



JOURNAL OF Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice

Editorial

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Welcome to the Summer 2020 issue of JPAAP.

I am writing on a dreich¹ Scottish summer's day, two-thirds of the way through the most unusual year we have experienced, both personally and as professionals in higher education. The past few months have been unprecedented, and I am at a loss to express just exactly how I feel about 2020. I think a Fill in the Blank is appropriate: "2020 is _____".

Working in universities throughout the world, we have watched and experienced the disruption caused by Covid, and the situations which change on a daily basis. None of us can be sure of anything any more, and as we reach a new academic year in the northern hemisphere, we are preparing to welcome a new cohort of students, and to welcome back our returning students, knowing that we are all adapting to different ways of learning. Many of our students will not be coming back to campus this year, and many of us will be teaching from home. This offers us new opportunities and new challenges, but if your institution is anything like mine, the past few months have seen a huge effort to get everything ready for students to be able to experience university, and a willingness of colleagues to work together to make sure that we continue to provide an education.

The disruption that we have experienced has reached into all aspects of our lives, including the production of this issue of JPAAP. I would like to acknowledge the patience and understanding of our authors, and also the huge effort of the reviewers and the editorial team in getting this issue together. I know it has been an uphill battle sometimes, but we are here now, and the issue is published. Thank you, all of you, for your efforts.

We have had delays for various reasons, Covid being the most memorable, but also because we were hoping that we could have migrated the journal to its new home. That is still on hold, but we hope to have an announcement soon. These delays have resulted in a bumper issue of JPAAP, with more papers than normal.

We have eighteen papers for you in this issue, on a variety of topics, from an international group of authors from three continents. There are four broad themes to the papers in the issue. Our first theme to consider is Community, which manifests itself in a number of fascinating contexts. Danette V. Day and Connie Strittmatter, Fitchburg State University, introduce us to the experiences of students on a campus committee organising an event to honour Martin Luther King Jr. We turn our attention to a number of papers focusing on the postgraduate taught (PGT) experience and fostering community; Wendee White and Richard Ingram from the University of Dundee explore PGT students' mental health through the lens of wellbeing, Richard Bale and Hannah Moran, Imperial College, give us the experiences of peer facilitation of a Graduate Teaching Assistant training course, while Lindsey Robb and Sheena Moffat from Edinburgh Napier University have a paper which tackles the importance of community in transition to PGT studies, with support from an online induction course. Finally, Anna Nikoulina, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Northwestern, explores academic literacy and research skills of graduate business students. We then turn to enhancing supervision of undergraduate projects, in a thoughtful paper by Adam Longcroft, St Mary's University and Simon Pratt-Adams, Anglia Ruskin University. Our second paper which tackles aspects of community building with undergraduate students is a study from Bronwen Edwards, Karen Horwood, Andre Pusey, Max Hope and David Haigh, Leeds Beckett University who examine a residential writing retreat for final year students in geography.

Accessibility is the second theme of the issue. We have three papers in this theme, dealing with diverse aspects of accessibility. The first paper to consider is one regarding academic decision-making processes through a deaf lens, by Dean J. Laury, Rochester Institute of Technology. The second paper in this theme is by Michelle L. Meadows, Tiffin University and Catie E. Carlson, University of Cincinnati, who have written a timely study on the use of OERs in teacher education. Finally, the third paper in the theme of Accessibility is from John Raymond Bostock, Edgehill University whose investigation of a flexible learning model for language students utilises technology to enhance student learning.

We turn next to the next theme of Implementing Learning. Mario Menz, University of West London Graduate School takes us on a tour of the learning journal to support learning, academic skills and employability. The second paper in this theme comes from Suzanne Young, University of Leeds, Helen Nicols, University of Lincoln and Ashley Cartwright, University of Huddersfield, who revisit Lecture Format, by investigating student learning preferences. We move on to a second paper by Suzanne Young, University

¹ Dreich: /dri:x/ adjective (Scottish) – particularly of weather: dull, dreary, bleak.

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of Leeds and co-author Ellen Tullo, Newcastle University, who examine the case study as an authentic learning experience in two different subject areas.

Our fourth theme is continuing professional development. The first paper in this theme comes from Nicola Parkin, Flinders University who looks at “Slow” in learning design, something we could all use at the moment, after the disruption of the past six months. We then turn our attention to a paper by Alexandra Sewell, University of Worcester, who explores her own experiences of the use of Inquiry-Based Learning. The third paper in this thematic area is a study of reflection-in-action as it applies to examination invigilators, by Mark Minott, who is a UK-based independent researcher.

Our final offering in this issue is a review from Lorraine Anderson, University of Dundee, on Daphne Loads’ inspirational book for our time, *Rich Pickings*.

We hope that readers of this issue find it a stimulating read, giving us all ideas that we can implement in our teaching and in our own continuing professional development in the coming year.

The challenging times we are all facing are not yet over, but we can share our experiences, and support one another. At the moment, we need this mutual support more than ever.

Take care.