Editorial: Many ways to develop student engagement

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After a couple of themed issues, this issue captures a wide range of student engagement initiatives from different perspectives and contexts. As regular readers know, student engagement is the core mission of the RAISE network, which aims to foster dialogue and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, students and policymakers who are interested in enhancing student participation and partnership in higher education. As the papers in this issue demonstrate, there are ways for everyone to get involved in student engagement, from curriculum design and assessment, to co-creation and co-research, to student voice and feedback, to staff development and recognition.

The current chair of the RAISE network, Tom Lowe, recently edited a book on 'Advancing Student Engagement in Higher Education', and we include a review here by Mirjam Glessmer – we had to go international to find someone who hadn't met Tom to get a truly independent review 😊. I think that is the first use of an emoji in a SEHEJ editorial, and it is done in honour of the paper by Hayes and Fatima in this issue, who have looked at student perceptions of the use by teachers of emojis, memes and gifs.

Whilst we have previously published work co-authored by Alison Cook-Sather, it is great to see a piece authored by a student, Dara Drake, who was inspired to become a pedagogical partner after attending one of Alison's workshops and how transformative this has been, both for them and for the numerous student partners she has since mentored. On a similar theme of pedagogical partnership, this issue also includes papers by Tim Herrick and Jasper Shotts which looks at the impact of student observation of teaching and by Catriona Meighan reporting on the work of student partners in a quality enhancement process (whole course evaluation).

David Gilani challenges us, in an opinion piece, to think about belonging and offers four questions for teams who are working to overcome awarding gaps between students with different characteristics. Colleagues working to ensure that historically underserved students have full access to education (I guess that is everyone reading this journal?) will also be interested in Kay Owen and Helen Simmons' investigation of the experiences of students who are also mothers, and Amy Kyte's report on a project to increase the diversity of student peer mentors.

Assessment has a focus in an article from Sam Elkington, Paul Chesterton and Alex Wood, which looks at how flexible assessment arrangements affects student engagement, as well as in a case study from Karen Dwyer which encourages us to think about engaging students with underlying processes of assessment to encourage a healthier approach to academic integrity.

We also have four articles which test out a range of innovative approaches to engagement in different contexts. Michael Brickhill, Sue Mulcin and Johanna Nieuwoudt describe a multi-disciplinary approach to developing academic skills through self-regulated learning strategies. A really interesting take on reverse mentoring comes from Rachael O'Connor, who worked with international students mentoring a campus police officer. Beverly Fitzpatrick, Leslie Phillips and Stephanie Chesser report on the involvement of students in a genuine interprofessional situation and compare it with simulated activities. A digital student feedback/evaluation system is tested and discussed by Stella Kazamia, Helen Treharne, Karen Gravett and Naomi Winstone.

As ever, it is great to see so many student authors and co-authors and such a wide range of topics on offer. Thank you to all our contributors, reviewers and editors for their work to support the network in this way.

If you are interested in contributing to the journal as a reviewer, why not create an account and tick the box for being a reviewer? We also offer support for early career authors via our developmental route, so get in touch if you have an idea and would like some feedback. Go the submissions page and scroll down for more information about this.