PTAS Project Report   (for REGULAR PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title: From the door of our tent: an online journal of creative and contemporary ethnographic work composed and curated by undergraduate students of the University of Edinburgh

Project type (delete as appropriate) :
B Innovation Project (introduction and evaluation of an educational innovation, usually taking a practical approach)

Principal Investigator : John Harries

Schools/department : Social Anthropology, School of Social and Political Science

Team members (including Schools and Departments) :

Laura Major, formerly Social Anthropology, School of Social and Political Science

Lauren Wilks, Sociology, School of Social and Political Science

With support from Lucie Stokes and her team with the Student Development Office, School of Social and Political Science, and Scholarly Communications Team of Information Services.

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Report (maximum 1500 words)

What did you do?

The original project proposed that we would "establish an online anthropology journal that will feature work authored by undergraduate students at the University of Edinburgh. Not only will this journal feature student work, but it will also be student lead, in that all processes involved in the creation of this journal – from the solicitation of original work, to the reviewing of this work, through to the design and eventual dissemination of the journal – will be undertaken by an "editorial board" composed of undergraduate students, with input and support from teaching and information services staff at the School of Social and Political Science."

In these terms our endeavour was wholly successful.

The journal has been established, led by an "editorial collective" of UG students in SPS and publishing peer-reviewed pieces based on ethnographic research undertaken by UG students, mostly in SPS. With the support of the student development office and scholarly communications team, as well as eventually the communications team in SPS, as well an "advisory team", which included a paid editorial assistant (initially Lauren Wilkes, now Leah Eades), the "editorial collective" led on all phases and components of this project, including the promotion of the journal, discussing and agreeing editorial policy and ethics guidelines, managing workflow, and bring this journal into being an online entity. A limited number of printed copies of the journal were also created for souvenir and promotional purposes. Additionally, again with the support of the student development office in SPS, those who wished to worked towards and were awarded an "Edinburgh Award for Digital Content Creation."

The first issue of the journal, now entitled **re:think**, was published online in summer 2018. The second issue was published online in summer 2019. The editorial collective reconvened in autumn 2019 and is working towards the publication of the third issue in summer 2020. To see and enjoy the journal please go to: http://journals.ed.ac.uk/rethink.

The work continues to be supported by an advisory team (Agustin Diz, John Harries and Leah Eades) as well as the communications team is SPS, the student development office in SPS and the scholarly communications team. Financially, it is supported by SPS via a budget line in the Social Anthropology budget.

What did you find out?

This project has been a challenge as the work of bring a journal into being and then sustaining the existence of that journal from autumn 2018 until now has been demanding, and commitment to that work has sometimes waivered and, of course, with both student and staff turnover the project team has required reinvigoration with the beginning of each academic year. But we have kept going and the journal seems now to be a sustainable entity. Gratifyingly, as this project has gone on UG students have taken increasing ownership of the work of making this sustainable to the point of very much driving this project forward and ensuring its ongoing vitality.

I think and hope the students have learned a lot, both those involved in the editorial collective, particularly those who have translated that involvement into an Edinburgh Award, as well as those who transformed their coursework (most of our submissions are based coursework) into articles suitable for publication. Certainly when it comes to the "editorial collective" I would suggest we

have all learned a lot about project management and team-working. As an academic involved from the outset I have learned a lot about the potential and challenges of initiating a student-led project to take learning beyond the classroom and, in particularly, trying to ensure that project is sustainable beyond the provision of PTAS-funding and the initial enthusiasm that comes with the initiation of any project.

How did you disseminate your findings?

The nature of this project is such that we have no findings to disseminate. Our ambition was to create a journal featuring ethnographic work undertaken by UG students that would be open-access and so available to, well, everybody as well as discoverable through Googlescholar etc.

This ambition has been achieved, again see: http://journals.ed.ac.uk/rethink, so in a sense this is our dissemination.

That being said, there is more work required to promote this journal and to enhance its visibility and, in so doing, enhance the range of submissions this journal receives. The students leading on marketing and promotion, support by the communications team in SPS, continue to work on such enhancements. Additionally, more work could also be done to integrate published articles into our teaching, thereby underscoring the institutional value of student work. Certainly I have done so with Invention of History, a course I offer at honours level.

What have been the benefits to student learning?

Students may be better able to speak to this than I, but much has been learned about digital content creation, the making and editing of online journals, project management, team-working, marketing and promotion etc. More basically, students have learned that they can take ownership of their own learning and so become recognised as emerging academics in their own right.

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

From the outset this project was not necessarily confined to students in SPS. Any student can join the editorial collective and any UG student can publish in this journal, so long as the submission meets the criteria for publication. In practice, however, the vast majority of the editorial collective are students in SPS, Social Anthropology in particular, and likewise the vast majority of published articles are based on work done for social anthropology courses. We are still working on promoting this journal more widely to enhance participation form elsewhere in the University. This is, I will

admit, something of a challenge in terms of time and also money. We are additionally considering

a move to invite submissions from UG students from other Universities, with one of my colleagues,

Agustin Diz, reaching out to contacts in LSE to promote our call for submission more widely.

Financial statement (please delete as appropriate):

This project has utilised the funding awarded to it by the PTAS adjudication committee and the Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.

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