

Introduction To The Issue

Saranne Magennis[†]

Linda Carey[†]

[†]National University of Ireland, Maynooth

[‡]Queens University of Belfast

Welcome to the Summer 2013 issue of the *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (AISHE-J)*. In this issue we have a mix articles and reports on practice, book reviews and letters, from colleagues in on the island of Ireland and internationally. In AISHE-J, we aim to foster a strong international dimension in the dialogue around issues in teaching and learning in higher education. This aim is specifically represented in the current issue, with invited pieces from two renowned international educationalists, and an interesting letter from a colleague in Papua New Guinea.

We have recently appointed our first international member of the Editorial Board, Professor Sally Brown. **A former** Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at Leeds Metropolitan University where from November 2004 – July 2010, **Sally was** responsible for strategic leadership of academic provision. In addition to this experience she brings to her role with AISHE-J experience as an Adjunct professor, University of Sunshine Coast, and James Cook University, both in Queensland, Australia and Visiting professor, University of Plymouth. She has travelled widely, teaching and researching in numerous settings across the world. This experience is reflected in her comprehensive paper on what this international role might mean in the context of a journal. The experience of many colleagues is of an increasingly diverse international staff and

student body, bringing with it a rich tapestry of culture and educational differences. In this context it is particularly beneficial to have the experience of someone who has worked in so many different countries to draw upon so that we have a better understanding of these differences. 'Entitled Internationalising Assessment, Learning and Teaching' this is our first invited paper of the issue. We are delighted that Sally has accepted the role with the journal and we look forward to working with her.

Our second invited paper in the current issue is a reflection on the theme of Originality by David Baume. David was a keynote speaker at the 2012 conference. He describes himself as an independent international higher education researcher, evaluator, consultant, staff and educational developer and writer whose passion is helping the improvement of learning in higher education. He was founding chair of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA); a founder of the Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG); and founding editor of the International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD). We are delighted to have his contribution entitled Originality and Education.

We have three interesting papers from the Irish sector, on quite divergent themes. The first is on the theme of PBL. There are problems at the heart of this article, contributed by O'Grady *et al* 'Reflecting on the Need for Problem Triggers in Multidisciplinary PBL'. This is important because problems are, unsurprisingly, central to learning in Problem Based Learning (PBL) curricula. Problems are fundamental to engaging students and achieving the intended learning outcomes. The authors remark that while PBL continues to be deployed in a range of disciplines, outside of the medical domain, there is a paucity of documented problems, leading to difficulties for those aspiring to adopt PBL, especially those who may be acting on their own initiative. The authors address this issue and include some sample problems from across the disciplinary spectrum.

In his paper entitled 'What students think of peer assessment: Using peer assessment to drive student learning within a social constructivist paradigm' McGarrigle looks at the dilemma faced by many colleagues when they using approaches to learning that attempt to involve the student in peer assessment. He suggests as peer assessment requires a level of collaboration and working together that may not resonate with its context, that of largely individualistic, competitive education system.

Finally, Watson, in a lively report entitled 'Teaching Italian with the Virtual Reality of Video' discusses how to create a more realistic learning environment in the context of language learning using film in the classroom. The video material suggested is wide ranging and runs from feature films, both classic and modern, and special interest documentary type videos, such as Jamie Oliver's *Great Italian Escape*, based on the interests of the particular group. The premise of the paper is that students carry the learning into their daily lives and integrate it with their other activities and they learn faster when they are deeply engaged.

In our letters sections we have two contributions, and in keeping with our "home and away" ethos, one concerns a development in Irish Higher Education, while the second is best characterized as a letter "from our overseas correspondent".

Lorraine McIlrath has written to us with information on a development in civic and community engagement in higher education in Ireland. Lorraine has coordinated the Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI) at the National University of Ireland Galway since 2004. She is responsible for developing and supporting civic engagement activities across the university, with the CKI team and has been involved with Campus Engage, a national Irish network to support civic engagement within higher education in Ireland from its inception. Lorraine has written to us with an update on the national platform.

Our second letter is from Alison Holmes and comes from Papua New Guinea. Alison has spent over 15 years in academic development and quality enhancement work in the higher education sector in the UK and New Zealand. She was Director of the University Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. Since 2010 she has been working as a freelance consultant, clients including Ako Aotearoa, Victoria and Massey Universities and several polytechnics in New Zealand. At present she is volunteering in Papua New Guinea on a two-year assignment as “Tertiary Education Adviser” to a vocational business college. She has written to us about her experience in PNG.

In terms of Book Reviews in the current issue, we have three volumes to bring to your attention. In our last issue we announced the publication of *Higher Education and Civic Engagement: Comparative Perspectives*, by Lorraine McIlrath, Ann Lyons, and Ronaldo Munck. (Published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) We now present a full review of the publication by Maria Avila, PhD, Andrew Mellon Fellow, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, USA. Maria remarks that the book “offers many lessons and conveys the passion and commitment from a rich array of voices from many different regions in the world”.

Our second review also considers a book from Irish sources, though it too is well situated in the international context, building as it does on the work of numerous international authors, both theorists and practitioners. *New Managerialism in Education, Commercialization, Carelessness and Gender* by K. Lynch, B. Grummell and D.Devine was published recently by Palgrave MacMillan. The reviewer, David Denieffe, Registrar of IT Carlow, comments that it “builds upon work undertaken by authors such as Deem and ties to the theories of Sen and Nussbaum”, and he considers that it should be required reading for all involved in the management of higher education.

Our third review is of *Review of Human Development and Capabilities: Re-imagining the university of the twenty-first century*, edited by Boni, Alexjandra and Walker, Melanie is a new volume from Routledge. In her review, Bríd Connolly, NUI Maynooth, remarks that the book frames its discussions of the role of higher education in turbulent social and economic times around human development and the capability approach. She considers that the “collection goes a long way towards highlighting that it is possible to have economic progress as a subset of social development, rather than the other way around”.

We would like to record our appreciation of all those who have contributed to the issue, including especially our peer reviewers, our colleagues who have assisted with copy editing and technology and the authors: together they make the journal possible. In keeping with recent practice, the current issue is edited jointly - on this occasion by Linda Carey and Saranne Magennis: together we bring you AISHE-J 5:2.

Saranne Magennis and Linda Carey, June 2013