Editorial: IJAP's Decade of Downloads

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The Irish Journal of Academic Practice (IJAP) was established in 2011 to complement a postgraduate course on academic writing and publishing at what was then the Dublin Institute of Technology. Since that time, we have published over 140 articles by authors from across the world, which have been downloaded more than 115,000 times by people in over 200 countries. As editors, we find this astonishing and are excited by the manner in which the ideas we discuss with students in our classrooms (and online) here in Dublin can gain currency in Fiji and Rwanda (50 downloads each) as readily as they do in Cork and Limerick in Ireland (c.2,300 downloads each).

Our peer review process is certainly designed to ensure a level of quality and scholarship that we believe is more than worthy of such engagement: our contributors have something important to say, and people around the world are interested in hearing it. Given that IJAP is open access (articles are published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](#)), there is no paywall or registration to contend with: all interested parties can access this scholarship readily (and anonymously). We realise that this is important not only for individual scholars but also for less well-off institutions around the world, and therefore we strongly endorse the principles of open access as a means to promote and share knowledge, especially when the research on which it is based is funded by the public purse.

In the main, we know that readers find us through search engines such as Google/Google Scholar and Bing rather than through subscription databases. And such availability has drawn interesting consequences. For example, who would have thought that "A Case Study of English Language Acquisition by Chechen Programme Refugees in Roscommon, Ireland" by Liana Rose (Vol. 4, 2015) would be downloaded over 4,000 times by people at 360 different institutions in 44 different countries? (Interestingly, the Master's dissertation on which it is based, also available online, has achieved 654 downloads: respectable enough for any academic thesis, but a mere fraction of the

resulting journal article.) Moreover, the audiences for IJAP go beyond academia: the majority of the 5774 accessing institutions identified within our system are tagged as commercial organisations, while government and military bodies also feature within the mix of readers.

Our primary focus has been on the evolution of teaching and learning practices in higher education, a dynamic and sometimes contentious area of study in this post-Covid age of Education 4.0. We have been intrigued to discover what has grabbed the attention of our readers in the main. Top of the list is an article published in volume 2 entitled "An Activity-based Approach to the Learning and Teaching of Research Methods: Measuring Student Engagement and Learning" by Eimear Fallon, Stephen Walsh and Terry Prendergast (it discusses a project carried out with undergraduate students learning research methods prior to undertaking an undergraduate dissertation). This article has been downloaded almost 30,000 times in 175 countries since it was published on 31 May 2013, and consistently ranks as our most downloaded contribution. Intriguingly, in this current issue, we opted to pre-publish an article for the first time rather than holding it back to include with publication of the full issue: between March and May 2023, "Continuous Professional Development and Work Conditions for English-Language Teaching Practitioners in Ireland: Where do we go from here?" by Deborah Tobin and Cathryn Bennett has already been downloaded almost 250 times, making it our second most popular article (the ranking is based on the average number of full-text downloads per day since the paper was posted). But of course, as editors we appreciate all IJAP articles equally, acknowledging the effort and commitment that went into each one.

As editors who also teach academic writing, mainly to graduate students and to fellow academic staff, we readily recognise that creating positive habits around academic writing and reducing feelings of isolation can help support them in their writing and thereby in their scholarship and career progression. This is important in the challenging and ever-shifting world and politics of academia. In the decade since its inception, the direction of pedagogic research published in IJAP has changed to reflect the higher education landscape, its priorities and drivers. Digital themes such as online course design (Clare Gormley, volume 3) and digital badges (Linda Dowling-Hetherington and Matt Glowatz, volume 6) are now being complemented and augmented by concerns surrounding the rise of Artificial Intelligence (current issue) and the importance of sustainability in the curriculum, all coloured by the Covid-19 pandemic and its ongoing aftermath. In this current issue, we have opened space for reflection through a series of Opinion Pieces in addition to the papers presented. In the main, this reassures us that threats also offer opportunities, and we believe that the opportunities bring new possibilities for scholarship, access to knowledge and the growth of the scholarly community worldwide.

The changing higher-education landscape over the last decade provided an opportunity for bringing related scholarship together in themed issues – as a unique and valuable reference source for our readers. So far, we have had four special issues – the first to capture thinking and ideas around the emergence of technological universities in Ireland (2019). Since then, three more have been produced – one in 2021 examined previously unaddressed aspects of impact of teaching,

learning and assessment, proposing and developing new approaches, exchanging perspectives among lecturers across different disciplines and encouraging new lines of pedagogic research. The other is an example of the outputs of a polytechnic summit in 2022. The latest is a specific area of research that has a broad appeal – sustainability in education (special issue forthcoming later this year).

Supported by the enthusiasm of our library colleagues in what is now Technological University Dublin, and by our ever-generous panel of peer reviewers, we have been surprised and delighted in equal measure with the success of the Irish Journal of Academic Practice to date. Thank you for your support. We look forward to another decade of open-access scholarship and publication.

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