

Example of a Review Using the Template

Supplemental resource to *Writing about Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Creating and Contributing to Scholarly Conversations across a Range of Genres* by Healey, Matthews, and Cook-Sather. Elon University Center for Engaged Learning, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.36284/celelon.oa3>.

Thank you for this contribution on student representation in higher education. I read the piece with great interest because, like you, I share a commitment to engaging with students in meaningful ways to shape learning and teaching. As such, I support fellow authors as members of the higher education scholarly community by offering developmental reviews to enhance your written contribution.

The purpose of your work is to “explore characteristics of the CR experience at a modern UK university to develop recommendations for practice to the SU and AD unit” (p4) and “report on research which explored the experiences of CRs in SAR in order to build on current literature postulating links between this thread of student voice and AD” and “to evaluate the CR experience”(p5) by drawing “on empirical data captured through cross-institutional research which explored the lived experience of the CR” (p1) that included a selection of “14 level 4 CRs” who reflected in an online diary, which informed the development and deployment of an online survey, “the ‘Student Academic Representation Assessment’ (SARA)”, sent to the “entire CR population” along with recruitment of five staff who were interviewed (p5).

In doing this work, you write: “This paper represents a first but significant step in addressing this gap” (p5) and “The data provided by SARA can provide AD with understating of the context in which SAR student voice is created and negotiated, with which it can enter discussions about developing and using SAR student voice to greater effect” (p16). You end the article by discussing your next steps and calling for collaboration: “The authors are now collaborating with the National Union of Students to run the SARA more widely across the UK HE sector in 2019. If your SU or HEI is interested in using the SARA then please contact the corresponding author.”

I have recommended this manuscript be declined in its current form to (name of journal) while encouraging the authors to reframe the piece for future new submission with guidance below. In doing so, I understand the editor, in consideration of fellow peer-reviewers, will make the final decision.

I have several suggestions to enhance this work listed in no particular order as all work together to guide revisions and note this is an exhaustive list.

1. If you resubmit to an international journal, then (a) explain UK-specific jargon (as one example, level 4) so international readers feel included in your conversation; and (b) explicitly articulate why the research matters beyond the UK so international readers can clearly understand how they learn from your “context” rich case study and feel included in your conversation.

2. Case study framing makes sense to signal the context-rich nature of the study. In doing so, offer readers more insight into the context of your case study that builds from the helpful Figure 1. As one example, you mention training and as the reader I wanted to understand what that training consisted for your CRs. I suggest you add a section called “context” or “program” and describe it, which makes sense for a case study design in an empirical research article.
3. You jump into ‘AD’ without any explanation of what AD means or includes, and then refer to AD as a single homogenous thing or being, so tell readers what AD means to you in the context of your study yet in conversation with rich literature on AD as a scholarly field of inquiry. The *International Journal for Academic Development* or IJAD is a great resource.
4. Who is your audience? My sense is that you are talking to AD so I wondered if IJAD is a better fit for your revised paper? You are also focused on the UK, so perhaps *Student Engagement Journal in Higher Education* (SEJHE) or similar UK-specific journal is a better fit for revised paper?
5. What is the aim? I quoted the manuscript above to signal multiple aims. From reading the paper, I believe the aim was to (a) evaluate your program with data from institutional research project, (b) promote the SARA so more people use it in collaboration with you, and (c) proffer recommendations about SAR programs based on the important learning you have experienced from engagement in evaluating your SAR program. I was left wondering if you were better to reframe this as a practical case study for a SEJHE or *International Journal for Students as Partners* (IJSaP) which published practical case studies.
6. Building from point 5, and because I think you present valuable evaluative data and insights that others, including myself, can learn from to implement or refine SAR-like programs, I wonder if you reframe more pragmatically? I say this because the current work is disconnected from scholarly theorizations. As one example, ‘student voice’ is a rich topic in literature that is now explicitly linked to the engaging students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education scholarship (start with Cook-Sather et al, 2018 in IJSaP plus Cook-Sather 2018). Importantly, your treatment of ‘student voice’ stands in opposition to key theorizations of student voice from leading scholars, particularly Alison Cook-Sather, which stands out as you refer her work. Acknowledging the ongoing conversation in literature and positioning your understanding of ‘student voice’ would go a long way to strengthening how this work is received within the student voice/partnership scholarly communities.
7. Student voice, student perspectives, and student-sourced of data are all important but not the same thing, so future revisions can signal this. As an example to guide how you might reframe these terms without “judging” them, Matthews (2018) distinguishes between student perception data and engaging with students as partners. This is also an example showing a way to identify and then speak directly to an intended audience.
8. I am always concerned with claims of “first” and “no one else” and I do not think you need to make these claims going forward. There is an ongoing conversation about student representation and how evidence is used to inform teaching practices, and more, so does your paper really “represent a first but ... in addressing this issue”? Instead of making such assertions, which you contradict by citing Alf Lizzio and Keitha Wilson (as one example), tell readers how you are extending the conversation

and explicitly state your contribution in relationship to existing literature. Meeuwissen et al offer 2019 paper on student reps, as one example of more literature you could be connecting with.

9. In talking to AD, acknowledging how ADs as a scholarly community are grappling with ways to support and understand practices to nurture partnership, including representation as a form of partnership practices, would enrich your work and impact. See Matthews et al (2019), Felten et al (2019), and Peseta et al (2016) linked to importance of students understanding how the university works to work in it effectively or meaningfully.
10. The methodology is really a method or research design, so better named in revised manuscript. In revising that section, move past description of what you do to tell readers why you made the research design choices you did, how analysis was done, how themes were decided upon, how all the data sourced contributed to overall themes, rationale for purposeful sampling of students and staff. Lots of room to strengthen this section.
11. Re-write the abstract to align with actual paper. In doing so, I suggest drafting the abstract first as a planning tool to better align your paper, which struggled with disconnects from start to finish. In doing so, think about how the 'recommendations' fit with the paper and make sense given the results presented while better discussing the results in context of broader literature. Rethink your concluding sentences.

Grammar and formatting comments:

I will not offer an extensive list, but rather point toward some selected issues to signal the need for careful copy-edit and proof-reading prior to future submission of the manuscript. While seeming small and easy to fix, doing so prior to submission matters because reviewers could understand the numerous errors to mean the paper was a 'rush job' submitted prematurely.

1. Repeated references in the list: Bamber, V and Bamber R
2. Inconsistency in referencing format: check punctuation
3. Cook-Sather 2006 cited work refers to Cook-Sather 2006 in Curriculum Inquiry, not the piece in the reference list to 2006 translation work.
4. Acronyms are over-used and tend to not be spelled out: AD, UNIAC
5. Use of pronouns is taking away from understanding – look at use of "it" and "this", in particular, and replace with what pronouns are referring to.

In closing, I encourage the authors to rewrite the manuscript. I hope my comments to enhance the piece support your future efforts to share this work.

References

Cook-Sather, A. (2018). Tracing the evolution of student voice in educational research. In *Radical Collegiality through Student Voice* (pp. 17-38). Springer, Singapore.

Cook-Sather, A. (2002). Authorizing students' perspectives: Toward trust, dialogue, and change in education. *Educational researcher*, 31(4), 3-14.

Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, presence, and power: "Student voice" in educational research and reform. *Curriculum inquiry*, 36(4), 359-390.

Cook-Sather, A., Matthews, K. E., Ntem, A., & Leathwick, S. (2018). What we talk about when we talk about Students as Partners. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 2(2), 1-9.

Felten, P., Abbot, S., Kirkwood, J., Long, A., Lubicz-Nawrocka, T., Mercer-Mapstone, L., & Verwoord, R. (2019). Reimagining the place of students in academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 24(2), 192-203.

Matthews, K. E. (2018). Engaging students as participants and partners: An argument for partnership with students in higher education research on student success. *International Journal of Chinese Education*, 7(1), 42-64.

Matthews, K. E., Mercer-Mapstone, L., Dvorakova, S. L., Acai, A., Cook-Sather, A., Felten, P., ... & Marquis, E. (2018). Enhancing outcomes and reducing inhibitors to the engagement of students and staff in learning and teaching partnerships: implications for academic development. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 1-14.

Meeuwissen, S. N., Spruijt, A., van Veen, J. W., & de Goeij, A. F. (2019). Student participation in governance of medical and veterinary education: experiences and perspectives of student representatives and program directors. *Advances in Health Sciences Education*, 1-26.

Peseta, T., Bell, A., Clifford, A., English, A., Janarthana, J., Jones, C., ... & Zhang, J. (2016). Students as ambassadors and researchers of assessment renewal: puzzling over the practices of university and academic life. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 21(1), 54-66.