always readily available for his students if they need assistance inside or outside the classroom. He gives them feedback on their work and helps them understand the information their lecturers give them.

“I try to promote a self-discovery approach to solutions rather than spoon-feeding my students the answers,” says Ong. He believes UTS’s collaborative and informal learning spaces, such as the ‘Sandpit’ in Haymarket, also support this style of active learning. “The layout encourages discussion and allows students to learn from each other.”

Ong says peer learning helps students remember information much better when they go into exams. “And it cuts down the study time they need to do.”

His teaching has also had unexpected benefits for his own study, helping incorporate new perspectives into his learning. “Working and studying at UTS has not only widened my career paths for the future, but has also offered me a unique environment in which I always learn something new each day.”

Jennifer Scherer
Bachelor of Communications (Journalism) / Bachelor of International Studies

Photographer: Richard Setiadi

The U:PASS program helps students with subjects that have been identified as particularly difficult to understand or pass. U:PASS group study sessions are facilitated by trained Peer Leaders – high-achieving UTS students who have recently completed the subject.

When I first came to UTS as a naive 18-year-old fresh out of high school, all I wanted was to earn a degree. Then he joined a student program and his world was turned upside down – in the best possible way.

When I say the trip was life-changing, I mean it in the full sense of the term and not just as a tired cliché. Before I joined the Peer Network – a group of experienced UTS students looking to go beyond the classroom, BUILD (Beyond UTS International Leadership Development Program) gave me the chance to travel and volunteer in Cambodia, South Africa, the Philippines and Thailand – all incredible experiences. The Big Lift bus with 40 strangers, completely out of my depth and comfort zone – and absolutely loving it. Sure, it was uncomfortable to begin with – but for the first time since I had started uni, I actually felt like I was doing something meaningful.

When I step off that bus with more confidence, maturity and – most importantly – a newfound passion for extracurricular pursuits.

I stepped off that bus with more confidence, maturity and – most importantly – a newfound passion for extracurricular pursuits.

Once I started looking, I discovered UTS offers an incredibly diverse range of options for students looking to go beyond the classroom. BUILD (Beyond UTS International Leadership Development Program) gave me the chance to travel and volunteer in Cambodia, South Africa, the Philippines and Thailand – all incredible experiences. Through my involvement with BUILD, I soon found myself in a position of President of the BUILD Student Society – the social club that supports students in the program. To be honest, I remember feeling pretty terrified at the time. ‘You have absolutely no idea what you’re doing!’ whispered my inner self-doubt. ‘Why would they entrust such an important position to someone as inexperienced as you?’

But through my experiences with the club, I soon learned a valuable lesson – that it was okay to make mistakes. Throughout the year, I made heaps of mistakes – things like forgetting to record attendance at events or leaving crucial merchandise orders too late. But the most important thing was that we learnt from those mistakes – and you can bet we always made sure to order things well in advance from then on!

We must have done a few things right as well, because in 2011 the BUILD Student Society was chosen from over 140 UTS student clubs as the ActivateUTS Club of the Year, something I’m incredibly proud of because it really proves that one of the best ways to be successful is to just take a crack at it!

Every extracurricular activity I’ve been involved in has taught me valuable lessons or new skills. Before I joined the Peer Network – a group of experienced UTS student volunteers who welcome and connect new students during Orientation – the mere thought of talking to strangers made my palms sweaty and my throat dry. Now I see it as an exciting chance to hear someone’s story and learn from them.

In a poetic twist, I became the President of The Big Lift, and I’ve learnt so much about managing and leading teams to work towards a common goal.

My involvement in clubs also led me to run as a student representative on the board of ActivateUTS, the organisation that manages many of the social programs and activities on campus. Being on that board has given me insight into the top-level strategic operations of a large organisation – something most students wouldn’t be exposed to at uni. And travelling overseas has broadened my world-view and made me much more understanding of cultural differences.

The name ‘extra-curricular’ is misleading because in today’s day and age, graduates are going to need every advantage they can get to stand out from the crowd.

That’s why I feel so strongly about this – far too often friends on the cusp of graduation have admitted to me that they wish they’d done more with their time at uni. As someone who has experienced firsthand the benefits of getting involved, I urge all my fellow students to find something they’re passionate about and invest some time and effort into it.

Someone once asked me what I would remember when I looked back on my time at UTS. Would I remember countless hours spent studying, time wasted commuting back and forth from class, and all those last-minute assessment all-nighters? Or would I remember sitting around a campfire with my fellow volunteers under a starry sky in the countryside, the thrill of meeting hundreds of new friends during Orientation, or spontaneously dancing on the streets of Manila with students from every corner of the globe?

So to every student reading this, I want to pose that same question: What will you remember about your time at UTS?

If you’re not satisfied with the answer, it’s never too late to start making those memories.

For more information about student programs at UTS, visit uts.edu.au/current-students/opportunities

Wihan Seang
Bachelor of Arts in Communication
Photographer: Hikaru Kawai

1. Ultimate Frisbee team at Eastern University Games in 2012. Photographer: Hikaru Kawai
2. In Thailand as part of the Australian Thai Youth Ambassador Program, 2012. Photographer: Cindy Anpholyette
3. In Thailand as part of BUILD, teaching English in rural schools. Photographer: Siriluck. Varitchartungruang

Comment on this article at utsNEWSROOM

Debi Taylor has worked in everything from construction development to IT, and is well known and truly socialised into male-dominated workplaces. So when she found herself the only female in her game development classes as a mature age student in her honours year of IT, she was more curious than intimidated.

Alone in a sea of men, Taylor wondered, “Is there a ‘type’ of woman who is more likely to see it through to a career in game development?”

This question became the basis of her honours thesis. As she began her research, Taylor soon realised that information on the Australian female game developers Taylor has studied so far shows the North American and European game industry has a long and varied history of gender equality. But Taylor steadfastly disputes the idea that women are less suited to game development than men.

In fact, she says women often have a broader suite of skills to offer the field than men do, because they are not inclined to focus on a certain type of game. Taylor also points out there is a vast range of communication skills that are vital to the field – from storytelling, to art design and an ability to draw a sense of fun and meaning into the game. Her research suggests women engage effectively across this spectrum of skills rather than focusing exclusively on the programming.

As a result, Taylor says, women tend to produce far richer and more diverse content when developing games. She believes it is a huge loss to the industry that more women don’t pursue game development as a career.

One of the primary barriers for women is their lack of engagement with game culture from childhood. Every one of the female game developers Taylor interviewed was introduced to gaming at a young age by a male relative. Unfortunately, not many young girls have this opportunity – with games being marketed specifically to males in the past, the majority of girls are not interested from early on.

Because of this lack of interaction with the industry, few girls even consider game development as a potential career pathway. Furthermore, Taylor found that while many parents deemed game development a viable career path for their sons, they considered it an irresponsible choice for women and “not a proper job”.

“WOMEN BRING A VAST RANGE OF SKILLS BEYOND PROGRAMMING – FROM STORYTELLING, TO ART DESIGN AND AN ABILITY TO DRAW A SENSE OF FUN AND MEANING INTO THE GAME.”

Taylor believes this socialisation of ‘appropriate’ careers for women is a hangover from a past era when gender roles were more defined. “As a society, we still believe there are jobs for boys and there are jobs for girls,” she says.

While it’s difficult to pin down why this attitude remains so prevalent, Taylor believes it is fed by the widely held perception that “games are the realm of guys”. This misconception is one WiE&IT aims to address.

“Through the Sydney WiE&IT Speakers in Schools program we travel to schools with female students who talk quite personally about their pathway into the field,” says Atkin. “We talk to over a thousand high school students a year, including regional visits.”

The team also runs Hands On Days where female high school students come onto campus for a suite of activities and guest presentations. The March 2014 event attracted 370 school students and 60 UTS student volunteers.

“In the most recent feedback, a number of girls reflected that they’d discovered a passion for an area of study they hadn’t previously known of!” says Atkin.

And Taylor’s results suggest game development is a passion worth pursuing. Having made it into the game development industry, the women in her study reported high job satisfaction and had few complaints about their professional experience.

Taylor’s findings also tell a hopeful story for the future of women in gaming. “More women own their own companies than ever before, and small businesses are recognizing that teams are improved by female input.”

Bella Peacock
Master of Arts in Journalism

Photographer: © Taylor; Wade Lawie
Other images: Thinkstock

Comment on this article at
UTS:NEWSROOM
newsroom.uts.edu.au/me/2014/01/girls-get-game
Getting grades. It’s catchy, it rhymes and in the midst of assessment madness, it’s a mantra that can provide some much-needed reassurance. But is this the slogan we want encapsulating our future? Even if passes – or ‘P’s – get students through, is passing your course enough to guarantee a successful life post-university?

The ‘P’s get degrees’ mentality invokes a world where passing and failing are separated by a thin line of desperate all-nighters. Battling to earn credits or high distinctions can feel like a waste of time during the stressful exam period when setting your sights on P’s will ensure you progress through your course.

“Making feedback effective is a real challenge,” says Senior Lecturer for the Institute of Interactive Media and Learning Simon Housego. “There’s plenty of evidence students don’t really understand the feedback. So the question is: how do we get students to engage with the feedback more actively?

“One way is to sell them on the idea that if you engage with feedback you’ll get a better grade.”

Under this assessment model, students spend one or two hours early in semester using SPARKPLUS – award-winning self and peer assessment software developed at UTS – to do a benchmarking exercise, reviewing examples of previous student work. Later in semester, they complete their assessment task and spend a few minutes self-assessing their assignment before submitting it for marking.

This benchmarking helps students understand the assessment criteria and develop the ability to judge the quality of their own work.

After the teacher has graded the assignment and given feedback, students have the opportunity to redo the assessment based on the feedback they’ve received, and accompany the work with a half-page reflection. This generally results in an increased mark.

“How many marks? This will vary from subject to subject, but 10 to 15 per cent on the specific assessment task is common,” says Housego.

In 2013 Senior Lecturer in the School of the Environment Andy Leigh ran a trial in the first year subject Biocomplexity to evaluate whether students understood the requirements of the specific assessment task is common,” says Housego.

In 2013 Senior Lecturer in the School of the Environment Andy Leigh ran a trial in the first year Biocomplexity to evaluate whether students understood the requirements of the first assessment task, it’s hard to improve for the second one,” she says. “Timing is the number one issue.”

Housego explains this assessment model is effective because it helps students make sense of feedback, and gives them an incentive to engage with it.

“Hundreds of students in this subject did this, even though all the steps are voluntary. And the pay off is, at the end you’re likely to get a much better mark.”

If you’re looking for additional feedback on your academic work, UTS also offers free extra-curricular support through U.PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) and the HELP5 (Higher Education Language and Presentation Support) service.

HELP5 offers workshops, online resources, group sessions and individual consultations for assignments and referencing, presentations and speaking skills, and reading and study skills.

U.PASS runs small group sessions led by experienced students who facilitate problem-solving conversations between students enrolled in historically challenging subjects.

“It’s designed to get students talking to each other, helping each other and supporting each other in a way that’s not possible in other learning contexts,” says U.PASS Manager Georgina Barratt-See.

Steane’s made use of U-PASS for some of her foundation classes and recommends it to students who need some extra guidance.

“I decided to go because I was struggling to understand what was happening in my criminology class, and needed all the help I could get! “Our U-PASS group touched on every topic we did in class – it was basically a way to clarify what we’d been taught.”

Effective feedback is a two-way street, and UTS provides students with the chance to critique their learning experiences each semester through the Student Feedback Survey (SFS). SFS feedback is passed on to tutors and lecturers, highlighting opportunities for them to improve their subjects.

Second-year Interior and Spatial Design student Christine Lee finds the SFS process constructive.

“It’s an opportunity for us to anonymously give feedback on the course and tutors,” she says. “We had a tutor last year and a lot of us didn’t really agree with the way they organised things. The SFS gave us the chance to let them know our concerns, and I’ve actually noticed improvements.”

Lecturer in Media Studies Belinda Middleweek says receiving criticism can be confronting at first, but overall the SFS is “cause for reflection”.

As teachers, we do try to find ways of combating or addressing the challenges students have faced.”

Barratt-See emphasises the range of advantages students gain from actively engaging in the process.

“You can often learn more from the feedback – particularly when it’s from both your peers and academic staff – than you learn doing the actual assignment! Not only that, but it prepares you for the workplace where giving and receiving feedback is a regular occurrence,” she says.

“UTS has so many useful ways for students to get feedback – we’d really encourage them to make the most of those opportunities.”

Nirah Hoped
Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism)

Taylor Schnieder
Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism) / Bachelor of Arts in International Studies

Alexandra Willis
Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism)

Photographer (left): Shane Lee
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology

Photographer (right): Anna Zou
First Year Experience

MINUS THE FEAR

Most students start uni expecting a very different experience from high school: a bigger campus and even bigger student population, less hours in the classroom and more on independent study, more social activities and greater expectations around managing their own time to meet deadlines.

But knowing it will be different isn’t always enough to prepare students to meet the challenges. That’s where the First Year Experience (FYE) project comes in. Designed to help students make the most of their studies, the project works with academics, the library and student support services to create learning environments where students feel they belong and are able to succeed.

UTS’s Learning2014 model adds fresh opportunities and challenges to the mix. “The emphasis is on empowering students to manage their own learning,” says FYE Project Coordinator Kathy Eaga. “Collaboration, feedback and reflection are a big part of the Learning2014 model, however these skills are foreign to many first-year students.

“It’s important to give them some extra support to help them take advantage of the opportunities.”

As part of the FYE project, each faculty has its own First Year Transition Experience (FYTE) Coordinator who works with academics to implement faculty-specific strategies that help first-year students adjust.

“A great part of the role is about finding out where people come from prior to entering university, and trying to ease that transition as much as possible,” says FYE Coordinator Vicki Bamford.

One initiative designed to assist student transition in the faculty is a podcast project in the high-enrolment subject Ideas in History. Created by Senior Lecturers Katherine Gordon and Virginia Watson, the podcasts feature the voices of experienced students, utilising their expertise to provide advice from a student perspective. These high-achieving students explain how to approach critical academic skills like writing a proposal or an essay, in ways new students can relate to.

“The videos were really useful,” says Creative Writing and International Studies student Alessandra Allegretti. “They were relatively informal, colloquial, and helped put things into perspective.”

Need some extra advice or support in first year? Visit uts.edu.au/current-students/commencing-students
UTS is more than a place to attend classes – it’s a space where students collaborate, study, catch up and relax. We set out to capture how the shared social, recreational and learning spaces are used over a 24-hour period, and discovered UTS is a place that never sleeps!
Natalie Clancy is in the first-year class of UTS’s new Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation. Associate Professor Louise McWhinnie is one of the course co-designers and Head of Department. They talk about exciting possibilities for engaging with complex challenges and un tapped opportunities in an evolving, entrepreneurial world.

There has also been a guest lecture by Gabrielle Benefield, who is an ‘agile thinker’. Yes, that’s a job! Her unique approach to problem-solving in her field of IT was engaging and inspiring.

I think the fact the BCII is the first course of its kind in Australia will give us a competitive edge when we enter the workforce, because there will only be a handful of us with these qualifications. The teamwork and networking skills that are central to the course will also be an advantage when we’re looking for employment. And representatives from industry will be heavily involved in running the summer and winter schools, giving us great opportunities for networking.

The fact you can study any one of 18 different core degrees with the BCII really appealed to me. The BCII can only be taken as part of a combined degree. I’m completing the course with a communication degree, and the interaction with students from so many disciplines takes teamwork to a whole new level. We’ll learn so much from each other, because every student brings a different skill-set to the table. I think the wide range of disciplines strengthens the course, because we’ll develop skills and interests in many areas, not just in the area of our core degree. Having students from a wide range of disciplines also facilitates problem-solving from multiple perspectives, which is a key feature of the BCII.

So far I’ve really enjoyed learning about unconventional and creative ways to solve problems. I think I’ll enjoy the challenges of the course, and the opportunity to meet students and industry representatives from various disciplines. I also like the fact there are no exams!

The dinner party Natalie mentioned came about because we were conscious that students in the BCII needed to establish an immediate ease in working with each other across the 18 disciplines. So the first challenge we set them was to organise a themed dinner party in groups of eight, and utilise the social opportunity to establish new networks by finding out what they had in common – or maybe didn’t.

This laid the groundwork for the collaboration between students, disciplines, faculties and the specialists – from UTS Designing Out Crime research centre to the City of Sydney council – who integrated into the delivery of the first subject.

innovation often happens at the overlap between the boundaries of disciplines. These ‘cracks in the pavement’ are where the various disciplines and their methodologies meet and potentially overlap. When students work within their disciplines, they don’t necessarily step on these cracks. But once we’re in the workplace, people with business degrees, for example, rarely just work with other business people; they work with lawyers and engineers and architects. So students need that ability to identify new possibilities by looking at things through different lenses.

The most important characteristic our students require is intense curiosity. With the first subject having just concluded, it’s clear this is a highly active course, comprised of very active students who do not expect to sit back or have knowledge delivered. The first three years of BCII subjects are taught as two-week and three-week intensive summer and winter schools. They’re never taught by one faculty or just in one place. For example, for part of the first subject, Problems to Possibilities, staff and students from across all seven faculties worked together in Kings Cross.

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So many schools and industry leaders have made the same comment in recent months: ‘Only UTS could have conceived this course and actually made it happen.’ I think that’s true. It came about in response to what I feel is such a particular characteristic of UTS – being proactive, rather than reactive – and its belief in leading educational and disciplinary change through innovation. The BCII was driven from the top and has involved 18 months of intense work with a core team of staff from across all faculties. That interaction between the faculties is truly where the big BCII ideas have come from, but the integration of students is where this really came to life!

Students’ interest in the new degree was clear at the UTS Info Day, but we were unsure of how many students would apply. However, the combined BCII degree received nearly 2500 UAC preferences for approximately 160 places across the university. From that extraordinary reaction, we immediately had our thinking confirmed – the creation of this course resonates with students’ changing expectations and their desire for challenge in their education as well as their future careers. It’s exciting – for students and staff!

Max Murphy Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism)
Photographer: S. McWhinnie and N. Clancy.
Richard Simon
Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication
Photographer: Student writing and lecture screen.
Louise McWhinnie
Photographer: Kings Cross Coke sign. Matt Gilman, Fäder

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TWO OF U
CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE AND INNOVATION

STEPPING ON CRACKS

Louise McWhinnie and Natalie Clancy

Natalie Clancy

I was initially attracted to the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation (BCII) because I thought the name looked really cool! I ended up choosing it because I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to study, and I have fairly diverse interests. I've always enjoyed a challenge, I thought the BCII would be a broad and exciting degree to study, and I have fairly diverse interests. Because I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do, I was initially attracted to the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation (BCII) program. They talk about exciting possibilities for engaging with complex challenges and untapped opportunities in an evolving, entrepreneurial world.

My experience has been very positive so far. We’ve done a networking exercise that involved organising a dinner party for eight students from different faculties, and getting to know one another in a casual environment. Any assignment involving dinner and a party has got to be fun!
Natalie Clancy is in the first-year class of UTS’s new Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation. Associate Professor Louise McWhinnie is one of the course co-designers and Head of Department. They talk about exciting possibilities for engaging with complex challenges and untapped opportunities in an evolving, entrepreneurial world.

There has also been a guest lecture by Gabrielle Benefield, who is an ‘agile thinker’. Yes, that’s a job! Her unique approach to problem-solving in her field of IT was engaging and inspiring.

I think the fact the BCII is the first course of its kind in Australia will give us a competitive edge when we enter the workforce, because there will only be a handful of us with these qualifications. The teamwork and networking skills that are central to the course will also be an advantage when we’re looking for employment. And representatives from industry will be heavily involved in running the summer and winter schools, giving us great opportunities for networking.

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I was initially attracted to the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation (BCII) because I thought the name looked really cool! I ended up choosing it because I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to study, and I have fairly diverse interests. I’ve always enjoyed a challenge, an interesting course that covered a lot of areas. I’ve also always enjoyed a challenge, creative thinking and working with other people, so the collaborative problem-solving aspect of the course appealed to me too.

My experience has been very positive so far. We’ve done a networking exercise that involved organising a dinner party for eight students from different faculties, and getting to know one another in a casual environment. Any assignment involving dinner and a party has got to be fun!
SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

A lot of people feel really uncomfortable about asking silly questions and right up front I say, "That’s cool. Please do. That’s the way you’re going to learn.” says Professor of Indigenous Education Juanita Sherwood. “That’s the most important thing you do with Indigenous teaching. Elders always say, ‘Don’t be afraid to ask.”

The approach appeals to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. Since Sherwood was given the challenge of revitalising the previously unpopular subject Balancing World Views: Introduction to Aboriginal Cultures in 2012, student numbers have tripled. Open to all students through the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the elective subject Balancing World Views: Introduction to Aboriginal Cultures is protected by research ethics.

“Here’s someone they’ve gotten to know who’s telling that story. And it’s not from 30 years ago – it’s a current issue.” says Watson. “Juanita’s background in health is really interesting. She talks about her experiences in real world settings and also in remote communities. I bring my experiences as a former lawyer to class. We have a lesson devoted to land rights and native title, so I am able to speak about my experiences of working in native title.”

Students are also encouraged to contribute their own perspectives to the conversation – so creating an environment where they feel safe sharing their ideas, experiences and stories is essential.

“I was really blown away by how welcoming and open the class was,” says one student. “In the first lecture, I tested one of my friends who wanted to do the subject. ‘This is incredible.’

For many students, the subject is their first real exposure to Indigenous history, culture and issues. “When I was at school we didn’t learn anything really,” says another student. “I’ve just got the image of an Aboriginal person with a spear.”

“Our students have all said this has been a subject that’s really opened their minds,” says Sherwood. “Because there’s not just one way of looking at the world, and I hope we provide a balanced perspective rather than a one-sided story.

Students particularly liked the week on health for this reason: “It made me realise there’s so much more going on than just the welfare issues that are brought up in the news and media – that they’re sensationalised.”

Students’ final project in the subject is a case study where they choose an Indigenous issue that interests them and examine how it’s been covered in the media recently. “The final products are fantastic!” says Sherwood. “They really put in a lot of effort, because they care about the subject.”

Sherwood and Watson say the enjoyment and learning experience flow both ways. “Our students are incredibly generous and open,” says Watson. “It’s a different experience every semester because people come in with their own histories and baggage – and we’ve all got that. So we learn from each other.”

Researcher Gawler
Photographer: Richard Setiadi

LEARNING2014

“Mental health is an area where there’s still quite a lot of stigma, negative attitudes and misinformation,” says Lecturer in mental health nursing Fiona Orr.

Addressing this stigma and equipping nursing students with the skills to work effectively with people with mental illness has been a key focus of Orr’s work. Her ongoing success was recently recognised with a UTS Learning and Teaching Award. Orr was part of the team that developed the ‘Hearing Voices that are Distressing’ simulation workshop. Designed to give students an understanding of what it might be like for people who hear voices due to mental illness, the simulation is now embedded in a third-year subject for all undergraduate nursing students.

“Simulated voices were recorded on MP3 players and the students listen to those while carrying out everyday tasks. It helps give them insight, awareness and – most of all – empathy,” says Orr. When the project was introduced in 2008, it was the first training of its kind for undergraduate nursing students in an Australian university.

Students report it has a dramatic impact on the way they understand voice hearing, and enables them to develop strategies to work with people who hear voices due to mental illness.

The Faculty of Health has developed a range of similarly innovative and creative learning initiatives over the past year, supported by Learning2014 grants from the Vice-Chancellor’s Learning and Teaching fund.

‘Flipped onto their Feet’ is a suite of new online audio-visual resource that uses patient vignettes to engage students with more realistic nursing scenarios in their Medical Surgical subject. Students are required to watch the videos before coming into the lab where they carry out practical tasks on simulation manikins that represent the patient depicted in the vignette. Known as ‘flipped learning’, this approach means students are able to fully utilise their time in the lab, and better able to relate to the patient’s situation.

“We got amateur actors to play patients and filmed them,” says project coordinator Lecturer Tamara Power.

“We were able to introduce different cultures, different socio-economic circumstances, different behaviours. It was really good for students to see that in a non-confronting forum.”

A Bachelor of Nursing student Marriann Singh agrees. “I love that Tamara not only gives case study patients the usual backstory, but gets in age- and look-appropriate actors to film the scenarios, then dresses the manikins in the same clothing as in the video, even down to the detail of one patient who had a tattoo sleeve.”

Other initiatives the faculty developed from its Learning2014 grants were a pilot audio-visual online resource to improve students’ therapeutic interviewing skills, and multimedia tools to facilitate students’ ability to understand and provide clinical handovers.

According to aged care Lecturer Joanne Lewis, “The online modules have successfully engaged students in topics they previously found boring.”

The modules have also helped dispel students’ negative preconceptions about aged care nursing and palliative care.

“We’re exposing students to some really positive perspectives on ageing that they wouldn’t have otherwise seen in the broader media,” says Lewis.

The projects represent a taste of things to come at UTS, as teaching continues to evolve, capitalising on the new learning spaces and technologies made available by the City Campus Master Plan.

Sobhan Kennedy
Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism) / Bachelor of International Studies

Sandra Selim
Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Journalism) / Bachelor of Laws

Photographer: Richard Setiadi

Learning2014: Pilot multimedia tools to facilitate students’ ability to understand and provide clinical handovers.

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“These photos remind me of the joy of being alone in an unfamiliar place, of the welcome clatter of the tram after a snowy wait, of ‘taco rice’ and melon soda surrounded by retro kitsch, of soaking in baths with strangers and of the unpredictable ebbs and flows of cultural belonging.

“My International Studies year in Japan was a challenging whirlwind that has fuelled much of my creative work since then; in this new language I found a fresh tool of expression, one that helps me rediscover my native tongue and encourages me to experiment beyond it.”

1. Yellow Pumpkin by Yayoi Kusama on a jetty over the Seto Inland Sea, Naoshima. 2. Shioya Diner, Naoshima. 3. Torii gate at low tide, Itsukushima Shrine, Miyajima. 4. Suginami-cho tram stop, Hakodate

Photographer: Eleanor Chandler, Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Writing and Cultural Studies) / Bachelor of Arts in International Studies graduate

JOYFUL COLLISIONS