

Newsletter June-July 2018

In this Newsletter there is information with regard to the LHERI seminar Series, a Featured Project, an update on the LHERI Research awards and on the back page the Spotlight fellow for this month is Dr Rachel Spacey. Dr Rachel Spacey has kindly provided an overview of her Higher Education research interests. To see details of more of our fellows or to apply to register please visit <https://heri.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/fellows/>

IMPact / The University of Lincoln Journal of Higher Education Research



FIRST EDITION NOW ONLINE: IMPact.lincoln.ac.uk

IMPact is an academic, peer-reviewed, on-line, open-access journal, established as the University of Lincoln's learned journal on higher education research. The focus of the journal is higher education and the contexts within which it takes place. Contributions that seek to enhance understanding of any aspect of higher education are welcomed for submission now.

Deadline for inclusion in the next edition: 25th September 2018

Lincoln Higher Education Research Awards

Holders of funding from the 17/18 round of LHERA attended a networking event in March, projects are progressing well and a dissemination event is taking place on the 4th-8th June 2018 which is also when applications for grants for 2018-19 will be opened. Information about all eleven projects can be found here: <http://lincn.eu/LHERA>. There has been so much interest shown, that we are considering running this exhibition again.

Featured 2017-18 Project

We will feature a project in each of our newsletters, this month see details of Keivan Ahmadi and Marianne Keeler's project below.



Title: Inter-professional Education (IPE) and Professional Identity: Can students' reflective writings measure professional development?

Background:

In recent years, healthcare educators have increasingly embraced the use of reflective writing to assess interpersonal and professional development among healthcare students (Charon et al., 2016). Interprofessional education (IPE) is a key catalyst for professional development. Moreover, there is a significant association between professional development and reflective ability (Hoffman et al., 2016). Thus, the main aim of our research was to investigate if MPharm students' reflective essays following IPE activities could provide information on students' professional development?

Method:

IPE-related reflective essays had been graded for a different assessment. We chose the essays from all range of grades to ensure they were representative of each cohort. Manual qualitative analysis of an anonymised sample of 35 MPharm students' IPE-related reflective essays (7 year 1, 14 year 2, 14 year 3) was undertaken for evidence of:

1. Understanding of the purpose and professional application of the IPE activities
2. Reflecting on own practice
3. Setting targets to develop own professionalism
4. Critiquing mainly focussed on the activities, rather than their own practice

Each category carried one point. We referred to the 2017 Standards for Pharmacy Professionals, General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), as the reference criteria to extract themes from students' reflective essays. Themes were coded according to the nine GPhC Professional Standards. Each essay was then scored by the researchers from 0 –3 for each theme.

Results:

Year 1 and Year 2 scored equally (33%) for Theme 3 'communicate effectively', whilst Year 3 essays scored 80%. Thirty six percent of Year 3 essays referred to demonstrating 'leadership skills', compared to 21% of Year 2 and 0% of Year 1.

Conclusion:

Themes such as communication and teamwork featured across all three cohorts, suggesting IPE activities have inherent benefits from the outset. However, leadership did not appear in any Year 1 essays, but featured significantly by Year 3, which suggests some professional skills develop more gradually than others.



Student Engagement Partnership Project

Inclusive Student Engagement Project 2018/19 – Paula O'Brian

Following the success of the LHERI funded project in 2017/18, I made a further bid to The Student Engagement Partnership [TSEP]. The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP) champions and develops student engagement practice in the English higher education sector. I firmly believe that the LHERI Award has helped make this possible.

The Student Engagement Partnership are launching a project on inclusive student engagement practices, with a focus on embedding practices which support students of colour to feel involved in their academic community across English higher education. TSEP were particularly interested in my application as it built upon previous notions of 'A Sense of Belonging'.

To ensure that providers and students' unions are able to accurately assess and reflect on the experiences of their students of colour, TSEP will be publishing a suite of resources including a research framework which will provide a step by step guide to undertaking such research. This project will pilot the research framework over a 10 month period, enabling you to undertake research with and for your students of colour, with the aim of identifying areas of practice that can be improved or develop to be inclusive for and/or accessible to students of colour.

Details of the project can be found here http://tsep.org.uk/inclusive-student-engagement-project/?mc_cid=9468e7e783&mc_eid=77232cb8ed

How the project will be supported

To support participants to undertake this pilot project TSEP will provide:

- An introductory workshop session held in London on **either** Friday 22 or Friday 29 June
- A draft action research framework
- Guidance and support for each stage of the action research framework
- A Literature Review summarising current sector research on inclusive engagement practices and the experiences of students of colour in higher education
- Regular catch ups (via phone or Skype)
- Cohort meetings at regular intervals throughout the project

The project will run for 10 months from June 2018, and participants will have the option to continue on to a second year project at the completion of the first phase.

Dr Paula O'Brien will take a lead research role for this project and will be working closely with colleagues [Dr Debbie Lock, Dr Patrick Hylton, Dr Paul Goddard] and the Lincoln Student Union

The Higher Education Research Institute's Research Seminar Series

The 2017-18 seminar series completed with Dan Bishop's work on student voice 18th April 2018. The slides and video from this can be viewed online here: <http://lincn.eu/ilaunch>

We are currently planning our 2018-19 seminar series/ If you would like to facilitate a seminar, please get in touch.

Higher Education Research Institute Project Updates

Access Agreement Evaluation Project – internally funded

The AAEP is the internally funded evaluation of the University of Lincoln's (UoL) Access Agreements (AAs) (from 2019/20 these are 'Access and Participation Plans'). Any Higher Education (HE) provider which wants to charge higher tuition fees (fees above the basic level) for home/EU undergraduates must have an AA which sets out how they will "*improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education*" (OFS, 2018).

The current project focus: '*Understanding the impact of financial support (bursaries/scholarships)*' makes use of the Office for Students (previously Office for Fair Access (OFFA)) toolkit. Focus groups with students to better understand the role of bursaries and scholarships in relation to access, support and success will be completed by the end of May. The next AAEP Board meeting takes place in May where Rachel and Jen will share some of the early findings from the focus groups.

For more information with regard to this, please see our [Spotlight](#) Article as Rachel Spacey has featured this month.

Learning Gain Project – Funded by the Higher Education Research Institute (HEFCE)

Our main focus of activity at present is preparing for the final administration of the Learning Gain exercises to the new intake in Welcome Week and the delivery of the Get Set Survey to all students at enrolment. Analysis of the data collected over the last two and a half years continues and, in addition, we are preparing a paper on Student Engagement which will be published in IMPact and submitted as an annex to our end-of-project report for HEFCE, which is due in October.

Intervention for Success Project – Funded by the Office for Students (formerly HEFCE)

Library staff are kindly assisting Ben Walker (project lead) in creating the Lincoln specific versions of the Sway resources with a view to these being launched ready for September 2018. The task of integrating the partner universities' resources here at Lincoln has been underway for some time. After Ben invited his equivalents at the project partners (Coventry and Huddersfield) to demonstrate and explain their resources to key Lincoln staff, he is tackling the challenge of embedding them here.

A focus group with the project's employed Student Assistants has taken place which focussed on personal tutoring support and the influence of the resources created by himself and Alison Raby (formerly Wilkinson) for the project.

The final session of the staff development programme, 'Tutoring the Tutors' is due to take place on the 6th of June. Much has been learned from running this pilot programme and Ben and Alison will shortly be collating all feedback and recommendations to inform the future version of the programme in 2018-19. Details can be found here: <http://lincn.eu/ttt>

Ben & Alison's funded research into effective personal tutoring at Lincoln (LHERI award) is progressing well with all interviews now nearly complete. The analysis of the stage 2 interviews, in which the influence of the resources they have produced are assessed, is about to get underway. The project will form part of the LHERA dissemination event from the 4th to the 6th of June.

Ben will be presenting at upcoming conferences in 2018, with the next being the European First Year Experience (EFYE) conference in June. This will be a joint presentation with Linda Speight, also from LHERI on the IFS and Learning Gain projects and the connections between them.

Lastly, Ben's article, *A Defining Moment for Personal Tutoring*, which informs the project and vice-versa, has now been being published in the first edition of *IMPact*, LHERI's journal next week and can be found here <http://lincn.eu/IMPact9>

Explaining the Gaps – Funded by NCOP LiNCHigher

Explaining the Gaps – Funded by the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) LiNCHigher

The Explaining the Gaps Project is producing a databank, which will enable practitioners to map outreach resources and activities to target stakeholder groups and geographical locations across Lincolnshire. The project, which is led by Lucy Mallinson (LHERI), began with a large scale survey of young people from across the county. Circa 3,000 pupils in Years 9 to 13 attending 22 target schools participated in the survey. The data collected from NCOP learners provides an insight into their attitudes and aspirations and how they make decisions about higher education (HE) and applying to university. The project aims to utilise this data to provide contextual information to develop a fuller understanding of the wider factors influencing participation in HE. This will enable LiNCHigher to deliver targeted and focused outreach activities aimed at

achieving the NCOP goal of doubling the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education by 2020.

Research Higher Project

In Spring 2018 LHERI carried out a pilot project inviting eight pupils from Lincoln College to engage with workshops around research skills. The pupils were then supported to complete research projects in their communities, the results of these were displayed at a celebration event in March.

Funding has been secured to allow us to carry out this project on a much larger scale with pupils from schools and colleges across Lincolnshire from September 2018.

Ali Brumhead presented findings from the pilot at the FACE conference at Worcester University 4th July and a paper will be published in IMPact soon.

Recent LHERI Publications

Karran, T. & Mallinson, L. (2018) Academic Freedom and World-Class Universities: A Virtuous Circle? *Higher Education Policy*.

Lucy Mallinson – Research Assistant in LHERI – explained that the study used empirical data from over 1500 respondents to a survey on academic freedom, and the Times Higher’s World University Rankings to compare the relationship between professed levels of de facto protection for academic freedom by teaching and research staff in individual UK universities and their institution’s university ranking. The study revealed that normative protection for academic freedom is strongest in Russell Group universities and weakest in post-1992 institutions.

Speight L, Haddelsey S. & Crawford K. (2018) Towards measures of longitudinal learning gain in UK higher education: the challenge of meaningful engagement. In print in [Higher Education Pedagogies](#) (DOI 10.1080/23752696.2018.1476827)

Linda Speight, Stephen Haddelsey and Karin Crawford – The learning gain project has been exploring possible ways to measure the distance travelled by students in terms of their skills and competencies development over their time at Lincoln. Although we have demonstrated that the self-assessment and situational judgement test are potentially suitable for this purpose, one of the biggest challenges throughout the project has been ensuring students are meaningfully engaged in the process. By that we mean that students work through the tests in an active and meaningful way and are proactive in their efforts to take part in the additional opportunities offered such as attending careers and employability sessions or seeking feedback from personal tutors. This new paper from the learning gain team discusses our experiences of encouraging meaningful engagement and argues that until this challenge is addressed the validity of learning gain data from bespoke tests is potentially questionable, and the value of participation to students as individuals is limited.

Spotlight on a fellow of the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute



Dr. Rachel Spacey

Research Fellow, LHERI

Rachel has been working as researcher for more than 15 years in lifelong learning on adult education, family learning, community learning, and further and higher education projects. Her interests have been shaped by her early career in public libraries and as a researcher at a national adult education charity.

She is based in LHERI where she works on the Access Agreement Evaluation Project and whilst at the University of Lincoln her research has focused on the student experience; Postgraduate Experience Project 2014/15 (based in the School of Education) and Understanding the Student Experience 2016/17 (based in the Vice Chancellor's Office).

Rachel is currently leading two research projects:

The Access Agreement Evaluation Project (AAEP)

Updates to this project are provided in each LHERI newsletter but to summarise, any Higher Education (HE) provider which wants to charge higher tuition fees (fees above the basic level) for home/EU undergraduates must have an Access and Participation Plan (previously called Access Agreements) approved by the Office for Students. They set out how a provider will *"improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education"* (OFS, 2018). The AAEP was set up in order to evaluate the University's Access Agreements. The initial focus has been evaluating the impact of financial support (bursaries/scholarships) on access, support and success using a data analysis tool; a survey and interview questions. Next steps include evaluating the Access Covenant first detailed in the Access Agreement for 2017/18 - the University will invest £195,000 per year supporting students *"from disadvantaged backgrounds, disabled, part time and mature students"* and *"from rural, coastal and dispersed communities in South Lincolnshire"* (UoL, 2016).

Recording and recognising the experiences of estranged students in higher education: a participatory research project using photo-elicitation (RREESHE)

While there is a plethora of research studies in HE focusing on the experiences of different groups of students there is little research exploring the experiences of students who are estranged from their families. Estranged students have *"No communicative relationship with either of their living biological parents and often their wider family networks as well"* (OFFA, 2017). The situation of estranged university is highlighted by the charity Stand Alone who underlined the lack of qualitative research which has been undertaken with estranged students to understand their experiences of HE. They suggest that one of the biggest barriers estranged students face is a lack of understanding around family estrangement such that it is regarded as taboo.

Rachel received a LHERI Award 2017/18 to fund the RREESHE project which records and recognises the experiences of estranged students at the University of Lincoln. A small group of estranged students were recruited and asked to take photos during a university vacation. The participants then shared their images with Rachel in focus groups to explore issues of estrangement and the university

experience. The data is currently being analysed and Rachel hopes to share the findings to raise awareness of the existence and issues facing estranged students at university.

If you are interested in finding out more about either of these projects or would like to discuss research on the student experience please contact Rachel: rspacey@lincoln.ac.uk

Apply to register as a Fellow

This provides an opportunity to be a part of a growing network of Higher Education researchers and to join our mailing list and to promote your work on our website. All staff and postgraduate students are invited to join our network of Fellows and Associate Fellows, for more information on our current Fellows and to apply, please visit <https://heri.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/fellows/>

**The next edition of this newsletter will be issued late July/early August.
If you have anything that you would like us to include please contact us.**