

## Introduction To The Issue\*

Saranne Magennis<sup>†</sup>  
Ekaterina Kozina<sup>††</sup> Moira Maguire<sup>†††</sup>

<sup>†</sup>NUI Maynooth

<sup>††</sup>UCD

<sup>†††</sup>DKIT

Welcome to the Summer 2014 issue the All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (AISHE–J), published by the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE). The issue, Volume 6, Issue 2 is jointly edited by Saranne Magennis and Ekaterina Kozina and by Moira Maguire, specifically in respect of the a new section of conference abstracts. At the outset we would like to thank our authors and peer reviewers for their diligent work, creativity and patience in bring this issue together. In keeping with recent practice, the Summer issue is open to a variety of themes in teaching and learning in higher education. It offers authors and readers the opportunity to explore a range of areas of discourse from across higher education. In this issue our contributors offer the reader thoughtful reflections on themes that centre largely on the student experience and how to improve it.

Mooney and Bergin report the findings of a study on the use of a VLE to promote student engagement in lectures, exploring three strategies and comparing their efficacy. In a time of increasing class sizes many colleagues will find this particularly useful. The three different approaches were trialled in a sequentially phased approach. This was a very useful way of ensuring that none of the students was disadvantaged in the study.

---

\*URL: <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/199>

McTaggart's paper sets out the results of a study of non-completion by students on higher education courses in a Further and Higher Education (dual sector) context in Northern Ireland. Unusually, the paper reports findings from interview with students who had withdrawn from their programmes, thus contributing significantly to our understanding of these decisions. The work is firmly in the interpretivist paradigm of research and its grounded theory approach gives a rich and nuanced picture of the participants' views. It will be of interest to many readers, especially those dealing with the pressures on students to withdraw from their studies due to the impact of austerity.

Huntley-Moore and O'Connor have contributed an interesting paper on the use of national survey data in curriculum development. In a context where initiatives like NSSE and the Irish National Student Survey can be seen as bureaucratic exercises of limited value this refreshing paper demonstrated that there are valuable ways of using the data. This project uses data from the NSSE to investigate the extent to which undergraduate nursing students in one Irish university adopt a deep approach to learning. The results are illuminating as they provide the first published evidence of nursing students' approach to learning under the new Irish system of university-based pre-registration education. In addition to using the results for their own curriculum development the authors encourage readers working in Irish higher education to consider using data from the Irish National Survey of Student Engagement to inform their curriculum development while international readers are encouraged to make enquiries about local versions of the NSSE.

Maguire, Maguire, Hyland and Marshal report on a study based on an interesting intervention with incoming university students who had not previously studied computer programming. A formalized structure for collaborative learning was investigated as the researchers sought to determine whether the use of pair programming in practical laboratories would facilitate peer learning and enhance students' confidence in their programming ability. Results showed that this intervention was generally well received, although the weaker programmers (as measured by prior exam grades) perceived it to be of more benefit than the stronger ones. Though it did not necessarily lead to enhanced performance students reported that it allowed them to meet more people in the class. Interestingly, though there was no significant increase in final exam grades for male students, there was a significant increase for female students, suggesting, the authors believe, that this teaching

strategy may have asymmetrical gender benefits.

Our overseas correspondent this issue is from the United States. Dr Kelly R. Kelley, of Western Carolina University (WCU) University Participant (UP) Program tells us about an innovative project in Western Carolina through which persons with an intellectual disability can participate in the University. She also recounts the experience of the WCU UP programme students and mentors on their recent study abroad trip to England and Ireland. As the group took the time to visit NUI, Maynooth, I would like to take the opportunity to say what a great experience it was for us to welcome both staff and students to our campus.

Two book reviews are included: the first a review of 'Social Network Analysis: history, theory and methodology' by Christina Prell, published in 2012 by SAGE Publications. Readers interested in interdisciplinarity will find that it gives an good introduction to the overlapping disciplines of social science and computer analysis, examining the theoretical concepts, methods and analytical techniques used to examine social relations and their structuring: generally termed 'social network analysis' (SNA). The second review is of Linda Nilson, 2013, *Creating Self-Regulated Learners: Strategies to Strengthen Students' Self-Awareness and Learning Skills*, Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing, eBook Collection, an interesting and comprehensive introduction to the area of self-regulated learning. This completes the familiar offerings of AISHE J.

However, in this issue we are introducing a new element – a section devoted to conference abstracts that may be of interest to readers. This is a section that was prompted by a number of discussions with colleagues in other networks and disciplinary groups and is an idea that was wholeheartedly welcomed by the editorial board of AISHE J.

In order to offer a useful service to members and colleagues involved in learning and teaching in higher education, the All Ireland Journal for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education ([http://www.aithjournal.com](#)), has adopted a strategy of close collaboration with networks and organizations that share our interest in teaching and learning in higher education. Collaborative thematic issues of the journal, co-operatively produced and co-edited with networks, communities of practice and organizations in the sector has been one of the fruits of this strategy. Our February issue was a collaborative issue with

Campus Engage, on the theme of community and civic engagement. The next planned issue in this series is a collaborative issue with the Educational Developers Network in Ireland (EDIN). The theme of the issue is Leadership in Educational and Academic Development and it is scheduled for publication on 28 February, 2015. The key objectives of this strategy are to foster research and publication on matters related to teaching and learning in the Irish context and to support writers from the networks in bringing their work to a wider audience. The publication of conference abstracts from partner organizations offers a logical further step in the development both of the service the journal offers and of the rewarding culture of cooperation and collaboration that is a feature of the teaching and learning sector in higher education in Ireland. This initiative has been led by Moira Maguire for and by Sylvia Huntley-Moore and Brett Becker on behalf of the respective Conference organizing committees. As the National Forum for Teaching and Learning has moved forward with its agenda, it has recognized the value of collaboration among networks. It is a policy that supports in word and in action.

In this issue, we are delighted to publish conference abstracts from the two recent Irish conferences The 2013 International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy (ICEP) held at IT Sligo, December 5<sup>th</sup> 2013 and the education abstracts from the 14<sup>th</sup> Healthcare Interdisciplinary Research Conference held at Trinity College Dublin, November 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 2013. We are confident that these abstracts will inform readers of the interesting work that is taking place and offer opportunities for new and creative research relationships Ireland and internationally.

In presenting you with this issue, we would like to take the opportunity to remind you that there are three issues of AISHE-J per year with suggested submission dates as follows:

<b>Indicative Submission Date</b>	<b>Publication date</b>
March 1	February 28
July 1	June 30
November 1	October 31

The submission dates are indicative and there is usually some measure of flexibility available. 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.

is an integral part of the All Ireland Society for Higher Education and as such we would like to inform those readers who are not yet aware and remind those who are, the former President of AISHE and current member of the Executive, Helen Guerin took up the role of President of the International Consortium for Education Development (ICED) at the close of the 2014 Conference in Stockholm this month. We congratulate Helen on her achievement in becoming President of a worldwide network devoted to the enhancement of teaching and learning in Higher Education and we wish her all the best for the busy years ahead.

As we commend this issue to you, co-editors Ekaterina Kozina, Moira Maguire and Saranne Magennis, would like to record their sincere thanks not only to the authors and the peer reviewers mentioned above, but also to all members of the Editorial Board, and most particularly to our International board member, Professor Sally Brown. Without their tireless work the issue, and indeed the journal, would not be possible. It gives us great pleasure to commend to you AISHE-J 6:2.

Saranne Magennis, Moira Maguire and Ekaterina Kozina, June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014.

## 1. (First Section Heading)

(Insert main text of article here.)

## 2. References