

Introduction To The Issue

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to the Autumn 2013 Issue of the *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (AISHE-J), published by the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE). In this issue, we present a selection of contributions that offer the reader a thoughtful, evidence-based reflection on teaching and learning in Ireland and further afield. The issue encompasses a diversity of themes, though all share the central focus on teaching and learning in higher education and emphasize the key goals of AISHE-J, namely fostering collegial interaction and mutual support among those concerned with advancing higher education teaching and learning on the island of Ireland and among our colleagues in other parts of the world

Nurturing dialogue and interaction among colleagues is a responsibility to which AISHE-J, is pleased to contribute. In bringing this issue to you, we on the editorial team would like to issue an invitation to all of our readers: if you find the journal useful, if it contributes to your work in higher education and connects you with a community, consider becoming a peer reviewer for the journal. Register your details, including your specific research interests, on the journal website. Feel free to contact the Editor directly at sp.magennis@nuim.ie if you would like to discuss it before registering. If you are interested in becoming involved in any other aspect of the journal, email us at info@aishe.org to let us know.

The contributors to this issue reflect the wide geographic reach of the contemporary higher education dialogue. Their contributions include research papers, reflections, narratives of practice, and reports on particular initiatives: taken together they will inform and inspire us as we play our individual and collaborative roles in higher education.

Jennifer Bruen's paper, *The Impact of Study Abroad on Language Learners' Perceptions of The Concept of Citizenship: Some preliminary considerations*, analyses reflective pieces by undergraduate students on the nature of citizenship, written before and after a year of study abroad. It offers an initial attempt to derive a typology of understandings for the term 'citizen' from this data and to assess the impact of study abroad on these understandings. This pilot study suggests that before students engage with study abroad, they have a relatively straightforward understanding of the concept of citizenship with a strong focus on the notion of 'belonging' to a country. Post year abroad their concept of citizenship has altered in complexity and focus. The author calls for a more in-depth study and further research: based on this interesting beginning, we may look forward with anticipation to what follows.

Research methods as a core component of undergraduate social science and education programmes can cause trepidation in students, particularly when quantitative methods, are involved. In their paper, *Developing Quantitative Research Skills and Conceptualising an Integrated Approach to Teaching Research Methods to Education Students*, Hampden-Thompson and Sundaram present the results of a small exploratory study used to assess students' attitudes towards such a module which will be of interest to many colleagues dealing with this sometimes challenging area of teaching.

In A Study of Risk and Capability Expansion among Mature Students in Higher Education
Veronica Anne Kelly discusses the complexities and challenges associated with increased participation of mature students in higher education. She analyses the experiences of mature students who may find that they are expanding their capabilities, but also increasing their risks, economic, social and personal. The balance between the social and democratic imperative to increase participation and the impact on the individual's personal, economic and social well-being is thoughtfully considered.

In *Can Clickers Enhance Team Based Learning? Findings From A Computer Science Module*, Phil Maguire and Rebecca Maguire examine the use of audience response handsets or clickers in a second year computer science module. While the use of clickers had a dramatic and positive effect on attendance and engagement in the classroom a surprising finding was that the final module grade was lower than previous years. The authors' investigation of this situation offers an interesting insight into individual and group responsibility in learning and recommends how to address these challenges.

The first year student experience is widely regarded as a critical transition into university life for new students. Managing the transition successfully can provide a foundation for retention and success. In *Re-framing the 'First Year' Undergraduate Student Experience* Michelle Morgan argues that with the increasing diversity of entry routes to higher education, and of the student population, what constitutes the 'first year' student experience and the support offered to students, needs to be re-framed. The paper highlights the changes that have occurred in higher education, and suggests a new student lifecycle to assist institutions effectively support new undergraduate students across academic and non-academic activities.

In *Utilising a Social Networking Site as a learning tool in an academic environment: Advancing Practice from Information-Sharing to Collaboration and Innovation (ICI)*, Orna O'Brien and Matt Glowatz reflect on a scarcity of research in relation to possible academic uses of Social Networking Sites (SNSs), such as Facebook (FB). Existing research tends to focus social or information use by students. This paper demonstrates how Facebook, can help increase a student's academic engagement and develop synergistic knowledge. The paper uses data collected using student surveys, archival Facebook information and interviews with students. The study supports previous observations on the academic value of some Facebook usage and suggests that this SNS can allow for student engagement in a way that traditional educational environment cannot.

Aiden Carthy and his colleagues, in an opinion piece entitled *Enhancing the academic and social learning of Irish undergraduates through emotional and social skills development*, consider the potential merits of emotional competency coaching for undergraduate students.

The paper builds on previous work that showed, for example, that a sample of First Year undergraduate students failed to engage with coaching primarily because it was not a mandatory aspect of the curricula. In this paper, an analysis of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) - which details the specific learning outcomes that must be achieved by all Irish academic syllabi, found that this framework makes scant reference to the development of social and emotional skills. The paper proposes a revised working model of the NFQ incorporating learning outcomes related to emotional and social development at all levels of academic attainment.

Peter Howard has contributed an informative piece about the continuing progress of an initiative called 'Clemente' in Australia. Entitled *New Possibilities for People Experiencing Disadvantage: Insights from Clemente Australia*, the paper outlines the development of the initiative since its was first established in Sydney in 2003. Howard is National Leader of Clemente Australia, and he outlines the origins and development of the programme and its impact on the lives of its students and the engagement capacity of the institutions that become involved. At the heart of the programme is the role a Humanities based curriculum can play in empowering individuals who are experiencing extreme marginalization in building and rebuilding lives in which they are agents of change in their own lives rather than victims.

In our Summer 2013 Issue, we introduced the idea of a Letter from an Overseas Correspondent, designed to share information about the experiences of colleagues in higher education in other parts of the world. In this issue our Overseas Correspondent Duncan Maclaren who writes to tell us of an initiative from the Thai/Burma border which is making higher education opportunities available to young people from Burma who live in refugee camps in Thailand. His letter is a reminder of the difficulties students can face and of the determination and heroism that they demonstrate in achieving their educational and life goals, despite the circumstances. Likewise, it speaks of the commitment and creativity of our colleagues who have designed and implemented the programme that is changing the lives of these students.

We are pleased to include in the issue a review of *Feedback in Higher and Professional Education: Understanding it and doing it well*, recently published by David Boud and Elizabeth Malloy (Editors) Linda Carey notes in her review that 'the book covers theoretical and practical issues and provides an interesting and fresh take on a subject which has become high on the agenda of many HEIs recently'. It is a collection of well referenced articles on different aspects of feedback in higher and professional education: that many of the articles are relatively concise is an added benefit given the time pressures being felt by many colleagues at present.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that there are three issues of AISHE J per year with indicative submission dates as follows:

Publication date	Indicative Submission Date
February 28	November 30
June 30	February 28
October 31	June 30

If you are interested in submitting a paper to the Journal you can find out more about us at <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/about>. This page will also give you the link to register with the journal and submit online. .

As we commend this issue to you, co-editors Moira Maguire and Saranne Magennis, would like to record their sincere thanks to the authors and the peer reviewers without whom the issue would not be possible. It gives us great pleasure to bring you AISHE-J 5:3.

Saranne Magennis and Moira Maguire , October 2013.