

## Case Study – The first University of Northampton Undergraduate Journal *Undergraduate Research; Inspire, Challenge and Achieve (URICA)*

### CONTACT

**Dr Estelle Tarry**  
*Senior Lecturer*

### CONTEXT

The online journal [URICA](#) celebrates the work of undergraduates at the School of Education in the University of Northampton and meets various objectives within 'Raising the Bar'; Student Experience, Research and Enterprise, Learning and Teaching, and quality and standards.

Undergraduate research including Dissertations have been selected from work judged to be of very good or exceptional quality that also has a little 'sparkle', that sets it apart from other School of Education undergraduate research. All work has undergone rigorous peer review by at least 2 members of the University staff and the Editorial Board.

Within the School of Education there many courses of different types and so students come from a wide range of

backgrounds: some are in employment, some are full time students, some are young and some are mature students, some aim to work with young children and some with adults and some do not want to work in Education at all. Therefore the Students have a very wide choice in topics for their final year dissertations. Obviously comparison cannot be made between the courses based on what is reproduced within the journal.

**URICA - Undergraduate Research;  
Inspire, Challenge and Achieve**

Programmes within the school include

- BA/BSc (Joint Hons) Education Studies and 'subject'
- BA (Hons) Education Studies
- BA (Hons) Childhood and Youth
- BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies
- BA (QTS) Early Years Education
- BA (Hons) Learning and Teaching
- BA (QTS) Primary Education

The Editorial Board consists of one member from each programme. A criterion for selection has been developed along with supportive documents, including ethics and copyright. All students follow the BERA Guidelines (2011) and the Dissertations meet a good/exceptional quality.

Tutors in the School of Education are requested to identify any suitable Dissertations and their Programme Leader selects one to three possible Dissertations. The Editorial Board meets in July and reads the selection and possible Dissertations for publication are selected. The authors are then contacted and asked if they are prepared to make small editorial changes for publication by the beginning of January.



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### INTENDED OUTCOMES

- To celebrate undergraduate success
- To provide exemplars of dissertations and work for present undergraduates
- To be a teaching resource for tutors

### THE BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

#### Benefits:

- Celebrates success
- Easy access for students and tutors
- A teaching resource
- Cross Divisional, so tutors are aware of the topics of interest

#### Challenges:

- To ensure all documentation is in place and various University Boards have considered the various issues encountered.
- The Editorial Board would like to highlight the tensions that have been encountered during the process of selection and publication. In some cases choices were made between work that appeared almost equally good, but very different in character and had the 'sparkle'.
- Ensuring sufficient time is given to the students to submit their edited version and quite often by the summer/Christmas they are in full time employment or postgraduate study.
- Ensuring that any tables/graphs etc. are removed to ensure that copyright is met without affecting the quality of the work.



**We are presently working on volume 3 which will be published in February 2015**  
– look out for it at <http://bit.ly/URICA>