

## Editorial

This is the fourth issue of the Worcester Journal of Learning and Teaching and I am delighted to note the publication of eleven contributions from colleagues at the University. These contributions include two academic papers, and also a number of project reports, personal perspectives and extended abstracts from the recent Learning and Teaching Conference hosted at the University. It is heartening to see a new crop of contributors to this issue. The challenge now, for the Editorial Board, is to encourage and support the authors of project reports, personal perspectives and extended abstracts to enable the dissemination of their research as academic papers in this or other pedagogic publications.

The academic paper by Seán Bracken reflects on how researchers ground their investigations, with a particular attention to ontological and epistemological issues. Although also reflective in nature, the paper by Oestreicher, Kuzma & Yen addresses the more tangible application of avatar technology for higher education academic studies

The report by Andrew Rothery disseminates the view of the current state of repository development that emerged from a symposium hosted recently at the University of Worcester. The contribution of Symonds and Kennedy reports on a collaborative project between the University of Worcester and the University of Gloucestershire that investigated their provision of informal learning environments – some of us will remember Sarah Kennedy from when she worked in ILS. The final report by Sanders and Hunt reflects on efforts in Worcester Business School to tackle the strategically important issue of non-submissions.

The personal perspective of Phil Collins reviews the Starting Out Scheme that has introduced in the Institute of Education to support and improve retention in Initial Teacher Education in shortage secondary subjects, whereas the contribution of Allen and Hunt reports on an the successful implementation of digitising book chapters and journal articles in Worcester Business School and the Institute of Health and Society.

Four extended abstracts are included from a successful Learning and Teaching Conference that was recently hosted by the University of Worcester. The abstract written by Alison Reeves summarises research aimed at establishing if there were differences in the expectations and achievements of “A” level students and students with vocational (alternative) qualifications after one year at the University studying Drama and Performance Studies. The contribution of Lillyman and Bennett explains their implementation of a story boarding approach to developing critical thinking based on students’ lived experiences. The presentation of Mandy Andrews reviewed the development of a mentoring programme for a group of Early Childhood students. Finally, Colvin, Hicks and Quigley report on their participation in the University’s assignment feedback pilot.

Once again I would like to thank other members of the Editorial Board for reviewing potential academic articles and for the subsequent support that they offered the authors of these articles

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