Inspiring Academic Practice: Foreword
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Scholarly writing about one’s own practice can be extremely powerful and none more so than with the collection of papers in this edition of the Inspiring Academic Practice journal. Such writing prompts others to experiment, to create even the briefest of moments to pause and reflect on our own work, and inspires the confidence to share ideas, to share learning and to get involved in the shared process of enhancing the education we all help to create.

This edition of IAP coincides with the publication of the University’s new Education Strategy, which sets an agenda for education at Exeter through to 2020. The Strategy is ambitious, internationalist, and focuses on the outcomes we achieve with our students and the impact they have on the world when they graduate. It seeks to capture the essence of what makes education at Exeter special: unrivalled student engagement, the strong sense of community, the ambition to see research and discovery inspire our graduates to amazing things, and the commitment to build our strong foundations to ensure the Exeter Experience remains at the forefront of international educational practice over the coming years.

Such strategies should never be judged by the words on the website but by their ability to enthuse all those who can play a part in making them come to life and become a reality for students and educators. It is the very practice that the authors in this journal describe that demonstrates how strategic aims become reality on the ground. Natasha Bellinger’s account of developing a new module in negotiation for the Law programme shows how the use of simulations and technology, coupled with a concern for developing ethical understanding, can develop attributes of value for employment not just in law but in many other professions. Salah Troudi shows how understanding one’s own theoretical framework and epistemological approach is important in researching education. Maria Lafuente describes her ‘adventure’ in using formative e-tests on ELE in foreign language learning, in a way that has improved the engagement and achievement of her students, with an excellent practical demonstration of how simple technologies can improve feedback and aid student learning, even concluding with a link to a short ‘how-to’ video guide for other educators. Still on the ‘cyber’ theme, Ann Kelly reflects on the challenges of developing anthropology education in the midst of ‘a technological revolution’ underway in society today. She describes her own plans to embrace the use of technology to support social learning ‘beyond the classroom’ on her ‘Anthropology of Africa’ module, seeing potential for both empowering her students and developing further opportunities for inter-disciplinarity, vital in the ‘Fourth Age’ of research. Finally, Stephen Rose crystalises that essence of the Exeter Experience, with his paper explaining the value of engaging undergraduate students as researchers, and showcasing some amazing and award-winning examples of student published work at Exeter across science and humanities disciplines.

All these articles demonstrate ably that innovation in education is thriving at the University of Exeter. It is central to the achievement of our new strategy for education and stimulates and nurtures further advancements in our practice. I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as I have and that it inspires you to research, write about and share your own experiences in creating excellence in education at Exeter.