**A census and diagnostic of 1,561 publications in “Higher Education Research and Development” 1982-2020**

Introduction. Publications in “Higher Education Research and Development” (HERD) address issues and interests selected by researchers, assessors, and editors from a larger array of potential topics. This project uses bibliometric and natural language processing methods to explore the HERD corpus. Of particular interest is the relation of the corpus to works in other higher education journals, especially seen through the dynamics of research collaborations.

Format of the round table. The round table adopts the Point for Debate format. The proposition for debate is that HERD authors influence and construct the HERD corpus as a frontier to higher education advancement and quality enhancement through their selection of topics, researcher networks and foundation of prior work. Debating points emerge from the research findings and include intriguing explorations of topic/co-author connections.

Context/background. HERD has informed and challenged researchers, teachers and others concerned with higher education for over 35 years. The HERD corpus comprises 1,560 indexed publications authored by 3,700 researchers from 650 institutions in 65 countries: 1,500 are articles, notes, and reviews (“articles”). Using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (Griffiths & Steyvers 2004) we find approximately twenty loosely interconnected topics in the HERD article corpus and label them using apposite author key-phrases. There are around 250 articles embracing the topic “student engagement and experience”, 90 on “higher education policy”, and 30 on “indigenous education”. HERD co-author networks have an average size of 2.5 in recent years, and only 10/1500 articles have networks larger than ten co-authors. Even the most-published HERD authors have co-authored eleven or fewer HERD articles in total and have published many of their works in other journals. The most-cited HERD articles have accumulated well over 100 life-time citations, some over 400. The average number of citations per article per year has increased from around 0.25 in early years to 2.5 in recent years. The most-referenced authors in the corpus are mentioned in over 10% of all articles, and there is a group of ten authors who are each referenced in over 100 articles. This influential group appears to help shape many research agendas and methods reported in HERD.

Intended outcome. The round table aims to simulate discussion and initiate collaborative research on the application of bibliometric methods combined with natural language processing and machine learning tools to undertake lexical and semantic analysis of the HERD corpus, including its embedding in the larger body of higher education research.

Griffiths, TL. & Steyvers, M 2004. Finding scientific topics. Proc Nat Acad Sci, 101(suppl 1), 5228-5235.