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Editorial

Jane Skalicky

University of Tasmania, Jane.Skalicky@utas.edu.au

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Editorial

Jane Skalicky

Welcome to Volume Eight of the *Journal of Peer Learning*. This issue includes six peer-reviewed articles and an author's note by Paloyo of the University of Wollongong, Australia. Paloyo's note discusses effective evaluation of Supplemental Instruction programs, particularly considering the issue of selection bias and providing a framework for consideration of this issue.

The six peer review articles share findings of research involving the application of peer education within higher education and community-based contexts, as well as learnings that will inform reflection and program improvement through initiatives including peer mentor development, lecturer perceptions of peer learning, and a review of online peer learning pilots globally.

Zamberlan and Wilson from the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Australia, review good practice in peer learning and mentorship in design education. Through an action research methodology Zamberlan and Wilson evaluate the peer mentor program on offer at UNSW in the context of good practice exemplars and student feedback. Four key aspects are highlighted as features of a successful peer tutoring program: create a visible community of practice, support the student learning experience, elevate senior students as ambassadors of the program, and reinforce an emphasis on learning through collaborative exchange.

Cusick, Camer, Stamenkovic, and Zaccagnini share findings of the development, implementation, and evaluation of a peer learning program for health science honours students at the University of Wollongong, Australia. Application of the Supplemental Instruction / Peer Assisted Study Sessions model to the research training and researcher role development aspects of the honours context provided the trainees with an opportunity to address social isolation and establish supportive peer networks outside their research teams. High overall satisfaction was reported by the participants.

The third article in this journal edition takes peer education to a community context, with the authors, Weeks, Bryanton, McInnis-Perry, and Chaulk, receiving funding for a two year project to raise awareness about elder abuse as a response to a lack of public awareness of the issue as well as how to obtain help for those who are abused. With prior research highlighting the need for volunteer peer educators to receive adequate training and support and most efforts in the area focused on training professionals, the researchers recruited older adults to participate in a peer educator training program who then delivered educational sessions across settings such as seniors' groups, service organisations, and workplaces. Whilst the sample size in this study is small, study results will inform ongoing improvement of peer education programs in this field.

Hammill, Best, and Anderson of Victoria University, Australia, describe the processes undertaken to develop a rubric that clarifies peer facilitation objectives for Student Mentors and their supervisors in a Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) program as part of a suite of initiatives designed to support the continuing professional development of peer mentors through formative feedback. The rubric utilised Bloom's revised taxonomy to scaffold and recognise mentor development across a range of objectives and skills.

Kodabux and Hoolash share insights gained from seeking lecturer feedback on a student learning assistance (SLA) scheme at the Middlesex University Mauritius Branch Campus. In this context the SLAs are senior students who are trained to provide peer support in labs, seminars, or workshops, outside of the formal lecture environment, across a range of disciplines. Outcomes highlight both the importance of communication to stakeholders regarding the value and benefits of peer learning and the importance of seeking stakeholder feedback to inform ongoing improvement in areas such as SLA training and critical reflection.

The final article in this edition by Watts, Malliris, and Billingham provides a comprehensive overview of online peer assisted learning pilots across a range of higher education settings internationally, incorporating reflections on the critical issues and considerations involved in implementing synchronous online peer learning environments. Implications for new ways of supporting learning and the training and development of peer leaders are explored. The authors recommend further exploration of suitable pedagogies for online peer learning, further research into understanding student motivations for learning online, and further trials of different forms of online peer learning.

I would like to thank all of our reviewers and the Editorial team who are committed to supporting authors to progress research in this field.

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