

## Editorial

We are pleased to introduce Volume 5 of the *UCLan Journal of Pedagogical Research*. This edition contains five articles focusing on a range of important areas that are central to national and international debates about contemporary higher education. These include discussions of student engagement and retention; research on developing intercultural communication using digital technologies; strategies for sharing discipline-based research; and the identification of frameworks to develop research-informed teaching. A particular strength of this edition is the number of disciplines it includes, ranging from forensic sciences and law, to business, modern foreign languages and healthcare.

In the first article, “Enhancing Engagement with Mandatory Modules: Forensic Science Students and the Learning of the Law,” Natalie Mason investigates issues of student motivation in the wider context of research on the student experience, assessment practices, and curriculum development. Recommendations focus on strategies for developing learner creativity and enhancing the clarity of course objectives to sustain student engagement in challenging content areas.

In “Free Coffee and Cake! A Retention Initiative to Promote First Year Business School Students’ Social Interaction with their Peers and Staff,” Victoria Jackson explores findings arising from case study research focusing on promoting belongingness among first year students in the UCLan Business School. A series of social events aimed to facilitate social interaction promoted a more relaxed atmosphere that enhanced students’ relationships with lecturing staff and their academic context.

In the third article, “International Electronic Link-up to Promote Interaction in Foreign Language,” Judith Broadbridge explores the implications of an intercultural exchange between UCLan students learning French as a foreign language and native French speakers based in Lannion. Data arising from research over two years investigated how students utilised a range of web-based digital technologies to promote cross-cultural communication and target language development. The paper explores the advantages and challenges posed by intercultural exchange in electronically-mediated environments, identifying recommendations for future research in the field.

The penultimate paper, “Developing Teaching Material from a Research Project: The Tutor’s Guide,” Tony Bennett examines how discipline-based research can be disseminated and shared with other academics in a community of practice in order to enhance teaching and learning. Focusing on business and management students in particular, the research aims to identify both theoretical and practical solutions in order to manage workplace conflict more effectively.

In the final article in this fifth edition of the journal, “Building Future Research Capacity in Student Healthcare Practitioners Through Research-Informed-Teaching,” Hazel Roddam, Jessie Janssen, Heather Stewart and Karen May investigate how to apply the research-informed-teaching agenda to teachers and learners in the healthcare field, where little research has been undertaken to date. The foci of the paper include raising learners’ awareness of the wider research environment appropriate to their discipline, developing advanced research skills, and engaging active researchers in the delivery of teaching.

As these five papers indicate, pedagogical research can play a significant role in engaging teachers and learners in higher education across a range of disciplines, promoting the power of reflective practice and cross-institutional collaboration. They underline the importance of transforming research-*informed* teaching into research-*engaged* activities leading to publication and dissemination and contributing in meaningful ways to staff development. If you have an idea or article for the next edition of the *UCLan Journal of Pedagogical Research*, please contact the editors. We look forward to hearing from you.