

Editorial: Akoji Emmanuel Haruna and Monty Adkins

Welcome to this postgraduate researcher (PGR) edition of *Fields*, the University of Huddersfield's journal dedicated to showcasing the diversity of innovative research. *Fields* aims to inspire our students to aim for excellence and contribute to global impact in the areas of research, innovation, and discovery.

This special edition comes out of the 2023 PGR conference and features a selection of research articles representing the breadth of scholarship from across the University. The 2020 version of the PGR conference was dedicated to rebuilding the PGR community following the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Building on that foundation, the theme of the 2023 PGR conference was "Gather and Grow" and focused on resilience and development, in addition to strengthening connections within the PGR community.

For the first time, the University of Huddersfield's PGR conference was held in collaboration with the University of Salford. The collaborative initiative provided researchers across both institutions the unique opportunity to share, discuss, and celebrate their thought-provoking research thereby enhancing inter-institutional and PGR community bonds, as well as broadening the reach of scholarly engagement.

In this edition, we are proud to present some of the outstanding research contributions from the at the University of Huddersfield PGR community. We hope that it not only highlights the significant and original work of our researchers, but that it also inspires our readers to engage with this work and its implications for each field of activity.

The first paper by **Samuel Higson-Blythe**, 'From the Book of Revelation to Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*: Unveiling Causality in Apocalypse' compares notions of apocalypse across thousands of years, from the Bible to the postmodern novelist Kurt Vonnegut. The paper explores what apocalypse is in theology, in literature and, most importantly, in the real world, and develops a new definition of the term. The paper contributes to the field of eco-writing through its emphasis on the powers of the artist to inspire change, and its research stems from the author's own writing of a pre-apocalyptic eco-novel for his master's by Research in Creative Writing.

Hannah Schofield-Lea presents the results of her research into the industrial usage of natural and synthetic dyestuffs in Huddersfield, as part of the 2023 'Growing Colour Together' WOVEN In Kirklees festival. The research topic explores how perceptions of sustainability and environmentalism are entwined with public understanding of textile dyestuffs, using data gathered from an exhibition at the Colne Valley Museum. Schofield-Lea presents a complex view of natural dyestuffs compared to modern perceptions, arguing how industrial usage of either synthetic or natural dyestuffs causes environmental damage, and that no one dyestuff is better than the other.

Research that relates to a relatively new policy reform in Further Education (FE) in England, with the introduction of Technical Levels (T-Level) qualifications is discussed by **Kevin Scullion**. The research considers how vocational pedagogy could be improved with formative questioning. This review explores the existing literature on questioning theories and models within the post-secondary sector. It highlights FE practitioners' understanding and application of formative questioning within FE and adult learning. Finally, it highlights a lack of empirical evidence within the FE sector, indicating the need for further evidence-based research.

Continuing the theme of education-related papers, **Patricia Quashie** outlines the research undertaken to investigate the experiences of mothers working in 6th form and FE colleges as they navigate pregnancy and as new mothers. Using semi-structured interviews supported by image elicitation, the research aims to investigate how family friendly policies in place in the organisations are experienced. There is a focus on the theoretical framework used to establish the possible reasons for women experiencing the policies in the way they do.

Leeanne Olivant addresses the underrepresentation of looked-after children with learning disabilities as participants in research. The article presents a doctoral case study of nine such children using dynamic and creative methods to overcome barriers to participation. It explores the ethical concerns, consent challenges, and adult gatekeeping, which must be addressed to ensure diverse perspectives are heard in research. The article emphasises that including vulnerable groups in research is vital for policy and practice development, and advocates for inclusive, rights-based approaches to ensure diverse, often silenced, voices are heard.

EdD candidate **Paul O'Sullivan** seeks the perceptions and perspectives of teachers working in Pupil Referral Units (PRU) with children who have been excluded from mainstream schools. The voices of teachers in PRUs are underrepresented in current literature, and in addressing this underrepresentation, Paul discusses how they define success in this unique setting and what they consider the most effective classroom practices. O'Sullivan finds that participants agree on several possible changes that would make outcomes for pupils better which, if considered by leaders and policymakers, could support the development and growth of teaching and learning in PRUs nationwide.

Siobhan Melay, a final-year PhD candidate based in the School of Business, Education and Law, focuses on the professional identity of learning support staff. Her paper emphasises the need for inclusivity and equity, reflecting diverse perspectives on professionalism. The research synthesises a wide range of literature on the evolving professional status of learning support staff in education before highlighting the complexities and tensions affecting our understanding of professional identity. The paper concludes by calling for further research into the personal narratives of support staff, ultimately contributing to more equitable educational environments.

Lastly, **Joanne Armitage's** research explores the many social factors which can influence social communication. Sociolinguistic interviews were carried out during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, when strict social regulations were implemented by the Government. While the use of online social platforms facilitated the gathering of social groups globally, they enabled her to informally interview participants in the comfort of their own homes. This

opportunity not only enhanced the research in the area of social networks and regional dialects, but it provided a sense of normality for all concerned, during these difficult times.