

Editorial Note

Human Resource Development Journal

Burapha University, Volume 3,

Number 2, December 2012

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Some academics probably regard editorial board membership as a badge of status. For me it is a great honour to be a member of the editorial board of Burapha University's (BUU) HRD Journal along with 35 eminent colleagues from within Thailand and overseas. I have long experience of academic journals in previous lives in Scotland and Australia and it is fascinating to contrast their situation with that of the BUU journal in Thailand. In Scotland I was for ten years chairperson of the editorial board of Scottish Educational Review and so gained insight into relations with publishers as well as taking advice on recruitment of editors and journal policy making. I edited a special issue of European Journal of Teacher Education in the 1980s; in the 1990s I edited Evaluation Journal of Australasia for three years whilst senior office-bearers of the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) deliberated on what form of journal might best meet the needs of members. As a member of the Academy for Human Resource Development, which heroically publishes four issues per year of each of its four journals I am currently being asked to choose between subscribing for hard-copy or online delivery, with management trying to convince me that online 'access' does not mean that I am subscribing to the seemingly inferior product of an 'online' journal. In fact, academic publishing is itself currently something of a 'hot' issue in western academic circles. Many voices are questioning why academic staff should give of their time, unpaid to edit journals and review articles for publishers who then make huge profits from journal subscription charges, and from fees levied on those downloading from the internet articles that other academics have written unpaid, often stemming from research that governments have funded from taxpayers' money. In short, the economics of academic publishing and its relation to academic roles and career progression are very much on the agenda. My experience is that all journals struggle to survive financially with issues of circulation linked to attracting quality articles, and more recently the quest for SSI status. Editors urge experienced academics to put pen to paper to maintain the flow of quality articles, or to volunteer to join their review teams and provide advice to beginning writers on a range of matters from how to get published to constructive reviewing. Lists of reviewers are published at suitable intervals, though without ratings for quality.

The situation of HRD Journal seems quite different. This difference stems from its history and purpose. It was set up in 2010 to enable masters' and doctoral students in the international education programs at Burapha to meet a new – and perhaps unique? – quality assurance requirement of the Thai Ministry of Education's Office for Higher Education that all international higher degree students must publish a paper on their dissertation in English in a refereed journal prior to graduating. Given time constraints of degree programs, creating an in-house journal in English offered students a speedier route to publication than existing international publications. Since the international program included a masters in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) the journal also provided an outlet for articles from dissertations in that field of study, causing some eyebrows to be raised among members of the first editorial board. Indeed only in the editorial of Volume 3(1) is it argued that, in the context of the Asian Economic Community (AEC) English language competency should be viewed as an

important aspect of human competency for HRD. In a south-east Asian context this may make sense, but perhaps the case requires elaboration for international members of the editorial board and HRD specialists in general. Thus HRD Journal provides an outlet for research by beginners, and so long as there is a stream of students through its international program its editor faces no problem with securing content. In fact the editorial team has sought to widen the journal's appeal by publishing articles based on conference presentations and on issues in the doctoral program itself that provide a broader context. Recently, too HRD Journal published a first invited book review. An eye-catching development in Vol. 3(1) is that all articles were co-authored, some by staff who acted as advisers, raising questions as to whether this may signal some relaxation of graduation requirements for international students or simply a new variation on existing practice. HRD Journal faces relatively minor economic challenges since its production costs may legitimately be met from student fees; there are even token, but none-the-less appreciated payments to 'blind' reviewers who provide rapid feedback on submitted papers, essential for facilitating the degree process.

In his editorial note in the last issue Professor Jamnean Joungrakul reminded readers that the vision of HRD Journal is 'to be one of the most recognized academic journals' in HRD in south-east Asia. That it has reached its third volume with the current issue is credit to the hard work of its editorial team. The last editorial indicates that HRD journal is now applying to be accepted for the Thai Citation Index; the editorial board will wish this application well. Published articles provide a window into the international programs at Burapha; they indicate what issues international students are researching and ignoring, what methodologies are popular and neglected, and what contribution findings make to theory and practice in a unique cultural context. Knowing their take-up and influence would be enlightening and encouraging to all concerned. Researching these aspects of HRD Journal's contribution to scholarship is a further challenge for its editorial team.

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