

Introduction Part II: Teaching and Learning and the Study of Religion in Higher Education

Stefanie Sinclair
The Open University
stefanie.sinclair@open.ac.uk

The final two articles included in this JBASR edition also explore issues relevant to teaching and learning, though with a specific focus on the study of religion in higher education. Teaching and learning panels now have a firm place at annual BASR conferences, bringing colleagues together to share best practice. Each year, the BASR also awards a Teaching and Learning Fellowship in recognition of excellent contributions to the innovation and transformation of the student learning experience in the study of religion. As Teaching and Learning representative on the BASR Executive Committee, the value the BASR places on supporting good practice in higher education is very important to me. So, I am very pleased to introduce these two papers that explore areas of student research ethics and e-mentoring that will be of interest and very practical relevance to anyone supporting students in the study of religion in higher education.

In her article “Research ethics and teaching”, Melanie Prideaux, who was awarded the BASR Teaching and Learning Fellowship in 2020, considers the benefits and challenges of engaging religious studies students with ethical research standards and approval processes. Prideaux argues that students’ active engagement with research ethics and approval processes does not just play an important part in enhancing the quality of research. It can also support the development of important transferable skills and facilitate deeper learning, in particular with regard to students’ understanding of religion in context and in practice. Reflecting on her experience as Director of the Community Religions Project at the University of Leeds, Prideaux makes a compelling case for the active use and application of the [BASR Ethical Guidelines](#) in undergraduate student education.

Ponn P. Mahayosnand and Diana Mora Bermejo's paper on "E-Mentoring Student Researchers through an Undergraduate Field Experience Course" highlights the opportunities and challenges of mentoring and being mentored online. Online forms of mentoring gained particular significance during the COVID19 pandemic. However, they have potential for much wider use as they open up fantastic opportunities to connect mentors and mentees. This paper is co-authored by a mentor and mentee, with Mahayosnand drawing on her experience as a mentor located in Gaza, Palestine, and Bermejo talking about her perspective of being mentored as a student based in Rhode Island, USA. Reflecting on their experiences, Mahayosnand and Bermejo share practical tips, tools and advice on how to mentor research students online.

Both papers not only draw attention to very important concerns and opportunities in the study of religion in higher education but are also based on the experiences of staff and students, with clear, practical recommendations that can be applied to many different contexts.