

Editorial: Innovative teaching approaches

Teaching in higher education in ways that engage students and enhance their learning outcomes requires significant effort on the part of the instructor. The research papers included in the second issue of Volume 18 of the *LTHE Journal* are example case studies of innovative teaching approaches applied in different disciplines within the higher education context of the Gulf. Each study documents a specific teaching approach and its impact on student learning.

As a response to emergency remote teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, Nitin Bhaurao Raut and Gweneth Gorman describe how their DoIt@Home Lab approach provided an effective way for engineering students to conduct their lab experiments while at home and continue learning without disruption despite the lack of access to a physical lab. The study showed not only an increase in student learning outcomes and a reduction in failure rates but also how this innovative teaching approach can be used to supplement the postpandemic on-campus activities for engineering courses.

In her research paper about composting practices, Carole Ayoub describes how project-based learning can be an effective approach to teaching undergraduate students microbiology concepts while, at the same time, raising their awareness about environmental sustainability. Comparing two group interventions (i.e. project-based learning vs traditional lecture), the researcher found the experiential learning that results from carrying out a project to be much more significant in enhancing students' knowledge of microbiology and awareness of waste management practices.

The third paper in this issue investigates how feedback affects students' performance in academic writing. Mohammed Abdullah Alharbi and Abdulrahman Alqefari compare the uptake of peer feedback to teacher feedback as well as the uptake of global feedback that focuses on content and organization vs local feedback that focuses on language and formatting. In addition, their investigation of student perceptions towards the source of feedback is particularly interesting as it explains the differences in feedback uptake in academic writing courses within the context of the Gulf.

The use of debates as an active learning strategy is the subject of the fourth research paper in this issue. Amani Hamdan Alghamdi, Ali Aldossary and Waisi Elhassan provide a detailed account of how they structured engaging debates in a postgraduate teacher preparation course to raise students' awareness of educational reforms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the responsibilities of educators and the effects on education. Debates proved to be an effective way to enhance student learning and involvement.

The final paper in this issue investigates the effects of studying history and Islamic history on students' political awareness. Meguellati Achour and Hasnah AlGhamdi make a case for how the study of history in undergraduate curricula can lead to an increased level of students' political awareness and help prepare them as future leaders.

This issue would not have been possible without the support of the countless peer reviewers from around the world, who devoted their time in reviewing dozens of research



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papers submitted to the journal and helped the editorial team choose the ones that appear in this issue. As always, their contribution is greatly valued and appreciated.

With best regards,
Prof. Dr. Christina Gitsaki
Editor in Chief

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