



## Editorial

Welcome to Volume 10 of the *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*.

This is a momentous year for the *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability* – having started from scratch in 2010, this journal was established as an outcome of Curtin University’s ‘Curriculum 2010’ curriculum renewal initiative, particularly to create a forum where teaching academics might engage in scholarly reflection and research associated with graduate employability, a relatively new field in Australia at that time. In 2010, we welcomed contributions about any aspect of higher education teaching and learning which related to the broad topic of graduate employability, including but not limited to:

- Graduate employability and how it can be measured;
- The relationship between graduate employability and the achievement of graduate attributes, employability skills and preparation for global citizenship;
- Teaching and learning experiences, resources and assessments which enhance graduate employability;
- Industry partnerships and perspectives;
- Life-long learning.

As we go forward, it is appropriate to note our achievements to date: this year, the journal will have been publishing for ten consecutive years: we published **sixty-four peer-reviewed articles** by May 2019, and ten editorials, and we have just published our **first special issue** (with plans for more). We are all interested not just in publications, but their impact. **Citations** clearly take time to build so focussing on our first six years (2010 to 2016) our thirty-three peer-reviewed articles were cited (in total) 570 times, and five articles were cited more than 40 times (to May 2019). Our most highly cited article to date – with 78 citations – is Catherine Caballero and Arlene Walker’s “Work readiness in graduate recruitment and selection: A review of current assessment methods”.

Since 2010, employability is mentioned in just about every jurisdiction and sector, and includes comments related to undergraduate and postgraduate learning, domestic and international students – onsite, online or both. Student success is now a fruitful topic, and there is some crossover with employability. Even though policy makers and practitioners frequently conflate *employability* with *employment* (and often the thing that occurs at the end of the degree - something this journal has attempted to define and clarify), it appears that “employability” is now writ large in the minds of sector leaders across the globe. It is front and centre of commentary about the sector particularly in the United States (Zemsky 2009) in policy initiatives such as the recent Augar review in the United Kingdom (Augar 2019), the review of performance-based funding in Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 2018) where graduate employment has been a standard measure associated with national quality indicators for teaching and learning for some time (qilt.edu.au).

We are also acutely aware that the emphasis on employability and employment is likely to become more intense as the fourth industrial revolution and the digital economy unfold, and require new skills (World Economic Forum 2016, Schwab 2017), including the ability to work with machines (Aoun 2017). In Australia and overseas, discussions regarding micro-credentials are gaining momentum in relation to the future of work, lifelong learning and the tertiary education sector (Fain 2018, Gallagher 2018). The Review of the Australian Qualifications Framework is contemplating whether micro-credentials might be regulated (AQF Review Panel 2018). As the name suggests micro credentials are certifications which are gaining in popularity since they deliver industry or profession-specific qualifications in a

relatively short time, sometimes at lower cost to learners, to meet particular needs and skills gaps.

A recent report from the *Foundation for Young Australians (Foundation for Young Australians 2016)* called *The New Work Order* similarly highlights the importance of opportunities for value-add credentials, citing the impact of the rapid growth of technology on the shelf-life of skills gained during a three year university degree. While it is not possible for working learners of all ages to combine work and further study, the “pincer movement” of more casual and short term work in the gig economy (Ernst & Young 2019) as well as the need to upskill for a very different future of work may mean that micro credentials are an idea whose time has come. It remains to be seen how higher education providers will respond to the conversations around micro credentials, but given their commitment to graduate employability, it would appear to be an initiative of great value to future and past graduates.

### **Our current issue**

The second Issue of the JTLGE for 2019 opens with four studies reporting a range of initiatives designed to improve graduate employability.

The first paper investigates the use of reflection to promote the awareness and development of graduate attributes. Author Julie Dunne found that by framing experiences both in terms of graduate attributes and core theoretical knowledge, there was a substantial increase in the breadth of attributes being reflected upon by students.

The second paper by Gail de Blaquièrre, Jane Nolan and Katie Wray argues that the ability to articulate what a graduate can offer to employers, framed in terms of skills and expressed in narratives which provide convincing examples, is important in establishing potential employability. The paper provides examples of ways in which architecture education - based on experiential learning - can support understanding, confidence, metacognition and the creation of narratives, enhancing students' capacity to 'join up the dots', and tell the story of their employability.

The third paper looks at the threshold learning outcomes for Australian bachelor degree graduates in environment and sustainability, and more specifically graduate competency levels. Michael Whelan and Amanda Reichelt-Brushett surveyed students, work placement hosts and teaching staff to enable comparisons between the performance expected of a new graduate by employers with the level of performance students achieved while on placement.

The fourth paper by Joanne Hart evaluates the effectiveness of interdisciplinary project-based learning in science programs, and their effectiveness in developing discipline knowledge and employability skills. Projects with wide interdisciplinarity were significantly associated with perceived gains in interdisciplinary effectiveness and more likely to have perceived gains in communication and teamwork skills than projects with a narrow discipline focus.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee, we thank you for your continued support of the journal, and we commend this volume to you. We invite you to engage with the forthcoming papers throughout the year as we seek to promote scholarly communication and debate in the increasingly wide range of topics associated with graduate employability.

***Beverley Oliver and Beatrice Tucker*** (Editor and Deputy Editor)

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