

Newsletter September-October 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 Paula OBrien. 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



Call for papers for the second edition by 25th September 2018

The first edition and two new papers can be viewed online at

<http://impact.lincoln.ac.uk>

[Student As Digital Producer: Learning New\(Old\) Skills Through An Agency-Led Project](#) –

Dr Hanya Pielichaty

[‘Partnership’ versus ‘collaboration’: A student perspective](#) - Madeleine Pownall

To contribute to the second edition, please visit the site to read the author guidelines and submit papers by 25th September.

Call for papers for student edition by 30th November 2018

We are welcoming papers from students exploring any aspect of higher education for a special edition of the journal. This is a fantastic opportunity for those who have not previously published to experience a robust but supportive blind peer review process. Please promote this as widely as you can.

Lincoln Higher Education Research Awards Call for bids for 18/19 NOW OPEN!

Holders of funding from the 17/18 round of LHERA attended a networking event in March, the projects had a very successful conclusion and a dissemination event took place on the 4th-8th June 2018. Applications for grants for 2018-19 ARE OPEN. 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, please see details of Mark Hocknull's project below:

The Use of Virtual Reality in Teaching Moral Philosophy



Introduction:

This project uses the classic philosophical thought experiment known almost universally as the Trolley Problem to test the hypothesis that virtual reality offers a potential learning gain in the teaching of Moral Philosophy. The project presents participants with a moral dilemma which must be solved in real time and seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Can VR be used in the classroom to simulate moral dilemmas?
2. Do students respond differently to the same dilemma when it presented as a VR game compared to a described thought experiment?
3. Does the use of VR help students to embed moral decision making in their everyday practice?

The classic trolley problem sets up a dilemma between acting to save 5 people at the cost of one life. In the first iteration of the dilemma participants can switch a runaway trolley to an alternative track, which results in the death of one person, but the lives of 5 people saved. In the second iteration, the participant is standing on a bridge and can stop the trolley and save five people, but only by pushing a virtual person off the bridge. We extended the dilemma to give participants a choice between saving penguins or human beings. There is a short video of our VR scenario here: <https://youtu.be/K3cnfiUrFKA>

Results

Table 1 shows a comparison between our results in VR and self-report studies, where participants report what they believe they would do, or what they think is the right solution to the dilemma.

	Switch Track		Bridge	
	Save 5	Save 1	Save 5	Save 1
VR Study	87	13	33	67
Self-Report	85	15	15	85

Table 1 Comparison of self-reports and VR actual reactions in the Classic Trolley Problem

Table 2 Shows the Preferences in the two scenarios of participants making the choice to save people or penguins.

	Switch Track		Bridge	
	Save Penguin	Save People	Save Penguin	Save People
VR Study	20	80	20	80

Table 2 Human/ non-human moral preference.

Table 3 shows the gender preference of participants. There is a significant bias towards saving female rather than male virtual persons.

	Switch Track		Bridge	
	Save Female	Save Male	Save Female	Save Male
VR Study	77	23	60	40

The results are encouraging in that they do suggest that there is significant potential learning gain in the use of the technology. They give affirmative answers to questions 1 and 2. VR is a viable classroom tool in the simulation of moral dilemmas and there is evidence that students behave differently in the virtual world to the way they report and think they would behave if confronted with the same dilemma in a traditional seminar introducing the dilemma as a thought experiment. This difference however is consistent with the participant's moral personality which is conserved in the virtual world and is pedagogically significant. We have not begun to address question 3. This will require significant follow-up of participants and a more longitudinal study than we have been able to conduct in one year.

We intend now to use our current system in real teaching of moral philosophy in the Philosophy BA programme in 2018-19. We are also putting together a much larger research project examining the idea of moral personality and how this may be affected in the virtual world.

References

Bronack, S., Sanders, R., Cheney, A., Reidl, R., Tashner, J. & Matzan, N. (2008). Presence pedagogy: teaching and learning in 3-D immersive environments. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 20, 59–69.

Dalgarno, B. & Lee, M. (2010). What are the learning affordances of 3-D virtual environments? *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 41, 10–32.

Slater, M., Antley, A., Davison, A., Swapp, D., Guger, C., Barker, C., Pistrang, N., Sanchez-Vives, M.V., 2006 A virtual Reprise of the Stanley Milgram Obedience Experiments PLoS ONE
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjet.12135/full>

The Higher Education Research Institute's Research Seminar Series

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

Access & Participation Plan Evaluation Project (formerly the Access Agreement Evaluation Project) – internally funded.

The APPEP is the internally funded evaluation of the University of Lincoln's Access Agreements/Access and Participation Plans (from 2019/20). Any Higher Education provider which wants to charge higher tuition fees (fees above the basic level) for home/EU undergraduates must have an AA/APP 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 focus of 2018/19: 'Understanding the impact of financial support (bursaries/scholarships)' made use of the Office for Students (previously Office for Fair Access (OFFA)) toolkit was completed in July 2018 and the findings were shared with the APPEP Board. The focus for the team in 2018/19 is evaluation of the Access Covenant; a series of initiatives to support applicants and students from disadvantaged backgrounds including students from rural, coastal and dispersed communities and disabled, part time and mature students.

Learning Gain Project – Funded by the Office for Students (formerly HEFCE)

The University of Lincoln's Learning Gain Project (funded by the Office for Students) expects to deliver its final report towards the end of October. All exercises have been completed by the first cohort of students (2015 intake) and the second cohort (2016 intake) will be asked to complete a final administration as they embark on the third and final year of studies. Also included in the project's final report will be the results of the next administration of the Get Set Survey which is open to all students (returning and new) until 31st October. The project team's main focus is to complete the end of project reporting for OfS and the related analysis of results covering the project's three year term. Our report on Student Engagement is now complete, and will be published in the next issue of IMPact as well as being included as an annex to our final report.

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

The Lincoln specific versions of the Sway resources have been created and communicated to all personal tutors ready for use in September 2018 by Ben Walker (project lead). 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 for the project.

The final session of the staff development programme, 'Tutoring the Tutors' took place on the 6th of June. Much has been learned from running this pilot programme. Ben has collated all feedback and recommendations and discussed the form the programme will take in 2018-19 with the LALT team. Details can be found here: <http://lincn.eu/ttt>

Ben and 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 underway. Ben plans to submit an article on the research to the journal, *Active Learning in Higher Education* in the coming months.

Lastly, Ben has co-authored a book along with colleagues from the universities of Derby and Bolton which informs the project and vice-versa. Entitled *Effective Personal Tutoring in Higher Education*, it is due to be published on 7 October and includes a foreword by Professor Liz Thomas. More details can be found here: <https://www.criticalpublishing.com/effective-personal-tutoring-in-higher-education>

Explaining the Gaps – Funded by NCOP LiNCHigher

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

The Explaining the Gaps project, which is led by Lucy Mallinson (LHERI), is collecting data from NCOP learners to provide an insight into their attitudes towards higher education (HE). The project aims to understand how students make decisions about HE and what influences their decision on whether to apply to university. This data will be used to develop a fuller understanding of the wider factors influencing participation in HE.

The main focus of the project at present is aggregating the student feedback from outreach activities with data from the baseline survey. The analysis of this data will form the basis of an end of academic year report for 2017/2018.

The next stage of data collection is the implementation of a large scale follow-up survey which will be completed by pupils in years 9 to 13 across the county in September and October. The Explaining the Gaps project has been extended to July 2019 to enable the incorporation of data from an additional academic year.

Research Higher Project - Funded by NCOP LiNCHigher

This project, which invites pupils studying Further Education onto campus to engage with workshops on research skills, will commence in September following the appointment of Ali Brumhead as Project Officer.

Spotlight on a fellow of the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute



Dr Paula O'Brien

Research Fellow, LHERI

Paula has been working for the University of Lincoln for more than 21 years as an academic member of staff. Her interests have been shaped by the impact of internationalisation on the higher education sector and the individual 'identity work' which students undertake. Her role as a Student Engagement Champion has been

enriched by her research on a Sense of Belonging and the development of an annual Student Conference for new students during Welcome Week.

She is based in the Lincoln International Business School, Department of People and Organisations where she works as a Principal Lecturer in Teaching. Leading on an inclusive student engagement project for TSEP (The Student Engagement Partnership) www.tsep.org.uk

Paula is currently leading on two research projects:

TSEP Inclusive Student Engagement

The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP) recently launched 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. The Student Engagement Partnership is a collaboration between the National Union of Students and the Higher Education sector. TSEP are funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Guild HE and the Association of Colleges (AoC) with additional funding provided by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for specific projects around quality assurance and enhancement.

The University of Lincoln were successful in their research bid to accurately assess and reflect on the experiences of their students of colour using a ‘critical race theory’ approach and the exploration of a Sense of Belonging across academic, enhancement and social engagement (as supported by Prof Liz Thomas, What Works). The research pilot will take place over a 10 month period, 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. The project adopts a partnership approach with the School of Psychology and the Lincoln Students’ Union.

Storying: A Sense of Belonging

Paula received a LHERI Award 2017/18 to fund the Storying of a Sense of Belonging project in partnership with Dr Patrick Hylton (School of Psychology)

The project employed four students in the role of co-researchers to analyse data and identify codes and themes from the data. Understanding the storying of a sense of belonging from a student perspective makes a valuable contribution to existing literature within the sector.

“Within the sector, a student’s sense of belonging has largely been explored using survey data (What Works 2012, 2017). In contrast, a story completion approach has been specifically developed for the purpose of exploring a student’s sense of belonging from a qualitative perspective and lends itself to a deeper understanding of the student experience. Participants in this project were required to generate individual responses by completing a story completion task. Each participant was emailed a story-completion task to complete within a specified time.

If you are interested in finding out more about either of these projects or would like to discuss research on inclusive student engagement or a sense of belonging please contact Paula: pobrien@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 November/ early December.
If you have anything that you would like us to include please contact us.**