

Introduction to the Issue

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Welcome to this Winter 2025 issue of AISHE-J. This issue marks a time of reflection. It is the first since the loss of our dear friend and colleague Dr Brett Becker who is remembered in this issue. Brett was an early and enthusiastic advocate of open-access publishing. This commitment embodied his enduring generosity, his deep belief in the collective advancement of knowledge, and his dedication to sharing insights in teaching and learning as widely as possible.

Over the past year we've been navigating the challenges of sustaining the journal with a very small team, very limited resources, on a purely voluntary basis, while maintaining our commitment to diamond open access. The high volume of submissions, while very welcome, has challenged our finite capacity, particularly as the day jobs grow ever more demanding. This has caused significant delays to our normal publication schedule. As we look ahead to 2026, we are reviewing the operation of AISHE-J and developing a plan to protect the future sustainability of the journal, and we look forward to the coming year. We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and readers for their patience and support.

This issue presents a lively, varied and timely collection of papers that deal with issues of interest and relevance across higher education – online and blended learning, the impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), specific groups of learners, specific pathways and specific approaches to enhancing teaching and learning.

The first article, by Frances Boylan and colleagues, deals with perspectives on hyflex at Technological University Dublin, focusing on academic managers. This provides a unique insight into the views of a key but under-studied group in this context. In the next article, Jenny Roth and colleagues report on a study on the relationship between online-only learning and self-esteem. Interestingly, they found that '*...when students do not have a chance to compare positively with other students, the online environment protects their self-esteem*'. In 'Enablers and Barriers to an Online Interprofessional Education Programme: A

Mixed Methods Study.’, Dymphna Casey and colleagues report on an innovative cross-institution interprofessional education programme, reporting both the challenges and the benefits. This is likely to be very useful to anyone with an interest in the education of health and social care professionals.

Marion Power, Eoin Homan and Gina Noonan provide an interesting account of using the flipped classroom approach in further education and highlight the importance of a ‘structured and guided approach’. In the next article, Hilary Dunne and colleagues ask how we can make our universities more age friendly. In ‘Evaluation of an Age-Friendly Intergenerational Service-Learning Programme on a University Campus’, they discuss a service-learning initiative that enabled occupational therapy students to design workshops for older adults. These ‘...*fostered a strong sense of purpose and enabled the formation of intergenerational relationships and social connections*’. The authors make a number of recommendations to further develop age-friendly initiatives and policies in higher education.

In ‘Traditional and Apprentice Modes of Learning at Undergraduate Level: A Comparative Analysis’, Diarmuid O’Brian and Sharron Harris Byrne deal with the very current issue of advanced apprenticeship. They make a range of recommendations that will be of value across the sector. Francis McGeough, Emily Walsh and Blathnaid McGeough present a study that uses the case of the former Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (now part of Technological University Dublin) to explore the public value of higher education. They concluded that benefits were considerable, resulting in ‘... *higher employment levels, higher salaries, and greater opportunity*.’

Few issues are generating as much concern as the impact of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) on academic integrity. Mary-Claire Kennedy, Silvia Benini and Fionn McGarth tackle the impact of GenAI on academic integrity policy and procedures. Their article provides useful guidance on how to develop and/or update policies in response.

In ‘Embedding social constructivism in a first-year online economics module’, Maire Finnegan explores student perceptions of digital tools used to scaffold learning. The paper identifies ‘...*a number of beneficial digital tools as perceived by students that can be used within the Moodle platform to promote the principles of social constructivism*’. Our final

paper is by James F. White, who discusses Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within the context of undergraduate Nursing education. The paper focuses on the considerations of UDL for students who are autistic and discusses practical applications. This paper will be of wide interest, particularly to educators on professional programmes.

Our sincere thanks to all our authors for this varied, interesting and timely collection of paper and to our reviewers who give so generously of their time and expertise. Our thanks too for the ongoing support and patience over the past year.

We hope you enjoy this issue.