These presentations were held as part of our Guest Speaker Presentation Series.

1. Gratitude in Higher Education: Therapeutic or Transformative?

10:30am-12:30pm

This presentation focuses on a unique approach to education that enhances the relational aspects of teaching and contributes to transformative learning. It offers a conceptual framework for the place of the practice of gratitude in higher education that is aligned with educational rather than therapeutic goals. Gratitude is broadly defined in this presentation as “giving back out of appreciation for what has been received”. A key underlying premise is that an
attitude of gratitude can generate greater consciousness of what we receive from others and our environment, and increase our motivation to want to give back. Though not necessarily involving a reciprocal relationship between the giver and receiver, greater attention to gratitude can increase awareness of the giving and receiving relationship inherent in healthy educational communities. In the context of the historical neglect of subjective dimensions of learning and teaching within higher education and forces that may be mitigating against our expression of gratitude, this attention to relations of reciprocity adds an important aspect to our thinking about reasons for student disengagement and low staff morale.

Examples will be given of gratitude practices and outcomes reported from the application of pedagogy of gratitude a variety of educational contexts, and participants will gain strategies that assist them to bring more of the subjective domain into their teaching. The conceptual framework underlying this approach gives precedence to expressed gratitude in the form of ‘gratitude practices’, rather than prescribing a certain way of thinking or feeling, or recommending that one should aim to feel grateful all the time. The presentation also takes into account some of dilemmas that arise when considering the role of gratitude in the complex terrain of university education.

2. Exploring the role of gratitude in facilitating enriched student engagement in university education

2:00-4:00pm

This workshop will first investigate the notion of “gratitude” in the context of education and its potential to achieve enhanced student engagement and positive learning outcomes. Taking the view that teachers first need to attend to their gratitude, participants will then explore the relationship between gratitude and teacher reflection, trust and resilience. The workshop will also consider the place of gratitude in enriching the PhD supervisor-student relationship. Participants will be introduced to theoretical underpinnings and strategies that are covered in the recent publication, Howells, K. (2012) Gratitude in Education: A Radical View (Sense Publishers).

About the speaker

Dr Kerry Howells is a teacher educator in the UTAS Faculty of Education, teaching in the areas of educational philosophy, professional studies and practitioner research. Kerry has been teaching in various university contexts for the last two decades. In order to fully realise her passion to teach to the ‘awake’ or truly present learner, no matter what the subject matter, Kerry developed ‘A State of Preparedness’, a unique approach to teaching and learning which addresses student disengagement. Her approach advocates for students to take greater responsibility for the state of being they bring to their learning, and what they can give back out of gratitude. Over the past fifteen years she has demonstrated that traditional teaching and learning practices are enhanced by greater attention to practices of gratitude, and that students’ gratitude is more fully realised when teachers and school leaders first attend to their practice of gratitude. Dr Howells has applied this approach to 12 teaching and leadership roles and in invited presentations at eight different universities and five schools, many of which have participated in her research on the role of gratitude in education. Since her commencement at UTAS in 2006, Kerry has been the recipient of nine teaching awards – including three national awards, and the 2009 UTAS Teaching Excellence Award.

Event date:
6th Nov 2012, 10:00am to 4:00pm
Location:
Learning and Teaching Workshop - Room 416 - Level 4 Mathews Building

Open to:
Staff Only: Event open only to UNSW Staff
Seats available:
Rego Closed

Cost:
Free

Contact name:
Natasha Moore

Contact email:
ltevents@unsw.edu.au

Add to calendar