

Editorial

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Issue 10 of the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education draws together contributions which reflect a range of current debates in learning development. All of the papers in this issue are concerned with understanding the student experience and ensuring that effective support is offered. The importance of 'learning spaces' is a recurrent theme, with papers exploring the significance of learning spaces to developing employability skills, supporting co-learning and engagement. The benefits and challenges of creating effective learning is also explored in relation to the use of educational videos and the topical issue of shifting emphasis from lecturer defined content.

Hayes et al's discussion of the impact of designing spaces for learning offers perceptions of academic learning environments and perceived impact on articulation of employability skills. In this mixed methods study the focus is on employability skills and how they can be facilitated by the organisation of social spaces for students to develop the social and professional skills which were of high value to students. Richard Reynolds' paper explores

the interesting concept of classroom psychogeography and is based on his work with Masters students at Central Saint Martins over a period of more than ten years. His paper raises questions about how learning spaces are never neutral and how consequently students' learning and levels of engagement are affected in different ways by the spaces that they learn in, both negatively and positively. Paul Rice and Robert Farmer present their research into the use of educational videos, focussing particularly on student perceptions of their value and the identification of key features of effective videos. While recognising the primary importance of content, their research highlights the need to provide added value through activities which engage students with that content. In addition they identify aspects of video production, such as length and style, which students prefer. Dr Emma Roberts from Leeds Trinity University offers a practice-based reflection on how developing higher education (HE) pedagogy towards reducing reliance on lecturer defined content shifts both students and lecturers out of their comfort zone with positive effects. In the current context of greater measurement of student satisfaction in HE, this can pose a challenge for individual academics as well as universities. However, Roberts argues that potentially disruptive and transformational learning experiences require additional support for staff and students if they are to be successful.

David Harwood considers the value of a university-based foundation programme, 'Extended Science', drawing upon a longitudinal study to share insights about curriculum design and student support. He also reports favourable results in terms of student retention, progression and graduation by comparison to other schemes. He emphasises the importance of embedding support for learning within such programmes and recommends utilising a 'Threshold Concepts' approach. Where foundation studies are undertaken in FE environments, he argues, transition-related challenges can be exacerbated whereas, when based within the University, a higher education learning culture may more readily be engendered and they may be more effective in widening participation in a field still marked by low levels of diversity. Jack and Hampshire's case study explores the value of story writing in understanding the learning needs of undergraduate nursing students during their first clinical placement. Based on a pilot study, the paper explores the value of using story writing, a tool which the authors believe enabled students to describe and construct their experiences through telling stories in their own words. Jack and Hampshire offer insights into the ways in which story writing might be a helpful way for nurse educators to understand the multiple factors which support or impede student placement learning. Sandra Abegglen, Tom Burns, Sandra Sinfield offer

an opinion piece which, as the title of so aptly conveys, discusses how productive co-learning can be fostered within semi-structured learning spaces. The paper describes the processes and outcomes of pairing first year education students undertaking a first assignment task with second year students studying a peer mentoring module. Students develop their own approach to the requirements of the assignment; and the study reports benefits to the overall well-being of the incoming students and substantive learning of academic literacy; as well as benefits of bi-lateral knowledge transfer and experiential learning for their peer mentors. These papers have much to say about how we can enhance the student experience in a range of contexts and we hope you find the issue useful and thought-provoking.