

**Title:** **Writes of passage: developing an inclusive open journal in academic practice**

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### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Identify the challenges facing early career academics who are seeking to engage in the scholarship of learning and teaching through peer reviewed publication of their own pedagogic research and practice
- Reflect critically on emerging trends in open access academic publishing, and question the full extent to which existing models embody a truly open ethos
- Distinguish between a range of creative approaches that can be used to support academics in beginning to write for publication in the area of academic practice
- Harness or adapt developmental approaches to writing for publication, developing journal reviewer skills, and gaining editorial experience that have been implemented within the context of an open journal in academic practice

### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

In recent years there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of the scholarship of learning and teaching, and the benefits this can bring in terms of enhancing and disseminating good academic practice. This has contributed towards, and benefited from, a greater recognition of academic practice as an important area for academics within the disciplines to engage in. In short, research and scholarship in learning and teaching is no longer seen as reserved for academics who are specialists in education, and many institutions run initiatives and programmes to support scholarly engagement in learning and teaching (Kreber, 2010; Lee and Boud, 2010).

However significant challenges remain for academics seeking to engage in the scholarship of learning and teaching, particularly where they are aspiring to publish their work in relevant journals. Writing out with the conventions of their own discipline area can potentially be daunting, as can the thought of being in competition with more experienced educational specialists, and subjecting their work to peer scrutiny.

Equally, although perhaps less well recognised, there are also challenges for more experienced academics who have successfully published on aspects of their educational

research or practice, and who may now be looking to broaden their professional engagement in education as a discipline by becoming involved in the peer review process or in an editorial capacity with relevant periodicals.

This paper will discuss the above challenges in the context of the development of a cross-institutional open access online journal. In exploring the development and ethos of the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice, this paper will examine current trends in digital scholarship and open publishing (Weller, 2011). It will also explore how a truly open and inclusive ethos (characterised by practices including structured support for new authors, a non-blind peer review process, open licensing, and editorial internships) can empower academics in becoming engaged contributors to the published discourse on effective learning, teaching and assessment.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

- 5 mins: Introduction to session
- 10 mins: Exploring engagement in the scholarship of learning and teaching, including challenges for new academics and those in the disciplines. Participants will be asked to share their own personal experiences, or experiences from supporting others to engage in scholarly activity.
- 10 mins: Overview and discussion of emerging trends in open academic publishing, and within which participants with prior knowledge or experience in this area will be asked to share their experiences as a focus for a critical consideration of how open and inclusive this area really is.
- 10 mins: Exploring the development and ethos of the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice (JPAAP), in which the presenters will explain the rationale for the development of the journal and invite participants to consider (1) how the kinds of professional development activities the journal is supporting could be adapted to institutional contexts, and (2) whether the journal itself could offer opportunities to their colleagues.
- 5 mins: Lessons learned from the development of JPAAP, with a focus on issues colleagues may want to consider is setting up a similar initiative either within their institution or in partnership with other institutions
- 5 mins: Concluding questions and discussion

### **References**

- Kreber, C. (2010). Controversy and consensus on the scholarship of teaching. *Studies in Higher Education*, 27(2), pp. 151-167.
- Lee, A. and Boud, D. (2010). Writing groups, change and academic identity: research development as local practice. . *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(2), pp. 187-200.
- Weller, M. (2011). *The digital scholar: how technology is transforming scholarly practice*. London: Bloomsbury.

