

# Editorial

Dafni Kalatzi Pantera

University of Essex

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## **Abstract**

This editorial piece marks the completion of my role as the Student Journal Editor for the Essex Student Journal. To commemorate this, I have written an account of my time in this editorial, exploring both the positives and challenges that have arisen.

**Keywords:** Essex Student Journal; Student Journal Editor; Scholarly Publishing; Open Access

## **Article**

The publishing world is complicated but magnificent. Researching, writing, reviewing, getting rejected, publishing are the core elements of publishing. In academia we usually think that publishing starts during people's postgraduate years, and I was always wondering why. Why should people wait until they start their postgraduate studies to publish? Why publishing can't be also open to students who have a passion for research? Students can have brilliant ideas and they might want to publicize them.

The Essex Student Journal gives this opportunity to students who are passionate about their work, and they want to reach a wider audience. This year, students with different interests, like politics, literature, psychology, social care, were able to publish in the journal. We are a multi-disciplinary journal, and this character is prominent in this issue, as we have contributions from a number of disciplines. The papers we have chosen for publication offer unique and engaging perspectives on a range of topics.

One of the papers that I found particularly interesting focuses on colour symbolism and its use by filmmakers under repressive regimes. The author, Jennifer Chante (2021) analyzes and compares two Middle Eastern films which both use vehicles and colour symbolism in narratives about female repression. Another interesting piece examines the impact of COVID-19 on the

marketing strategies of multinational corporations (Bicheno 2022). The author focuses on the Konamy company and one of its most famous products, namely the ‘YuGiOh’ cards. Of course, I couldn’t forget the last paper I published as the editor of the journal, which focuses on occupation apartheid, in other words on occupational injustices within healthcare and community practices (Virani 2022).

Reading many diverse but equally intriguing papers made me even more excited about the benefits that the publishing process can have to students. Student journals enhance students’ academic experience and thus universities should promote student journals if they want to promote students’ academic development. Throughout the year, we organized various events for boosting the journal’s visibility among students. By approaching students either via social media, with various videos, or via in person workshops and discovery days, we tried to highlight the benefits of publishing. Unsurprisingly students were responsive to our cause, and they wanted to get involved with the journal. Although we are still a small journal, we do grow a lot.

Additionally, my role as the journal editor did not only show me that publishing as a student is possible, but it also taught me the importance of free access publishing. The Essex Student Journal operates as a fully Diamond Open Access journal – i.e., it is free to both publish and access articles – for making student-led research open. One of our main goals this year was the propagation of open access benefits. To do so, we digitalized and added on our website more than 100 papers that were published in our journal (which was previously known as ESTRO) from 2009 until 2017<sup>1</sup>. Although the main purpose of this initiative was to make research available to a wider audience, the benefits of working on this project were many more. I had the chance of reading many interesting papers that otherwise I wouldn’t have read.

Our team also attended an event organized by YERUN (Young European Research Universities Network)<sup>2</sup> which was dedicated to open access advantages and challenges. The event was held via zoom, so many researchers, librarians, and stakeholders could attend. During the event, some universities, including Essex, presented their efforts to promote Diamond open access techniques. It was impressive hearing about the initiatives that universities have put forward for supporting open access. The University of Konstanz for instance has created the ‘PANDA’ for

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<sup>1</sup> You can find all the volumes of the journal here: <https://publications.essex.ac.uk/esj/issues/>

<sup>2</sup> You can find more information about YERUN here: <https://yerun.eu>

establishing library consortia to fund open access journals and books. Additionally, the presenter of the University of Rijeka mentioned a phrase that I still remember, and it describes how we can promote diamond open access: small fund + some volunteer work + a lot of enthusiasm = creation of a greater public good. This event showed us that although our journal is much smaller and newer than other university journals, we have ways to expand, and partners to get advice from.

Lastly, another fulfilling aspect of this role that I had not anticipated was the engagement with students. Part of my role was talking to students, promoting the journal, and generally promoting academic writing and publishing. Engaging students was a difficult task, but our team managed to find innovative ideas to do so, such as uploading videos to social media (Tik Tok, Instagram, Twitter), run workshops with games and prizes, and organizing interactive seminars. My favourite event was an online seminar about “Publishing with the Essex Student Journal” which was addressed to master students who wanted to turn their dissertation into an academic paper. My role in this seminar was to present the journal and give tips to students about the process of turning a dissertation into a paper. Although I was stressed in the beginning of the seminar, I shortly realized how much I was enjoying talking about research and helping students. The responses were amazing, and students were genuinely interested in the topic which made the seminar interesting for both them and me.

Working as the Student Journal Editor was an amazing experience that I will never forget. It was my first job in the academic world, and it has impassioned me even more about research. I was already familiar with the publishing world but only from the side of the author. What this job showed me is the other side, the one of the publishers. Understanding how publishing works made me a better researcher and an advocate of open access publishing. I want to believe that I also contributed to the team by offering ideas and working hard for promoting the values of the journal.

Of course, I couldn't finish this editorial without thanking all the people who helped me in this journey. The Essex Library team is made up of amazing people who are passionate about their job and keen to help in any ways possible. I am especially grateful to Hannah and Kat who made my time here at the Journal unforgettable.

If you made it until here, it means that you are as passionate about research and publishing as I am. So, I would advise you to get involved with the journal and you won't be disappointed!

**Bibliography**

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