

Editorial

Sue Eccles

Bournemouth University

Amanda French

Birmingham City University, UK

Lucy Gray

Open University, UK

Andy Hagyard

University of Leeds, UK

John Hilsdon

Plymouth University, UK

Christina Howell-Richardson

Birkbeck, University of London, UK

Moira Maguire

Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland

We are delighted to introduce issue 12 of the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education. This diverse issue includes seven papers, a case study, an opinion piece and a book review which between them consider a range of topics broadly associated with enhancing student support and performance. Despite increasing interest in the development of learners' socio-emotional intelligence, little attention has been paid to the role of learning development in supporting this. Camila Devis-Rozental, Sue Eccles and Marian Mayer explore this in their article, 'Developing socio-emotional intelligence in first year higher education students through one-to-one learning development tutorials.' Drawing on an analysis of feedback from students who used the service and a focus group, the authors concluded that 'It would appear that the intervention of LD tutorials, supports students in becoming self-directed and more confident learners, able to fully engage with their university experience' (p.14). The participants provide rich descriptions of the wider benefits of one-to-one learning development support and highlight the importance of this aspect of our work.

Students' growing preference for accessing and receiving feedback on academic work online, and their associated learning needs, are explored in a paper by Michael Hast of St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK. Entitled 'Supporting student transition to higher education feedback: an evaluation of an online feedback training approach', Hast's paper describes a series of activities embedded in a first year undergraduate module. This included a lecture on how to use feedback provided online. An important finding is that those students who undertook the preparatory training were better able to make productive use of their online feedback than those who did not. Christine Fanthome's paper, 'Maximising the benefits associated with internship learning for undergraduates,' offers a fascinating account of how students evaluate their experiences of work placements in a particular context (US students on London based internships). The paper explores the personal and professional learning that students perceive has resulted. Fanthome, who works for Boston University Study Abroad, London, UK, highlights that "the playing field is not level" and describes how financial, social and cultural inequalities can generate disadvantages for some. A key finding is that preparatory and ongoing online support materials would be welcomed by the intern participants, and would help them to make the most of their placement experiences.

Justin O'Brien and Donna Brown's paper is also concerned with vocational learning and addresses the task of developing partnerships with business to provide situated learning opportunities for MBA students at a level of challenge commensurate with their prior knowledge and experience. At the core of the paper is the question of how to develop MBA students' learning capacity to integrate and reconcile new and existing theory and experience, through genuine, co-operative participation in business projects. O'Brien and Brown delve deeply into Kolb's theory of experiential learning cycle and critically discuss the development and practicalities of their own model of an "equitable, tripartite cashless exchange" of knowledge, expertise and knowledge as praxis involving the business organisation, MBA students and academic faculty members. The paper concludes with a discussion, based on 5 years of practice, of hurdles to developing such partnerships and potential solutions.

Sofia Chanda-Gool and Christoforos Mamas's paper, 'Coming from somewhere else – group engagement between students and academics', considers the importance of collaborative learning through group work, suggesting that anxieties about individual students' academic achievements can inhibit the enjoyment and skill in shared learning.

The authors highlight the potential risks associated with prioritising 'assessment' over 'relationships', suggesting that relationships are central in preparation for assessment. Drawing on an ethnographic, qualitative and emancipatory approach to research, the authors make recommendations for overcoming some tensions and fears that can inhibit effective group work. Group work can provide a creative, empowering avenue so students become proactive in their learning and engage more equally with academics.

Victoria Park and Gelareh Holbrook's paper, 'Student perceptions of the effectiveness of self-editing on their writing: towards a self-regulated approach' explores the impact of native English-speaking postgraduate students self-editing their own work. Their study evaluates the usefulness of a self-editing worksheet based on students' perspectives and feedback from writing tutors and the subject lecturer (staff). Findings from their study note that students found the worksheet useful and it helped them make some positive changes to the way they thought about and constructed their essays. Although this paper focuses on postgraduate students, it highlights that not all students start their studies with the same experiences (and confidence) in writing for academic purposes and this self-editing approach allows them to take responsibility and credit for improvements as they progress through their programme. They conclude that self-editing helps students not only evaluate and address their weaknesses in writing independently, but also identify their strengths – leading to improvements to the overall student learning experience. Finally Anne Quinney et al's paper reports on the work of the Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL) at Bournemouth University which was created to promote, support and co-ordinate pedagogic initiatives and embed the explicit valuing of teaching and learning into all aspects of university life. In particular it considers its recent BU 'Fusion' a corporate strategy which promotes clear links between Pedagogy, Professional Practice and Research. This initiative offers a model for managing change and supporting more flexible academic identities which are both increasingly a characteristic of contemporary HE life.

Ronan Bree's case study picks up Michael Hast's theme of digital environments and focuses on the affordances of augmented reality (AR) as a useful digital tool which can be effectively integrated with relevant lecture notes. Bree suggests that there is a risk that advances in digital tools can potentially result in excessive supplementary resources, often across multiple platforms. This paper evaluates the use of AR with a group of undergraduate science students in order to enrich the teaching and learning of complex scientific processes. The technology used provided 'trigger' images placed in a printed

handout from which students could engage with specific multimedia content in real-time at the appropriate part of their course. Examples of these multimedia resources were pre-existing online, or customised electronic sketch, videos. Bree's paper assesses the role and benefit of AR in empowering students with regard to their learning and the steps needed to introduce AR.

Andrew Hollyhead and John Curwin's opinion piece continues the theme of vocational learning. Making a difference to student employability through assessment explores ways in which student employability can be supported in higher education. The authors argue that well-designed assessment, in addition to support through careers advice, visiting speakers, placement opportunities, can make a difference to students' employability. The authors argue that outcomes from assessment which evidence skills are valued by employers. The authors suggest that assessment is critical for all courses and where assessments provide students with outcomes, experience or artefacts that evidence a 'can do' ability this can positively impact on employability.

Book Review

In a review of the book, 'Challenges, Changes and the Teaching Excellence Framework' by Amanda French and Matt O'Leary, Alex Patel from the University of Leicester, UK, reminds us of the importance of the debates on this topic in shaping how teaching and learning is conceptualised in UK universities. Her review not only gives us an overview of the contents of this book but also a flavour of significant debates critiquing the notion of excellence as it applies to the highly diverse and cross-disciplinary landscape of contemporary UK. Crucially Patel's review also alerts potential readers of the book to key content that challenges the way institutions are ranked, the role of 'big data' and how it is used in the assessment of quality.