Introduction to the Issue

Moira Maguire and Marie O'Neill

We are delighted to bring you our first issue of 2024, with a range of papers that offer interesting perspectives on issues of relevance across the sector. We are very pleased to present two literature reviews in this issue. Good literature reviews are important resources for scholars and practitioners, and we would like to encourage submissions of relevant literature reviews to AISHE-J.

In our first paper, 'The relationship between notetaking, revision and learning in tertiary education: A review of the literature, 1979-2023', Kathleen Carroll addresses a critical, though under-researched, study skill. The review examines evidence regarding how notetaking contributes to learning, and the effectiveness of handwritten and typed notetaking and other notetaking strategies.   Carroll demonstrates that effective notetaking is associated with academic success, highlighting the importance of supporting students to develop these skills as '...*notetaking instruction on important skills such as listening discriminatively, synthesising material, and the use of pictographic mapping results in the achievement of higher assessment scores for students*' (p. 12).

Our second review paper, by Roisin Donnelly and Andrew Ryan, 'Workplace Implications for Female Leaders: Exploration of Stereotype Threat within Video Conferencing' is very timely given the focus on gender equality in Irish higher education and the widespread use of video conferencing applications across the sector. Defining stereotype threat "*as occurring when a negative stereotype regarding a group under test becomes salient in the context of that test, adversely affecting the performance of the subject,*"(p. 2), this review reveals a body of research demonstrating stereotype threat in a range of technological contexts in the business environment which act as impediments to the advancement of women and ethnic minorities. The authors highlight the need to ensure '...*that the physical environment does not convey stereotypes about the group which inhabits it helps by not alienating people who may not fit that stereotype.*' (p. 25) and call for further research on stereotype threat in video conferencing in higher education.

Our next paper, by John McFarland, Gurjot Bar, Peter Hayes and Mohamed Elhassan Abdalla

deals with the challenges of providing opportunities to develop reflective practice in medical training. In '''The free association sessions''. Perspectives on a novel teaching platform by final year medical students and basic specialist trainees in Psychiatry', they discuss the implementation and evaluation of a 6-week structured programme of reflection. The findings indicated that the programme did facilitate reflection and might be particularly beneficial for those less inclined to engage with reflection. The authors conclude '...*our programme provides some preliminary evidence that structured reflective sessions created a comfortable environment, addressed hierarchy and facilitated wide-ranging reflection on multiple areas. Furthermore, the structure appeared more approachable for medical students and those early in training.*' (p. 19). This paper will be of interest to all concerned with supporting and promoting reflective practice.

Finally, Violeta Morari, Geraldine Doyle and Catherine Murphy report on an innovative academic mentoring and coaching programme at Munster Technological University, in their paper 'REACH - A mentoring initiative in an Irish University'. The initiative was designed to support first- and second-year students during the shift to emergency remote teaching in response to the COVID pandemic. The article discusses the evaluation of this programme, and findings highlight the benefits of this scheme. For example, while '... *academic support was a key reason for a student to contact their mentor, practical information, discussion of exam results and information on accessing other support service were also high on students' list for contacting their Reach Academic Mentor. In effect the Academic Mentors played a significant role in signposting students to other support services across the university*.' (p.9 17).

As ever, many people have made this issue possible – our authors of course, and our reviewers who generously share their time and knowledge to benefit the learning and teaching community in Ireland. We are always keen to hear from potential reviewers so please do get in touch of you are interested in reviewing for AISHE-J. Finally, we would like to remind you of our upcoming Special Issue 'Universal Design in Tertiary Education', in partnership with AHEAD (Home - AHEAD). We had an amazing response to our call for contributions and it promises to be an excellent issue. Please note that we accept general contributions at any time - deadlines only apply to Special Issues. We hope that you enjoy our Spring 2024 issue.