Editorial

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Student Success in 2020

This issue is being published during a time of massive disruption and change associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. A situation which has been further complicated by rapid changes in higher education public policy, funding and regulation in Australia and elsewhere. Despite all these challenges, our friends and colleagues and higher education practitioners across the world have been responsive and innovative in the face of restrictive conditions, have focused on what they can and will learn from these strange times and have continued to share expertise and experiences, and importantly have never lost sight of what really matters – our students and their success. We salute each and every one of you.

Despite the current global disruption, we are buoyed by the continuing interest in the Journal and the growing number of submissions from international authors. We endeavour to publish articles accepted for the Journal as 'Online First' publications ahead of the actual issue release. We recognise that the nature of academic research is changing, and publishing research papers as soon as possible after acceptance has multiple benefits for the author and for the academic community more broadly.

Daniella Padula from Scholastica has recently outlined a series of benefits for what they describe as "rolling articles" (Padula, 2020) Generally, search engines will favour websites with new content which can create opportunities for scholars to come across and reference timely articles as they are published. Scholars and practitioners may also be more likely to frequent the journal website and/or follow your social media channels, in order to find and share new and relevant content. Improving research impact is ultimately the end game for many scholars:

> Publishing and promoting articles on a rolling basis can also help your journal improve its altmetrics impact, or impact from mentions of research in nontraditional online outlets such as news media and public policy. While The Impact Factor was once the gold standard of research impact assessment, article level metrics are rising as a more digitally driven alternative. (Padula, 2020, para: 7)

The publication schedule for *Student Success* is normally three issues per year: a general issue, a STARS Conference issue, and a special issue. Unfortunately, in 2020 with the postponement of the annual STARS Conference we were only able to publish two issues. However, the good news is that 2021 will see our regular publishing schedule resume. Additionally, we are pleased to be able to publish a special issue facilitated by guest editors Marcia Devlin and Jade McKay: *Student Success in a Global Pandemic*. In the meantime, we hope this issue has something for all teaching and learning practitioners grappling with the complexities of the new COVID-induced higher education environment.

Articles

In *Development, Implementation and Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of an Interdisciplinary For-Credit Subject to Help Students Transition to University* authors **Heike Schütze** and **Jenna Bartyn** add to the limited research on successful interdisciplinary for-credit transition subjects that support students, particularly in Australia. Also on transition, **Amy Larsen, Deanna Horvath** and **Christopher Bridge** embed Lizzio's Five Senses Model in an attempt to build student identity in a new academic community in *'Get Ready': Improving the Transition Experience of a Diverse First-Year Cohort Through Building Student Agency.*

Early assessment is often pivotal to the first year experience of the student. **Kate Wilson** (University of Canberra) and **Kate Wilson** (from UNSW) explore the effects of a purposefully tough early assessment on first-year engineering students at an Australian university in *Student Responses to a Tough Early Assessment: A Useful "Kick up the Bum"?*

In *Adaptation Challenges Faced by Pakistani University Entrants,* **Fareeha Javed** undertakes research to understand the adaptation challenges faced by the Pakistani university entrants and the nuances between their experience and those of other students internationally

Work integrated learning is the focus of a pilot study which explored the experiences of undergraduate students studying disability and their three-week international Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placement in Brunei Darussalam. In *Preliminary Insights into International Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Placements in Disability and Student Recommendations for Success* authors **Peggy Essl, Michelle Bellon** and **Caroline Ellison** provide insight on what makes international WIL placements successful in promoting optimal learning.

The experience of regional students through the eyes of staff supporting them is detailed in *Narratives of Access: A Critical Exploration of How Institutional Interactions with Students Affect Regional Student Participation in Higher Education.* **Jenny Ostini** and her colleagues detail how university staff perceive their role in the provision of education to regional students and to understand university staff perceptions of factors and influences that lead to student success

From the UK, **Monika Foster, Tm Mulroy** and **Mark Carver** discuss the specific challenges of 'commuter' students transitioning to second and third year in *Exploring Coping Strategies of Transfer Students Joining Universities from Colleges.*

As well, we are very pleased to publish four peer reviewed articles selected from submissions to the postponed 2019 STARS Conference:

Linda Nguyen from RMIT University in Vietnam and her Australian RMIT colleagues **Andrea Chester, Anne Herbert** and **Alison Lugg** detail case studies from Vietnamese students transitioning to an international branch campus and the use of collectivist and individualist 'face' strategies used by first-year students. *First Year Transition Through a Cultural Lens: Face Strategies of Vietnamese Students* assists in understanding how face strategies can help anticipate the challenges of Vietnamese students studying in English-medium environments and inform culturally sensitive practices in teaching and learning.

In *Online Student Expectations: A Multifaceted, Student-centred Understanding of Online Education* **Mel Henry** considers the expectations of online students via a series of interviews noting their expectations are complex and multidimensional, relating to both their personal characteristics and situation, and to their institution.

Abi Brooker and **Catherine Vu** offer guidance on strategies within academic and non-academic university contexts that can effectively and efficiently promote student wellbeing in *How do University Experiences Contribute to Students' Psychological Wellbeing?*

First-Year Students' Academic Self-Efficacy Calibration: Differences by Task Type, Domain Specificity, Student Achievement Level, and Over Time details how a one-size-fits-all approach to self-efficacy is unlikely to be beneficial for student learnings. Authors **Kate Talsma, Kimberley Norris** and **Benjamin Schüz** considered how first-year undergraduate students' self-efficacy calibration varied across task type and specificity level, over time, and according to students' achievement level. The authors noted that overconfidence was prevalent, particularly among lower-achieving students and at subject level.

Practice Reports

From the US, **Bethany Blankenship's** practice report *Bricolage and Student Learning* discusses the term 'bricolage' and its relationship to student learning. The positive and negative perceptions of teachers and students as "bricoleurs" (those who practice bricolage) are discussed.

Finally, **Leigh Moore** and **Narelle Campbell** from Flinders NT discuss how 'escape rooms' have been used by one Australian university to successfully engage with high-school students who reside in areas of relative socio-educational disadvantage. *Escaping the Norm: Games for Wider Participation with a Sense of Success* notes how escape room competitions may help develop student identity and familiarity with the university by appealing to the interest in games, as well as addressing some of the student requirements for early success in university.

References

Padula, D. (2020). Why some journals are publishing rolling articles instead of issues. *Scholastica.* https://blog.scholasticahq.com/post/why-some-journals-are-publishing-rolling-articles-instead-of-issues/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Organic%20Social_Content