

From Learner to Scholar

"For students of only a generation or two ago, learning occurred by reading summaries or conclusions that others put forward, and they had at best very limited access to the raw data underpinning journal articles and books. Thus the possibilities of encouraging student research were highly constrained, and student involvement in original research, especially research authored by them, was the exception" (Hodge et al 2008:4).

Welcome to the third edition of *Enquiry*, ACES undergraduate research journal. This retrospective issue features a range of essays produced by undergraduate students across the Faculty during 2011-2012.

The journal is based on the premise that education is a social process, and that learning is not merely an acquisition and reproduction of specific information, but it also involves transforming, reinterpreting, communicating and co-producing knowledge. Students are inquisitive, active and interested human beings with a lot to offer. They are willing to participate in their own education, and shape the educational process. The notion of students as scholars and producers of knowledge underpins the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment policy, which emphasises "student-centred and active approaches to learning, teaching, and academic support" and aims to provide "opportunities for students to be researchers, enquirers, co-producers and partners in learning" (from SHU LTA 2011).

Journals such as *Enquiry* are therefore more than an outlet to showcase student work. They allow a powerful opportunity for learners to take on the role of an expert educating the reader. Reviewing work by other student authors has an additional benefit of broadening one's horizons beyond the confines of a specific module diet, as well as participating more fully in an academic community of practice. We are particularly keen on including first-year work, and hope our readers will bear in mind that the student authors represented here are at different stages in their University studies. Some are already accomplished researchers and practitioners, and for others this may be their first University essay - but all offer valuable insights and demonstrate the rich diversity of skills and interests within our Faculty.

The current issue represents some of the disciplinary breadth within the Faculty. We start with Robert Dascenzo's discussion of the importance of context for analysing images, focusing on the work by Julia Margaret Cameron, a 19-century British photographer. The second piece, by a group of first year Animation students, offers an account of their first experience of producing work for an external client. Dan Hodgson, Anita Bruvere, Hayley Humphreys and Carl Jones reflect on their creative decisions and some of the challenges involved in client-based work that they have discovered in the course of the project. The article is richly illustrated with examples of their own artwork.

This is followed by three articles on various issues in computing. David Phillips and Richard Thompson look at the developments within mobile web applications, and conclude that this growing sector needs clearer methods for cross-platform development. Next, Obinna Okeke and David Izuogu discuss accessibility guidelines for websites, outline several specific barriers and explore methods of encouraging compliance with accessibility guidelines. Phillip Bottomley, Austin Cheetham, James Lovell and Jamie Mach turn our attention to Ajax applications for the web, and consider the directions for sustainable development. Finally, Alex Winrow (the then first year student) evaluates the debates around the potential of game-based learning.

With the long-awaited 2012 issue of *Enquiry* finally published, we can look ahead to the future. The Autumn 2013 issue is already in the pipeline. It will effectively represent a relaunch, with a fresh call for authors, reviewers, editors, and proposals for the upcoming themed issues. We have already received several exciting contributions from Film, Animation and Photography students, both theoretical work and reflections on practice. Although articles are accepted at any time throughout the year, the deadline for our next issue is 1 September. So if you are a student interested in publishing your work, or a member of staff wishing to recommend a particularly good student essay, or simply want to know more about the journal - we'll be very happy to hear from you.

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