



# JOURNAL OF Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice

## Editorial

### December 2014

Welcome to this the fifth issue of the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice (JPAAP). This issue follows on from our extremely popular summer issue, which included submissions in a variety of formats including reflective analysis papers, case studies and on the horizon pieces. The rich diversity of topics and article types encapsulates differences in disciplinary pedagogies, professional perspectives and associated academic practices. In this issue, original research – and the increasingly international profile of the journal – is very much to the fore, with a range of evidence-based studies included with submissions from the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

The enthusiasm within the community to engage with the journal – either as an author or reviewer – continues unabated. As we publish this issue we already have a call out for contributions to our next special issue – *Learning and Teaching in the Distributed University*. Guest edited by Professor Frank Rennie (University of the Highlands and Islands), this edition is looking for contributions relating to learning and teaching support and delivery across dispersed geographical and social boundaries – from transnational education to collaborative partnership agreements to smaller interventions involving community engagement. You can find more information regarding this call on our Announcements page with the 15th of January 2015 the deadline for submissions. We also continue to welcome expressions of interest from individuals with a background aligned with the scope of the journal to join our core pool of reviewers. Our policy of open peer review seeks to foster a collegiate publishing environment and provide a supportive outlet for authors and reviewers alike.

Returning to the present, we are sure our new issue again provides a rich offering which will stimulate many ideas and open up equally many important discussions.

The topic of transitions figures strongly in several papers within the current issue with the article by Srivalli Nagarajan and Jenny Edwards investigating the extent to which Australian IT graduates are equipped with the appropriate skills to make the transition into the professional IT workplace. Patricia Logan and colleagues focus on transitions into the Australian Academy, examining the different experiences of those academics with and without a doctorate and presenting some valuable findings to inform those tasked with developing induction/staff development programmes. Support for early career academics following their entry to academia is central to the paper by Barbara Kensington-Miller, in which she presents an analysis of a new model of peer mentoring geared to improving transition into the institution and role.

The efficacy of student engagement with technology, specifically virtual learning environments (VLE) and social media, also features in this issue. The relationship between VLE visits and attainment in final assessment marks is explored in the paper by Chowdhry, with suggestions offered for more effective implementation of VLEs within teaching processes. Matthew Graham's research paper investigates techniques for improving student engagement and interaction beyond the classroom through the use of social media. The study reports on the use of social media tools within the context of teaching Humanities and addresses questions around effective participation and how this can be facilitated.

Technology and digital practice are also to the fore in this issue's Opinion Piece by Professor Peter Hartley, who asks "Are we ready for the post-digital age?" in exploring key issues in academic development, university systems and curriculum design against the backdrop of this year's SEDA (Staff and Educational Development Association) Annual Conference.

Peter's Opinion Piece also invites us to consider "How 'fit for purpose' is your curriculum design?", and the relationship between technology, innovation and curriculum design is also the focus of the book review by Professor Keith Smyth, who considers the recently published edited volume *Curriculum Models for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Using Learning Technologies in Higher Education*.

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Our On the Horizon piece this issue comes from Fiona Smart, who discusses Poetic Transcription as a method of reinforcing the identity and resilience of new academics entering higher education, suggesting that whilst there is still much to learn in terms of the experience of early career academics, there is clear evidence that this transitory period can be extremely challenging.

We hope that for our readers the contents of this issue are similarly challenging (in the best sense of the word) and that they provoke, stimulate and encourage reflection with the ultimate goal of furthering your own practice or your thinking in respect to the various areas covered. You might even conclude it's time to submit an article of your own. Happy reading.

*The editors*

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