



## Guest Editorial June 2013

Lorraine Stefani

I am honoured to have been invited to welcome you to this first issue of the *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* (JPAAP). The inaugural issue of this innovative journal is a great credit to Karen Strickland and Keith Smyth from

Edinburgh Napier University, David Walker from the University of Dundee and Panos Vlachopoulos from Aston University for planting the seeds of this innovative and alternative route to publication, carefully tending and nurturing its growth and bringing it to fruition. Barbara Kensington-Miller from the University of Auckland, New Zealand has recently joined this illustrious group to assert the local, national and international reach of the journal.

The founding group for this exciting venture has taken the publishing challenges for early career researchers in the broad fields of SOTL, (the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and Academic Practice), turned these challenges on their heads and opened up a supportive, developmental, collegial pathway to research and publication success – and it is free!

The genesis of this journal is also testimony to the coming of age of Academic Practice. As academic developers, our role is to lead the way in building capability and capacity in learning, teaching and research endeavours, for the purpose of providing the best learning environment and experience for our students. To achieve this means that we must capture and gain leverage from the many novel approaches taken by individual staff members in different disciplines to engage, inspire and motivate their students. Too often great ideas are lost to us or seen only by a few colleagues. Participants pursuing postgraduate programmes relating to learning and teaching are a prime example. Their understanding of the conventions of their discipline is of paramount importance, but often transitioning into publishing for wider audiences, examining their work through a pedagogical lens, is a significant challenge. The ethos of this journal is to provide the necessary support in a way that benefits us all. The journal is free, thus removing a considerable barrier for many academic staff. You do not need to be a 'big name' in order to have any chance of publishing. Peer review, a critical aspect of academia, will be open and transparent. Editorial support will be provided to help shape great ideas into great articles.

The journal welcomes Opinion Pieces and On the Horizon articles, commentaries of ideas gaining traction. We welcome material in different formats. We live in a digital world and use of multimedia may be the norm in some areas of our teaching practice so this journal actively supports submissions in different formats.

This interesting and inspiring inaugural issue of JPAAP encompasses many critical issues on learning and teaching that

have wide-ranging relevance. Karen and colleagues provide a fulsome overview of the root of the idea of JPAAP. A participant on a postgraduate certificate programme at Edinburgh Napier, Sibylle Ratz, provides an article on e-readiness and the implications for choosing appropriate tools for technology mediated learning and teaching. The academic discipline area is community language learners; however, the article is relevant to many different disciplines. Julie-Anne Regan provides us with critical insights into the potential risks inherent in pedagogic research, with emphasis on the issue of valid consent. This is mission-critical information relating to pedagogical research methodologies. Divya Jindal-Snape and Richard Ingram delve into the issues surrounding the multiple transitions that international doctoral students make and how we can better support these students. Amy Louise Sheppard explores the motivations of online distance learning professional doctorate students. Mark Carver invites us to explore humour in the classroom, a touch of edgy humour, and Chris Doye courageously tackles the thorny issue of paraphrasing.

Homing in on the idea of the openness and inclusivity of this journal, Alexander Dunedin presents an Opinion Piece on the idea of the 'Ragged University'. Taken from the Victorian era concept of the Ragged School, the ragged university idea is that of the 'university of open spaces and social learning'. Dunedin is pondering how the Ragged University might be sustained without losing its ethos of openness, and how it might be built upon without succumbing to bureaucratic borders.

These articles, taken together, provide new insights for us from many subject areas that might not be captured in the traditional higher education journals. The speed of turnaround is a huge bonus for early career academics forging their careers in a time of reduced resources, accountability and high expectations.

I am very excited about this journal and I hope you, the readers, will feel the same. It is quite simply not beyond the bounds of possibility that the *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* will be a catalyst for a 21st Century approach to publishing. Be part of this great initiative. Read the articles, offer responses, share your ideas, teach us and allow us to teach you. Enjoy!

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