Editorial: Student Engagement in the time of a Pandemic Part 2

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We are delighted to see how many research teams are including undergraduate and postgraduate students in the authorship of articles in this issue. It is a welcome expression of the sector's commitment to student engagement, and it can only be positive that students are contributing so strongly to the interpretation and representation of data about students. This completely reflects the values of the RAISE network and we celebrate the efforts of all of our authors.

As usual, we start the issue with pieces which are only authored by students. For this issue, we have been incredibly lucky to receive two honest and insightful pieces by students about their experiences during the pandemic. Coincidentally, they both involve the particular impact of being an international student in a time of crisis, but I think the key message in both is to show how active support for student engagement is vital to wellbeing and student success. Although the pandemic was a particular factor for these students, what really shines through is the importance of university staff in supporting students to develop their own agency in building their confidence and ability to tackle challenges in their education. As ever, we are grateful to receive these first person articles which illuminate students' experiences in ways which traditional research cannot. Thank you to Mya Taylor, Dangeni and Rui He for sharing their stories with us.

The first case study in the journal also reflects this theme of participation and the nature of international experiences. When the pandemic stopped travel, Johannes Bohle and Holger Jahnke were forced to reconsider some of their beliefs about international mobility, and work in partnership with students to develop a new approach to internationalisation, which has proved to have benefits in relation to inclusion and the relevance of such experiences to students. Next, Palfrey, Russell and Michalczyk describe a peer mentoring project to tackle the particular challenges of artistic isolation which were added to the social isolation experienced by dance students during the pandemic. The successful implementation of the peer mentoring scheme is something which can be transferred to the hybrid post-pandemic environment.

The final two case studies in the issue both look at ways universities used technologies which might be more familiar to students than staff to engage with students during the pandemic. In the first, Harrison, Griffiths and Strugnell describe how they used study streams as an opportunity for isolated students to develop some community. They explain that "a 'study stream' sees a host broadcast themselves while studying, with viewers following along while completing their own work". If you

have never heard of Twitch, or have only heard of it in relation to people playing computer games, then this is your chance to find out more and see how it could be a useful tool for engagement! And in the second of these studies, Tidy and colleagues from Teesside university and University College Dublin used another piece of software many adults will have heard of but not necessarily used themselves, Minecraft, to create online activities which could be carried out in a replica of the real university campus even though students could not visit it at the time. Because of the teamwork needed to complete the challenges, students had to communicate with each other and so got to know others who were starting their course, leading to social as well as practical communications.

The three research articles in this issue provide a more in-depth look at some of the topics raised in the student voice and case study articles. Bruce et al look at the impact of peer mentoring on both mentors and mentees, showing strong benefits to the scheme and providing a very useful set of guiding principles for those who would like to set up their own. Struan et al have analysed how Learner Development and Researcher Development teams responded to the challenges of providing services in the pandemic and how they can take forward what they have learned about accessibility and community-building to continue to make their resources and training authentic and valued.

We end this issue with an article by Reith-Hall and Steane which reviews and celebrates the values of student-staff partnership, and how lessons from adapting partnership approaches during the pandemic have had a positive impact on students-as-partners activities, as well as reflecting on the individual benefits the authors have found in working and disseminating together as a student and staff author.