

## Editorial

As we approach the first birthday of IMPact, the University of Lincoln Higher Education Research Journal, this student edition exemplifies our commitment to the importance of sharing good practice and providing dissemination for differing perspectives within Higher Education. Banks (2008), in her editorial for *Diffusion: the UCLan Journal of Undergraduate Research*, observes the trends for undergraduate journals in the UK, acknowledging that such publications have historically been more established in America. This special edition of undergraduate and postgraduate papers complements this shift towards student publications, as demonstrated by the increasing number of accessible multi-disciplinary peer reviewed undergraduate journals (For example: [Reinvention: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research](#) (Warwick and Monash), [Kent Student Law Review](#), [Transformations: A Journal of Undergraduate Research in Education](#), [Diffusion: the UCLan Journal of Undergraduate Research](#) (Central Lancashire), [\(JUST\) The Journal of Undergraduate Science and Technology](#) (University of Exeter), [Geoverse](#) (Oxford Brookes); [Début: The Undergraduate Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies](#); [The Plymouth Student Scientist](#) and many more.

Such online student-authored publications share and publish valuable contributions which really enrich the broader aims and objectives of IMPact. With our focus on enhancing debates on all aspects of Higher Education, IMPact has successfully published two editions over the last year, with multi-disciplinary contributions of divergent types and formats, all expressing valuable insights on Higher Education topics from different disciplinary areas.

IMPact seeks to share innovations in teaching and learning and enhance a shared ethos of engagement within Higher Education through its published papers. With reference to some of the more established journals, Banks acknowledges being part of the 'vanguard of this new movement' (2008, p.1) working alongside others to enhance and promote undergraduate participation. Other editors from student-authored journals also identify the importance of collaboration shown through their publications and how they can showcase undergraduate research and writing through those publications.

There seems to be some shared aims and objectives within the increasing number of undergraduate journals. Such publications have aims to ensure ‘the accessibility of undergraduate research’ (Editors, 2018, p.1), provide and facilitate opportunities for undergraduate students to be part of the wider peer reviewed process, to ‘showcase existing research and scholarship’ (Canning, 2010, p.ii) and to nurture and ‘inspire undergraduate students, to be an’ invaluable stepping stone’ (Banks, 2008: 2). Such multidisciplinary publications are committed to publishing high-quality undergraduate student research, to promote student community, enhance student engagement, encourage wide participation and collaboration and disseminate knowledge on teaching and research within Higher Education.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this special student edition, particularly in such an accessible format, which unmistakably supports the place of students within UoL, emphasising the commitment to the Student as Producer ethos, student community and student voice.

It is an honour to have Professor Mike Neary present the opening paper in this student edition and discuss the importance of student authored contributions alongside Student as Producer, the production of knowledge and the role of students, and IMPact, within this. Professor Mike Neary initiated Student as Producer during his time at Warwick (2004) and developed this further at UoL 2010-2013 with support from the Higher Education Academy funded project ‘Student as Producer: research-engaged teaching, an institutional strategy’ (2014). Since then Student as Producer has been pioneered through the work of Neary to ‘promote research -engaged teaching as the organising principle for teaching and learning across all subjects and all levels of taught provision at Lincoln” (2014: 5)<sup>1</sup> ([Http://www.studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk](http://www.studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk) ). The impact has significantly grown beyond the institutional level at UoL, securing global recognition for this critical pedagogy framework.

This student edition presents 4 interesting student-authored papers addressing core debates of importance and relevance to the role of students within research and teaching in Higher Education. More specifically, their discussions and discourses

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see: ([Http://www.studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk](http://www.studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk) )

address their learnt experiences of engaging through student engagement and their perspectives on participating in the Student as Producer informed Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme (UROS) (Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching, 2018).

Gibbons presented an interesting reflection in her perspective piece by evaluating the extent to which participating in UROS has enabled her to become more research-engaged and reflecting on how this has positively impacted her learning. By addressing on 'student-as-producer research-engaged learning within higher education' (2019, p.7) the author emphasises the personal developments she has gained by being involved in UROS. Gibbons extends her reflections to other Student as Producer informed research projects which have resulted in greater ownership and development of student voice. References are made to the importance of Student as Producer as a model throughout her paper, and importantly she shows how such opportunities developed at UoL have had significant benefits to her learning journey.

The research summary presented by Gaschino discusses her involvement in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme (UROS) project and presents a summary of her evaluation on student mentoring. By framing her project within education policies and practices, the author addresses the greater role required to support the educational aspirations of students and provides some recommendations to address the issues and structural barriers preventing educational progress. Her evaluation provides a creative contribution, within the lens of widening participation, addressing the potential for the role of mentoring with working-class boys. In her recommendations, Gaschino refers to some practical student friendly reflections for the future of volunteering and training for mentors.

The co-authored paper by Ross, Prichard and Headleand presents a commendable exemplar of effective collaboration between student and academics. The perspective piece was creative in its focus and reflected on the importance of sharing good practice learnt from teaching. In its evaluation of the PLUS+ Programme, a model of peer-mentorship where students have the opportunity to deliver extracurricular teaching, the paper reflects on how and where valuable skills were learnt and discussed through a student perspective. This contribution has an important place in

identifying skills, employability and benefits as 'added-value to their university experience' (2019, p.3). With reference to Scholarship and Professional Practice, links were made to the PLUS+ programme being 'sector-distinctive student engagement' (2019, p.4). This paper was importantly framed around the student experiences and their perspectives on 'Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn' and responding to feedback. In essence, this paper offered in-depth evaluation of the PLUS+ programme, as a pilot peer mentorship model, within the broader context of the importance of student engaging and participation.

The final contribution by Keeler has a distinctive place in this special student edition. In some ways this perspective piece presents an illustration of the integral place for the different representation of voices, more broadly the experiences of students within Higher Education. Presented as a narrative, the paper explores the journey of the author as a non-traditional HE student (Bowl, 2001) and her 'shared experiences' reflecting upon widening participation. Drawing the reader into her personal recognition, the author explores how she has met challenges and identifies the need for mechanisms of solidarity. This captivating account explores the role of student engagement, Student as Producer in practice, and reflects upon her 'new-found scholarly approach' (2019, p.3). The messages within this paper had to be authored by a student who has successfully recognised, first-hand, the importance and benefits of being part of a learning community, one which embraces the value of partnerships between student and academics and collaboration.

All of the papers in this student-authored edition have some common themes, emphasising the importance and place for student engagement and participation in opportunities, the value of collaboration and the benefits arising from partnerships between students and academics. Overall, the edition is in itself a celebration of Student as Producer, showcasing the work of Professor Mike Neary who, in his interpretation of Mathiesen and Unfinished in his 'politics of abolition' (1974), sums up the value of both Student as Producer and I would argue this special edition:

'Starting from 'the unfinished' does not mean that Student as Producer is forever, but that the form in which Student as Producer is produced will itself be transformed [sublated] in ways that are appropriate to the moment in which it has come subsist, or it will die. In other words Student as Producer must reinvent itself as yet another subversive form of higher learning if it is ever to be fully realised'. (Neary, 2015)

I hope that you find the contributions in this edition interesting and informative. The papers aim to play some part in sharing good practice, how we can learn from students and their perspectives and reflections on being a learner or researcher. There appears to be some mutual benefit with peer reviewing student-authored publications. The process offers student authors some experiences of being involved in the peer review process but also has been a positive experience for reviewers, allowing them time to reflect on such processes.

This special edition presents papers in different styles and formats and across different disciplines. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the authors for their valuable contributions and co-authors and academic partners for their supervision. For future editions we are keen to discuss current challenges or contemporary debates in Higher Education, if you have any suggestions for other special editions please do not hesitate to contact [IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk).

## References

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