

Welcome to our eighth issue of *Compass*, which contains a number of firsts. A freshly designed front cover, in celebration of the second issue online, establishes a dynamic and colourful new feel. In recognition of the digital world in which we live and learn, we have a new format. In addition to research articles, case studies and opinion pieces, we now include technology reviews. For the first time, a response to an article in an earlier issue has been published, and we are delighted that the journal is fulfilling the conversational role that we always envisaged it would have. We hope that the articles in this edition will inspire other responses. *Compass* provides a valuable forum for teaching and learning research as well as for articles submitted to the 2013 Research Excellence Framework (REF).

In the 11 articles published in this Autumn issue, a number of themes emerge which sees the sector recovering from the dip in student recruitment, and the change in attitude and behaviour as institutions respond to Government's Higher Education White Paper - Students at the Heart of the System (2011).

The digital world continues to exert its influence and make an impact on the content and type of articles submitted. In the first opinion piece, Ray Stoneham discusses the perennial topic of referencing. In our Google era, he identifies shifts in academic practice regarding students' search skills and an understanding of how information is organised.

Lynne Jump critically explores the possibilities and drawbacks of the 'flipped classroom' in which the students individually study content, often provided as a lecture, and then participate in small group discussions where the tutor may provide more personalised support.

Andrew Thompson's response to an earlier article "*Teaching 'dry' subjects without tears*", by Sandra Clarke which appeared in *Compass* number 3 in 2011, starts to develop a dialogue that touches on areas of student motivation and engagement, teacher experience, preparation and presentation, and threshold knowledge.

One theme emerging in this issue is professional identity and its impact on career development. Gemma Richardson assesses the take-up of Masters level primary mathematics continuing professional development (CPD). Previous researchers have noted differences between male and female teachers and their view of their own academic identity. Gemma considers whether reduced participation in CPD is due to the fact that many primary level teachers are female, who may not be considering promotion given the challenges of maintaining a work-life balance. Students' self identity is also a factor in Mark Betteney's article in which he investigates students' lack of risky behaviour. Seeing themselves as acceptably "good", rather than dangerously "outstanding", he suggests, may lead students to keep to very safe lessons rather than venturing beyond the lesson plan in the teaching observation period. Although this can result in a good grade, Mark Betteney's view is that students need to move away from the safety of the perfect lesson in pursuit of the outstanding grade.

Higher education staff may already be familiar with the World Café approach to facilitate group discussion that are popular in conferences and staff development events. Jackie Farr's case study considers the effectiveness of the World Café approach used in a revision seminar for her third year students, and the way in which it can promote interaction between different groupings of students.

Research-based learning has been the guiding principle behind Angela Laycock's work on the Comparative Evaluation of Rights Mechanisms Project that she has developed with her students. She maintains that participation in this project has encouraged deep learning in students as well as offering undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in the type of research more usually associated with postgraduate study.

Lastly, the three technology reviews cover a wide range of subject areas and technologies. Anyone who has been searching for a user friendly system for conducting online seminars will want to read Paul Stoneman's technology review of Adobe Connect, which he has used for webinars and online seminars. He has some suggestions for extending the use of this technology to record material for distance learners or for use at meetings. Nola Stair reviews *Bubbl.us*, the free mind mapping software, and suggests inspiring ways of using it with third year students who produce mind maps in order to generate and organise their ideas for topics for their dissertations. Sarah Crofts explores how technology reviews by first year Law students can be used as authentic assessment in the context of students' library seminars.

The *Compass* team hope that you enjoy reading these articles and look forward to receiving your responses to them as well as your own articles for future issues.

References

BIS (2011) Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Available online at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/h/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf>. (Accessed 11 December 2013).

Author Biography

Sarah Crofts is based in the Greenwich campus library and is Senior Academic Services Librarian for Law and Criminology. She is interested in the general area of students' digital literacy and is co-author (with Irene Barranco, Maggie Leharne and Rachael Hartiss) of the *iPROGRESS* online information skills course. Sarah is also an Associate Teaching Fellow and participates in teaching legal research on the Law School courses.