

Introduction to the Issue

Welcome to the final issue of Volume 10 (2018) of The All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. It will be the last issue of my tenure as editor as I step down from the role at midnight tonight. For that reason, I have allowed myself a little leeway in the format of this issue, though of course the heart of it remains the creative work of our authors who have contributed the results of their research to the journal. However, I have included some invited reflections on the nature and importance of writing and journals in this issue and these have been produced in free format at the discretion of the authors and are to be thought of as personal, though grounded in knowledge, experience and a commitment to the scholarly.

Turning to the contents of this issue, we have a most interesting paper from Brigid Lucey, Sarah O'Sullivan, Louise Collins and Ruairi Ó Céilleachair from Cork Institute of Technology. In a paper entitled "Staff mentoring in Higher Education: the case for a mentored mentoring continuum" they report on a case study in which they explored "a mentored mentoring continuum" and compared it dyadic or group mentoring approaches. The authors contend that the increased support for mentors and mentees offered by this model, can lead to a greater potential for learning for both the mentor and the mentored.

In "A Critical Evaluation of the Integration of a Blended Learning Approach into a Multimedia Applications Module"- Lucia Cloonan, Irene Hayden, of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology consider the issue of how blended learning design principles are implemented into existing modules in the discipline of multimedia studies, addressing a gap in the existing literature. The paper offers a critical evaluation of the integration of a blended learning pedagogical approach into a multimedia applications module. Their findings suggest that a good blend of theory, delivered synchronously online while students also have face-to-face practical classes in laboratories, may be optimum. Inconclusive results in relation to whether students learned more in the synchronous online lecture than in the face-to-face lecture suggest that further research is needed in this area.

“Research Informed Teaching in a Graduate Taught Programme: a Pedagogical Model for Teachers and Students” by Deborah Wallace, Olive Lennon, Justin King and Peter Doran of University College Dublin, investigate the potential of the *Research-Teaching Nexus* in a graduate taught MSc in Clinical and Translational Research, using the Healey & Jenkins pedagogical model as a curriculum development tool for teachers and a framework for students to develop their research skill set. Mapping of their module learning outcomes onto this model enabled the authors to examine research-teaching linkages in the curriculum, together with teaching strategies and learning experiences. The approach has allowed the authors to highlight areas for development by means of a curriculum evaluation tool and has offered students a structure for expanding awareness of what constitutes research and a framework for research driven continuous professional development.

“A Road Less Travelled, a Road Nonetheless” situates itself in the globalized and digitalized learning environments with which we are familiar and its findings acknowledge the potential of newer delivery models. However, the author suggests that while many educators view the move to digitalization of learning as a natural progression, a decision or a choice, for others it is a requirement they feel is imposed upon them. Employing a self-study methodology, supported by naturalistic diaries and analysed through the process of content data analysis, the study explores a journey with four academics who have moved from a traditional class-based lecturing methodology to one where online live teaching is a requirement for the programmes they deliver. In an interesting discussion, concerns about their practices and their pedagogy, and their professional **identity** that are forcing the educators to explore and questions about their roles within a higher education space are considered.

In a newly minted section, which may well be for one issue only, we have four invited reflections, each of which has emerged in the context of the development of AISHE-J. Our dear friend and staunch supporter, Professor Sally Brown, has written what I might characterize as a manifesto for those of us who care about learning teaching and assessment - it is a call to write when there is no time to write because but it really matters. Sally argues that the time and effort it takes to write in scholarly and reflective ways about our varied practice, sharing innovations and achievements across many boundaries, is well rewarded through many mutual benefits.

Bernadette Brereton and Karen Dunne, who have written, reviewed and edited for AISHE-J have offered a comprehensive reflection on their journey with institutional colleagues in disparate disciplines, in a professional development context. The shared journey proved fruitful collaboration in teaching, learning and assessment, as professional development co-mentors and as academic editing partners. Bernie and Karen give us their personal reflections on a shared journey in friendship, illumination and engagement.

Moira Maguire has contributed a reflection on the role of AISHE-J in the teaching and learning community in Ireland in the years since it was established and on its impact on the output of teaching and learning research in that period. She highlights the part it plays in supporting an inclusive community of scholars.

The final piece in this section is in interview format, contributed by Alison Farrell and Saranne Magennis. We have called our piece "A Conversation with the Editor" albeit one who will cease to be the editor as soon as the issue is published. Following some friendly conversations Alison suggested that a good way to capture my reflections might be an interview format. At a pre-retirement course, kindly funded by Maynooth University, the facilitator suggested that it is important to mark an important transition like retirement by addressing ones colleagues at any function that may be held. This piece has something in common with such a speech. I am delighted to have had the opportunity to reflect on what the AISHE-J has been to me in the seven years I have served as editor and, and in the 20 issues that it has been my privilege to produce. On Friday October 26th, 2018 Alison and I sat and conversed. The following article is based on that conversation.

In closing, I wish to record my thanks to the many colleagues and friends with whom I have been able to share the most enjoyable task of editing AISHE-J. The authors, peer reviewers and guest editors are the heart of the journal and any success I have had has been as a result of their efforts as well as my own. They have my gratitude and appreciation. All my colleagues on the Editorial Board and the AISHE-J committee are likewise due a debt of gratitude and I hope that I will continue to enjoy into the future the friendships we have built in this shared endeavour. Were I to name all the people who have contributed over the years I have been editor, the Editorial might well exceed the word limit for our research papers. Yet without naming some representatives from among those who have contributed so much to

the journal, thanks and appreciation can seem hollow and impersonal. That would not be in tune with the ethos I have sought for AISHE-J. Reflecting on this I am going to mention three people by name and I would ask you to consider them as representatives drawn from a wide and vibrant network. I have chosen them to represent in a sense a past, a present that is coming to its close and a future that I know will be bright. Around each one there is a network of connections and relationships and I name them to represent those communities.

First I would like to thank Sylvia Huntley Moore, the first editor of AISHE-J, who had the enthusiasm and persistence to bring us all to the point of establishing the journal. Because of her work and that of those who worked with her, I was able to take over a functioning journal and take it forward. I was not faced with a blank space because she had already filled in that space.

If Sylvia is named to represent the beginning, my friend and former colleague from Queens University in Belfast Linda Carey is named to represent the middle. Serving as Deputy Editor for many years, Linda offered consistent encouragement and support without which I would not have taken on the role. I learned from and drew on her writing expertise throughout my time as editor. Her contribution to the development of AISHE-J has been very great indeed. She has my thanks and appreciation, both personal and professional.

Finally, I would like to thank Moira Maguire, representing the future of AISHE-J. Moira has been a stalwart member of the team for some years and there are certainly issues that saw the light of day only because of her work. She too has my thanks and my good wishes for her future in the role. I know that she and her team will bring the journal forward to its next stage of development and will maintain the mission, the friendship and the scholarly approaches that we all value.

And so with the issue introduced and my thanks to so many recorded, it remains for me to commend to you AISHE-J Volume 10, Number 3, Autumn 2018.

Saranne Magennis, 31 October 2018