Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Dr Ingrid Harrington

To all our Journal's readers and followers, a warm welcome to our first issue of 2022! I hope this year promises to be more fulfilling, enjoyable and productive than 2021 for us all.

In this issue, 16 papers on higher education practices by authors from Australia Canada, United States, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Portugal, Israel, and Bangladesh just to name a few, share their focus on teaching, learning and assessment in education, and issues of training and human resources in industry and learning institutions.

The first article by Ugwuanyi, et al. explores the perceptions of Nigerian university academics on the use of IT tools for the formative assessment (FA) of students' learning outcomes. Their findings reported that university academics by gender and qualification perceived the use of information technology tools as veritable tools for implementing FA differently. They concluded that that quality assessment can be achieved using IT tools, but there is a need for professional development of the lecturers. The second article by Mavuru, et al. investigated the levels of adaptation required for South African pre-service teacher students to successfully access and engage with their studies, based on their socio-economic status. Their results reported that disparities and inequalities that exist in different South African contexts, dictated their required levels of adaptations to successfully access and engage with their remote teaching and learning. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds were less adapted as they struggled more when it came to acquisition of electronic gadgets and connectivity to facilitate remote learning, compared to those from advantaged backgrounds. This study affirms the call for education institutions and governments to rethink ways of closing the gap between the poor and the rich in education, in terms of resources and other support mechanisms. The third article by Alcinia Sampaio explored the possible introduction of *Building Information Modelling* methodology in the construction and education industries, specifically in their curricular programs, to accomplish the digital requirements, integration, and collaboration on the elaboration of projects and maintenance of buildings. Their findings reported that actions and organization of topics promoted an adequate updating of the students' skills. The fourth article by Ahmed, et al., provides a scoping review of the literature to categorize barriers and enablers to academic mobility between higher education institutions (HEIs) in Asia, Canada, and Latin America. Their findings highlight the need for Latin American HEIs to emphasize relevant initiatives and qualities that go beyond rankings, boost the use of English among academics and staff, actively reach out to Asian partners, and collaborate to develop credit transfer policies compatible with Asian institutions. The fifth article by Valencia Mabalane explored the effectiveness of online enrichment intervention programmes, in providing student teachers in Johannesburg with the necessary teaching skills, whilst ensuring the readiness for work-integrated learning (WIL) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her findings indicated that the online enrichment intervention programme improved student-teachers' levels of confidence, emotional readiness before and during WIL, and the unfavourable circumstances in their classrooms. Overall, the student-teachers reported a better understanding of the need for proactive planning for any circumstance or situation.

The sixth article by Gamede, et al., investigated the adoption of the Learning Management System 'Moodle' as the best approach to engage students in full teaching and learning activities in most South African universities. The seventh article by Deri, et al., presents an overview of studies related to the benefits of academic writing groups to benefit graduate studies. Based on a systematic literature review, a chronological account of key issues and concepts that have influenced the effectiveness of academic writing groups throughout history is provided, and considerations for future exploration of academic writing groups used as a pedagogical strategy in the context of higher education, from disciplinary, sociocultural, and gender perspectives are discussed. The eighth article by Mukwawaya, et.al., looked at

ways to investigate and delineate the perceived challenges of implementing an integrated talent management strategy at a South African tertiary institution. Their recommendations include a demonstrated commitment by university management towards accessing adequate finances to facilitate the implementation of a sound talent management strategy, that will assist in promoting both the quality and longevity of the tertiary education institution in question. The ninth article by Olori, et.al., explored the continuous decline on students' enrolment in adult and vocational education in the Niger Delta region, and analysed the effect of militancy activities and its impact on educational development. Their findings showed that students' poor academic performances, high illiteracy levesl and increase in youth restiveness, were found to have highly impacted upon their educational development. The tenth article by Giladi, Koslowsky and Davidovitch explored students' self-efficacy in language learning (LSE), in contrast with general self-efficacy (GSE) and effort (EF) as predictors of students' reading comprehension performance in English. Their findings contribute to the literature by recommending the development of more effective teaching methods, and providing English as a Foreign Language teachers the necessary tools to predict and enhance students' achievements in the field. Implications and limitations for future research are discussed.

The eleventh article by Harrington, et.al., explored the nature of first year students' relationships with the academic and the learning environment as critical to the success of commencing students, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds. Their findings conclude that any measure that promotes a stronger relationship between the student and the Unit Coordinator is beneficial to the overall quality of student experience, and positively impacts upon retention. The twelfth article by Jita and Munje explored the mentoring experiences of preservice teachers during eight weeks of teaching practice in 2020, using Gibbs' experimental learning as a conceptual framework. Their findings indicate the importance to upskill mentors to equip them with professional and mentorship ethics, to enable preservice teachers to acquire the requisite skills that will better prepare them as future professional teachers. The thirteenth article by Charunphankasem investigated the development of an online learning management model for Thai vocational students in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reported a high level of satisfaction amongst students to the online model that met their learning objectives.

The next paper by Heled and Davidovitch explored how experienced Israeli school counsellors evaluated the association between their academic studies and the professional training they received during their Masters degree in school counselling. Their findings reinforce the inconsistent and vague definition of the school counsellor's job, and accentuates the many years of academic training that has not been adapted to the evolving school counsellor's role. The fifteenth paper by Faieza Chowdhury investigated the perceptions of students towards the use of humour as a teaching tool at higher education institutions in Bangladesh. Her study concluded that most of the students considered humour as a positive and beneficial teaching tool in the classroom. The final article in this issue by Finkelstein, et.al., discuss a unique multidimensional model of Culturally Relevant Academic Evaluation (CRAE), that fills a gap in the scientific literature on evaluation in higher education. Their paper analyzes the interrelations between the four dimensions of the evaluation process, and discusses their contribution to the enhancement of evaluation in higher education.

What an interesting issue, the first for 2022, has turned out to be! With that, I would like to thank all authors, reviewers and editors for making this issue possible. Please continue to support us for publications of future issues.

Warm regards,

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