Editorial

In this issue of *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, authors from a range of academic disciplines – music therapy, political geography, social policy, international communications and law – explore some contemporary concerns in higher education.

In the first article, Beth Pickard analyses the way disability is portrayed to disabled applicants through the Disability Service web pages of Welsh universities. She finds that medical and individualised interpretations predominate and that relatively little of the material presented is authored by disabled students or mentions the contribution that they can make to the life of the institution. She calls instead for institutions to adopt a rights-based approach that promotes full and equal participation in higher education for disabled students.

In the second article, Olivia Mason and Nick Megoran examine the de-humanising effects of casualisation amongst the academic workforce in UK higher education today. Academics with insecure jobs are marginalised and often invisible to colleagues and institutions. They are pressured to do more work than they are paid for, have little choice over what they teach or research and are unable to make meaningful plans for their careers or personal lives. Resistance to casualisation will be strengthened if those with more secure jobs recognise casualisation as an affront to human dignity.

In the third article, Jane Booth advocates community-centred active learning for social science students. She shows how students and university departments can work with community groups and organisations to co-design placements and projects based on knowledge sharing and collective knowledge generation. Marginalised and disadvantaged groups can benefit significantly from involvement in these egalitarian partnerships, and students from all backgrounds can gain insights into inclusive professional practice.

In the fourth article, Sabine Krajewski and Matthew Khoury investigate the benefits of multi-functional and multi-sensory learning and teaching spaces in universities. Their evaluation of one experimental classroom without hard furniture or audio-visual equipment demonstrates the creative potential of such spaces. But their account also shows that innovative spaces can end up

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being under-utilised unless their design is the outcome of extensive consultation with students, academics and professional services staff.

The issue concludes with reviews of books about sustainability in higher education and doctoral education. Our thanks go to the authors of the articles and reviews, the anonymous referees who commented on the manuscripts, the Editorial Board and everyone at Berghahn Journals. This is the third issue that has been copy-edited, type-set and produced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Penny Welch and Susan Wright