Boys, balls and bad behaviour

In the wake of national public outcry over recent rape allegations against rugby league and AFL players, a Monash University physical education expert has called for radical action at junior levels to combat the problem of footballers behaving badly.

Associate Professor Lindsay Fitzclarence said physical education teachers and coaches should be treating junior footballers as less than equal, "Footballers are not being given enough training in how to walk, talk and not cross over to the other side. Male team sports like football have been built on a military model that stress group cohesion. Phrases such as 'treat for all and all for one' reinforce that ideal, but when that is carried beyond the boundary of the game and into sexual relations, we have serious problems."

Dr Fitzclarence, an associate dean in the Education faculty at Monash's Gippsland campus, has been researching about behaviour by footballers for more than seven years, in partnership with Dr Christopher Hickey of Deakin University.

They are currently completing a book on the topic.

The researchers, both former physical education teachers, observed and recorded a number of disturbing behaviour patterns in the junior football team they were coaching in the mid-1990s.

Their theories about what they were seeing reinforced witnessing an on-field assault at a senior football match that ended up with the victim in intensive care for nearly a week.

"Games such as football that actively foster tight bonding between players also have the capacity to objectify those not in the group, as part of a 'group-think' factor that contributes to a sense of entitlement and reinforcement for others.

"There is a fine line between illegal behaviour and the practice required to play body contact sport," Dr Fitzclarence said.

"Footballers are not being given enough training in how to walk, talk and not cross over to the other side. Male team sports like football have been built on a military model that stress group cohesion. Phrases such as 'treat for all and all for one' reinforce that ideal, but when that is carried beyond the boundary of the game and into sexual relations, we have serious problems."

He said the best way to stop bad behaviour at senior levels was to attack the problem at junior levels, by promoting a culture of social and emotional responsibility.

"Teachers and coaches should aim to develop players' social and emotional skills as much as physical skills and team tactics, helping to create a revolution from below that can work its way up through the system."

Dr Fitzclarence said the crucial factor in breaking down group-think barriers that foster abuse of team members was to find ways to encourage and reinforce individual responsibility while still maintaining the cohesion needed to be an effective team.

"Teaching and even rejection are what most young people fear most of all. Learning to understand such feelings and reactions becomes an important step in the process of developing emotional maturity." – Michele Martin

Contact: michele.martin@monash.edu.au Phone: +61 3 9902 0068

Platypus sense is electric

Medicine

The unique ability of platypuses to locate a shrimp on a muddy river bottom at night is due to the bills and brains of these unique mammals being specially equipped with electro-sensors that allow them to home in on the electrical signals of prey, Monash scientists believe.

Professor Uwe Proksch and Dr Ed Gregson from the Department of Physiology have studied the data available on platypus physiology and strongly believe there are electro-sensors in platypus bills, wired to the touch and electro-sensing part of the platypus brain, work like a short-range radar system to pick up the electrical signals of fish, shrimp, crayfish and other prey.

Their speculations about platypus electro-sensors have been published in the journal Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology.

"Electro-sense in animals has evolved at least twice," Professor Proksch said. "The first time was in fish – sharks, rays and other non-bony fish as well as in electric bony fish. The second time was in platypuses and echidnas. The electro-sensory system in the platypus evolved entirely independently of that in females."

Professor Proksch said platypuses appear to have developed touch receptors in their bills, similar to those in human skin, as part of their electro-sensory system. Some cells in the platypus bill respond to touch and some to weak electric fields, weaker than anything humans can feel. These cells wind down the pipes to the brain.

It is important that the electro-sensors be sensitive to the slightest change in electric field, so the platypus doesn't rely on its other senses when hunting – Its eyes, ears and snout are closed when it dives, looking for prey on the bottom of a stream or pond.

"If you look at the surface of the platypus brain, about two-thirds of the sensory part of the brain is connected to the bill," Professor Proksch said.

"One of the surprising things we found was brain cells that responded both to signals coming from the touch cells and from the electro-sensory cells. So data the platypus feels touch when it detects an electric field."

"We think that as a shrimp swims, it generates an electro-magnetic field which when its tail is flaked, it produces a signal the platypus can detect. So, as the platypus is swimming in the dark, the first thing it detects is the electro-signal. Then, as a delay, there is a small disturbance of the water as a result of the tail flick, and the disturbance triggers the touch nerve endings in the bill."

So does the key register that there are cells in the brain that are tuned to respond to sensory signals coming from the bill at a preferred interval. The interval response tells the platypus how far away the prey is.

"The system is obviously effective, as a platypus can capture half its body weight in food every night."

Although Professor Proksch is particularly interested in how the electro-sensory system of the platypus works, these ideas could have practical applications.

Just as the use of radar by Doppler was developed into a practical application for the US navy, it is possible that knowledge of how the membranes in a platypus sense line are affected by a weak electric signal could be used to detect objects underwater that produce electric signals.

– Penny Fannin

Contact: uwe.proksch@nd.edu.au Phone: +61 3 9905 2526

Suburban home bedazzles with colour

Howard Arklay's Family home – suburban exterior (1993, Monash University Collection) is one of the works featured in the Satellite Cities and Tabloid Life exhibition showing at the Monash University Museum of Modern Art (MUMA), Clayton campus, until 3 July.

For further information, call +61 3 9905 4217 or visit www.monash.edu.au/muma. And see page 6 for details of a new exhibition series at MUMA – "Incident in the Museum".
From the vice-chancellor’s desk

A monthly column by the vice-chancellor of Monash University
Professor Richard Larkins

The growing strength of biotechnology in Victoria, nowhere better reflected than at Monash, where research and infrastructure projects are entering exciting new phases of discovery and development.
The university is at the centre of a research and commercialisation boom, with the first stage of the Monash Science Technology Research and Innovation Precinct (STRIP) now fully operational and the research activities that are so much part of Monash – the National Stem Cell Centre, the Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development, and the Monash Research Cluster for Biomedicine – producing high-quality research of great current and future benefit to humankind.

Collaboration of the Australian Synchrotron at Monash’s Clayton campus is also well under way. With this powerful scientific instrument being in such close proximity, there is a great opportunity for Monash to become the regional centre forsynchrotron science and the research and industry that flows from it.

We also have a major branch of the CSIRO located on our Clayton campus, and increased collaboration with the outstanding scientists located there will further enhance the potential of the precinct.

The first stage of the Monash STRIP was completed on the Clayton campus earlier this year, and planning for stages two and three has begun. The STRIP brings together researchers and commercial partners in an environment where they can share ideas and collaborate. It is an ideal environment for fostering research-based business development.

One of the STRIP’s major tenants, the Nano21 Stem Cell Centre (of which Monash is a major shareholder), last month received an additional $5.5 million in funding from the Federal Government to continue developing treatments for serious diseases using stem cells and related technologies.

This success can be partly attributed to the significant effort the university has made in designing cutting-edge research programs and attracting high-calibre researchers.

Surrounding Monash’s Clayton campus is Australia’s largest industrial concentration of information technology and telecommunications, scientific, medical, advanced materials, plastics, transport and equipment manufacturing.

Monash is ideally positioned in every sense to become the epicentre of a thriving science, technology and industry precinct driving the Victorian and Australian economy.

Richard Larkins

Books strengthen links between Monash and Italy

Italian studies

Monash has joined a select group of three universities outside Europe that have received a significant donation of Italian books from the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research.

The government has given Monash more than 700 books, which will form the basis of an Italian studies research centre to be developed within the university’s School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics (SCLC).

It is the third such book donation by Italy’s Ministry for Cultural Heritage to universities in cities outside Europe with large Italian communities, the others being to a university in Alexandria, Egypt, and in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The donation, which is valued at approximately $550,000, includes encyclopaedias and reference texts, works of classical and contemporary literature and books on librarianship.

At a ceremony to acknowledge the donation, vice-chancellor Professor Richard Larkins said it signalled the importance of the close cultural links the university had established with Italy since setting up a centre in Prato in 2001.

Also speaking at the ceremony Italian tourism general manager Dr Francesco Calogero said the donation was part of an international program to provide readers of Italian throughout the world with access to a wide range of Italian literature and texts.

And Arts Associate dean (graduate research) Associate Professor Denise Cuthbert said the books would provide a nucleus for the proposed Italian studies research centre, which would coordinate and enhance research and teaching in Italian studies at Monash.

- Michele Martin

Briefly

Rural doctors are happy

A Monash University study of more than 1100 rural doctors has found that Federal Government strategies to attract doctors to rural areas are working.

The three-year study by Mr Jo Winder, a research officer at Monash’s Centre for Rural Health, found a high percentage of rural doctors expressed confidence with their life in rural Victoria and the work they do.

Mr Winder said Federal Government programs to encourage medical students and young doctors to experience rural practice were supported by by two-thirds of the doctors he surveyed.

"This finding supports the expansion of rural-based medical practice that was encouraged by the Federal Government," Mr Winder said.

Monash library a national leader

The Monash University Library is one of the premier libraries in Australia in terms of the range of services on offer, the quality of the collection and the high level of usage.

The library, based on the Clayton campus, holds more than 2.2 million items, from which students can locate and access a vast range of information.

"We have a top-level library that is used by students and staff, and is world-class," Monash Vice-Chancellor Professor Richard Larkins said.

Neurology: ward goes wireless

It is a first for the Monash Medical Centre, ward 54 has went wireless. Efficiencies are expected to increase with clinical staff using innovative handheld devices and mobile equipment to deliver patient care.

The project, called m Ward, has been developed by the Centre for Health Services Operations Management (CHSOM) within the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash University.

"The project aims to demonstrate the benefits of wireless technology in a hospital environment, and provide a platform that could be used to inform the workplace of nurses and doctors, and ultimately, on patient care.

"Infrastructure for the m Ward project has been established in the neurology, neurosurgery and stroke units at Monash Medical Centre.

"The equipment used has been donated by NEC Business Solutions, their partners TeleTec and Spectralink, and Wi-Fi Systems Pty Ltd.

French-connected marketing students

A team of Monash University marketing students has won the right to represent Australia in an international marketing competition in Paris this month.

The three-person team will compete against groups from France, the United States of America, Canada and Italy in an annual L'Oreal Marketing Award International.

They qualified for the competition when they were declared winners of the national round of the Australian L'Oreal Marketing Award on 4 May in Melbourne.

A second team of Monash University students was declared runners-up in the national competition.

The team’s project was from Monash and saw them researching the L’Oréal Paris Homme brand of mens’ products, and devise a strategy and creative brief for the product.

"This is a great opportunity for these students to develop their marketing skills and gain exposure in the industry," Monash Business School’s Professor John Thompson said.

"The team will also get the chance to visit Monash’s campus in Prato, Italy, to see the L’Oréal Paris Biotherm Homme facility, and observe the operations of the company and the L’Oréal Paris team.

"The team will also get the chance to visit Monash’s campus in Prato, Italy, to see the L’Oréal Paris Biotherm Homme facility, and observe the operations of the company and the L’Oréal Paris team."
Monash heart surgeons make history

Surgery

Monash University Department of Surgery staff have made history by performing the first robotic heart operations in the southern hemisphere.

Surgeons Professor Almeida and Mr Randall Moshinsky, both experienced cardiac surgeons, have performed more than a dozen operations in the past few months using the da Vinci Robotic Surgical System - a highly sophisticated device that allows complex operations through a 4 cm incision.

After being the first Australian cardiac surgeons to train using the robotic surgery system at East Carolina University School of Medicine in the US, the Monash surgeons are now using the $3 million device at the Epworth Hospital in Melbourne.

The system consists of a high-resolution 3-D telescope and two robotic arms that are inserted into the patient through small incisions. The surgeon operates the procedure by controlling fine instruments at the tips of the robotic arms while seated at a console away from the operating table. A second surgeon is at the operating table at all times.

Cardiac surgery has traditionally been performed through a long cut through the breast bone, which offers good exposure to the heart but can lead to prolonged discomfort, pain and scarring. The da Vinci system minimises the invasion into the body and means complex surgical procedures can be conducted through spaces between the organs.

Robotic-assisted cardiac surgery dramatically improves patient outcomes, including shorter hospital stays, less post-operative pain, less risk of infection, less scarring and faster recovery.

Mr Almeida said patients who had undergone robotic surgery were being discharged in half the time they would be after conventional open heart surgery.

The head of the Monash University Department of Surgery, Professor Julian Smith, said the groundbreaking technology opened doors for the establishment of a cross-faculty robotic surgery institute focused on further developing the technology in Australia.

Professor Smith has discussed the proposal, including applying for a Smart Government Science, Technology and Innovation Grant, with members of the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Information Technology.
Passing the baton in family business

Small business

Many family-owned businesses are run by sprit founders and operators who have not adequately considered the complexities of passing on their businesses to successors, research by Monash University’s Family and Small Business Research Unit (FSBRU) has found.

"FSBRU senior associate Professor Rosenna Barrett said her unit’s investigation showed that many family and small business operators who would visit within the next decade had not addressed the issue of succession planning.

"We believe business operators need to take a holistic approach to succession planning, as it does not work if you look at it from just one perspective," Dr Barrett said. "You can look at succession planning from the financial, taxation and legal points of view. But unless you also factor in the individuals, you are destined to fail."

The unit sourced and evaluated existing international research and statistics on small and family-owned businesses, concluding that most small businesses do not consider the psychological aspect of the hand-over process.

Funding boost for primary care mental health research

Research funding

Monash University’s Department of General Practice has received $350,000 in grants from the beyondblue Victorian Centre in Depression and Related Disorders.

"This is because GPs are accessible, able to sift out the physical and psychological symptoms with which people with mental illness usually present, and are perceived as a low-cost resource by the people seeking our professional assistance."

The PEP project is an opportunity to integrate research and psychological interventions can be integrated into general practice, how best to treat GP's, whether patients benefit in terms of objective clinical measures, how consumers and carers experience care provided by their GPs, and how GPs interact with mental health specialists and make appropriate referrals."

The project will involve researchers from several organisations including the DIAMOND (Diagnosis, Management and Outcomes of Depression In Primary Care Evidence Based Psychological Interventions) Collaboration headed by Dr Grant Blashki, director of the Department of General Practice. Dr Blashki said the grant recognised GPs' role as the front line in managing depression and suicide, and the project will also investigate the strengths in training GPs in mental health in primary mental health care and on increasing the 'increasingly successful research program in Australia and the world'.

Ms Davidson said. "The project builds on the department’s increasing success in training GPs in mental health, including substance abuse issues," Ms Davidson said.

We also believe that education plays a vital role in helping to develop a more sustainable community. Because we are committed to economic, social and environmental sustainability as a way of doing business, we’ve developed a monitoring solution to help you save money and the environment – the me&u way Car Loan.

In cooperation with Greenfleet, we’re proud to present an extensive suite of sustainable business debt products that help you better manage your finances as well as reduce your carbon footprint, water consumption, and show you the right way to go about it.

Greenfleet is a unique solution that provides companies and individuals who can make use of its services with a competitive edge in the market. The company has been providing car loans for over 30 years, and has built a reputation for being reliable, efficient, and environmentally conscious. In addition to the benefits of car loans, Greenfleet also offers competitive interest rates and flexible repayment options.

GoGreen Car Loans

We extend our congratulations to you for choosing a sustainable way of doing business. We believe that by choosing a sustainable way of doing business, you’re contributing to the overall sustainability of the planet. You’re not only making a conscious decision to reduce your carbon footprint but also ensuring that you’re supporting a cause that matter to you.

Contact:
Grant Bleashki: grant.bleashki@med.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 8575 2250

Monash News, June 2004

Succession planning vital: Associate Professor Rosenna Barrett.

Schools

Chemical Engineering Experience

The Chemical Engineering Experience is a two-day school holiday program hosted by the Department of Chemical Engineering at Monash Clayton campus on 29th and 30th June.

The program will provide an opportunity for secondary school students aged between 16 and 19 who are interested in science, chemistry or engineering to find out more about chemical engineering. It includes hands-on activities, laboratory time, an industrial site visit and a chance to interact with practicing chemical engineers. Participants will also gain an insight into the career opportunities available to chemical engineers.

It is a good idea to register soon, as places are limited. The cost is $95, which includes all activities, transport, site visits, lunch and morning tea. Overnight accommodation is available, at a subsidised rate, for students from outside Melbourne.

For further information, contact Ms Lysanne Price on +61 3 9905 1872.

Explore Monash – a program for regional students

The Explore Monash program aims to introduce regional students to the study opportunities and experiences available at the university’s Clayton campus. It also gives these students, who may not be able to attend Open Day, an opportunity to visit the university.

The program takes place on Friday 9 July from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm. It coincides with the school holidays, so students and their families can visit Melbourne to attend.

Participants receive information about courses, admissions and scholarships and have the opportunity to tour the Clayton campus and halls of residence. At the end of the day’s program, participants may also choose to visit another Monash metropolitan campus, and campus tours will be organised for interested parents.

For more information or to book online, visit www.monash.edu.au/go/events/explore-monash.

Save money and the environment. GoGreen Car Loans.

We also want to remind you of our environmentally friendly car loan service. Our GoGreen Car Loan offers many benefits: it has a p.a. (Comparison Rate p.cr.), has more sustainable communities. no monthly fees and includes free loan protection insurance. Because we are committed to economic, social and environmental sustainability as a way of doing business, we’ve developed a monitoring solution to help you save money and the environment – the me&u way Car Loan.

In cooperation with Greenfleet, will present and maintain 17 estate terror actually in the Murray Darling Basin on your behalf. These trees will offset 50% of the green house gas emissions that your car produces as well as helping to tackle soil erosion and improve water quality.

We also support you for making an environmentally responsible car purchase by offering you a competitive interest rate. Our goGreen Car Loan starts at a p.a. of 7.26% (Comparison Rate 7.02%), has no monthly fees and includes free loan protection insurance.

To make a smart move today - call 135 888 or visit me&u.com.au to apply online.

Greenfleet intelligent banking

Contact:
Grant Bleashki: grant.bleashki@med.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 8575 2250

Sandra Davidson: sandra.davidson@med.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 8575 2250

Contact:
Grant Bleashki: grant.bleashki@med.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 8575 2250

Sandra Davidson: sandra.davidson@med.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 8575 2250
International education: Bringing cultural diversity

In the mid-1990s, Australia continued to grow, with remarkable growth in international education. Australia remains an English-language nation and public repudiating Keating's international education program. The Howard government was elected in 1996 and re-elected in 1998 and 2001, partly by reassuring a traditional Anglo-Australian identity and publicly repudiating Keating's attempt to open Australia to Asia and reconcile with Indigenous people. The gulf between the two sides of politics was not as great as the rhetoric suggested. There is often a difference between what political parties say at election time and their practices in government; and in between election campaigns, the pragmatists took over.

Australia is located on the edge of Asia, the main growth zone in the world economy. The nation is highly dependent on regional trade, and military cooperation is significant. Australia needs to live in peace with its neighbours, and to do this it needs to be understood. The immigration program is not free from suspicions of cultural bias — Australia remains an English-language monoculture, and government still lacks a capacity to fully embrace cultural plurality. The fundamental demographic reality is that the education imperative will be twofold: to provide a better English-language education — which includes 16 languages with more than 15 million people, and 12 of these cities will be located in Asia. These cities are centres of potential and future demand for education. In China, India and Indonesia, the English language is the most widely spoken and economic growth is outstripping educational provision, hampered by restraints on government spending. The story is even more remarkable at Monash, where international students and their families are welcomed by the Monash government.

Monash students.

You ain’t seen nothing yet

However, there is likely that ‘You ain’t seen nothing yet’, as Al Jolson put it in the first ‘talkie’. Again, this is dictated by the combination of demographic weight and economic growth that underpins the dynamic of Australian society. China, India and Indonesia are three of the four largest nations in the world. In 2015 there will be 21 cities with more than 15 million people, and 12 of these cities will be located in Asia. These cities are centres of potential and future demand for education. In China, India and Indonesia, socio-economic growth is outstripping the growth of educational provision, hampered by restraints on government spending. For the foreseeable future, the number of domestic higher education places will be inadequate to meet demand. This alone will drive continued growth in foreign students, but even if domestic capacity is adequate, many families will send their student children abroad because of the skills and positional advantages provided, by a foreign degree and the potential for migration.

An increasing number of Australian households have the capacity and willingness to invest in education. Private investment in education plays a larger role than in Western Europe or, until recently, in Australia. According to OECD data, in 1999 in China 21 per cent of all educational costs were paid by households; in Indonesia, 49 per cent; and in Korea 56 per cent.

In future, the internationalisation of Australian universities and society will continue and consolidate. The challenge for Monash, and the other large universities, is to anticipate this by deepening the internationalisation of the curriculum and the student experience. All international students want to become competent in the Anglo-Australian context. Few want to abandon their languages and cultures, and there will remain part of the global environment, in which dual identity is becoming more common.

The sheer weight of regional demography and economics means the cultural balance will start to tip, and a more genuine educational plurality will emerge in Australia. First some, and then all Australian universities will become multilingual ‘Australianised’.

The educational imperative will be twofold: to provide a better English-language education — which includes 16 languages with more than 15 million people, and 12 of these cities will be located in Asia. These cities are centres of potential and future demand for education. In China, India and Indonesia, the English language is the most widely spoken and economic growth is outstripping educational provision, hampered by restraints on government spending. The story is even more remarkable at Monash, where international students and their families are welcomed by the Monash government.

Monash students.

You ain’t seen nothing yet
INPRINT

Early Childhood Education Society and Culture
Edited by Angela Anning, Joy Oller and Marilyn Flesner
Published by SAGE Publications, pps. vii-x, 399
This book offers a comprehensive, up-to-date and balanced overview of the current literature on neuro psychological rehabilitat ion. With each chapter written by one or more director of the Centre for Human Bioethics between 1980 and 1992.

From Neurobiology to Clinical Practice
Edited by Jennie Ponsford
Published by Gifford Press, pps. viii-x, 304
This book offers a comprehensive, up-to-date and balanced overview of the current literature on neuro psychological rehabilitat ion. With each chapter written by one or more director of the Centre for Human Bioethics between 1980 and 1992.

Cognitive and Behavioral Rehabilitation From Neurobiology to Clinical Practice
Edited by Jennie Ponsford
Published by Gifford Press, pps. viii-x, 304
This book offers a comprehensive, up-to-date and balanced overview of the current literature on neuro psychological rehabilitat ion. With each chapter written by one or more director of the Centre for Human Bioethics between 1980 and 1992.

Harm Minimisation, Zero Tolerance and Beyond
By Dr Philip Mendes and Dr James Rowe
Monash University Education Australia
PPS: $49.95
Harm Minimisation, Zero Tolerance and Beyond concentrates on the political factors and forces that determine government policies on illicit drugs, and considers alternative structural perspectives while examining the harm reduction/ zero tolerance divide.

The authors emphasise the broader political debate around illicit drug policies involving the influence of ideas and ideologies, interest and lobby groups, and global policy factors and norms.

They also analyse and explain contemporary Australian illicit drug policies and outcomes and predict likely future directions.

The book provides detailed case studies of contemporary Australian drug debates, and the questions for discussion at the end of each chapter will assist students to understand and reflect on the issues and forces that determine illicit drug policies.

Dr Philip Mendes is a senior lecturer in social policy and community development in the Social Work department at Monash University and has written articles on social policy for numerous local and international publications.

POSTSCRIPT

The President of Good and Evil
The ethics of George W. Bush
By Peter Singer
Published by Text Publishing Company
PPS: $30
In this book, philosopher Peter Singer scrutinises the policies and actions of George W. Bush from an ethical perspective, saving he wrote the book because Bush is not only US president, he is also that country's most prominent moralist. "No other president in living memory has spoken so often about good and evil and wrong," the author says.

In this search probe into the meaning of the Bush presidency, the author also examines what he calls "the disturbingly American moral outlook", a particular and pervasive view that affects all of us today.

Peter Singer is currently W. DeCamp professor of bioethics in the University Center for Human Values at Princeton University. Prior to this, he held various academic positions at Monash University for more than 20 years, including director of the Centre for Human Bioethics between 1980 and 1992.

If you are a member of the Monash community and have a forthcoming exhibit, contact adminmuma@adm.monash.edu.au

Books featured in 'Inprint' are available or can be ordered at Monash's four on-campus bookshops.
- Caulfield +61 3 9571 3277
- Clayton +61 3 9905 3111
- Gippsland +61 3 5122 1771
- Peninsula +61 3 9783 6932
www.monash.edu.au

Published by SAGE Publications.

Graphic designer aims to inspire

Leading US graphic designer Stuart Alden is the latest participant in the Artist/Designer in Residence program conducted by Monash University's Faculty of Art and Design.

Mr Alden commenced his stay at Caulfield campus last month and will be in residence until 13 June.

While at Monash, he will be delivering a series of lectures to visual communication students at all year levels and participating in master and studio classes. He will also direct a group of students who are developing a visual contribution to Melbourne's upcoming Digital Design Show.

"It is important to inspire and help students with their passion so that they are better prepared for the world of working graphic designers," Mr Alden said.

"Design is a dialogue between the artist and the client. By developing depth of thinking in their work, students will learn to ask better questions about their projects rather than trying to fill preconceived ideas. Understanding the problem will provide them with the ability to offer different types of solutions."

Since completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Colorado State University in the early 1990s, Mr Alden has gone on to create effective work for his clients as a designer, photographer and artist. He has also taught at various institutions in his home state of Colorado, including the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design and the Metropolitan College of Denver.

Mr Alden is also an active representative of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA), serving currently as vice-president of the AIGA Cross-Cultural Design Community of Interest, and as regional liaison to the US Western Regional Chapter, and as coordinator of the board of directors.

Mr Alden will serve as Department of Design deputy head, external, Mr Russell Kennedy said Mr Alden's residency provided students with a wonderful opportunity to learn from a highly creative and prominent graphic designer.

"Stuart manages to so seamlessly combine the creative disciplines of photography, graphic design, and writing," Mr Kennedy said.

"He is an example to students of the importance of blending visual and written communication skills. Students find him very approachable and really respond well to his design knowledge and literary wit.

An exhibition of work created by Mr Alden during his residency will be held at the Art and Design building at Monash Caulfield campus earlier this month.

The Artist/Designer in Residence program is designed to complement international study programs developed by Monash's Art and Design faculty. Participants stay on campus at the faculty apartments in Caulfield and spend their time teaching, researching and lecturing.

Since its inception in 2000 the program has attracted respected artists and designers from around the world.

- Karen Stichtenoth
Contact: karen.stichtenoth@arts.monash.edu.au

Ph: +61 3 9905 2680
Website: www.designstudent.com.au

New exhibition series at MUMA

The Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) has introduced a new series, 'Incident in the Museum', an occasional program of specially commissioned exhibitions, projects and events by contemporary artists. The latest exhibition in the series, open ed on 29 May, features a new, architecturally scaled installation by Stephen Bram, a leading Australian visual artist who has achieved recognition both in Australia and in Europe for distinguished art projects developed in relation to architecture.

The spatial dynamics projected in Mr Bram's paintings have been realised at MUMA in a dynamic, all-encompassing wall painting created by the artist over several days, which subverts the viewer's usual perspectives and spatial perception.

Using simple geometric shapes to provoke the viewer a new experience of the existing museum architecture, ultimately real and responsive.

Mr Bram is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery in Melbourne, where his most recent individual exhibition was presented in April.

Show notes:
What: 'Incident in the Museum 1: Stephen Bram'
When: 29 May to 2 July, Tuesday to Friday 10 am - 5 pm, Saturday 2-7 pm
Where: Monash University Museum of Art, ground floor, building 55, Monash University, Clayton campus
Who: For more information, contact +61 03 9905 4217, email muma@adm.monash.edu.au or visit www.monash.edu.au/muma

Abstract painter: Stephen Bram.
Photo: Melissa Di Ciero
Israeli expertise assists rural education programs

A cademic low-achievement among children and adults in Australia's rural and remote communities, particularly Indigenous ones, has long been a significant factor preventing many such communities from becoming economically sustainable. But steps are being taken to address the issue via an Israeli accelerated learning program that has been providing the basis of improved educational outcomes in rural and remote Australia, thanks in part to the contribution of a Monash education lecturer and researcher.

Dr Zane Ma Rhea is working, working with Professor Marcia Langton of the University of Melbourne and Ms Helene Teichmann of HIT Associates, a consultancy that specializes in devising strategies for cooperation to work together with governments and communities. Together, they are providing leadership to develop and implement the Telhad Accelerated Education and Work Readiness (YAEWR) project.

A team of Israeli accelerated learning experts, led by Professor Elie Obststein from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, is also involved. The YAEWR project was conceived after Professor Langton's 2003 study tour in Israel, where she saw great potential in an accelerated learning program which addressed education disadvantage via principles of gifted and talented education.

"The overriding principle is that the standard school curriculum should be taught to educationally disadvantaged groups in the chamber, along with additional accelerated learning classes before and after school, to bring the students up to the national average." Dr Ma Rhea said.

"It's based on a philosophy that every student is capable of being taught the standard curriculum and able to achieve the expected outcomes, provided particular attention is given to overcoming any learning impediments that are not on cultural or differential cues.

"Evidence gathered in many parts of the world shows that an accelerated learning approach has led to educational achievement and improved career pathways for academically low-achieving students." Dr Ma Rhea said. The YAEWR project aims to develop economic sustainability in rural and remote communities, a consultancy that will help lift their performance to standards closer to urban standards, and the development of employability and work-ready skills," she said.

In the project's first and current phase, the focus is on field trial sites - in Western Australian East Kimberley region, Queensland's Cape York area and in northern Victoria. "In each of the sites, a program is being developed for the whole classroom, serving the needs and interests of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, based on visits to the site last year by the Australian and Israeli teams," Dr Ma Rhea said.

They consulted with a wide variety of stakeholders, including local community members, business groups, schools, TAFE colleges and potential future teachers, both public and private. Seed funding of $24,000 was sought and obtained from the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

The project has also attracted strong interest from the federal Department of Education, Science and Training. "We appreciate that student performance in each pilot area will be commensurate with, or will exceed, the national average by the year 2006," he said.

"The expected flow-on effects to employment should also be highlighted, as international evidence shows students will improve their employment prospects by increasing their vocational educational attainment. And engagement with local employers will strengthen the local school to work pathways and build the capacity of local people to attract industry to their area, based on the availability of a pool of experienced potential employees."

"The success of accelerated learning programs internationally has been measured by increased workforce participation and the creation of an economic base for those participating communities," Dr Ma Rhea said.

"We anticipate that the YAEWR project will produce the same economic benefits for the participating Indigenous communities as the results in other countries."

"The accelerated learning approach has led to educational achievement and improved career pathways for academically low-achieving students." - Dr Ma Rhea

Puppets come out of the shadows

Puppetry enthusiast and Monash University fine arts student Ms Jai Hartnell has recently returned from a one-month tour of Cambodia studying the traditional form of shadow puppetry. The trip was part of an annual cultural delegation organized by the Cambodian Living Arts-Cambodian Masters Performers Program and was funded by a $1000 travel and study grant provided by Unima Handspan International.

"The trip was an opportunity to learn more about people with a tradition dating back thousands of years. I gained an insight into the ancient art of shadow puppetry in Cambodia as well as practical experience, which helped develop my excitement about the beauty and potential of shadow puppetry in many forms," Ms Hartnell said.

"Cambodia today is in the midst of a revival of traditional arts. There is a unique and exciting creative environment which may hopefully save the country from the fate threatening some other Asian cultures, where traditional arts have died out within the indigenous community and survive only as a source of tourism," Ms Hartnell said. Theory of art and design lecturer and Asian art expert Dr Peter Maddock said Ms Hartnell had come back with new ideas that could provide Australian puppet-making with an inspiration boost from which great things could develop, including deeper communication with our Asian neighbours.

"The enthusiasm to explore traditional and contemporary Asian art and design while studying at Monash's Caulfield campus has been inspired by her studies at Monash," Dr Maddock said.

"The knowledge she gained in Cambodia has helped her artistic practice become more worldwide-aware and artistically sophisticated."

"Her enthusiasm for Cambodia has also been passed on to other students who now wish to go there and to other south-east Asian nations, in order to find out what is going on in traditional and contemporary art and design that may be of great relevance to the Pacific Rim nations," Ms Hartnell said.

Ms Hartnell is planning an extended trip to Cambodia in 2005. In the meantime, she is continuing her involvement in puppet-making workshops and community theatre.

Contact: peter.maddock@artdes.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9903 2255

Dealimg with rural education disadvantages:

"We wish to bring together Indigenous, farming, pastoralist and mining communities, along with government and industry partners, to develop their local accelerated education and work readiness projects and to consult and agree on benchmarks, expected outcomes and the skill development needs of teachers."

"In August, we'll begin our first field trial site visits with our Israeli colleagues to each of the three sites to undertake professional development with teachers from pilot schools." - Dr Ma Rhea

"An ancient art: Ms Jai Hartnell says going to Cambodia helped her learn about people with a tradition dating back thousands of years."

"The accelerated learning approach has led to educational achievement and improved career pathways for academically low-achieving students." - Dr Ma Rhea

"The accelerated learning approach has led to educational achievement and improved career pathways for academically low-achieving students." - Dr Ma Rhea
Leeches fall into the parent trap

Evolution

When it comes to parenting, leeches are quite accomplished. Although some leeches abandon their young at birth, a Monash University study of the Australian leech species, Helobdella papillosa, has found that it broods its eggs and keeps its body for several weeks and provides food for its offspring.

Evolutionary biologist Dr Fred Govedich from the School of Biological Sciences has been studying the parenting behaviour of leeches in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the evolution of parental care in animals.

"Although the word 'leech' is often considered synonymous with selfishness and exploitation, many leeches are devoted parents," Dr Govedich said.

"After fertilisation, sexually mature leeches produce cocoons containing eggs. Helobdella attaches this cocoon, which contains 30 to 40 eggs, to its body. Once the eggs hatch, the juveniles attach themselves to the parent, remaining there for five to six weeks."

Helobdella is a member of the glossiphonid family of leeches. It is a taxon, growing up to two centimetres long and is typically found in pools or bodies of slow-moving water.

"Leeches are hermaphrodites, but Helobdella displays parental behaviours that are associated with birds and mammals, which have separate sexes," Dr Govedich said.

"This particular leech cares for its eggs by providing ventilation and defending them from predators such as fish. Then, once the young are hatched and attached to the body, the parent captures food and sends it to its young to eat as well as transporting them to areas where there is plenty of oxygen and lots of prey for the young to feed on once they leave the parent."

Dr Govedich has also found that Helobdella is a social leech. It will aggregate in groups of up to 50 other leeches and will also provide food to the young of other leech species.

"In many ways for our leech parenting study is similar to that of some birds and mammals, in terms of the evolution of parental care, it is fascinating that an invertebrate is displaying vertebrate-like parenting."

"These findings with respect to Helobdella introduce an interesting new angle for evolutionary biologists to consider when attempting to explain how parental care has evolved."

Aged care

Elderly dementia patients from non-English-speaking backgrounds communicated more with others and took fewer psychiatric medications when living in ethno-specific nursing homes, a Monash University study has found.

The study revealed that Italian-speaking residents in mainstream facilities had a significantly higher rate of prescription of daytime tranquillizers than those in Italian-specific facilities.

Dr Susannah Runci, from the university's Aged Mental Health Research Unit, said that 30 per cent of participants in mainstream facilities were prescribed daytime benzodiazepines, but none of the participants residing in Italian-specific facilities were prescribed them.

Dr Runci said her research, under the supervision of Associate Professor Jenny Redman and Professor Daniel O'Connors, revealed a shortage of ethno-specific aged-care facilities in Melbourne.

"This means the quality of care provided for non-English-speaking residents might be compromised due to cultural and communication difficulties, particularly for those with dementia," she said. "It also appeared that family members are often used as interpreters, which can be a cause for concern."

As part of a three-stage study, Dr Runci compiled a profile of nursing home residents in south-eastern Melbourne who either preferred or needed to speak a language other than English.

"We discovered more than 1100 people — about 19 per cent of the aged-care facility population in the survey — either preferred or needed to speak one of 40 different non-English languages," Dr Runci said.

"We also found that people from such backgrounds were more commonly the sole resident with that language or had only one other resident speaking that language at their facility, which is very isolating."

Dr Runci then observed and compared the social and linguistic use of 35 Italian-background residents living in either Italian-specific or mainstream aged-care facilities.

"A significant finding here was that the residents in Italian-specific facilities engaged more often in meaningful communication in the Italian language than those in mainstream facilities," Dr Runci said.

"These are people who mostly came to Australia in the post-World War 2 migration boom, and while many learned to speak English, they can lose that ability with dementia."

She said more research was needed to enable any patterns of over-prescribing of medication to be confirmed. It might be, for instance, that Italian-specific facilities have a lower rate of prescribing of daytime benzodiazepines than general rates in aged-care facilities.

"It is also possible that the distress of non-English-speaking residents could not be effectively communicated to staff members and was misinterpreted as 'problem' behaviour," Dr Runci said.

The third stage of the study compared the impact of an intervention conducted in either English or Italian language for three Italian-background patients with dementia who were considered verbally disruptive by staff at their facilities.

"This behaviour can include yelling, screaming and repetitive requests that can be disturbing for other residents and of course be a sign of discomfort or an indication that they have unmet needs," Dr Runci said.

However, the results showed increased communication when the intervention was conveyed in the patient's original language.

Dr Runci said the research findings emphasised the importance of language-relevant services and, given the growing non-English-speaking population. could have important government policy implications.

Contact: susannah.runci@adm.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9265 1700

Speaking their language aids dementia patients

Contact: susannah.runci@adm.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9265 1700

Speaking their language aids dementia patients

As part of a three-stage study, Dr Runci compiled a profile of nursing home residents in south-eastern Melbourne who either preferred or needed to speak a language other than English.

"We discovered more than 1100 people — about 19 per cent of the aged-care facility population in the survey — either preferred or needed to speak one of 40 different non-English languages," Dr Runci said.

"We also found that people from such backgrounds were more commonly the sole resident with that language or had only one other resident speaking that language at their facility, which is very isolating."

Dr Runci then observed and compared the social and linguistic use of 35 Italian-background residents living in either Italian-specific or mainstream aged-care facilities.

"A significant finding here was that the residents in Italian-specific facilities engaged more often in meaningful communication in the Italian language than those in mainstream facilities," Dr Runci said.

"These are people who mostly came to Australia in the post-World War 2 migration boom, and while many learned to speak English, they can lose that ability with dementia."

She said more research was needed to enable any patterns of over-prescribing of medication to be confirmed. It might be, for instance, that Italian-specific facilities have a lower rate of prescribing of daytime benzodiazepines than general rates in aged-care facilities.

"It is also possible that the distress of non-English-speaking residents could not be effectively communicated to staff members and was misinterpreted as 'problem' behaviour," Dr Runci said.

The third stage of the study compared the impact of an intervention conducted in either English or Italian language for three Italian-background patients with dementia who were considered verbally disruptive by staff at their facilities.

"This behaviour can include yelling, screaming and repetitive requests that can be disturbing for other residents and of course be a sign of discomfort or an indication that they have unmet needs," Dr Runci said.

However, the results showed increased communication when the intervention was conveyed in the patient's original language.

Dr Runci said the research findings emphasised the importance of language-relevant services and, given the growing non-English-speaking population. could have important government policy implications.

Contact: susannah.runci@adm.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9265 1700

Speaking their language aids dementia patients

As part of a three-stage study, Dr Runci compiled a profile of nursing home residents in south-eastern Melbourne who either preferred or needed to speak a language other than English.

"We discovered more than 1100 people — about 19 per cent of the aged-care facility population in the survey — either preferred or needed to speak one of 40 different non-English languages," Dr Runci said.

"We also found that people from such backgrounds were more commonly the sole resident with that language or had only one other resident speaking that language at their facility, which is very isolating."

Dr Runci then observed and compared the social and linguistic use of 35 Italian-background residents living in either Italian-specific or mainstream aged-care facilities.

"A significant finding here was that the residents in Italian-specific facilities engaged more often in meaningful communication in the Italian language than those in mainstream facilities," Dr Runci said.

"These are people who mostly came to Australia in the post-World War 2 migration boom, and while many learned to speak English, they can lose that ability with dementia."

She said more research was needed to enable any patterns of over-prescribing of medication to be confirmed. It might be, for instance, that Italian-specific facilities have a lower rate of prescribing of daytime benzodiazepines than general rates in aged-care facilities.

"It is also possible that the distress of non-English-speaking residents could not be effectively communicated to staff members and was misinterpreted as 'problem' behaviour," Dr Runci said.

The third stage of the study compared the impact of an intervention conducted in either English or Italian language for three Italian-background patients with dementia who were considered verbally disruptive by staff at their facilities.

"This behaviour can include yelling, screaming and repetitive requests that can be disturbing for other residents and of course be a sign of discomfort or an indication that they have unmet needs," Dr Runci said.

However, the results showed increased communication when the intervention was conveyed in the patient's original language.

Dr Runci said the research findings emphasised the importance of language-relevant services and, given the growing non-English-speaking population. could have important government policy implications.

Contact: susannah.runci@adm.monash.edu.au
Ph: +61 3 9265 1700