Editorial

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Editorial

This edition of the journal offers an insight into teaching in the modern world. A fundamental aspect of teaching is development, both staff and students and two papers explore this aspect of practice. The remaining papers look at a diverse range of technologies and how they impact student learning. With papers from colleagues in China, Spain, the USA, England, Wales, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, this edition offers a truly international perspective of modern Higher Education.

Two papers, those by Victor Abella-Garcia et al., from the University of Burgos, Spain (To Tweet or not to Tweet: Student perceptions of the use of Twitter on an undergraduate degree course), and David Hortigüela-Alcalá et al., also from the University of Burgos, Spain (Social networks to promote motivation and learning in Higher Education from the students' perspective), explore the use of microblogging on the development of student learning and motivation. The paper by Abella-Garcia et al. explores the impact of the use of Twitter on student learning and the development of critical thinking skills. The author suggests that having access to a range of expert opinions and not being restricted to the perceptions of those on the course inspires greater learning and the development of a commitment to lifelong learning. The paper suggests that students felt they had developed their critical thinking skills as a result of the activity. Additionally, Hortigüela-Alcalá et al., suggest that using Twitter and Instagram can improve student motivation, engagement and achievement.

The paper by Lan Li from Bowling Green State University, USA (Using game-based training to improve students' assessment skills and intrinsic motivation in peer assessment), focuses on the development of peer to peer formative peer feedback and student intrinsic motivation through the use of games-based learning. They identified that assessment literacy amongst students was essential to ensure they could provide effective feedback. The study showed that those using a games-based learning approach showed higher intrinsic motivation.

The papers by Qijie Cai et al., from Minnesota State University, USA (Using differentiated feedback to improve performance in introductory statistics) and Marion Heron and Rebecca Head, University of Surrey, England (Discourses of peer observation in higher education: Event or system), also look at feedback. Cai et al., look at the impact of motivation and prior performance on how students receive and act upon feedback. They explore the impact of matching feedback to the learners' motivational systems thereby increasing the likelihood that it would be perceived as relevant to the individual and lead to changes in their effort and performance. By contrast, the paper by Heron and Head explores the language used in peer observation of teaching and how that can lead to either compliance or shared development.

Antoni Badia, Consuelo Garcia and Julio Meneses from the Universitat Obeta de Catalunya, Spain (Emotions in response to teaching online: Exploring the factors influencing teachers in a fully online university) consider the range of emotions that impact those who teach online. It is known that motivation, cognition and academic performance influence emotions in face to face teaching, and the authors suggest that understanding the influential emotions involved in online learning may help improve the teaching experience but also the learning experience for students through influencing learning design. Two other papers in this edition also look at instructional design from very different perspectives. Feray Ugur-Erdogmus and Kursat Cagiltay from Amasya and Middle East Technical Universities, Turkey (Making novice instructional designers expert: Design and development of an electronic performance support system), look at the use of technology to enhance learning design in

HE. Acknowledging that work has already been done in this area, the authors focus on the design of a locally developed electronic system to support novice instructional designers. In their paper, Tian Yi et al., from Central China Normal University, China (Teachers' continuous vs. intermittent presence in procedural knowledge instructional videos), look at an aspect of instructional design in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). They explore the impact of continuous versus intermittent instructor presence in procedural knowledge instructional videos and found that intermittent presence led to enhanced learning and satisfaction and reduced cognitive load.

Two papers by Qiusha Min, Zhifeng Wang and Neng Liu from Central China Normal University, China (Integrating a cloud learning environment into English-medium instruction to enhance non-native English-speaking students' learning), and Abdella Ibrahim Mohammed Elfeky from Kefrelsheikh University, Turkey (The effect of personal learning environments on participants higher order thinking skills and satisfaction), explore the impact of virtual learning environments (VLEs) on student development, satisfaction and self-efficacy. Use of the cloud as a virtual learning environment is explored by Min, Wang and Liu. The authors examine how a blended learning approach to enhance learning (where English is a second language in the classroom) can be enhanced using a cloud learning environment (CLE). The paper concludes that the use of the CLE develops student confidence and increases motivation. In contrast to this, Elfeky looks at the role of personal learning environments (PLEs) on the development of higher order thinking skills and student satisfaction. The study uses a controlled trial where half the group learn using i-Google and the other half use a learning management system (Blackboard). The paper demonstrates why LMS/VLE designers need to make their systems more interactive and to support the role of students as co-creators of their own learning, the curriculum and the learning of others.

The final two papers by Kholoud Mohsen, Shahpar Abdollahi and Suha Omar from Essex, Richmond and De Montfort Universities, England (Evaluating the educational value of simulation games: Learners' perspective) and Sue Annetts and Richard Day, Cardiff University, Wales (The informed study project: An innovative online self evaluation of fitness to practise within a professional higher education degree programme), both explore the use of technology to enhance student employability skills. Annetts paper focuses on Healthcare and Fitness to Practise where a mismatch between student expectations and experiences and those of the Professional body often occurs. Developing metacognition and self-efficacy is essential, and this study describes the use of a pre-entry tool designed to support transition and develop metacognition in helping students decide prior to entry, if they will meet the Fitness to Practise requirements. By contrast, the paper by Mohsen, Abdollahi and Suha explores the use of simulation games in developing students' skills in data analysis, strategic planning, decision making, problem solving and teamwork. These skills have been identified by employers as some of the essential attributes they look for in employing graduates. The authors suggest that by using a game which simulates real-world learning, students cognitively, affectively and behaviourally process knowledge, enhancing not only their perceptions of their enjoyment of learning but also their ultimate outcomes.