

Introduction to the Issue

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It gives us great pleasure to welcome you, our readers, to the Autumn 2014 issue of the All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (AISHE–J). Our open-access journal of research into teaching and learning is published by the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE), in order to further our central goal of bringing together and offering mutual support to all those concerned with advancing higher education teaching and learning. In the current issue we offer readers a mix of research articles and reports on innovation and practice, which demonstrate the spread of interests across the AISHE community.

In an interesting piece developed in the context of Timber Product Technology, Jennifer Byrne investigates the potential benefits of using independent online learning and reflective journals to encourage students to continue their learning outside of contact hours and thereby improve their performance in the practical class. Students were encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning. Independent learning was fostered through a purpose built website, where relevant

material were provided across a variety of media. Reflective journals, records of progress on practical work and estimated and actual time charts to plan practical work were some of the approaches used. Developments were identified in a number of areas of student work.

Paul Dervan highlights the benefits of using a student feedback system cited by Dublin Institute of Technology. The study, undertaken in the context of the Contemporary Sports Management Module, indicates that interactive technology can provide an immediate source of feedback for the academic and student in the classroom as well as improving student interaction.

Eilish McLoughlin, Odilla Findlayson and Sarah Brady have contributed an interesting and informative paper on Inquiry-Based Science Education (IBSE), a student-centred methodology that has been promoted in recent years as an innovative teaching and learning methodology that engages students in science and motivates them to pursue careers in this area. The authors draw on the ESTABLISH project which has contributed to the IBSE movement by adopting a pan-European approach for developing and implementing teacher education in IBSE and teaching and learning IBSE materials.

Ronan Bree and his colleagues have contributed an interesting small-scale, mixed-method research study set in the context of laboratory practical sessions. The paper describes a range of innovative integrated approaches over one semester, and assesses the outcomes of the interventions using data collected by two mixed-method approaches. The supplementary materials supplied with the paper are practical, useful and extremely informative and are likely to encourage colleagues to review their own materials and approaches.

Deborah Keogh and Veronica Lambert tackle the issue of assessment of group work and specifically the views and emotions raised by the issue of group marks as opposed to individual marks. This paper is written in the context of nursing and sets out to describe nursing student's experiences of receiving a group mark for collaborative learning modules and the impact this has

on their learning and group work experiences. In this and many other disciplines, students must be taught effective group work skills and this paper is important because it highlights the need to examine the appropriateness of awarding group grades where participation may be unequal. While the paper is written in the context of Nursing colleagues in a wide range of disciplines will find the discussion relevant.

Sinead Hahessy and her colleagues in Nursing and Midwifery have contributed a paper, which will also have relevance well beyond its home disciplines. Their study looks at student satisfaction with a range of aspects of their experience in undertaking blended learning postgraduate programmes in a school of nursing and midwifery. It is interesting in that it considers the student experience of online learning across a range of issues such as flexibility in delivery, assessment and feedback.

Lisa Donaldson has contributed a paper that looks at aspects of the significant change within higher education that results from advances in information technology. Her case study was to uncover the factors impacting the integration of learning technologies in the classroom. It was designed to measure the degree of technology adoption following usage of an online learning resource incorporating Web 2.0 tools.

A single cohort of eleven lecturers in Ireland used an online learning resource for a period of 6 weeks. A series of recommendations for integrating learning technologies will be of interest to many colleagues as they seek to develop their approaches to teaching.

In addition to introducing the papers that form the latest issue of the journal, we would like to remind you that there are many events that may support you in enhancing your approaches to teaching and learning, supported by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning. We would encourage you to consult the forum website and avail of the many opportunities that are being made available.

From the perspective of the journal, and your research and writing for publication more generally, we would like to bring to your attention an AISHE event that will take place in March 2015 on the subject of ethics. It is designed specifically to address issues that arise for colleagues researching teaching and learning and will offer information and advice on how best to navigate the field.

We will have a thematic issue in February and further open issues in June and October 2015. We look forward to receiving your submissions.

Moira Maguire and Saranne Magennis, 31st October 2014.