

## A Pluralism of Methods

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Welcome to the twelfth issue of this journal in which we have again included a mixture of reports and scholarly articles that we hope will interest you and stimulate reflection on learning and teaching.

For this issue we interviewed Dr Deirdre Burke, Senior Lecturer in religious studies at the University of Wolverhampton and National Teaching Fellow. She has been involved in many projects and events with the Subject Centre over the last six years and her insights deserve wide dissemination and implementation.

The disciplines supported by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies are diverse, even occasionally in conflict; so it should not come as a surprise that we cover education for sustainable development, reusable learning objects in RS, medical ethics teaching, an application of the concept of critical being to philosophy teaching and an analysis of the effectiveness of distance learning, amongst other things, in this issue. What is, perhaps, more unexpected is the diversity of methods to be found in the articles published here. No single methodological framework captures expert practitioners' interpretation of precisely what learning and teaching are and

how they should therefore be described, analysed and developed. It is a core virtue that the humanities, and the PRS disciplines in particular, continually reflect on their own nature, a virtue that prevents there ever being any consensus on what could be 'pure' and 'objective' evidence of the most efficient ways of studying or understanding learning and teaching. And yet it is also at the heart of our subjects that we constantly strive to understand, express and share the on-going creative dialogue about ourselves and the world. Consequently, we find the richness of our subjects clearly apparent in our thinking about teaching in our subjects. I believe that this plurality of **methods** demonstrates the thriving health of pedagogical reflection in PRS, even more so than the range of topics themselves. And we shall continue to support and nurture this pluralism in a context where pressures to conform to inappropriate methodological approaches continue to grow.

## Survey

During this spring you should have received a survey from the Subject Centre with a reply-paid envelope. Returns have been good so far, but we would urge you to complete the survey as soon as possible, if you have not already done so. It covers questions about **Discourse**, as well as more general questions about the Subject Centre. It is an opportunity for you to help us develop services and materials that can better support your teaching. If you have not received a survey and would like one, please contact the Subject Centre, or complete the on-line version at:

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/surveys/prs>

A snapshot of results will be taken at the end of June, but the survey will remain active and continue to inform our publication planning after that date.

## Website

Later this summer we will be launching a new look to our website, which in due course will feature much greater on-line access to previously published papers from Discourse.

As always, all feedback is welcome and I hope there is something of value for you in this issue. I wish you a happy and fruitful summer.

David J. Mossley, Editor

## Erratum

In Volume 6 No. 1 the final line of Wayne Morris' paper '**Learning, Teaching and Assessment with Deaf Students: The Development of a Programme in Christian Ministry**' was missed off due to a typesetting error. We apologise for this?the final paragraph should have read:

This programme is important because its success or otherwise has the potential for ramifications and positive benefits for all of HE as it works towards widening access and participation for a greater number of people. The programme is also important because BSL is now recognised as a full language and it has the capacity for the full range of expression of ideas that is equal to English. That in turn provides Deaf people with new and exciting opportunities to learn and develop using their own language on a par with their hearing peers. That is a reality that has never before been available to Deaf people but that will, with care and in time, become more of a possibility.

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