

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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To all our Journal's readers and followers, a warm welcome to our first issue of 2023! I hope this year promises to be more fulfilling, enjoyable and productive than previous years for us all. In this issue, we learn from papers on higher education practices by authors from Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Morocco, and Jordan 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 Phumdandin and Wongchantra explores the efficiency of environmental teaching using Creativity-Based Learning (CBL), to compare the environmental knowledge, the attitudes towards environmental conservation and the environmental problem-solving thinking ability of students. Their findings included that whilst the environmental knowledge, the attitudes towards environmental conservation, and the environmental problem-solving thinking ability of the students of different genders were not different, their attitudes towards environmental conservation and environmental problem-solving thinking ability were not different. The second article by Buck and Martin investigated an assessment framework that enables estimation of the dynamic nature of mental constructs as students make gains towards coherency of knowledge and understanding. The framework emphasizes the value of iterative assessment combined with multivariate methods borrowed from ecology for revealing and following gains in student thinking. Their findings revealed that students take a multitude of pathways to concept mastery, and that they struggled to succinctly construct and communicate comprehensive evolutionary models. The third article by Ishaq Al-Naabi explored the potential of professional development webinars offered to university language teachers in transforming their online pedagogies. The results revealed that webinars enabled teachers to resolve some misconceptions about online teaching and learning, enhanced their critical reflection on their online teaching practices, and formed some new practices of online pedagogy. The study provided some implications for higher education to enhance professional development webinars.

The fourth article by Dobela and Seboni examined the attitudes of engineering students and their academic performance towards both prerequisite courses for and the final year project (FYP), given the need to increase the current level of understanding of attitudes and performance in the context of engineering students. Their findings report that the majority of students struggle with project progress as compared to other stages of the FYP, due to inadequacy in fundamentals such as design, and have implications on engineering education in relation to informing policy decisions on engineering program structure. The fifth article by Stoffberg and colleagues examined the relationship between educational qualifications and job performance among university staff in academic administrative positions, where the relationship and relevance of academic administrative staff in a university in the Western Cape province of South Africa, is not understood by the administrative managers of the university. Their research helped to determine the preferred educational levels for academic administrative positions of varying complexity, and provides the University with additional guidelines to recruit staff who are most likely to impact organizational objectives positively. The sixth article is from Gebremariam and colleagues explored how cooperative learning was employed at technical and vocational colleges in southwest Ethiopia to manage student diversity. Their findings report that trainees had more favourable perceptions of students' diversity management in the application of cooperative learning than did the trainers. Cooperative learning was found to work better in diverse classrooms than in monolithic groupings. Our final article for this issue is from Kwon and Shwarzer who describe a foundational course designed for international graduate students in a public university in the Northeast USA. The course was developed to

provide support and guidance for practitioners and researchers who work closely with international graduate students through transcultural/translingual and whole-person approaches. Their findings confirm that students engaged with a foundation course better prepares international graduate students for academic success in their first term.

What an interesting first issue for 2023, 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 and the season's greetings,

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