

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

<p><b>Institution:</b> University of Lincoln</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Education</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Student as Producer</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Student as Producer connects academic teaching, undergraduate research and student engagement at the level of curriculum design and practice within HE institutions, which has in turn affected national HE teaching agencies approach to developing practice. The impact includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shaping the Students as Partners approach, now recommended by HEA, JISC and the QAA as essential for effective teaching practice, that emerged from a cross-sectoral debate in which Student as Producer played a leading role;</li> <li>• review of teaching practices carried out by academics within a range of institutions;</li> <li>• creation of an international network to promote undergraduate research, via a student research publication.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The research underpinning Student as Producer provides a critical theoretical framework which prompts academics to examine the meaning and purpose of higher education, specifically involving and partnering with students. The research’s context is the global marketisation of higher education and its critique. The purpose of the research is to create alternative models of higher education, based on academic values grounded in the principles of democracy, social justice, equality, openness and common ownership. The marketised model promotes the concept of ‘student as consumer’, in which curriculum design is based on instrumental approaches to education, thereby encouraging pedagogical practices that are antithetical to deep learning.</p> <p>This case study reflects research undertaken since 2008, led by Neary, in higher education settings in different countries. The methodology underpinning the research is grounded in a conceptual and theoretical framework derived from a critical engagement with Marxist social theory, working with the actual settings of higher education teaching and partnerships with students. The research methods used included extended case studies within different HE contexts; participatory action research interventions, based on observation, analysis and action; semi-structured interviews; and documentary analysis.</p> <p>The theoretical base of Marxist thought of workers as producers was applied to Student as Producer, creating a framework for recovering a different model for higher education from the current model of marketised higher education. The key outcome from the research is an institutional framework, which is being used by universities to develop their own teaching programmes. This framework includes suggestions for redrafting quality protocols, a model for student engagement, and a strategy for teaching technologies, all based on the principles of the student as a producer of knowledge and of higher education itself.</p> <p>Key concepts developed through the research include: ‘Student as Producer’, ‘student engagement’, and ‘Teaching Politically’. Key outputs from this work include curriculum development programmes, academic articles, a national Student as Partner initiative sponsored by the Higher Education Academy, an international student research publication and annual student research conference, and the consolidation of a transnational network of academic and student activism. Further research outputs featuring Student as Producer in the context of postgraduate study are being developed.</p> <p>Student as Producer received project funding (£200,000 from the HEA) as part of the National Teaching Fellowship Fund. Lincoln was the lead institution, in collaboration with other universities, including Warwick, Sheffield, UCLAN and Macquarie from 2010–2013. The key researchers were Neary, working with Amsler and Winn, both in the Centre for Educational Research and</p>

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Development, together with Crawford, Director of Learning and Teaching for the College of Social Science at the University of Lincoln.

The new practices and concepts that have emerged this work have been presented by Neary in keynote speeches at national and international conferences. The considerable debate he has generated is reflected in peer-reviewed publications, as well as in non-academic articles, including in *Guardian Education* and the *Times Higher Education*.

**3. References to the research**

- Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2009) 'Student as Producer – Reinventing the Undergraduate Curriculum', in L. Bell, H. Stevenson, and M. Neary (eds) *The Future of Higher Education*, Continuum, London and New York: 126-139.
- Neary, M. and Saunders, G. (2011) 'Leadership and Learning Landscapes in Higher Education, the struggle for the idea of the University', *Higher Education Quarterly* 65 (4): 333-352.
- Neary, M. and Amsler, S. (2012) 'Occupy: A New Pedagogy of Time and Space?' *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 10 (2): 106-138.
- Neary, M. (2012) 'Teaching Politically: Policy, Pedagogy and the New European University', *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 10 (2): 233-256.
- Neary, M. and Winn, J. (2012) 'Open Education: Commons, Communism and the New Common Wealth', *Ephemera: Theory and Politics in Organisation*, 12 (4): 406-421.
- Neary, M. (2013) 'Student as Producer: Radicalising Higher Education' in E. Dunne and D. Owen (eds) *The Student Engagement Handbook: Practices in Higher Education*, Emerald Books, Bingley: 587-602.

**4. Details of the impact**

Evidence for the impact of the Student as Producer action research and case studies is manifest at three interconnected levels: in institutional strategies, where institution-wide initiatives are developed and implemented; national HE teaching development agencies, who have embraced initiatives and provided funding for individual institutions based on student as producer principles; and a range of changed practices involving students at the centre of their studies in different HE environments. Examples from the research undertaken through action research interventions were presented at conferences; academic papers were published and further disseminated, including through the Student as Producer website, to the wider community; case studies were used in consultancy in institutions, and national teaching development agencies were involved as the research evolved and developed in a feedback loop to further shape the research. The following are examples of the real impact of the Student as Producer research:

**Institutional Strategies**

Student as Producer has impacted on the strategic decisions of a number of higher education institutions in the UK and internationally, including:

- *Vanderbilt University*, in the USA, which has developed its own version of Student as Producer, based on the Lincoln model. The impact at Vanderbilt is manifest in the way in which students take on the role of producers within curriculum; development ([cft.vanderbilt.edu/2013/09/students-as-producers-an-introduction/](http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/2013/09/students-as-producers-an-introduction/));
- *Nottingham Trent University*, where the direct institutional level impact of Student as Producer is evidenced by the creation of the Scholarship Project for Undergraduate Research (SPUR) initiative, which links undergraduates with university research teams (see sources);
- *The University of Warwick*, which has established a Student as Producer fund to promote undergraduate research as central to the academic culture and project of the university ([www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross\\_fac/iatl/funding/students/](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/funding/students/)).

**National HE Teaching Development Agencies**

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Student as Producer has affected curriculum design and practice and has been taken up by the Higher Education Academy, JISC, and in different higher education settings, including:

- *HEA* – The key area of impact is the contribution Student as Producer has made to the concept of Student as Partners, both intellectually and practically. In support of the concept of student partnerships, Student as Producer research has provided sound working examples of its practical application across a whole institution, and a framework for a critical debate about student engagement in higher education (see sources);
- *JISC* – ‘The Summer of Student Innovation’ (2013), which is based on undergraduate students’ capacities to produce technological innovations for teaching and learning, was based on the framework developed by the Student as Producer initiative. JISC also adopted the concept of student as producer in thinking about their approach to Open Educational Resources ([www.jisc.ac.uk/inform/inform37/StudentsAsProducers.html#.UnYnT8xFCM8](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/inform/inform37/StudentsAsProducers.html#.UnYnT8xFCM8)).

### Changed HE Practices in Institutions

- *Mary Washington University*, in the USA, has used Student as Producer principles as the basis of a university on-line programme, ‘A Domain of One’s Own’ ([umwdomains.com/](http://umwdomains.com/)), where students create web pages for publication and dissemination of their work;
- *Macquarie University*, in Australia, where the recent establishment of ‘The Education Studio’ was influenced by Student as Producer, and the imperative to have students working alongside academics to solve complex education problems (see sources);
- *The University of Hertfordshire* is using Student as Producer as an exemplary case study for its HEA funded Change Academy Project. Student as Producer provided the university with a clear institutional model for delivering enquiry based learning across their Business School (see sources);
- *The University of Liverpool*, where *The Interchange Project*, a charity based in the Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology, supports undergraduate students as researchers within voluntary organisations. Student as Producer is used as the pedagogical theory to underpin practice (see sources).

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

*Bruff, Derek* – Director of the Centre for Teaching at the University of Vanderbilt: ‘I first heard the term ‘Student as Producer’ in a keynote given by the University of Lincoln’s Mike Neary in 2011 at a conference in Ireland. What appealed to me about the University of Lincoln’s initiative, and what I look forward to exploring with the Vanderbilt community this year, is the involvement of students as producers inside the classroom, that is within the confines of a standard semester long course’ ([cft.vanderbilt.edu/2013/09/students-as-producers-an-introduction/](http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/2013/09/students-as-producers-an-introduction/));

*Groom, Jim* – Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Technologies at Mary Washington University, writes: ‘Building on Lincoln’s example, the University of Mary Washington is also trying to empower its undergraduate students to take control of their education through a project called ‘A Domain of One’s Own’ which... will give all Freshman their own domain and web host. The idea here, like at the University of Lincoln, is that we provide students with the possibilities of framing their educational spaces and sharing the work they do as part of the class beyond the walls of the institution’;

*Hampton-Reeves, Professor Stuart* – Director of the Centre for Research Informed Teaching, UCLAN, and chair of BCUR. As keynote speaker at the 2013 Student as Producer conference, he emphasised ‘the vital importance of the work of Student as Producer and its lessons for universities’ ([tiny.cc/43f91w](http://tiny.cc/43f91w));

*Hardwick, Dr Louise* – Director of the Interchange Project at Liverpool University, acknowledges that: ‘there is no doubt that Student as Producer has helped us develop and understand the critical pedagogy underpinning Interchange modules’. The relationship between the Interchange Project and Student as Producer was consolidated when Professor Neary was the invited Keynote speaker at their AGM in 2013 ([www.liv.ac.uk/interchange/events/](http://www.liv.ac.uk/interchange/events/));

*Jarvis, Professor Joy* – Professor of Educational Practice at the University of Hertfordshire: ‘the impact that Professor Neary has had on educational practice at UH has been substantial... this ongoing relationship with Professor Neary will continue to have a significant impact on the development of our education policy and practice in the future’;

*Kernohan, David* – e-learning Programme Manager at JISC: ‘The Lincoln Student as Producer project played an important part in JISC work around Open Educational Resources (OER)... and acted as a beacon of practice across the sector... To say that this was influential in the UK OER community is an understatement – the work coming out of Lincoln transformed the critical and theoretical landscape of the programme, and was warmly welcomed by globally significant writers and practitioners in the field’;

*Levy, Professor Philippa* – Higher Education Authority Deputy Chief Executive: ‘At the HEA level there is clear evidence of the direct impact that Student as Producer has had as a powerful inspirational and practical impact across UK and international higher education’. Professor Levy underlined the importance of the impact of Student as Producer across the higher education sector in her keynote address at the Student as Producer conference, Lincoln, 2013 ([tiny.cc/43f91w](http://tiny.cc/43f91w));

*Martinez-Arboleda, Antonio* – Principal Teaching Fellow at the University of Leeds, and Co-Investigator on the OpenLIVES Project writes: ‘Student as Producer has had a significant impact in my academic practice. Firstly, it has provided a starting point and a solid philosophical basis for my own critique of the very limited role that student research still has in Higher Education. Thanks to Student as Producer I was able to engage critically with educational practice across the sector with greater confidence. Secondly, my own students and other learners across the world, will be benefiting from the changes I have introduced in my practice as a result of my engagement with Student as Producer. As a co-investigator in the JISC-funded project OpenLIVES, I have published a full collection of OERs which have been influenced by Student as Producer educational principles. My own students and other colleagues and students at the Universities of Southampton and Portsmouth have published their OERs too as part of OpenLIVES. In our discussions and work we have taken on board not only Open Practice and Oral History principles, as OpenLIVES intended originally, but also the Student as Producer pedagogy. Evidence and full details of the impact that Student as Producer has had in my academic practice can be found in my recent publications’;

*Pole, Professor Chris* – PVC Academic, at Nottingham Trent University: ‘...the Scholarship Project for Undergraduate Research (SPUR) initiative, which links undergraduates with research teams in the university, drew heavily on Student as Producer’ ([www.ntu.ac.uk/apps/news/133266-25/SPUR\\_students\\_present\\_findings\\_at\\_poster\\_exhibition.aspx](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/apps/news/133266-25/SPUR_students_present_findings_at_poster_exhibition.aspx));

*Solomonides, Dr Ian* – Director of Teaching and Learning at Macquarie University: ‘The recent establishment of “The Education Studio” was in part inspired by the idea of Student as Producer and the imperative to have students working alongside academics to solve complex education problems’ ([www.mq.edu.au/educationstudio](http://www.mq.edu.au/educationstudio)).