



## Editorial

November 2013

Welcome to our second issue of the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice (JPAAP). Our first issue has been well received and has given some welcome exposure to our new and emerging authors in academic practice. Since the last issue the editorial team have continued with their commitment to supporting early career authors and peer reviewers. To this end the editors hosted an open access webinar for those interested in journal reviewing, focussing on what makes for a good reviewer as well as how to get involved as a reviewer for JPAAP. The journal now has a LinkedIn presence with a specific group space for our reviewers and editors to engage in discussions around the practice of reviewing and publishing in academic practice. If you are reading this and thinking “I’d like to become a reviewer but not sure how” why not contact the editorial team at [JofPAAP@gmail.com](mailto:JofPAAP@gmail.com) and take it from there. We are always keen to hear from new reviewers. Whilst we are on the subject, we would like to give special thanks to the reviewers for this issue who have done a sterling job of offering their considered critique of the authors work and providing valuable constructive feedback to our authors which has helped to further develop and refine those papers included..

In this issue we have a good mix of new and emerging authors, as well as some papers from authors who are more established. We welcome the rich mix of authorship from a wide variety of higher education institutions across the globe and the range of issues in higher education that are raised in these articles.

Developing academic skills such as note taking, independent learning and learning from feedback are issues that academics face on a daily basis. A collection of papers in this issue offers some insights to these problems and raises issues for further debate (Brabazon; Doan; Ryan). Tara Brabazon tackles the dichotomy of the use of technology in learning and its potential for learners and academics to become deskilled in the finer art of learning and teaching. She observes the decline of note taking in class and an emerging trend of slides being photographed and laments the dying art of notetaking in students. Tara draws from her own experience and observations in higher education and at conferences where she observes that technology often drives the lesson or presentation rather than it being a means of communication. Trying to hold back technology might be a little like trying to stop the tide with a tea strainer but finding ways to support students and novice teachers to develop their skill in learning and teaching should be what drives the use of technology, not simply jumping on the next app.

Goulding and Sneddon continue the theme of developing academic skills in their paper which tackles the issue of developing scholarship in the delivery of higher education within the Australian technical and further education (TAFE). The delivery of higher education programmes in non-HE settings is an increasing trend which brings a number of challenges for academics and students alike. Goulding and Sneddon conceptualise scholarship as a

particularly problematic issue as the emphasis on this has been less than in traditional HE settings.

Developing ownership and independence in learning is a fundamental goal of higher education and Ryan’s article highlights the “flipped classroom” as a way of promoting ownership of the learning experience. His case-study of a group of final year students highlighted a deep understanding of their self-selected topic within the bounded learning environment.

Feedback is an aspect of learning and teaching practice in higher education that receives continued attention from poor results in the National Student Survey (NSS), many institutions have invested heavily in feedback campaigns and project work with sometimes disappointing outcomes in terms of improving NSS scores. Loc Doan asks if feedback is a waste of time. The problem of feedback is argued from both student and academic perspective, with academics often bemoaning the fact that students do not engage with feedback. Doan asserts that many simply do not know how to use feedback and focusses on how academics can offer guidance to students on the relevance of their feedback and on how to use their feedback to feedforward. The article was based on a sizable survey of students at Aston University in Birmingham and makes an interesting contribution to the discourse in this area.

Internationalisation of the curriculum is a buzz phrase many will be familiar with but those effaced with supporting international students will be well acquainted with the challenges of supporting students whose first language is not English. The articles by Huang and Gohil both tackle related issues with Huang focussing on the challenges of the academic use of English being no-ones mother tongue, and Gohil exploring ways of making translation more creative. Gohil’s opinion piece describes the use of innovative translation tasks for developing language competence, highlighting that simple translating of terms often misses the nuanced interpretations of those who are native speakers. The research paper by Huang however highlights the complexities of academic language, and how our use of language in academia also leaves native English language speakers requiring some translation. Perhaps we can use some of the techniques from Gohil’s paper to support all our students who perhaps struggle with the sometimes alien discourse of higher education.

The development of employability skills is also an important issue in creating graduates who are “workplace ready”. We have a collection of papers which focus on the development of such skills. The paper by Conlon and Gould describes two different approaches to developing the skills of reflection within the discipline of nursing. Within the discipline of drama, McKinnon reports the findings of a pilot project which evaluates the effectiveness of two teaching and learning interventions designed to support the development of creativity. Both interventions use strategies identified in research on ‘adaptive dramaturgy’ as the basis of group learning projects that

facilitate creative and collaborative skills. But it does not stop there; the development of the skills needed for the professional workplace is only part of the story of our students journey to their chosen profession. Often programmes of study may lead to a number of different career options and supporting students to get the best start into their professional life is ever more important in today's competitive employment market. The paper by Allan, Moffett and Robertson describes the development of a national career guidance profession in Scotland. Recognising prior learning and awarding academic credit against industry experience or previous study is a challenge for many institutions. Katrina Swanton summarises issues and offers insight into the usefulness of the new book by Prawelska-Skырzpek et al (2013).

Finally, on a subject close to the journal's heart, Chrissi Nerantzi presents a discussion on open educational resources. Chrissi's article focusses on the development of a series of open access videos

which are embedded within the University of Salford's postgraduate certificate in academic practice. These videos provide short sharp "food for thought" topics in the programme and showcase the use of the medium for learning and teaching to the participants. The paper shares the results of an evaluation of the resources and describes the ease of incorporating these types of resource into the programme.

The collection of articles in this issue cover a range of practical topics and issues that academics engaged in the practice of teaching can relate to. The practice focus of the articles is welcomed as the authors present the challenges of everyday life in higher education. We hope that you enjoy reading this issue and welcome comments from our readers.

*The Editors*  
*November 2013*