

## Editorial: Researching to Improve and Inform Teaching and Learning in a Period of Uncertainty

Much has happened in the sector since our last edition. September 2015 saw the commencement of the first round of the area reviews for Post-16 education and training provision, with the stated aim of creating '*...fewer, often larger, more resilient and efficient providers*' (BIS, 2015: p. 3). We are beginning to see the impact of this policy lever on the sector in terms of the announcements of proposed mergers between colleges and, perhaps less expectedly, the widely reported plan for Bury College to merge with the University of Bolton. Financially, the much-feared Chancellor's budget in November 2015 surprised many with its announcement that funding for 16 to 19 year olds would be protected, though this has to be seen against a backdrop of five years of successive cuts. However, the hoped-for stability that the promise of protected funding would offer could not prevent Learning South West, a charitable organisation involved in education and youth training, going into administration in April after serving its region for over 60 years. Significantly for HUDCETT and the other CETT, the Association for Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (ACETT), who led joint bidding by the CETT for project funding and represented us at national level meetings, was a division of Learning South West and so no longer exists. One thing that we must hold to during this period of uncertainty is that teaching and learning remains the sector's main priority.

This issue brings together three very different papers about teaching, learning, and assessment. Much has been written about the impact of lesson observations within quality assurance, so it is good to see Dominic Brockway's case study into student teachers' perspectives on the lesson observation process within an in-service Initial Teacher Education programme. Our second paper is by two Teacher Educators who have adopted a self-study type approach to developing flipped learning materials for the students on their Initial Teacher Education award. Their key recommendation is that some Teacher Educators need further training in the use of learning technologies if they are to increase their competence and confidence in using them and thus model their potential application to student teachers. Finally, Michael Smith uses a case study approach to explore and debate the different types of literacy found amongst vocational students and how these need to be nurtured, valued, and recognised by assessment regimes such as the Functional Skills English qualifications.

### Reference

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) (2015) 'Post-16 Education and Training Institutions: Area Based Reviews', [www.gov.uk/bis](http://www.gov.uk/bis) [accessed 9 June 2016].

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