2018

JUTLP Editorial Issue 15.1

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Welcome to the first issue of the Journal of University Learning and Teaching Practice for 2017. This issue contains six papers that broadly cover topics related to assessment, educational collaborations, academic development and social media

The first two papers in this issue have a focus on assessment. In the first paper, Francis examines and evaluates the link between assessment rubrics and student performance and evidences the importance of students engaging with and discussing assessment rubrics. The paper presents practical suggestions for effectively using rubrics and fostering improved student performance and engagement. In the second paper Tadesse, Manathunga and Gillies broadly examine the perceptions of a range of stakeholders in higher education in Ethiopia, on the quality of their experiences of teaching, learning, assessment and review. A qualitative case study design was used and found that recent quality improvement efforts in Ethiopia have been more focused on quality assurance than quality improvement. The recommendations of this study suggest the need for internal system enhancement, adoption of formative assessment and support and ownership of those working in the sector and responsible for quality improvement.

The next two papers in this issue address educational collaborations. Kamphorst presents a perspective on multidisciplinary cooperation through the lens of fourth year bachelor students from different domains at two research centres. Survey questionnaires then focus groups were implemented with a sample of 71 students. The findings highlighted the fact that there were varying degrees of multidisciplinary cooperation amongst the students and that this was influenced by differences in: disciplinary programs, thematic groups and research centres, student characteristics and the quality of the multidisciplinary tasks. The paper provides suggestions for delivering an effective multidisciplinary professional learning environment. In the fourth paper, Kaktins explores the perceptions of teachers employed in a pathway program that provides a bridge for students, particularly international students, into a mainstream university degree. The challenges of these sorts of educational collaborations and articulations are discussed; in particular the concerning issues surrounding the confluence of market imperatives and the impact on pedagogical excellence, teachers' professional practice and the quality of tertiary education. Further, the sustainability of these types of pathway models is examined.

In the fifth paper, Kehoe, Schofield, Branigan & Wilmore describe an academic professional development program focused on building the capacity of academics to design blended curricula and effectively use contemporary learning technologies. This academic development program adopted an approach that purposefully moved from "sage on the stage" to "guide on the side," as well as using flipped and blended learning approaches. An account of the benefits and affordances of this program are presented in the paper which include increased teacher confidence and student satisfaction ratings.

Finally, Nagel, Remillard, Aucoin and Takenishi investigate the use of social media across three tertiary-level programs at two Canadian institutions. They report that the students in their study were: using at least one social network, with Facebook the most popular followed by Instagram; regularly active on several social networks at once; and rarely

posting to more than one social medium per day. Facebook is posited as the easiest social media to integrate into the classroom with the potential for being the most beneficial for student engagement and collaboration. Additionally, the authors suggest that the integration of social media into the classroom for the purpose of professionalization must consider the platforms that are likely to be more useful for students not only as a tool, but also as a social network, when entering into their distinct work environments.

We would like to acknowledge all who are involved in making this journal the success that it is. In particularly we would like to thank the reviewers who have contributed to this issue: Spero Tsindos, Kathie Ardzejewska, Brianna Julien, Amanda Reichelt-Brushett, Morag McFadyen, Kristyn Harman, Juliana Ryan, Nicole Crawford, Jo-Anne Tait for their detailed and informative feedback to our authors and advice to our editors; our copy editor Laura Goodin and the production support team from Learning, Teaching and Curriculum at the University of Wollongong; and the many people involved in the background who keep the journal running.

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