Editorial

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Welcome to this issue of *Learning and Teaching: The International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*. Our thanks go to the authors of articles and reviews, the anonymous referees who read the articles, the publishers who provided review copies of the books, our own publisher Berghahn and the Editorial Board.

This issue focuses on recent research into undergraduate and postgraduate education in the U.S.A. and U.K. Taken together, these articles raise important issues for academics and universities to consider when reflecting on their own teaching and course development. The different methodologies developed in these studies could also be adapted to other countries in order to build up a more fine-grained and critical understanding of how students perceive their education, find their ways around higher education institutions and use their education in subsequent careers. Such analysis could help academics make well-informed decisions about how to combine critical course content and challenging ideas with academic skills that students take with them and develop further in subsequent phases of their lives. It is also important if universities are to succeed in putting over public arguments about the value of higher education.

The first article by Emory Morrison, Elizabeth Rudd and Maresi Nerad presents the results of their study, *Social Science PhDs – Five + Years Out*. The aims of this study were to establish whether the supply of PhD graduates in the social sciences corresponds to the demand for them in the U.S. labour market, the extent to which there is equity of outcomes between women and men and how well the skills learned in graduate school match those used in employment. Two-thirds of the 3,000 respondents had applied exclusively for academic posts after obtaining their PhDs and most of the rest had applied for jobs in academia and in other sectors.

The chances of being in a tenured or tenure-track academic position increased with time. One year after obtaining their doctorate, 40 per cent had done so, rising to 73 per cent after six years. Even then, however, 17 per cent of respondents were still in part-time or temporary academic jobs. Some PhD

graduates had switched career goals as a result of the competition they faced for tenured and tenure-track posts. The results of the survey showed that women had the same success rates as men in obtaining tenured or tenure-track jobs but that a higher proportion of men had achieved tenure and had achieved it at higher status institutions. More women than men were still in temporary or part-time roles six years after completing their PhD. Some women had delayed marriage and children until they had established an academic career. Overall, women reported more constraints on their career outcomes as a result of marriage and children than men did.

Looking back, most respondents identified the support they had received during their PhD studies as adequate or excellent overall. However, they expressed lower satisfaction levels for some aspects of their experience, including their socialisation into the academic community, the feedback received on their progress and the quality of career preparation. Within the latter category, only half of those surveyed had been offered training in university teaching and many were dissatisfied with the guidance available on publishing their work and applying for grants. Training in generic professional skills such as teamwork and management were poorly rated or did not feature in the PhD programmes they had followed.

The authors recommend that universities track their PhD graduates to find out if their career needs have been met by their doctoral programmes, integrate preparation for both academic and non-academic careers into the programmes they offer and find resources to ease conflicts between work and family for their employees.

In the second article, Brendan Bartram and Mayumi Terano outline and evaluate the ways in which higher education institutions in the U.K. and the U.S.A. support international students. The authors identify tensions in the U.K. between approaches that emphasise the differences between international and home students and those that treat home and international students as having a similar range of needs. The first approach can risk labelling international students as needy and demanding and the second can fail to take into account cultural factors that inhibit some international students from accessing certain services, such as personal counselling. U.K. universities generally offer a range of academic, practical and social/personal support mechanisms but both home and international students may not be aware of the full range of provision. Most higher education institutions in the U.K. have international offices that advise international students before they arrive and organise induction and orientation sessions. While these ac-

tivities are essential, they do reinforce the separate identity of international students. It appears that universities are not taking enough responsibility for the social integration of international students and Student Unions could do more to involve international students.

The authors argue that universities in the U.S.A. do more to facilitate the social integration of international students, mainly through their endorsement of self-organised student groups. The advantage of such groups is that they offer peer support and accessible ways of getting involved in student life. Even single-nationality student organisations can aid the social integration of international students, although groups including students from different nationalities have the additional benefit of aiding intercultural learning. However, involvement in student-organised groups tends to be higher among younger students than older students and given that the majority of international students in the U.S.A. are postgraduates, often older than their U.S. counterparts, self-organisation is only a partial solution to social integration. The authors advocate that U.K. higher education institutions do more to encourage self-organisation among international students and point out that this could be an attractive option because it is relatively low-cost.

In the third article, Paul Sutton sets out to strengthen the sociological dimension of the Academic Literacies approach to higher education pedagogy. He does this by taking Bourdieu's work from the 1960s on the social aspects of pedagogic authority and communication and applying it to higher education today. For Bourdieu, the role of the university is to transmit and legitimate the dominant culture. Academics are invested with the authority to do this and their authority is particularly displayed in the style of communication they use. The prevailing academic discourse functions to separate teachers from students and to make it hard for most students to understand thoroughly what teachers are saying. Students respond by attempting to mimic the discourse without understanding how it is produced, so most fail to convey their own understanding. Students from middle-class backgrounds, having been brought up within the dominant culture, adapt to the style of communication more readily than students from less privileged groups but remain in a position of dependency. The deficit in communication is blamed on the students and not the teacher or the institutional context in which the teacher works.

In U.K. higher education today, the communication gap may be even greater. Many students, as a result of their use of digital media, have developed communication styles that are instant and visual. This sets them

apart from teachers who value carefully considered and constructed verbal and written communication. Students who have to undertake paid work alongside their studies are less integrated into the process of academic socialisation and have less time to develop academic literacy. First-generation university students are often constructed as lacking basic literacy. At the same time, there is pressure on universities to demonstrate the vocational relevance of their courses and to produce graduates who are flexible and task-oriented workers. These new demands reinforce rather than undermine traditional forms of pedagogic communication.

The author advocates teaching about the role of academic discourse in reproducing asymmetries of power, while at the same time enabling students to learn how to use academic language for themselves. Matched with assessment methods that are transparent and part of a dialogue between tutors and students, such a pedagogy can significantly increase students' ability both to create and to demonstrate their own understandings.

All these articles are concerned with what higher education institutions can do to meet the needs of students, here constructed as active participants in their own education rather than passive consumers of university services. The authors also raise questions about the responsibility of higher education teachers, both individually and collectively, to consider how they can contribute more effectively to the academic literacy of the undergraduates they teach, the career prospects of the postgraduates they supervise and the academic and social integration of international students in general.

In the fourth article, Davydd Greenwood reviews a recent book about U.S. students' conceptions and experiences of higher education, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* by Richard Arum and Josipa Roska. Greenwood appreciates the way the authors have assembled a substantial database and admires the meticulous nature of their quantitative analysis. Their very critical study shows that students are energetic and well-motivated but become 'adrift' within the university system when their courses are not academically demanding and when their teachers do not make time to see them outside class. *LATISS* is taking up the authors' invitation for academics to engage in a serious discussion of their findings and participate in a dialogue about the future of higher education in the U.S.A., as elsewhere. Greenwood starts the process by identifying several ways that qualitative research could complement and qualify Arum and Roska's research. We have asked a number of academics who write on higher education from a variety of disciplinary perspectives to comment on the issues

raised by Davydd Greenwood and on other aspects of the book. These commentaries will be published in future issues of *LATISS*.

This issue concludes with reviews by Eli Thorkelson and Steve Fuller of works about New Public Management in higher education policy and about the peer-review process in the funding of academic research.