

## Editorial

**Dr Kate Strudwick<sup>1</sup> and Clare Cotton<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Dean of Teaching and Learning

<sup>2</sup>Student Engagement Project Manager

Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching, University of Lincoln

### **Student as Producer RAISE Conference Edition**

Following the RAISE 2022 Conference, the University of Lincoln is working in conjunction with RAISE for this special edition of our online journal IMPact. This edition digitally presents for some of the submissions collated from the conference, all of which profile the pedagogical impact and global influence of Student as Producer. This is a signposting of where and how the Student as Producer model has been applied in practice from across the Higher Education sector, illustrating its transformative potential.

Student as Producer has been institutionally embedded at the University for over a decade and continues to innovate and support best practice from across the sector. As a teaching model it lays the foundations for routes to facilitate extra curricula opportunities for students to engage in learning with staff. With core principles of partnerships and co-creation into learning experiences, this model has empowered both students and staff through their collaborative opportunities and projects. Student as Producer remains to be focused on “...*the wider student experience, the broader educational community, the extra-curricular, and the sense of belonging to a community*” (Strudwick and Prichard 2022)

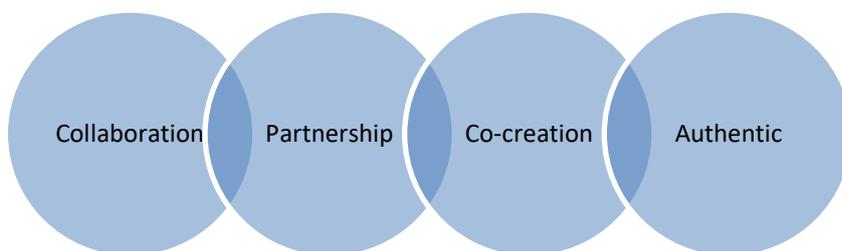
This model has reasserted the valued role of students, enabling contributions which have “...*embraced student engagement with teaching, learning and research*” (Strudwick 2017: 74). Projects have been developed across all disciplines, in and outside of the curriculum, with practices “...*whereby students learn primarily by engagement in real research projects... Engagement is created through active collaboration amongst and between students and academics*” (Neary et al 2014: 9).

Student as Producer views students as active learners rather than passive recipients in their learning, supporting them to have greater ownership over their own learning journeys. Student as Producer is more than a vehicle to develop student engagement, it is indeed part of student engagement, but not in the conventional way, as it has a broader and wider impact that has allowed for “... *an exploration of the reshaping of core elements of engagement and participation*” (Strudwick 2017: 82).

## Student as Producer 2.0

As an objective from the University of Lincoln Strategic Plan 2022-27, a revised Student Engagement/ SAP 2.0 strategy has been launched. This revisited model, builds upon the foundations of the original '*Student as producer: research-engaged teaching, an institutional strategy*' (2010 to 2013), which was embedded institutionally as a multi-disciplinary teaching and learning model, with its focus to redress the '*imbalance between teaching and research*' (Neary and Winn, 2009: 193). Student as Producer 2.0 is the current institutional commitment to further embed partnerships into learning, whereby students and staff are supported institutionally through a range of collaborative opportunities.

The new model (2023- 2027) will further develop opportunities for student engagement and participation, within and outside the curriculum, and enable students to hold a valued role in the community at UoL. Such collaborative and co-created opportunities will be facilitated through flexible active engagement, framed within a collectiveness of practice to build a sense of belonging.



The core values of SaP 2.0 are:

- a) To facilitate and support collaboration and partnership in all aspects of the student experience.
- b) Provide accessible opportunities for engagement within and outside of the curriculum.
- c) To empower students in their learning journey.
- d) Enable students to be active learners through participation.
- e) Create a shared responsibility and decision making between staff and students.
- f) Develop a shared learning experience – which is part of a reciprocal continuum of learning.

- g) To institutionally embed the co-production of knowledge.
- h) To build a greater sense of belonging.

The model is framed around four core themes:

- Teaching/Curriculum;
- Research;
- Decision making;
- Extra curricula.

Each of these themes supplement and overlap at different stages in the learning experience, to facilitate a path for co-creation between students and staff. As part of this model, students play a valued role in the wider learning community at UoL, one which impacts upon being active participators and engaged learners.

### **IMPact journal**

Since its launch in 2018, IMPact has supported Student as Producer ethos and facilitated and enabled students *to be "...an integral part of the academic project of their institutions"* (Neary and Saunders 2016: 2). Students as Authors, shown through the student editions of IMPact (Volume 2 (2019), Volume 5 (1) and (2) 2022, Volume 6 (1) 2023) were framed around Student as Producer principles, providing opportunities for participation with research, and the benefits of self-authorship (Walkington 2015; Zepke 2015; Strudwick 2021).

IMPact has facilitated a route for students to be a central part of co-creation in their learning through publications. The reflective submissions presented in IMPact on the Festival of Learning and the institutional Undergraduate Research Opportunity Scheme (UROS) scheme, have met the values of the new TLSE Strategy, empowering students to co-create meaningful, challenging and life-enhancing educational experiences.

By facilitating and enabling students *to be "...an integral part of the academic project of their institutions"* (Neary and Saunders 2016: 2), Student as Producer projects have been developed, in and outside of the curriculum. Such exemplars of co-creation emphasise the continued value of this model to all aspects of pedagogy. Student as Producer was institutionally embedded over a decade ago, but its impact continues to be notable, and as shown by the RAISE conference and this edition. It has a legacy which is still very timely and addresses some of the current challenges within higher education.

SaP remains to have currency and is still an integral element of learning which results in collective positive impacts for students, staff and stakeholders.

### **The Student as Producer RAISE Conference Edition**

This special edition contains submissions from the conference, based around the key themes linked to the new Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Strategy (TLSEs).

- Curriculum for LIFE
- Diverse delivery
- Sense of Belonging
- Student Service refresh

The conference offered the opportunity for staff to showcase their practice and research, and in keeping with Student as Producer, student-led and collaborative submissions between students and staff were welcomed. In total 13 short papers of 2000 words provided discussions, reflections and addressed the impact of the Student as Producer themed project/research.

Scoles, Berger, Arton and Foucher reflect upon the podcast *Teaching Matters* and its value as a means of co-creation and self-discovery in learning and teaching for students. Discussing their journey through this collaborative, autoethnographic approach, they analyse the learning moments emerging from these processes developing the podcast. In doing so as a team, they consider how students can create new meaning about what and how they learn. *Teaching Matters* was an audio resource associated with The University of Edinburgh's learning and teaching blog. This focused upon timely areas, such as decolonising the curriculum, and provided a platform for staff and students to share their teaching practice and engage with current issues in higher education. Importantly, this reflection considers how this experience of podcasts has produced a pedagogical artefact, one which can showcase the sharing best practice and explores the learning journeys experienced. Some of the key areas addressed in the submission were those related to the student interns' growing sense of belonging, increased confidence in their skills, and the lessening of perceived student-staff power dynamics.

Shelbourn discusses the creation of 'Mind-Set', which won best UK Feature Film at the Manchester International Film Festival in 2022. The film, created by the University of Lincoln, embodied Student as Producer practice, with key roles being taken on by students. He explores the concept of the film set as a learning environment in an educational setting and the professional industry and emphasises the successful impact of the students' involvement. The purpose was to devise a method of educating students in real-life situations and to test them with the hope that they flourish. Students benefited from a focus on employability, the ability to have creative freedom, and gaining independence and confidence, with the success being evident from it being awarded best UK Feature Film.

Duffy investigates student's self-assessment and how they can judge the quality of their work to develop self-reflective skills, abilities, and attributes. She evaluates an aspect of a UKRI funded project which aimed to enable student self-assessment and a shared understanding of quality. The introduction of Taras' model of Integrated Student Self-Assessment (ISSA) found that a move to this model required both

teachers and students to make a cultural and pedagogical shift to reimagine a theory of assessment as a process of social construction. In response to the National Student Survey flagging that assessment and feedback could be strengthened, 17 participants revisited their summative work and made their own judgements to increase student autonomy in assessment.

Contributing to Student as Producer practice, Khan reports on a teaching exercise implemented in the MA Interior Architecture and Design Programme at the University of Lincoln. The exercise promoted individual reflection by asking students to create a visual collage and written statement reflecting on the theme of the International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers (IFI) World Interiors Day 2022, 'Pride of the Past, an Incentive for the Future'. These were compiled in a physical and digital book that was shared online. This was a great opportunity for students to have their ideas promoted on a global platform and highlighted the voices of students as contributors and producers.

Bohórquez, Khan, Battestilli and Fogleman discuss the ever-changing nature of technology within Higher Education, noting particularly the flexibility of HyFlex (Hybrid Flexible) instruction. This is a learner-centred model that combines online asynchronous, online synchronous, and in-person learning options with students at the helm, essentially allowing students to customise their learning experience based on what best suits their personal needs. They surveyed 633 students on courses which employed HyFlex learning, and asked questions on topics such as student perceptions on course content and learning technologies, student engagement and self-directed learning, and overall satisfaction with the course. They investigate the relationship between the HyFlex course structure and how students engage with course content to determine how flexibility in academics affects the student experience.

Stickels and Tranter explain how gamification can increase student engagement through the use of quizzing technology and co-creation to challenge students to take part in their own games. They worked with international foundation year students at the University of Warwick, who were tasked with co-creating quiz questions based on their learning from pre-recorded lectures. The team found that students engaged more in the classroom, felt motivated and inspired, and felt a greater sense of belonging within the classroom. This example of gamification is also a form of active learning which is linked to increases in student performance, as shown by the finding that students' ability to write more application based and complex questions also developed over time from partaking in the project.

Shaw research focused upon creating effective partnerships in the 'third space' as a response to the ever-changing nature of the Higher Education sector. He discusses the many lessons that universities learnt from the Covid-19 global pandemic, most notably the need to adapt to online and hybrid pedagogies. These new cross-boundary collaborative working practices were enabled by the 'third space' (between professional and academic spheres). He explores the individual experiences of third

space working to change the shape of the Higher Education working environment in response to disruption, and how the culture of collaboration must continue in order for institutions to remain agile and flexible. Shaw conducted semi-structured interviews with those working in the third space and found that examples of recognising skill and rewarding cross-boundary working can provide strategies in preparations for unexpected disruption.

Hilgers, Farley and Storz investigate the research and process involved in implementing Consent.Ed, which is a workshop series on sexual and gender-based violence and harassment (SGBVH) prevention and education. The workshops were led by students as an example of students acting as collaborators. They provide context behind student-led research on the relationship between learning spaces and feelings of safety and outline specific actions that universities can take to combat SGBV and create a safer campus, such as employing specialist experts to create learning resources around SGBV. Another recommendation from this research was to implement consent education and the paper emphasises the transformation from student-led advocacy to institutionalisation, which was built on research and student activism.

Walker, Pratchett, and Gilbert reflect on the workshop on how COVID impacted on mature students' digital skills development and digital self-efficacy. The paper discusses the background research conducted in this area, how this was shared at the workshop and how participants were asked to explore ways in which educators could support the development of students' digital self-efficacy in a post-COVID. The paper is interesting as it draws together discussions from participants at the session from a number of institutions and suggests two interventions which would help to overcome the challenges explored. This work was co-produced with a student intern who provided the perspective of a student with personal experience of studying through COVID.

Batkin discusses 'The Student Lounge' website, which was created during lockdown, as a response to the need for a more visible student skills and opportunities focus. The website was designed as a response to the impending regulations from the Office for Students to deliver an employability-centric and quality Higher Education experience leading to good graduate outcomes. This paper reflects on the challenges and context of the Student Lounge and explores its inception, development and impact within the School of Film, Media, and Journalism at the University of Lincoln.

Blacklock and Parkin reflect on how Northumbria University's Student Inclusion Consultant (SIC) scheme, heavily influenced by the principles of Student as Producer (Neary, 2020), empowers those from underrepresented groups to enhance the inclusivity. The paper discusses how students are offered flexible, paid partnership opportunities to share any barriers they have had in accessing, progressing, or succeeding at University with a focus on their lived experience. It details how the project was piloted in April 2020 and processes developed for the recruitment. The team of SICs is recruited on a cyclical basis from their student body and informs a

wide range of university policies and initiatives. This paper reflects upon the projects which have been undertaken in collaboration with staff, across both academic and professional service departments. The narrative explores a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular topics which have identify the barriers that student carers might have in accessing course-related field trips and reviewed the accessibility of online Library platforms for international students. Finally, the paper considers the impact and benefits of the scheme for future plans.

Perlman-Dee reflects on how the Alliance Manchester Business School (AMBS) identified that certain groups of students on specific programs were lagging behind their peers in employment and salary post-graduation. They further address how this unique mentoring program, focussing on working in partnership with specific organisations and aligning Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals of organisations with targeting specific student groups, provided equitable and inclusive possibilities to students, was introduced to provide additional support. The paper discusses how the mentoring program was set up, observations of logistics and emotions and reflects upon potential changes for a better student experience. The submission further reflects on mentor's and mentee's lack of skills, engagement, and initiative (or lack of). The article addresses lessons learnt from the initial first pilot project and how these can and will be implemented differently in next year's pilot.

Struetzel and Mackey discuss how a pandemic response became best practice for student retention at the University of Greenwich. This paper reflects on 'The Retention Project' which focussed on providing a proactive, early intervention to resolve issues students might be facing during their studies. The paper reflects upon the partnership between the University of Greenwich and Student's Union, and provides insight into how student staff contacted students about their programme, extracurricular experience, loneliness, any pressures they are facing, offering advice and referral to the relevant University and Students' Union services where required. The outcomes and impact discussed in the paper provide observations on the value of the project providing a safe, social connection with a student peer, and the extent to which this positively impacted on the sense of belonging and retention. This paper showcases how the project became a blueprint for partnership working between the University and Students' Union and contributes to delivering key student success objectives and have also informed improvements to university services and processes.

This special edition showcases the positive impact of Student as Producer across Higher Education, exploring the notable values that such collaborations can have with active learning, participation and as a vehicle to enhance the wider student experience. All of the contributions identify differential applications of the model demonstrating its broad appeal across disciplines.

## References

Neary, M., Saunders, G., Hagyard, A. and Derricott, D. (2014) *Student as producer research-engaged teaching, an institutional strategy*. York: The Higher Education Academy.

Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2009) The Student as producer: reinventing the subject experience in higher education. In: L. Bell, H. Stevenson and Neary, M. (eds) *The future of Higher Education: Policy, Pedagogy and the Student Experience*. London: Continuum.

Strudwick, K. and Prichard, D. (2022) *What's next for student engagement WONKHE* <https://wonkhe.com/blogs/whats-next-for-student-engagement/>

Strudwick, K (2021) Student as Author: Mapping the field of undergraduate research publications in the UK in Social Sciences. *IMPact: Journal of Higher Education Research*, 4(1), 1-11.

Strudwick, K. (2017) Debating Student as producer: Relationships, contexts and challenges for Higher Education. *PRISM Casting New Light on Learning, Theory and Practice*, 1(1), 73-96.

Walkington, H. (2015) *Students as researchers: Supporting undergraduate research in the disciplines in higher education*. York: Higher Education Academy. Available at: [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Students%20as%20researchers\\_1.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Students%20as%20researchers_1.pdf)

Zepke, N. (2015) Student engagement research: thinking beyond the mainstream. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 34(6), 1311-1323.