

EDITORIAL

The 2015 Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education (ACSME – formerly known as the UniServe Science Conference) marks the first time it has been held on the west coast of Australia. It is always a special time of year and has an even more special place in my heart, as it was the first ever conference I attended as an Honours student. As a student I was always in awe of all the academics I came into contact with at ACSME. It is hard to believe that I am now one of those academics and how far I have come, particularly this year being the Chair of ACSME. I have seen ACSME transform from a small single stream conference to a key gathering of science and mathematics educators in Australia from a wide variety of disciplines, institutions (and now countries) with a common goal of enhancing the overall student experience and improving learning outcomes.

ACSME has been a conference that provides an ideal opportunity for colleagues to share practice in a welcoming and friendly environment. ACSME has always been a forum that offers mentorship, where collegiality is nurtured, and allows attendees to develop as scholars and teachers by learning from colleagues that have a wealth of experience and are committed to excellence in teaching and learning. Even after being involved with ACSME for so many years, I always leave feeling challenged and inspired.

I have met so many wonderful and inspiring people at ACSME and have had the privilege of working closely with number of fantastic people through my involvement in its organisation for the last 5 years. Networks, both discipline and national networks, are continually supported at ACSME. I hope that those who are attending ACSME for the first time feel the same sense of community that I have felt and make new connections that I'm sure will continue for a long time to come.

As mentioned above, I have seen the transformation of ACSME take place of the last few years. However, that is not the only thing that has transformed. Our teaching practice has also transformed with changing demands such as diverse student cohorts and the multitude of tools that we as educators can use to enhance student learning. This is highlighted in the conference theme "Transforming practice: Inspiring innovation". We have all heard the terms "blended, flipped, digital ready, distributed, innovative, motivating, reflective, transforming" and more. However, what do they actually mean for our teaching practice? What actually works and what doesn't? Don't traditional teaching practices already do what we want? Is there too much "innovation"?

ACSME 2015 is all about the educator and how to support them: from designing and implementing creative approaches that are satisfying to both teacher and student, to how institutions and colleagues can inspire and foster teaching innovation and ensure that teaching excellence is recognised and valued.

There is increasing pressure for science and mathematics educators to become more flexible, increase the use of on-line environments, mine the research-teaching nexus, motivate more students and unlock new avenues for science and mathematics education. ACSME's model of showcasing and building on shared experience is sure to spur insightful discussions on how to inspire effective innovative ideas and transformations in teaching practice.

We have the privilege of gathering at ACSME to further our knowledge of teaching and learning. On behalf of the Organising and Program Committees, I would like to thank all the authors and participants at the conference and all those who have made this conference possible. I hope you find the 21st ACSME conference stimulating, thought provoking, and enjoyable so that you leave feeling energised to transform the futures of the students that you have the pleasure to teach.

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