Discussion papers on university scholarship and learning analytics

The Office for Teaching and Learning has recently released two discussion papers on matters of current importance for universities. Both papers are available on the ITL website.

**Why scholarship matters in higher education** is the first of three discussion papers resulting from Professor Belinda Probert’s academic secondment to the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT). The paper provides a critical review of the way in which ‘scholarship’ is being interpreted in Australian higher education arguing for a return to Ernest Boyer’s conception of scholarship. This paper is part of a broader examination of the distinctive nature of university teaching, including how to strengthen the professional preparation and development of higher education teachers.

**Improving the Quality and Productivity of the Higher Education Sector** was authored by George Siemens, Shane Dawson, Grace Lynch and commissioned by the OLT. It presents a case for a national learning analytics policy and strategy to assist education executives and government in making the most of an era of ‘big data’. The paper offers enabling suggestions for guiding future discussion around a coordinated national learning analytics agenda for Australia. Case studies illustrate how universities from around the world have used analytics to improve learning and teaching. It was prepared by the Society for Learning Analytics Research, (SoLAR)2, a not-for-profit organisation of leading international researchers exploring the impact of big data and analytics on the education sector.