

Provocations from the First Day of the BA Conference

#BAConference #HASSFutures

Beginning with an acknowledgement of the footprints over this land
we are taught to say hello – yo – and reminded of the power of language
and the diversity of those here – Bonjour Canada; Kia ora New Zealand; Heita, Aweh,
Sawubona, Hoe gaan dit and Howzit South Africa! –
And this prompts us to think of the growing diversity of those in our universities

A E I B – Acknowledge, Explain, Invite and Bless

imagine what might happen if we followed a similar approach in our
Classrooms. In those spaces where Professor Doun challenged us
at the start of our day to ask what might the
Optimal pedagogies be. How can we teach differently, openly, accessibly, flexibly?
Should our students be able to ‘hack’ the BA?
Any answers yet?

Nothing is set and everything is up for grabs;
we have a whole day of conferencing yet to
Find some answers and to do as Deanne urged us:
be provocative, be creative, be
Energetic. As energetic as our first panel.
All those hot chicks with big brains
and Martin.

Remember what it feels like to spend a whole day reading a book? A book like
Monkey Grip that changes the way you think about your world. Let’s
Encourage students to find the space to do the same. Let’s give them
time in their degrees to read.
And time to learn another language.
Not fluent in another language, yourself?
Then, why should our students be?
What do we model with our monolingualism?

Career paths came next – thanks Sarah – and not the Dominoes Pizza kind of career.
Why aren’t we talking to our students about jobs,
about lives, about life beyond the university?
Are we just trying to make little
clones of ourselves?
Who is helping students

Explore all the possibilities that our big, bad, robotic world offers?

And who is helping them formulate a response to the
drunk uncle at the family BBQ who asks, ‘A BA?! What the
Hell are you doing a BA for?’
Maybe the answer is in a combination of the Arts and Design,
or maybe it’s in Data

Analytics and humanities together and now we’ve got the term Humanics.
Are we robot-proof?
Are we T-shaped?
Are we adapting to our changing world?

Our international panel gave us a few clues on the issues we need to confront to answer these questions and they are, as Genevieve reminded us,
Systemic, national, governmental, institutional, academic, and individual
and that's why, Tim pleaded, we need to
Share ideas with each other.

Be open, be generous, be leaders for change.

Be like Patrick who we all know as gone back to Sydney to write up an article
For us in the Sydney Morning Herald on how amazing BA degrees are.

An article that hopefully does not include the line, 'Studying arts is like being
Unemployed except your parents are proud of you' but might instead say,
'To steal a book is life's most beautiful crime'.

May the only crimes we commit today be
to be too generous with
our sharing of ideas,
to be too open,
to be too

Unfettered in our willingness to learn from and to praise others ideas,
to be too kind in freely giving links to our

Resources, to be too

Energetic in our desire to make the BA the best

Leaping-off-into-the world experience,
the strongest foundation,
the prettiest capstone
that an undergraduate student could ever want.

And let's remember, too, that ultimately it's all about them
and their learning. So, let's also listen to them, the

Students.