

# Editorial

## Volume 1 - April 2018

Welcome to the first edition of IMPact: the University of Lincoln Higher Education Research Journal. It is very exciting to publish this first edition after approximately one year of planning and lots of discussions and hard work! This edition includes seven journal articles from a range of disciplines and departments within the University of Lincoln, and a special reflective piece presenting a critical analysis of the shifting issues within pedagogical research by the four College Directors of Education. The original idea for the journal emerged from discussions with colleagues who have achieved Senior or Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. Through their forum, academics interested in furthering evidence-based practice in higher education developed their ideas and the beginnings of this journal evolved. Whilst the journal is hosted by the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute, this first edition is the result of many months of work from a small group of colleagues from across the University of Lincoln, representing collegiality, shared contributions, partnership and a shared ethos of engagement with debates in higher education.

IMPact is an academic, peer-reviewed, on-line, open-access journal. Its focus is to enhance understanding and open debates into all aspects of higher education and the contexts within which it takes place. As is evident from the rich range of papers published in this edition, IMPact invites researchers and educators, from both within the University of Lincoln and beyond, to publish their work in the form of research papers; reflective, critical, think pieces; or other digital media formats. The vision of the journal is to represent many perspectives, promote a research environment, share good practice and encourage wide participation and collaboration. Thus, the scope for the journal is very much multi-disciplinary, valuing insights on higher education from academics, students and practitioners in different disciplinary areas. Furthermore, the journal is open to studies from a variety of methods, with contributions in this edition including a mixture of empirical, theoretical, conceptual and practice-based papers.

The editorial board consists of staff from the University of Lincoln who have achieved Senior or Principal Fellowships of the Higher Education Academy.

Members seek to guide the direction of the journal, ensuring it develops alongside the emergent themes within higher education and enables an opportunity for 'voices' to be heard through challenging perspectives, research and practice dissemination. Overall, it is our intention that IMPact will inform, challenge and influence its readers. We are aware of the many alternative higher education journals, which arguably address similar issues. However, IMPact seeks to add to these contributions through its wide appeal, with the potential to hear 'voices' and a sharing of values and practice from all involved in higher education, at all levels. There is a scholarly community which needs to be documented in its many, varied forms. IMPact enables academics, practitioners and students to all 'have a say' in this dynamic and challenging context of higher education.

Many readers will be familiar with the classic texts by Ronald Barnett. In particular, perhaps, his concept of the university in an age of supercomplexity in which he argues that we live in a world of 'infinite interpretability' with 'multiple frames of understanding, of action and of self-identity' (Barnett, 2000, p.6). Although written almost 20 years ago, Barnett arguably laid the foundation for research into higher education becoming a field of research in its own right (Bengtson, 2018). The 'idea of higher education', conceptually, theoretically and ideologically has been also been discussed more recently by Troschitz (2017) who refers to the theorisation of higher education as being complex, 'a system of differences' (2017: 19), which represent different discourses, identities and functions. The relationship between teaching and research, and the framing of this within higher education, is one of the many issues that have been debated alongside the shifting concept of the student, widening participation, ever-changing policy discourses and student choices within higher education.

This journal aims to reinforce the importance of higher education research in an ever evolving context. This first edition includes contributions that extend and disseminate differential knowledge on higher education, shown with the opening paper, an invited contribution from Clements, Lingwood, Lock and Smith, Directors of Education, serving to open that debate in this first edition. The invited paper focuses on the challenges facing research into teaching and learning, and responds to the challenge of meeting such diverse developments. While this journal, and the Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute, are interested in debates and discourses on research into Higher Education, learning and teaching are crucially a core part of this

remit. This first edition frames some of the issues pertinent to higher education from a number of different perspectives. It includes contributions from authors working in different academic disciplines and within professional service areas, discussing concepts and research both in specific areas of higher education practice and work that impacts more widely across all aspects of the university. Two very different reflective papers are included in this edition, Walker discusses personal tutoring and Bishop focuses on student engagement both authors identifying their respective subjects as examples of the complexity and changing interpretations in higher education that Barnett (2000) refers to. This is also a factor in Sanderson's paper reporting on research with programme leaders and the wider issues of providing appropriate development and support within this complex context. Pickerell's paper offers an account of a research project at its early stages, but one that aims to understand how students are interpreting particular aspects of their experience and how this impacts on their motivation to access support services. Also drawing on multiple perspectives, Brookfield's paper on research in progress demonstrates how higher education research can impact on the development of policy, procedure and practice across all areas of a university. In contrast, both Campbell's and Lingwood's papers examine aspects of practical teaching enhancement practices within specific disciplinary contexts. These authors evidence the value of robust enquiry and evidence-based approaches to the enrichment of practice in higher education. Brumhead and Vickers' paper considers key issues for widening participation (WP) emerging from a lack of meaningful understanding about the public's attitude towards higher education

This editorial outlines the purpose and vision of IMPact, framed as the first step on a learning journey. A journey which focuses on disseminating higher education research and new theoretical perspectives or research agendas for higher education. Such contributions within IMPact emphasise the value of different 'voices' from multi-disciplinary fields. The scope for different perspectives further addresses the wider values that underpin higher education. It is our overall intention that IMPact will inform, challenge and influence and, as such, will be of interest to a broad readership within and beyond the University of Lincoln.

Future editions of IMPact will seek to continue the discussion of important emerging aspects within higher education, including the rise and impact of digital education, student experiences and student engagement, as well as addressing emerging

policy developments. We are keen to produce occasional special issues to address contemporary questions in higher education, such as those relevant to disciplines or specific areas of research, teaching or learning.

It has been encouraging to see papers in this edition furthering discussions on a broad range of disciplines and areas of higher education. Such wide-ranging contributions are key to meeting the scholarly aims of IMPact. Its focus and scope is to expand knowledge and debate on the different values and approaches to higher education, and explore how we make sense of these and their impact in the wider context of higher education.

Calls for papers will be on going. Please do not hesitate to contact Ali Brumhead, Managing Editor, [abrumhead@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:abrumhead@lincoln.ac.uk) or email [IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk) if you have an idea for a contribution.

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**Katie Strudwick**

Editor

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**Karin Crawford**

Outgoing Editor

### **Bibliography**

Barnett, R. (2000) *Realizing the University in an Age of Supercomplexity*  
Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bengsten, S. S. E. (2018) 'Supercomplexity and the university: Ronald Barnett and the social philosophy of Higher Education', In: *Higher Education Quarterly*, Wiley, 72, pp65-74.

Troschitz, R ( 2017) *Higher Education and the Student: From welfare state to neoliberalism* Oxon: Routledge.

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### **How To Become Involved With Impact**

IMPact encourages submissions from colleagues and postgraduate students from all schools and colleges at the University of Lincoln\*.The focus of the journal is all

aspects of higher education and the contexts within which it takes place. Contributions that seek to enhance understanding of any aspect of higher education are welcomed. These may include learning and teaching; student experience; student outcomes; local, national and international policy; the values which underpin higher education, including social justice and equality; and the contribution of higher education to society and the economy.

Please see the full journal aims and objectives here: <http://lincn.eu/impact>

\*Collaborations with external partners will also be accepted where they are led by colleagues or postgraduate students at the University of Lincoln

We will consider a wide range of paper types and encourage the submission of multimedia formats to accommodate all disciplines. Some examples of paper types and their format specifications include:

**Journal Article/Case Study** (Abstract: 250-500 words. Word Limit: 3000-5000 words).

A piece of primary literature reporting original research based on a detailed study. To include (but not limited to) a detailed introduction, background investigation, research questions, research design, results, interpretation of findings, and conclusions.

**Review Article/Literature Review** (Abstract: 250-500 words. Word Limit: 3000-5000 words).

A comprehensive overview of present literature in a specific area of higher education research. Research questions, analysis of the literature and investigation of any issues or benefits of the work. Review articles may include a number of sub-type papers, including literature or systematic reviews, meta-analyses, etc.

**Reflective, Critical Think Pieces Such As:**

**a. Book/Film/Theatre/Exhibition/Conference Review** (Abstract: 100-250 words. Word Limit: 1000-2500 words)

Critical personal evaluation of a contemporary or recently released book, film, theatre performance, exhibition or conference, from which a critical analysis may benefit higher education.

**b. Technology Review** ( Abstract: 100-250 words. Word Limit: 1000-2500 words)

Unbiased, critical evaluation of a contemporary technology, application, or product that has relevance to higher education.

**c. Perspective Piece** ( Abstract: 100-250 words; Word Limit: 1000-2500 words)

Review of an established concept or theory in the field of higher education, may investigate one singular idea or a few related concepts. Shorter than a review article and providing a personal opinion and analysis.

**d. Short-form Research Summary** (Abstract: 250-500 words. Word Limit: 2000-4000 words)

Condensed report of a larger, complex research project into a publically readable, concise summary of the author's research written in layman's term.

**e. Account of Research in Progress** (Abstract: 250-500 words. Word Limit: 2000-4000 words)

Overview and initial findings of a research project in advance of its completion.

**f. Comment Paper** ( Abstract: 100-250 words. Word Limit: 1000-2000 words)

Article responding to an element of a previous publication. May explore and challenge any potential issues or contradictions within a study or explore and highlight the ways in which a publication may be utilised.

**g. Multimedia/Visual Materials**

Note: March 2018 – As this journal is in its initial stages, if you wish to submit multimedia or visual materials please email [IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk) to discuss prior to submission.

If you wish to submit a piece which does not fall within these parameters, please email [IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk) to discuss further.

### **Editorial Board**

Details of the board are available at <http://lincn.eu/IEB>

The editorial board meets regularly and members are also part of the reviewers' panel for IMPact.

### **Members**

Katie Strudwick, School of Social and Political Sciences – Editor

Alison Brumhead, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute – Managing Editor

Andrew Beeken, Library

Anita Backhouse, School of Education

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Rachel Spacey, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute  
Rob Dean, School of Fine and Performing Arts  
Lisa Gaughan, School of Fine & Performing Arts  
Tracey White, Lincoln International Business School

**Reviewers** who have contributed to our first edition are:

Rob Vickers, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute  
Ben Walker, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute  
Rachel Spacey, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute  
Matt Hawthorn, School of Design  
Beatrix Fahnert, School of Life Sciences  
Tracey White, Lincoln International Business School  
Rob Dean, School of Fine and Performing Arts  
Kelly Sisson, School of Health and Social Care  
Mike Neary, School of Social and Political Sciences  
Mo Ray, School of Health and Social Care  
Matthew Hall, Lincoln Law School  
Linda Speight, Lincoln Higher Education Research Institute

If you would like to join our database of reviewers, please email

[IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:IMPact@lincoln.ac.uk)

**Editorial Copy Checking** courtesy of the School of English and Journalism

Deborah Wilson-David – Coordinator  
Andrew Kerr  
Anna Hoyles  
Catherine Parry  
Andy Rowcroft  
Jessica Day  
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## **THANKS**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the editorial board for their comments, opinions and continual enthusiasm which has played an integral role in developing

and progressing IMPact. Without their commitment, time and interest we would not have been able to begin this learning journey together. Many thanks to John Stocker (School of Design) for all the help and support with the design work, Jordan Watson (Doctoral School) for his advice and support, Jason Maddison (Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching) for producing the first edition launch brochure and Deborah Wilson-David (School of English and Journalism) for co-ordinating the editorial copy checking.