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Welcome to this edition of JPAAP.

My writing of this guest editorial coincides with the start of autumn in the UK. The leaves are turning, nights draw in, and there are early morning frosts. The death of the calendar year is not too far away, and a new decade is on the horizon. In sharp contrast to the demise of the year, the new academic session is underway and universities across the globe burst into life as if it is springtime. There is vibrancy and colour. The promise of a glorious growth period reaches out to draw us in. Corridors buzz with the sound of student voices. Academics are once more adept in balancing the complexities of their roles and responsibilities. Professional services determine to ensure the smooth function of everything and anything which concerns their absolute commitment to the student learning experience. There is a pace to this time of the academic year like no other. It is cut and thrust. And is both exhilarating and unnerving, even for those who know and understand the space of the university and its intersecting parts.

Appreciating this, turns my attention to those who are less familiar with the ecosystem which aims to nourish and facilitate, but does not always do so. In this context, it should not be surprising to find that we speak much of belonging and community, although I would suggest that there is a tendency to think more of both from a student perspective to the detriment of the ecosystem as a whole. We talk too of resilience. Holdsworth et al. (2018)[1], for example, borrow from the well-known words of Stevie Smith[2] to explore students' conceptions of resilience as they 'wave, not drown' concluding that maintaining perspective, staying healthy, and developing support networks are key attributes. Furthermore, they go on to propose strategies which universities might adopt to support resilience development.

Against this backdrop of a continuing, and important conversation about belonging, community and resilience this issue of JPPAP offers food for thought. **Hardcastle et al.** focus on how pre-arrival social media communication might contribute to a more thoughtful, tailored and proactive approach to student induction which they propose can impact positively on both retention and academic grades. It is a paper which speaks to the capacity of individuals to adjust, if the setting into which they are transitioning is responsive to what matters to them, rather than what we – the HE establishment– believes to be the priorities. **Katz's** paper is student-focused too, bringing into view something which might be considered mundane – the purchase of text books - but which has the capacity to challenge students' limited finances and magnify their stress; and points to more sustainable alternatives.

Raadt et al. centre on a particular sub-set of the ecosystem – teacher education – to consider the extent to which marketable skills learned in teacher-preparation programmes transfer to the teacher's classroom? Of particular note in the discussion is the argument that as we seek to develop students' higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and metacognition, we are at risk of demeaning those which are more basic, but yet foundational, for example, communication and teamwork. There is a connection here to **Wickramasinghe et al.'s paper** on assessment practices in the context of professional development and the need to develop students as agents of change. I am still contemplating this sentence because it resonated with me, and therefore invite you to do the same:

> Students who are willing to be active participants in their learning become aware of a secret that can only be known by those who are active learners: that secret is the generative power of knowledge acquired through active learning, and the durability of the active approach.

The construct of agency features in **Aitken and Loads** too alongside that of empowerment, but this time from the perspective of staff developing their academic practices in online spaces. They urge us away from a narrative of constraint to one of growth, recognising that academics will need to reach out for ongoing support as they hone their skills in online education. And therein might lurk a risk alluded to earlier. The health and well-being of the university is multi-dimensional and demands focus on its more permanent residents – the staff – as well as those who are more

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[1] Holdsworth, S., Turner, M., & Scott-Young C.M. (2018) …Not drowning, waving. Resilience and university: a student perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*:11, 1837-1853, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2017.1284193

[2] https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46479/not-waving-but-drowning

transient – the student population. **Kensington-Miller and Carter** would recognise this imperative. Their paper attends to the demand for academics to write, understanding the complexity of why something which might seem so simple to achieve can be elusive. They too speak to the importance of the social dimension of the act of writing and the need to support the development of confidence.

At first read, **Mackay's** paper returns us to what appears to be a student focus; that is satisfaction datasets. However, situated in the context of the current QAA (Scotland) Enhancement Theme, she is in fact centring our attention on the importance of sharing practice across institutions and making better use of free text data, arguing the potential of text mining to better understand the voices of both students and staff in the quest for developing institutional resilience.

Returning to the start of this editorial and my reading of the beginning of the academic session as being hectic, demanding and challenging for students and staff, I am left contemplating just how much value, and mental well-being, might come from committing to untangling, opening, loosening, listening, seeing and belonging more broadly across the university ecosystem. Its cut and thrust might be what we have learned, but perhaps we can speak back to it. Forcing springtime to come too early will impact the fullness of summer's bloom.

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