# Publishing or perishing? The scale and state of open access institutional higher education journals in the UK

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## Abstract

*This paper provides an overview of open access institutional higher education journals in the UK. These are in-house publications that are focused on developing staff and disseminating, largely, localised accounts and reflections of academic practice. This study found that around ten per cent of UK higher education institutions have an institutional journal, and these vary in style and focus. Developing and sustaining an institutional journal has been challenging, as evidenced by the often sporadic patterns of publication. This paper reflects on a number of themes, including: governance and quality; scale and scope; and publishing platforms used. The paper offers suggestions for future research, particularly in relation to the value and impact of these journals for (a) the contributor, (b) the institution, and (c) the wider academic community.*

## Keywords

publishing; open access; scholarship; staff development; pedagogy

## Introduction

*The only thing to do with good advice is to pass it on; it is never any use to oneself.*
*- Oscar Wilde*

Many in academia will empathise with Oscar Wilde's counsel. Research findings are of limited value until they are shared; scholarly communication is "the currency that allows the reputation economy of academia to function" (Hill, 2016: 366). The motivations for publishing are varied. Mahoney (1978) viewed job security and personal advancement as the primary reasons, whilst Chandler (1995) and Henson (1995) identified four key motives: achieving recognition or extending one's reputation; staking a claim on an idea or discovery; desiring to shift the focus of a discipline; and attracting research funding. Drawing on Hagstrom's (1965) anthropological perspective, Chandler (1995) advised that publishing for academics is primarily a gift exchange system rather than a contractual or bartering one, where the "gift of papers" is reciprocated with "the gift of recognition" (p. 212). Mabe (2009) concurs, and suggested that academics "aspire for the esteem of colleagues and want recognition of their unique contribution..." (p. 3). Similarly, Rankin (2001) rationalised that most write to join the professional conversation or discourse community. This perspective was embellished by Wisker (2013) who considered writing and publication as a form of 'academic rite of passage', "since acceptance into the published community signifies and enables wider acceptance into the communities of those who create, articulate and share knowledge" (p. 345). Espousing a much broader perspective, Pinfield (2004) posited that universities want academic publishing to support and further their mission of carrying out research, delivering teaching and facilitating learning.

The academic journal is a principle unit of scholarly communication; it has been designed to disseminate current knowledge and to place on record, contributions of that knowledge. Schauder (1994: 74) defined the academic journal as, "A printed serial publication whose contents include selected professional articles in a particular field or discipline, usually published by, or in association with, a learned society or professional institution." Whilst learned publishing began with Denis de Sallo's *Journal des sçavans* in January 1665, Henry Oldenburg (1619-77) is regarded to have devised the first academic journal, *Philosophical Transactions*, in March 1665 for the Royal Society. Its four functions of registration, dissemination, peer review, and archival record have endured to this day (Mabe, 2009).

Digital technology has added another dynamic to the process. Citing Hunter (1988), Schauder (1994) proffered that the transition to digital publishing held implications for all phases of research accountability and research publishing, including: registration of the proprietary date of an article's contents; the peer review process; the archiving of definitive versions of each article; the conditions governing access to, and replication of, published articles; and the use of articles as indicators of performance for the university rewards and promotion system (p. 73).

Further, the 2002 Budapest Open Access Initiative marked a significant re-channelling of thought and practise as it ushered a cultural and societal push towards openness:

> *By 'open access' to the literature, we mean free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers*

*other than those inseparable from gaining access to the Internet itself.*

Budapest Open Access Initiative (2002)

Open access (OA) has, therefore, presented opportunities for universities to bypass commercial publishers and assume control of the publishing process. Lorimer (2003) applauded this movement, and posited that the traditional model of subscriber-based journals was inadequate in the face of rapid technological change and a desire by academics, in a networked environment, to make as much of their research as openly accessible as possible. The 'culture' of OA in UK HE continues to be championed and prioritised and, as noted by the Chair of Universities UK's Open Access Coordination Group,

*The UK is well above global averages of open access publishing, and is at the forefront of a significant global movement which is fundamentally changing the way that research is conceived, conducted, disseminated and rewarded.*

Tickell (2017: 4)

This paper examines the scale and state of OA institutional higher education (IHE) journals in the UK. For the purposes of this paper, OA IHE journals are those that have been formed in-house, with an editorial board comprising staff, largely, from that institution. The mission and aims of each OA IHE journal can vary from encouraging staff *within* those institutions to publish their reflections on practice, or to include contributions from contributors *beyond* the institution. Accessed globally, the underlying mission is to encourage conversations on teaching at both a localised and wider level. The paper offers an overview of *Innovations in Practice*, as an example of an IHE and OA IHE journal, before describing the scale and state of OA IHE journals in the UK.

### Innovations in Practice

Innovations in Practice *is a means by which we can amplify our voices. It exists in a mosaic of other collegial practices (the LJMU Teaching and Learning Conference, Research in Practice seminars and Faculty pedagogic/education research groups) by which we can connect with and develop ideas inspired by others; a common narrative that shapes and arouses us with a common purpose – a vaulting collective ambition.*

Mistry (2016c: 76)

The first issue of LJMU's *Innovations in Practice* was published in July 2008. The journal was based at the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure and branded as a 'CETL journal' focusing on physical education, dance and outdoor education. £315m had been allocated to a total of 74 CETLs (Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) in England and Northern Ireland, between 2005 and 2010. Writing whilst the CETLs were still in operation, a vice-chancellor commented that, "[they] have provided an opportunity for those engaged in their development to conduct pedagogic research" and added that, "… new opportunities are being opened up for individuals to gain promotion through work on teaching and learning in their disciplinary fields." He concluded, "Research and scholarship in pedagogy has therefore started to gain wider recognition within the academy rather than being taken for granted" (Burgess, 2008; 101). The very first editorial in *Innovations in Practice*, echoed these sentiments, and outlined that the journal was intended to offer staff and students, "the opportunity to disseminate a range of innovative subject and pedagogically based practices with the intention of sharing these with a wider audience both internally and externally to the institution" (Vickerman, 2008: 1).

A 2010 issue of *Innovations in Practice* provided a glimpse of the future direction of the journal as it included 11 research papers

from those studying on a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching Higher Education programme, across all faculties (Carey et al., 2010).  From 2012, *Innovations in Practice*, had shaken off its CETL journal identity, and proceeded to include submissions from colleagues across LJMU.  This paved the way for a migration from the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure to the, then, Education and Academic Quality Services, a centralised professional service (Stewart, 2014).

Following the launch of LJMU's Teaching and Learning Academy, which assumed stewardship of the journal in 2015, *Innovations in Practice* was reformed, or "reloaded", capitalising on the advances in digital publishing.  Supported by LJMU's Library Services, it proceeded to sit on the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform (Dishman, 2017).  Whilst the technology had changed, the journal team aimed to continue the efforts of its predecessors in offering a "developmental and supportive approach" to LJMU staff and student contributors (Mistry, 2016a: 3).

## Methodology

OA IHE journals were discovered using the Google search engine.  In total, 157 UK institutions were investigated and the following search strategy was employed:

[NAME OF INSTITUTION] + 'teaching learning journal'

The keywords chosen were preferable to 'higher education' as initial searches showed that the journals were located within 'teaching and learning' microsites of institutional webpages.

The HE providers were identified by consulting the following sources:

o Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) (ND) register of HE providers focusing on those with

permanent degree awarding powers (DAPs) (n=127 HE institutions).
o The Scottish Funding Council's (ND) list of universities and HE institutions (n=19), each with DAPs.
o Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (ND) list of HE institutions with DAPs, excluding The Open University of Wales (n=9).
o NI Direct's (ND) list of universities in Northern Ireland with DAPs, excluding The Open University (n=2).

Online or digitised IHE journals were located at 23 institutions (Table 1) though, as explained in this paper, this is not an exhaustive list of IHE journals that have been produced over the years. Included on the list is Queen's University, Belfast's *Reflections*.  Though described as a newsletter, it includes short case studies, of up to 1,000 words.  This is distinctive when compared with other institutional newsletters.  For example, Liverpool Hope University's (2016) *Learning and Teaching @ Hope*, is bulletin-like, conveying news and information on events and activities.  The Queen's, Belfast example therefore demonstrates that there is a continuum of IHE journals, ranging from publications that include relatively short vignettes of practice to longer pieces of research, but each being subject to a peer review process.

Exclusion criteria were applied.  For instance, some UK HE institutions produce their own general academic journals, such as University of West London's *New Vistas* (ISSN 2056-9688) journal.  *New Vistas* encompasses scholarship *in* and *from* West London on a range of subjects, as opposed to a sole focus on the scholarship *of* higher education, education development, or reflections on teaching or learning.

Also excluded is the *Wales Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (ISSN 2051-9788) which is based at University of Wales, Trinity Saint David (UWTSD).  Whilst

preparing this paper, the journal was in the process of being launched though, from a description of its aims and scope, and in the absence of information on the make-up of the editorial board, it is difficult to determine whether this is a national journal for Wales, or focused on practice at UWTSD (ND).

There are notes of caution. Online and digital publishing is a dynamic process and information changes regularly. What is, therefore, reported represents a snapshot as information contained on some of the webpages accessed may change over time. Further, recent mergers in UK HE have resulted in the loss of names from the HE registers, for example, in recent years:

o University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology [UMIST] merged with The University of Manchester;

o University of Glamorgan and University of Wales, Newport merged to become University of South Wales;

o University of Wales Lampeter, Trinity University College and Swansea Metropolitan University merged to become UWTSD; and

o University of Paisley merged with Bell College to become University of the West of Scotland.

Any IHE journals produced prior to these mergers may therefore be lost in the process of change. One exception is The City University which joined the federal University of London to become City, University of London in 2016; fragments of The City University IHE journal (*Learning at City Journal*) are still discoverablr on the web but archived as separate PDF articles, rather than whole issues, along with other non-IHE journal articles by staff at City (see Appendix A for link to *Learning at City Journal* articles).

| Institution | Journal |
|---|---|
| Anglia Ruskin | *Networks* |
| Arts London | *Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal* [ISSN 2397-6594] |
| Bedfordshire | *Journal of Pedagogic Practice* [ISSN 2047-3265] |
| Birmingham | *Education in Practice* [ISSN 2057-2069] |
| Arts Bournemouth | *Creative Pedagogies Journal* |
| City | *Learning at City Journal* |
| Cumbria | *Practitioner Research in Higher Education* [ISSN 1755-1382] |
| Greenwich | *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching* [ISSN 2044-0081] |
| Hertfordshire | *Blended Learning in Practice* [ISSN 2014-1758] |
| Keele | *JADE: The Journal of Academic Development and Education* [ISSN 2051-3593] |
| King's College, London | *Higher Education Research Network Journal* |
| Leicester | *Journal for Excellence in Teaching and Learning* (2010-12); *Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (from 2017) |
| Liverpool John Moores | *Innovations in Practice* [ISSN 1757-921X] |
| Manchester Metropolitan | *Learning and Teaching in Action* |
| Middlesex | *Middlesex Journal of Educational Technology* [ISSN 2041-2762] |
| Northampton | *Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education* [ISSN 2041-3122] |
| Oxford Brookes | *Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching* (2004-16); *Higher Education Journal of Learning and Teaching* (from 2017) [ISSN 1744-7747] |
| Queen's, Belfast | *Reflections* |
| Sheffield Hallam | *Student Engagement and Experience Journal* |
| Southampton Solent* | *Dialogue: The Journal of the Solent Learning Community** |
| Ulster | *Perspectives on Practice and Pedagogy* [ISSN 2044-7388] |
| Winchester | *Capture* [ISSN 0141-1926] |
| Worcester | *Worcester Journal of Learning and Teaching* [ISSN 2024-8032] |
| York | *York Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* |

**Table 1:** *IHE journals discovered from a Google search. If the ISSN (International Standard Serial Number) has not been cited, it indicates that the journal either has no ISSN or that this detail has been excluded on the journal webpage. *Solent's* Dialogue *is the only non-OA journal*

## Results and Discussion
### Overview
There are a relatively small number of UK HE institutions producing, or have produced, an IHE journal. Figure 1 provides an overview of the OA IHE journal issues from each institution, with the earliest edition (2002) located at Manchester Metropolitan University (*Learning and Teaching in Action*). It would be misleading to think that 2002 was the first year of publication of an IHE journal. For instance, in December 2000, University of East London launched its IHE journal *Research and Innovation in Learning and Teaching* (ISSN 1468-0912), intended to be "… the first in a proposed series bringing together research and innovation in learning and teaching by staff at, or associated with, the University of East London" (O'Reilly, 2000: 3). The editorial continued, "A key purpose of the series is to disseminate good ideas and good practice that might otherwise remain locked within subject areas, departments or small research groups" (p. 3). No digital traces of, or references to, this journal appear to exist; none of the articles in the December 2000 issue (Volume 1, Number 1) could be traced on Google Scholar.

Figure 1 demonstrates that publishing has been relatively infrequent and sporadic. For instance, Manchester Metropolitan published between zero and four issues of *Learning and Teaching in Action* each year from 2002. Six of the IHE journals had year-long gaps whilst still considered to be active. Thus it would appear that sustaining the journals has been challenging and far from straightforward. Figure 1 illustrates the scale of publication to 2016 and, during the preparation of this paper, it is worth noting that in 2017:

o An announcement on the Anglia Ruskin University (*Networks*) webpage advised that 2016 would be the final year of the journal.
o Similarly, Sheffield Hallam University notified readers that, partly owing to the creation of a new journal by the RAISE (Researching, Advancing and Inspiring Student Engagement) Network and other institutional priorities, its *Student Engagement and Experience Journal* would cease publication in 2016 (Middleton and Taylor, 2016).
o By contrast, Arts University Bournemouth announced that its *Creative Pedagogies Journal* would be launched in spring 2017. (When checked in December 2017, an issue of the journal had yet to be released.)
o University of Leicester had published its *Journal for Excellence in Teaching and Learning* from 2010 to 2012; in 2017 it invited expressions of interest for its successor publication, *Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education,* with the intention of it being active from December 2017.
o Following a gap of three years, University of Winchester published an edition of *Capture* in spring 2017.
o Of those OA IHE journals that produced editions in 2015 but not in 2016, University of Birmingham (*Education in Practice*) released an issue in June 2017, as did University of Worcester which published *Worcester Journal for Learning and Teaching* in February 2017 following a 2015 issue.

Taking into consideration the above factors, there have been an average of 16 active OA IHE journals in each year this decade; about ten per cent of UK HE institutions have or have produced an OA IHE journal.

| University | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anglia Ruskin | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Arts London | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Bedfordshire | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Birmingham | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| City | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | |
| Cumbria | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Greenwich | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Hertfordshire | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Keele | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| King's College, London | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Leicester | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| LJMU | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Manchester Metropolitan | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 2 | 2 |
| Middlesex | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Northampton | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Oxford Brookes | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Queen's, Belfast | | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Sheffield Hallam | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Southampton Solent | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Ulster | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| Winchester | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| Worcester | | | | | | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| York | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |

**Fig. 1:** *The scale of publishing/ number of journal issues produced by UK institutions from 2002 to 2016*

21 of the 23 IHE journals referenced in Table 1 are based at HE institutions in England. Both universities in Northern Ireland (Queen's, Belfast and Ulster University) maintained a newsletter/journal, but there were no traces of an IHE journal, OA or otherwise, in Scotland or Wales. It may be fanciful to align this with the UK nations' engagement, or otherwise, with the CETL programme but, in addition to LJMU's *Innovations in Practice*, it was acknowledged that University of Hertfordshire's *Blended Learning in Practice* and Leicester's *Journal for Excellence in Teaching and Learning* also came into being with HEFCE's CETL funding (Jefferies and Porter, 2009; University of Leicester, 2012).

It is also worth considering the effect of the closure of other national initiatives at that time. 2010 witnessed the closure of the Higher Education Academy's (HEA) Subject Centres and, as speculated by the author, this seemed to herald a steep engagement with pedagogical conversations within the institution; in this instance, reflected in the growing attendance at an institutional teaching and learning conference (Mistry, 2016b). Figure 2 illustrates the number of journal issues released each calendar year from 2002 and the number of active OA IHE journals found in this period; 2009/10 marks a point of growth, which may support the author's suppositions (Mistry, 2016b: 115). As also highlighted, more journal issues were released in 2012 (n=31) and there were a higher number of active journals (n=18) this year. Could these publications have appeared as a consequence of authors not accessing dissemination opportunities associated with the Subject Centres? As reported by the author, in their teaching and learning conference programme, Southampton Solent University encouraged presenters to write up their presentations as papers for Solent's IHE journal *Dialogue* (Mistry, 2016b: 123); could higher levels of

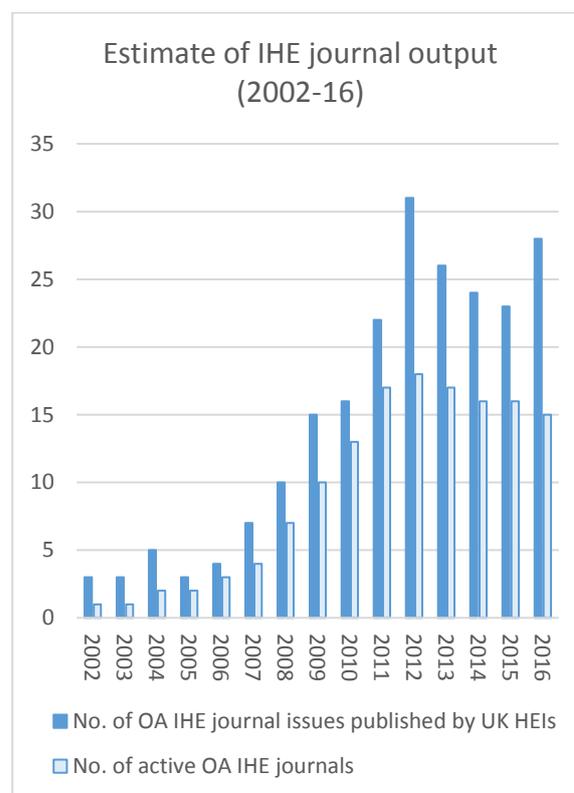engagement with the institutional conference have cemented some growth of IHE journals?

**Fig. 2:** *Estimate of journal output from 2002 to 2016. An active journal is defined as one that published at least one issue in a calendar year.*

### General focus
Overall, the IHE journals are aiming to develop their staff and promote reflections on teaching, learning and general academic practice. As Sheffield Hallam (ND) advised, when they ran their *Student Engagement and Experience Journal*, that engagement could help those seeking professional recognition when generating evidence against the UK Professional Standards Framework, (HEA, 2011: 3), particularly in relation to:

o [Professional Value] e.g. V3 – use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development (CPD).
o [Area of Activity] e.g. A5 – engage in CPD in subjects/disciplines and their

pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices.

o [Core Knowledge] e.g. K5 – methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching.

Most of the IHE journals audited are broad in scope, though some focus on particular themes, such as student engagement (Sheffield Hallam) or technology-enhanced learning (Hertfordshire and Middlesex).

The emphasis on developing staff new to writing about teaching and learning, is echoed by other IHE journals. For example, University of Leicester (ND) posits that its IHE journal, *Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education,* is intended to "provide an accessible vehicle for staff and students to publish their research." The sense of writing, in an appropriate and supportive environment, was underlined by Middlesex University when it ran the *Middlesex Journal of Educational Technology* (*MJET*); "*MJET* aims to provide an unintimidating way for authors to publish papers… perhaps prior to writing an external article" (Middlesex University, ND). Most journals stated that they published under the Creative Commons Licence, thus enabling authors to retain copyright of their own work, which acts as a stimulus to further publication in another journal.

As noted by Rocco (2011: 5), "Knowledge is lost because potential authors do not know how to join the conversation, do not know the rules for writing and may be intimidated by the process." This might be especially acute in HE, where staff have 'dual identities' – of being researchers in their subject or field, but relative novices when reflecting on, or writing about, teaching, learning and academic practice in HE (Mistry, 2016c). Blackmore (2010) acknowledged that "there are real and potential conflicts that may arise between a formal (and compulsory) programme of academic development and the research

commitments of … teachers/researchers" (p. 1). Applying an academic literacies perspective, Nygaard (2017) observed that academics' affiliation to more than one community at a time, may have conflicting expectations. She outlined:

> *Researchers may feel they belong not just to the institute they are employed by, but also to a larger discipline-focused community (e.g. other political scientists or anthropologists), a larger thematic community (those who share interest in the same topic), a linguistic or national community (people who share the same language, ethnicity, or nationality), and any number of social communities.*
>
> Nygaard (2017: 520)

Citing Brandt and Clinton (2002), Nygaard underlined, that academic writing is situated on multiple levels. The development of voice, via engagement with an IHE journal, could therefore be viewed as a critical step in building personal confidence and belief that one is capable and worthy of participating in these scholarly conversations. Sheffield Hallam (ND) amplify this, "Writing about academic practice will sometimes require different scholarly conventions to those required by other academic disciplines and [*Student Engagement and Experience Journal*] is structured to make transition to the domain of higher education and student experience straightforward."

Some recent IHE journals have emerged out of planned pedagogic conversations within the institution. For instance, University of York's *York Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Journal*, with contributors from its Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice programme, have supportive, parallel mechanisms – such as its York Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Network, to finesse "discussion of learning research" (Robinson, 2016: 5).

> *Many staff at the University of York approach their teaching and the learning of their students in a scholarly way, seeking evidence to test the*

*impact of their creativity, exploring published research critically in the light of new questions or otherwise adopting approaches to learning and teaching that are defined by rigour, robustness and a drive to introduce improvement that is informed and credible.*

*Where a scholarly approach might become scholarship is when the results of this work are made accessible and shared with the intention of impacting positively upon the thinking and practice of others.*

(University of York, ND)

King's College, London's journal was informed by feedback from external examiners of their Masters programme in Academic Development; they "urge[d] [King's Learning Institute] to bring wider attention to the quality of participants' assignments and to demonstrate the ways that SoTL and of disciplinary inquiry effectively collide" (Blackmore, 2010: 1).

The sense of developing SoTL, and connecting it with its IHE journal, is also perceptible at other 'teaching-led' institutions. For instance, Manchester Metropolitan published three preview articles resulting from its SoTL research grants scheme (Jones, in press; Matthews and Vargas, in press; Wozniak et al., in press). Whilst Boyer's (1990) conceptualisation of SoTL has had much traction elsewhere (especially in North America), SoTL is finding a firmer foothold in the UK where, to many heads of educational development, it tends to be recognised in the form of publications (Fanghanel et al., 2016).

### Reach

The IHE journals offer either 'local' reflections or, in some cases, a showcase of examples beyond the institution. An example of an IHE journal with 'local content' is Birmingham's *Education in Practice*. Here, the editors advise that, "[the journal]

provides an accessible publication route for all University staff, be they academic members of staff or members of professional and support services, looking to disseminate learning and teaching practices, ideas and developments in a scholarly and evidence informed manner" (University of Birmingham, ND).

Other IHE journals have enjoyed wider engagement, accruing contributors from beyond their institution. For instance, the very first issue of University of Cumbria's *Practitioner Research in Higher Education* featured papers from staff at the university only, and it then developed to capture national and international perspectives. This includes curating papers presented at the 5th International Assessment in Higher Education Conference (Headington and Chapman, 2016). Similarly, *Compass: The Journal of Learning and Teaching*, began by "champion[ing] ideas and practices about learning and teaching within the [University of Greenwich] and its partner colleges" (Walker et al., 2009: 1); in a 2017 issue of the journal (Volume 10, Number 2), a special feature on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) included opinion pieces from established practitioners and HE commentators from across the UK. This pattern of development, in relation to the accumulation of experience and maturity, is reminiscent of Tight's (2017) assessment of the development of some HE journals "along the country-specific to international dimension." Tight surmises, "journals often start out focused upon a particular country or region… but open up to become international as they expand and become established" (p. 3).

### Institutional value

Institutions commit significant resources to internal teaching and learning projects plus events, such as an annual teaching and learning conference. IHE journals captured

the outcomes and experiences of these initiatives. For example, the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education), in a review of the University of Bedfordshire, complimented the role of Bedfordshire's IHE journal, *Journal of Pedagogic Development*, which it viewed to "facilitate the sharing of teaching practice" by incorporating the results of its small project grants (QAA, 2015: 30). Similar observations were made by the Agency with respect to their assessment of the role of *Education in Practice* at Birmingham (QAA, 2016). Anglia Ruskin's *Networks* reports on papers from its institutional projects (Learning and Teaching Project Awards) and acts as conference proceedings "as all Learning and Teaching project award holders [are] required to present at the conference and provide a written paper or report" (Anglia Ruskin University, ND). Internal projects often employ staff or students on fractional and/or short-term contracts. Given the lag sometimes associated with publication to an external peer-reviewed journal, IHE journals could be an attractive alternative to such individuals.

### Content and style

Each journal is distinctive in style. King's College, London's *Higher Education Research Network Journal (HERN-J),* which encompasses 'prizewinning essays' and the articles submitted to *York Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Journal* are research focused. Most others, by including column or opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and book reviews, have a conversational air – overall, the style reflects the traditions and culture of the institution. For example, in the case of University of Arts London's *Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal,* in the first issue of the journal, the Dean of Learning, Teaching and Enhancement commented,

[Spark] *offers us a creative space to share our passion for creative teaching and learning in the output forms we know best – in text, in image, in art, in design, in film, in sound and in mixed media.*

(Orr, 2016: 1)

Each issue of *Spark,* has featured a cover illustration by a UAL graduate.

An overview is presented in Table 2, which tabulates the plurality of 'submission type'.

Online version available at: http://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/iip

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| | Research Papers | Case Studies | Opinion Pieces | Book Reviews | Student Papers | Letters | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts London | X (2-5k) | X (1-2k) | X (1-2k) | X | X (1-2k) | | X Exhibition reviews |
| Birmingham | X (2-3k) | X (≤2k) | X (≤3k) | | | X | X (Literature review, ≤3k) |
| Bedfordshire | X (≤8k) | | | X (≤1k) | | X | X (Interviews) |
| Cumbria | X (≤5k) | | | | | | |
| Greenwich | X (≤6k) | X (≤3k) | X (≤1k) | X (≤0.75k) | | | X (Greenwich Conference reflection, ≤1k) X (Technology review, ≤1k) |
| Keele | X (≤2.5k) | | | X (≤0.5k) | | | X (Research in progress, ≤1k) |
| Leicester | X (3-5 k) | X (1-2k) | X | X (≤1k) | | | X (Creative writing; poems, artwork, cartoons) |
| Liverpool John Moores | X (5-7k) | X (3-5k) | X (≤2k) | X (≤1k) | | | X (Technology review, ≤1.25k) |
| Manchester Metropolitan | X | X | | | | | |
| Oxford Brookes | X (3-6k) | X (1-2k) | | | | | X (News items, ≤0.1k) |
| Queen's, Belfast | | X (0.5-1k) | | | | X | X (Newsflash items, works in progress, ≤0.2k) |
| Worcester | X (3-4k) | | X (1-1.5k) | | X (1k) | | X (Project reports, 1-2k) |
| York | X (4-6k) | | | | | | |

**Table 2:** *Overview of the type of artefacts published in a selection of OA IHE journals. Figures in brackets indicate suggested word count in the journal's instructions to contributors*

## Contributors

In the journals audited it was noted that they attract papers from multiple viewpoints and experience. A majority of the papers are from faculty staff, but they also include contributions from professional service staff (e.g. library and IT services, student support or careers teams). As noted in Table 2, a couple of IHE journals have encouraged contributions from students. Not all contributions are from early career staff within the institution, for instance, Greenwich published an opinion piece from a National Teaching Fellow based at University of Gloucestershire (Derounian, 2011). Special issues have also been produced. For instance King's College, London's 2016 issue of *HERN-J* focused on employability and enterprise (a collection of selected essays from the module 'Employability and Enterprise' by teaching staff enrolled on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in HE programme at the College), while a 2015 issue was dedicated to 'teaching in the context of diversity'.

## Governance and quality

The main sponsors of the IHE journals are central learning and teaching or academic practice units. For instance:

o Anglia Learning and Teaching (Anglia Ruskin)
o Teaching and Learning Exchange (Arts London)
o Centre for Learning Experience (Bedfordshire)
o Teaching Academy (Birmingham)
o Centre for Development of Learning and Teaching (Cumbria)
o Educational Development Unit (Greenwich)
o Learning and Teaching Innovation Centre (Hertfordshire)
o King's Learning Institute (King's College, London)
o Leicester Learning Institute (Leicester)
o Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (Manchester Metropolitan)
o Centre for Educational Development (Queen's, Belfast)
o Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice (Ulster)

Governance structures and quality control are important features of the scholarly publishing process. Many of the journals either documented their peer review process, or indicated that there was a process in place. Mabe (2009) describes the peer review as a defining characteristic of the academic journal. It involves the systematic, critical review of a submitted paper by at least two scholars from the same academic community as the author. Mabe further argues that reviewers, typically, critique papers in respect of their originality, methodological soundness, the significance and strength of the conclusions, the degree to which the evidence supports the conclusions given, and proper attribution of original sources. Manchester Metropolitan (ND) in their 'instructions for authors' provide a list of useful suggestions on how to structure an article and the elements they should include (e.g. rationale of a methodological approach, and how results should be presented). Such instructions should, of course, be useful to any reviewers and one should not overlook the development opportunities for those staff that may aspire to review for external journals. Rosenbaum (2005) reflected on the value of being a reviewer, not least the educational value from reading each paper, but also in addressing the challenge of writing reviews that are instructive to the author.

Many of the journal sites listed members of an editorial team, with staff from a range of faculties within the institution and, in a few cases, there were one or two external members. It is difficult to determine how

the editorial teams have been created and what experience, or otherwise, individuals bring to the mix.  On their journal webpage, Ulster University (ND) describe a journal planning workshop that took place in April 2016, where "all SFHEAs (Senior Fellows of the Higher Education Academy) and PFHEAs (Principal Fellows of the Higher Education Academy) were invited to attend and/or submit a formal expression of interest in becoming members of the Editorial Board [of *Perspectives on Practice and Pedagogy*]."

## Publishing platforms

There is variation in the type of publishing platform used.  As illustrated in Figure 3, most have created (PDF) issues that sit on an institutional webpage.  The concern here is one of discoverability of an individual article by a search engine, but also of potential 'link rot' (Spinellis, 2003).  As a feature of good practice, Keele, applies a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) to each article published in *The Journal of Academic Development and Education*; like a digital fingerprint, the DOI provides a persistent link to an article's location on the Internet (Paskin, 2010).  OJS, an open source journal management and publishing software which was developed as part of the Public Knowledge Project (Willinsky, 2005), represents a robust means of finding individual articles; each is easily discoverable on Google Scholar.  OJS has found traction with other UK HE sectoral bodies and organisations:

o  Jisc's 'change agents' network', a project that established a network of staff and students to support curriculum enhancement and innovation with technology, stimulated the formation of a supporting journal, *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change* (ISSN 2055-4990); and

o  The RAISE Network employed OJS for its publication, *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal* (ISSN 2399-1836).
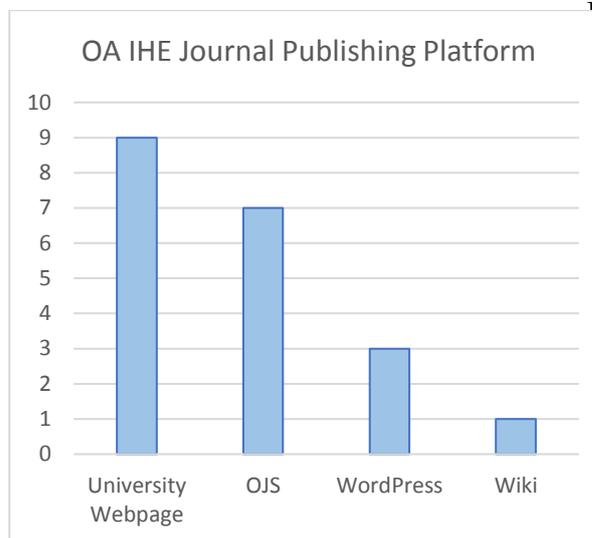
**Fig. 3:** *OA IHE journal publishing platform*

## Operational issues

The nature of publishing and, in particular, digital publishing requires significant input from people and services with a range of skills (Dishman, 2017).  In addition to the main editor and editorial team, Leicester (ND) identified a range of roles, that fused journal logistics experience with a many other skills: analysis skills (reporting statistics to an editorial board); editing skills (including copyediting, layout editing, and proofreading); reviewing skills; 'reinterpretation' skills ("to help rethink submissions to the journal in different forms, [and] help articles to reach a wider audience"); social media skills (to promote the journal); and graphic imagery skills.  In summary, setting up an IHE journal is not a trivial activity - it can be complex to plan, time-consuming and reliant on a range of people and services.

## Conclusion

This study has shown that OA IHE journals exist in about ten per cent of UK institutions. They appear to reflect the mission, culture, practices and strategic priorities of the university. For example, by acting as a means of developing writing and improving reflection on practice, or in the curation of the outputs of internally-funded projects and events, such as a paper to an institutional teaching and learning conference. Some IHE journals have developed beyond a local perspective to encouraging engagement with the wider HE community and have attracted contributors beyond their institution. IHE journals might appear less daunting for potential authors and the plurality of submission type indicates attempts to induce engagement without appearing too formal.

With a dearth of literature on IHE journals, there is a compelling case for further research in the area. This research might be broached in a number of ways:

o  The impact/value for the individuals (both early career or more experienced staff);
o  The impact/value to the institution, perhaps focusing on how any metrics or indicators of success are defined or established;
o  The impact/value to the wider academic community. In the context of a growing catalogue of HE journals (Tight, 2017), how regularly are OA IHE journals consulted or referenced outside the institution?

Aside from evidencing quality enhancement and recognition of professional practice, there is a wider sense of the potential significance of an IHE journal. In a Viewpoint paper for *Innovations in Practice,* reflecting on the TEF, Gibson (2016: 81) asserted:

*The fee regime has changed the landscape, to come extent, to increase the emphasis on the student experience. A focus on excellent teaching with transformational learning at its core can build on the strengths of the university. A strong network of educators creating innovative pedagogy, for maximum impact, and disseminating their findings provides a sound basis to deal with the new challenges of competing as an HE institution nationally and internationally.*

In other words, creating and opening up space and the opportunities for discussion, and connecting conversations, coupled with supporting staff "how to write for the SoTL and pedagogic research genre" (Ulster University, ND), seem like important starting points. For the institution, an IHE journal may reflect the value it places on the status of SoTL, pedagogic and higher education research; how they are sustained may be dependent on the sector-wide conversations on pedagogic research in REF [Research Excellence Framework] 2021.

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Online version available at: http://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/iip

**Appendix A:**

**Website addresses of IHE journals consulted**

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Anglia Ruskin University
*Networks*

http://www.anglia.ac.uk/anglia-learning-and-teaching/good-teaching-practice-and-innovation/pedagogic-research/publications/networks

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University of Arts London
*Spark: UAL Creative Teaching and Learning Journal*

https://sparkjournal.arts.ac.uk/index.php/spark

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University of Bedfordshire
*Journal of Pedagogic Development*

https://journals.beds.ac.uk/ojs/index.php/jpd

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University of Birmingham
*Education in Practice*

https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/teaching-academy/education-in-practice/index.aspx

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Arts University Bournemouth
*Creative Pedagogies Journal*

https://aub.ac.uk/campus/centre-creative-learning/learning-teaching/creative-pedagogies-journal/

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City, University of London (The City University)
*Learning at City Journal*

http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/view/divisions2/UALDCN=5FLCJ.html

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University of Cumbria
*Practitioner Research in Higher Education*

http://194.81.189.19/ojs/index.php/prhe/index

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University of Greenwich

*Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*

https://journals.gre.ac.uk/index.php/compass

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University of Hertfordshire
*Blended Learning in Practice*

http://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/learning-and-teaching/learning-teaching-institute/scholarship-research-evaluation/blended_learning_in_practice

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Keele University
*JADE: The Journal of Academic Development and Education*

https://jadekeele.wordpress.com/

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King's College, London
*Higher Education Research Network Journal (HERN-J)*

http://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/learningteaching/kli/Publications/Hern-J/Hern-J-Publications.aspx

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University of Leicester
*Journal for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (2010-12)*

https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/jetl/issue/archive

*Journal of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*

https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/jlthe

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Liverpool John Moores University
*Innovations in Practice*

https://openjournals.ljmu.ac.uk/iip/

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Manchester Metropolitan University
*Learning and Teaching in Action*

http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/ltia/

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Middlesex University
*Middlesex Journal of Educational Technology*

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http://elearningresearch.middlesex.wikispaces.net/Middlesex+Journal+of+Educational+Technology

University of Northampton
*Enhancing the Learner Experience in Higher Education*

http://journals.northampton.ac.uk/index.php/elehe/index

Oxford Brookes University
*Brookes eJournal of Learning and Teaching*

http://bejlt.brookes.ac.uk/

*Higher Education Journal of Learning and Teaching*

http://bejlt.ocsld.org/about-bejlt/

Sheffield Hallam University
*Student Engagement and Experience Journal*

http://research.shu.ac.uk/SEEJ/index.php/seej/

Queen's University, Belfast
*Reflections*

https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/AcademicStudentAffairs/CentreforEducationalDevelopment/Publications/

Southampton Solent University
*Dialogue* [NOTE: Not an OA journal]

http://ssudl.solent.ac.uk/2064/

Ulster University
*Perspectives on Practice and Pedagogy*

https://www.ulster.ac.uk/cherp/journal

University of Winchester
*Capture*

https://www.winchester.ac.uk/about-us/academic-excellence/learning-and-teaching-development/ (link for access to '*Capture* e-journal')

University of Worcester
*Worcester Journal of Learning and Teaching*

https://rteworcester.wordpress.com/resources/worcester-journal-of-learning-teaching/

University of York
*York Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*

https://www.york.ac.uk/staff/teaching/develop/network/york-sotl-journal/