

24th August 2018

# How can we avert the Citation-Based (H Index) Crisis?

Dr Emer Ring, co-author of *Autism from the Inside Out*

Increasingly in Higher Education globally, accountability and impact are measured largely with reference to the Citation-Based (H Index). While citations in prestigious journals have an important role to play in contributing to scholarship, demonstrating accountability and establishing impact, they are in danger of overwhelming the range of other possibilities that exist for Higher Education to demonstrate accountability and establish impact. Paradoxically, one of the possibilities, in danger of being engulfed in the citation-based crisis is books!

As academics, we have an ethical obligation to our respective disciplines in ensuring that we define and defend the parameters of accountability and impact, rather than having these parameters imposed externally on us. This ethical obligation is at the core of the forthcoming Peter Lang Publication: '*Autism from the Inside Out: A Handbook for Parents, Early Childhood, Primary, Post-Primary and Special School Settings*'.



As academics committed to research-led practice, we are accountable for operationalising research findings and ensuring that those participating in the research and those directly affected by the focus of the research benefit most from the process. This becomes an imperative in special education research, where children and families continue to experience exclusionary practices in our education systems. In essence, democratising evidence is critical to ensuring that research findings are leveraged to improve the quality of children's, parents', teachers' and schools' experiences, in addition to being readily accessible to fellow academics and policy-makers. Otherwise, there is a danger that research findings will remain under-explored, insufficiently interrogated and the preserve of a select few.

Following a multi-method empirical evaluation of education provision for students with autism aged 3–18, funded by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), in Ireland (Daly and Ring et al. 2016), a number of the researchers were concerned to operationalise the findings and allow those directly affected by autism access to the evidence.





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Emer previously worked as an early years (infant), primary and special education teacher and a senior inspector with the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland. Emer has been principal investigator on a range of national research projects and her research interests include education policy and practice, the teacher education continuum, inclusion, pedagogy and autism.