International Studies in Widening Participation

Editorial
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The *International Studies in Widening Participation* journal was established in late 2013. The journal is located at the *Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education* at the University of Newcastle, Australia. The journal is aimed to engage academics, practitioners, and students on a wide range of topics related to widening participation.

The inaugural volume includes five papers. All papers are peer reviewed by national and international scholars with research strength in primary, secondary and post-secondary education, access and equity, widening participation, and other disciplinary areas.

In this volume, initiatives which aim to widen participation through enhancing the experiences of higher education students are included. The article by *Liu* and *McGrath-Champ* examines the experiences of mentoring for low socio-economic status students. Through evaluating a mentoring program for first year students, *Liu* and *McGrath-Champ* are able to provide insights about implementing mentoring programs which build informal networks and increase the social capital of first year students from low socio-economic backgrounds. *Rowley* looks at the perceptions of first year university students who are involved in an undergraduate service learning unit of study. As part of the unit, the first year music and visual arts students partner with school students from low socio-economic schools to engage in collaborative learning. Rowley's work indicates that widening participation can be achieved through close partnerships between higher education providers and primary and secondary schools.

Technology can also be useful in widening participation. *Hopkins* and *Ryan* explore the role of using social networking technologies and digital platforms within an enabling tertiary preparation program to promote social integration, encourage expressive self-reflection and introduce students to the higher education environment. The Enabling program discussed by Hopkins and Ryan provides an alternative means of entry to higher education for many domestic students from disadvantaged backgrounds. On the other hand, *Kantini* looks at how innovation in technology can be used to widen student participation in low resource countries. *Kantini's* paper proposes a theoretical framework that could be used to widen participation and equity in higher education in low resource countries by harnessing the power of Learning 2.0.

National and institutional student equity and diversity policies have improved access, success, and support services for students with disabilities. The paper by *Downing* focuses on the experiences of an autistic mature-age student participating in a fully online course. By looking at the experiences of this student, *Downing* is able to provide insight into the difficulties posed by online learning for students with autism. Her study also outlines the journey undertaken by both the academics and the student in order to enable him to participate in the course. *Downing's* study provides useful insight into inclusive course design.

The second volume of papers will be published in December 2014.