



Welcome to the Inaugural Proceedings of the Lancaster University Education Conference

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71957/byamtv70>

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1. Introduction

We are delighted to present the proceedings of the Lancaster University Education Conference¹ for the first time. The conference has been running annually since 2020. From the beginning, part of the remit has been to foster engaging, constructive discussions and collaboration. Driven by the passion and commitment of a wide range of colleagues, a great deal of innovative work is happening in teaching, learning and education. Yet, unless specific attempts are made to nurture the sharing of practice, it is easy for colleagues to focus mainly on their own efforts and those of others with whom they work closely. By presenting proceedings from the conference, we aim to broaden and deepen such efforts. Our hope is that these proceedings will allow colleagues to draw wider inspiration from work being done by others and also support longitudinal conversations across successive years of the conference.

A core contribution of the conference is to support teaching, learning and education across the wide range of organisations which participate in Lancaster partnerships. Lancaster University benefits from a wide range of partnerships, both within the UK and across the world². Alongside other priorities (such as research collaboration), these seek to deliver Lancaster's distinctive teaching in a wider range of settings, and the Lancaster University Education Conference has become an important fixture in the annual calendar where those

¹ <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/curriculum-and-education-development-academy/education-conference/>

² <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/partners/>



from across all partner institutions can come together—some by videoconference—to share their experiences and deepen their connections. It is therefore a pleasure to see so many colleagues from partner institutions represented in these inaugural proceedings.

2. The 2024 Conference

These inaugural proceedings build on work presented at the 2024 edition of the conference, a hybrid event held on 3-4 July—in person at Lancaster’s Bailrigg Campus and online.

The theme of the conference in 2024 was *Empowering Education: Navigating the Landscape of Meaningful Student Engagement*. The conference steering group were delighted that the conference attracted 41 contributions from colleagues who work both at Lancaster’s Bailrigg campus and 6 of the partner institutions. These contributions, which were submitted as abstracts in advance of the event, addressed a very wide range of issues under the broad umbrella of the conference theme. We categorised the presentations into six strands, which formed the organising principle for the sessions in the conference programme:

- Creative Pedagogy;
- Culturally Responsive/Inclusive Engagement;
- Engagement in Assessment;
- Outside the Classroom;
- Peer Learning; and
- Student Voices.

After the conference, for the first time, the steering group contacted all of those who had presented and asked if they would be interested in expanding their presentations into short papers. These proceedings are evidence that a number of those presenters responded positively!

3. Producing the Inaugural Proceedings

Four members of the conference steering group—the authors of this introductory piece—worked together as an editorial team to co-ordinate and support the production of these proceedings.

Our initial instructions to prospective authors emphasised that we wished to produce short papers which built on the discussions and presentations at the conference. Submission was, therefore, open to everyone who had presented at the conference.



We emphasised that the structure and format of papers might vary. We did not wish to be overly prescriptive. But we did encourage people to reflect, where appropriate, on the following issues:

- The purpose of the work being described;
- The context in which the work occurred (such as a department, discipline, programme and/or module);
- The earlier work from which the work takes inspiration (whether practical projects or published papers);
- What was actually done, in practical terms;
- What were the core findings (both encouraging and adverse);
- The implications of the findings for others.

Our stated aim was that the papers would have a reflective and engaging quality, which would provoke others to consider the potential implications for their own practice. We also encouraged authors to aspire to write their papers in a scholarly way and to include academic citations where possible, although our guidance explicitly recognised that this might not be done uniformly across all submissions. We advised a length of 800-1500 words, although, once again, we indicated a willingness to be flexible where authors had particular requirements.

We were delighted to receive a number of submissions in response to our call. These expanded papers were reviewed by the editorial team. Editorial comments were returned to the authors, who were asked to revise and return their papers prior to inclusion in the proceedings. While the editorial comments were varied, some common themes include asking authors to:

- Reflect on their own personal motivations for pursuing their work;
- Consider in more detail the local context, including in the discipline and location of study, and why the issue being addressed is important in that context;
- Be open about ongoing tensions and room for improvement in their work;
- Consider how the work being described might be taken forward in the future—perhaps in the next year of work, prior to further discussion at a later edition of the conference.

The sixteen papers we present in these proceedings were revised based on the comments we provided.



4. The papers

We are delighted to present 16 papers in these Inaugural Proceedings. Each presents an account of innovation and reflection for the betterment of teaching, learning and education at Lancaster University and its partner institutions. Collectively, these papers showcase the wide variety of work being undertaken by those committed to providing a distinctive and high-quality education across the Lancaster Partnership.

The papers are concerned with a broad cross-section of disciplinary and topic areas. Different authors write from their perspectives of education in the contexts of Art and Design; Communication Studies; Computer Science; Economics; Engineering; English Language Studies; Film Studies; Health Sciences; Law; Management and Business Studies; Politics, Philosophy and Religion; and research training for postgraduate researchers.

Several papers are, of course, presented by those who work at the Lancaster University campus in Bailrigg, just south of Lancaster in the UK. But we are also delighted to present papers from those in partner institutions: specifically Dnipro University of Technology, Ukraine; Lancaster University Ghana; and Sunway University, Malaysia.

We hope that bringing together this collection will spark new conversations and reflections between stakeholders across the Lancaster Partnership. And we hope to continue those conversations at the next edition of the conference, to be held on 24-25 June 2025. The next theme for the conference is: *Reimagining Education: Inclusive Practices and Transformative Curriculum Design*.

Acknowledgements

Presenting these Proceedings would not have been possible without the support of the Lancaster University Library team and their Lancaster University Open Journals project³, which has allowed us to use the Open Journal Systems platform. We would particularly like to thank Tom Morley, Research Culture and Open Monographs Lead, for his support as we brought this project to fruition.

³ <https://portal.lancaster.ac.uk/ask/study/library/open-research/open-access/lancaster-university-open-journals/>