

Editorial

It is with great pleasure that we present the fourth issue of *The China Papers*. This set of papers, on aspects of teaching and learning, is one of the results of a professional development program that is taking place at the University of Sydney for Chinese university science teachers. The development program is a collaborative project between the University and the China Scholarship Council. In the words of the Council 'As a new step in the reform process in higher education, the Ministry of Education of China has decided to introduce bilingual teaching in science subjects in Chinese universities. To this end the China Scholarship Council has started a scholarship program for English and professional upgrading for science teachers from Chinese universities in support of this endeavour'.

For inclusion of a paper into an issue of *The China Papers* the paper needs to be written as a result of ideas and understandings developed by the Sydney program and reflect the issues and ideas which have been addressed as part of the program. These may be related to issues and aspects of teaching and learning, or to research or developments carried out or initiated whilst involved with the Sydney program. A significant criterion for inclusion in *The China Papers* is that the contribution must be seen as having the potential to be developed further into an acceptable international journal article and to have a real and practical application to the Chinese teacher's home institution.

These contributions come at a particularly important time for science tertiary teaching in the People's Republic of China. As part of the 'Higher Education Teaching Quality Reforms' announced in May 2003, the Chinese Ministry of Education has implemented an 'Education Invigorating Action Plan 2003-2007'. One of the aims of this plan is to improve the quality of undergraduate teaching by adopting new teaching modes and using new technologies in tertiary teaching. We hope that the papers contained in this publication go some way to addressing these issues and responding to this initiative.

Within this volume are papers on the use of problem solving, case studies and concept mapping in supporting active learning. Together with the papers from the previous three issues of this publication, these papers are helping to build a new way of teaching and learning in the People's Republic of China. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chinese visiting teachers and our colleagues within the Faculties of Science and Education & Social Work for the helpful and collaborative approach that was taken in the production of these papers.

The China Papers are also online (<http://science.uniserve.edu.au/pubs/china/>) in pdf.

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