

Innovations in Practice: Reloaded

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Welcome to *Innovations in Practice*, reloaded and waiting for your contributions! This refereed journal is focused on the enhancement of teaching and learning through *your* reflections. We hope you will find it engaging to read and helpful in your research and practice. The re-launch of *Innovations* acknowledges a number of things that have happened during its hiatus. First, the formal launch of the Teaching and Learning Academy at the 14th LJMU Teaching and Learning Conference last year, has acted as a further stimulus to the elevation of academic practice. Second, that engagement and interest in pedagogical research is on a sharp, upward trajectory - exemplified by a record turnout for the aforementioned Conference and continued staff engagement with the Academy's Research and Practice (RaP) seminar series. All this has been set against a renewed national policy focus and debate on teaching excellence and social mobility. (This issue was in preparation just as the UK Government's Higher Education Green Paper was being discussed and published just after the White Paper.) Re-launching is somewhat propitious.

In our desire to promote open access scholarly publishing, this incarnation of

Innovations sits on the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform and, not only does it offer a more dynamic environment, it is indexed in tools like Google Scholar enabling greater access and exposure to our articles. If you are on Twitter, feel free to share the articles using the hashtag #LJMUIiP. Technical developments aside, we think the other exciting dimension will be how it develops and establishes itself in terms of its contents and style. We would love to see new contributors, but acknowledge that this may take time; the development of the journal is therefore a 'process of becoming'.

Innovations has been recalibrated to ensure that there are opportunities for all to publish, and it must become what we as a scholarly community want it to be. It will evolve, and we have tried to be brave by trying out new things. In this issue you will notice four distinct sections: Viewpoints, Research in Practice, Sector Round-up and Book Reviews.

Viewpoints are short punchy articles written by practitioners with interesting and innovative perspectives or ideas, or even a germ of an idea, intended to stimulate further thinking. For instance, included in this issue is Hanneghan's paper, 'The lecture is broken', which was the most popular

presentation at the 2015 LJMU Teaching and Learning Conference. We very much hope that the next issue of *Innovations* will feature other popular papers delivered at the 2016 Conference (“Supporting transition: exploring pathways for success”). In this issue, we also include a piece by Bishop, who provides a fascinating overview of tertiary and higher education in Connecticut, USA, where LJMU students will spend some of their time, capitalising on a new strategic alliance we have with Southern Connecticut State University.

Research in Practice encompasses the ‘traditional’ journal paper (case studies, small and large-scale evaluations, literature reviews, completed projects or works in progress etc.). It is especially pleasing to note that papers by Smith (on self-directed learning) and Swain (on block teaching) set their evaluations against the backdrop of contemporary debates and discussions, such as the HE Green Paper (November 2015) or UCAS analysis, demonstrating the exponential growth in BTEC qualified students likely to enter HE in the near future. Stacey offers a short reflection, emerging from some interesting comments on the fear of collusion in a Higher Education Academy-funded project focusing on the UK Engagement Survey.

Sector Round-up will be published twice a year, incorporating developments from September to January and from February to August. It is aimed at summarising the key reports published by major, largely UK-based, sector organisations.

It is always worthwhile keeping abreast of developments in HE and pedagogy, which is why the Book Review section has been introduced. Included are pieces by McIlroy, Muir and Turner, who set their reviews against their subject or professional specialisms and interests (self-efficacy,

learning technologies and creativity in education, respectively); there are additional reviews by Hudson (on curriculum development in a global context) and Mistry (on myths in education). We hope that the Review section will also act as a catalyst to those who wish to get into the practice of critiquing the work of others and develop the confidence to write, or as Erasmus once said, “The desire to write grows with writing.”

The point related to confidence just raised is worth emphasising and explaining. In the spirit of LJMU’s ‘one university’ principle, *Innovations* is *our* journal; it is a celebration of the many ideas, thinking and pedagogical research being undertaken by colleagues. Whilst *Innovations* has undergone major cosmetic changes the spirit and culture that established it has endured. We pride ourselves on our developmental and supportive approach and, whilst publication cannot be guaranteed, we can assure that you will receive support and guidance.

We hope you really enjoy reading the journal and that it inspires you to engage with and contribute to it in future; we would encourage you to be bold and creative. We welcome submissions from teachers (new and experienced), researchers, professional services staff and students. This issue features staff from LJMU but, like the Teaching and Learning Conference, I’m hopeful we will receive submissions from our partner institutions and other sector colleagues. We will give careful reading to everything we receive and provide you with effective pointers. *Innovations* is open to diversity; we encourage you to offer any feedback to us, which is especially important in the early iterations of this ‘new’ journal.

***Innovations* has been reloaded, primed and ready to provide you with the opportunity to explore the inspiration**

**and hope that reflective practices offer to
make your teaching and learning
environments understandable,
adaptable, just and rewarding.**

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