

Dear Readers,

With this issue, we offer you a new journal that originated from the *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching* we started ten years ago. It served educators and researchers well, but we decided it was time to raise it to a higher level and provide top materials in a variety of educational areas that would help educators innovate and thus make education – both secondary and higher – more effective and efficient.

This issue presents five papers on the following topics:

- (1) innovation in education;
- (2) organizational practices;
- (3) online education;
- (4) history of educational innovations; and
- (5) globalization of education

The first paper, “Innovation in education: what works, what doesn’t, and what to do about it” by Peter Serdyukov, presents a systemic overview of the field of educational innovation, addressing various issues in the education system and beyond that create barriers for effective teaching and learning, and discusses prospective paths for enhancing educational innovations. The author argues that innovations are not solely technological in nature, as the human element remains the most crucial and sensitive aspect of any educational advances. He suggests that the principal focus of educators’ innovative work should be on learners and teachers, and on increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of all pedagogic efforts. The key to a prosperous, innovative society, in his opinion, is an educational system that breeds critical thinking, autonomy, self-efficacy, creativity, responsibility, and a culture that supports innovative education. The most effective way to spread innovations, according to the author, is to make it a major societal issue.

The next paper, “The role of the university in accelerated learning and innovation as a regional ecosystem integrator” by Kevin Celuch, Bryan Bourdeau, Mohammed Khayum, and Leslie Townsend, presents a social entrepreneurship program emphasizing innovative solutions to regional problems/needs. The model is examined through the lens of several defining aspects of ecosystems that exist on strong platforms, engage diverse actors, drive new collaborations, accelerate engaged learning and innovation, and create unique value. The model points to implications for the future of higher education.

The third paper, “A case study on narrative structures in instructional MOOC designs” by Elke Höfler, Claudia Zimmerman, and Martin Ebner, share the lessons learned in implementing certain MOOC instructional design patterns, such as shorter course duration, narrative structures with suspense peaks, and a course schedule that is diversified and stimulating within the “Dr Internet” MOOC.



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The paper “Problems and solutions for using computer (networks) for education” by Hermann Maurer, one of the pioneers of computer-based education, provides a unique insight into the 50-year history of the use of computers for teaching and learning. The author writes that in some niches, applications tend to be successful; in others, attempts to fully eliminate humans from the educational process are bound to fail. He reports on what he has learned over the last 50 years, and shares his rich experiences in the hope they will help other researchers avoid falling into the same traps.

Finally, R.D. Nordgren’s paper, “Cultural competence and relational closeness: examining refugee education,” uses a two-site case study to examine refugee education in Sweden together with relevant literature to explore effective ways in which refugees can be educated in Sweden, the USA, and elsewhere. This case study points toward the dual use of cultural competence and relational closeness as ways in which refugees can be integrated (rather than assimilated) into the cultures of their host nations.

Educators and researchers are invited to submit their innovative research for publication in *JRIT&L*.

**Peter Serdyukov**