

Introduction to the Issue*

Summer is in all its glory as I write some brief thoughts to introduce you to Volume 10: 2, the summer issue of the *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. It is unusual to write as sun shines in full force with temperatures reaching more than 30⁰C., in an Ireland that is concerned about lack of rain. In these circumstances I hold out some hope that you will find time to read the issue while sheltering in the cooling shade rather than from the rain and grey skies that we more often associate with the Irish summer.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce an issue with an interesting range of themes in higher education: encompassing digital citizenship, pedagogic interventions, and some practical guidance for early career colleagues in relation to bidding for funding. A book review and a response to an earlier paper complete the issue, which I trust will be of benefit to practitioners from across the disciplines.

Prior to entering into the details of the current issue, I would like to begin by reminding our readers that AISHE-J views itself as a service to higher education in its broadest sense and therefore invites submissions from colleagues in all discipline areas. We have a particular interest in early career researchers and welcome submissions from colleagues at this stage of their careers. Our scope encompasses papers from academics, educational developers, and colleagues engaged in e-learning, information skills and student support, and research on any topic in relation to the development of teaching and learning in higher education is appropriate. The key criterion is a focus on higher education. We look forward to seeing your submissions.

* URL <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/363>

Turning to the current issue, there is a pleasing emphasis on the engagement of students, both in their classes and in the broader digital society we inhabit. Christina O'Connor and Paul Donovan reflect on the problem of student passivity in the higher education classroom and consider whether the ubiquitous use of PowerPoint has a negative impact on student engagement. In a paper entitled "The Engaged Classroom: PowerPoint Free" the authors report on a study, conducted in two undergraduate modules at an Irish university, into the removal of PowerPoint as a transmission medium in the classroom. 136 students were involved over a 12-week period. Following the interventions data were gathered using a survey. Results showed a positive response to the removal of PowerPoint resulting in increased engagement by students.

In "Developing a Business Simulation Game to Improve Student Engagement with Accounting Theory", Carol Moran, Gary Reynolds, and Neil Gannon explore an intervention designed to encourage active learning for undergraduate business accounting students. A lecturer's reflective practice, led to the recognition that many business students struggle to understand the practical application of accountancy theory. A simulation game was developed to provide a virtual gaming environment to help students to contextualise accounting theories by encouraging them to engage in active learning. The prototype of the game was tailored to the specific learning outcomes of the accounting modules that students were following. The game was refined through an iterative process, using student feedback to make it more relevant and user friendly. The intervention aimed to improve the quality of student learning and the quality of the teaching. As the authors state: "This paper demonstrates how reflective practice, and the intervention which followed, has resulted in the development of a new tool for teaching and learning". The paper is particularly interesting in that what began as an individual reflection became the collaborative journey reported here.

While the paper entitles "Embedding Digital Citizenship in Higher Education Institutes" by Colin Cooney, Katherina Nugent and Kevin Howard, remains concerned with fostering student engagement it is aimed as promoting "responsible Digital Citizenship in Higher Education settings". Concerned about the negative impacts of inappropriate online activity within the campus community, the authors' rationale was to create a dialogue within their HE setting to challenge a false division that seemed to exist between face to face and digital social norms. The paper reports on a two stranded intervention, theoretically underpinned by synthesised literature from Community Development, Republican Citizenship and the Social Psychology of online communications. Awareness raising on a train-the-trainer model

of peer-led workshops, was combined with a proposed mediation process based on Restorative Justice principles to allow those harmed by the Social Media actions of others to be heard and their concerns addressed. The authors report that the evaluation indicates "the emergence of cultural change within our institution in relation to online behaviour".

In "From Conference to 5k – getting started with bidding for funding" Magennis and Farrell offer experience-based advice to those new to the area of bidding for funding in what they describe as "a brief and somewhat lighthearted guide" designed for colleagues who have never bid for funding before but think they might like to give it a try. Taking the systematic approach to developing fitness that is referred to in the phrase "From Couch to 5k", the authors chart a journey from securing small amounts of funding rising in stages to the €5000 goal. This contribution draws on the authors experience to suggest what the essential elements of the process might be. The paper points to some potential places where Irish colleagues might begin to seek funding particularly to support teaching and learning related activity. The guidance is aimed specifically at those who are inexperienced in this aspect of academic work and is thus at a basic but systematic level to help with the beginning of the journey from Conference to 5k.

In a Letter entitled "An Appraisal of Thematic Analysis: Warts and All" Frank Houghton and Sharon Houghton respond to an earlier piece in AISHE J, namely "Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars" by Moira Maguire, Brid Delahunt published in Aishe-J 9:3. Houghton and Houghton suggest that early career researchers would benefit from being forewarned of certain issues and debates that impact the approach such as the relative standing of qualitative approach and thematic analysis in particular and the relevance of specialised software to support their endeavours. This is the first time that AISHE-J has published a letter in response to a paper. It may well be the first stage of a thought provoking debate on the issue of thematic analysis and the other matters raise.

We bring the issue to a close with a review of *Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2017, by Evans, N., Broido, E., Brown, K., Wilke, A. The review is contributed by Ciara O Shea, who following a detailed, insightful and informative review concludes that the book should be "a recommended read not only for those in the front line provision of support but also the strategic planners of higher education."

Before closing this introduction, I would like to bring to your attention a conference that is to take place in October. Entitled the All Ireland Conference on Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Further and Higher Education, it is a collaboration between the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) and the Learning Innovation Network (LIN). The conference theme is 'Using evidence to enhance learning'.

The conference hopes to promote inclusive conversations across and between sectors and disciplines. After the conference, all presenters will be invited to submit a full article for consideration for publication in a special issue of the All Ireland Journal of Higher Education (AISHE-J) <http://www.aishe-j.org>. In addition to the conference presenters, we invite all colleagues working in the the area to consider submitting a paper for the special issue.

I hope that you will find AISHE-J Volume 10 Number 2 (2018) of value to you in your practice and that you will find the content both thought provoking and practical. I would like to thank, on behalf of the journal team, all of our authors for their work and patience as their papers have progressed through the stages towards publication. I would also like to thank our peer reviewers who gave generously of their time and expertise: the journal could not be published without them.

Saranne Magennis, Editor AISHE-J
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