Introduction

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Editor

In this issue of *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives* we include a variety of contributions which can contribute in different ways to understanding and guiding higher education in the Arabian Gulf region.

The first paper, by Bielenberg and Harvey, relates to an area of current interest in various subject areas and interdisciplinary courses: Problem-Based Learning (PBL). In PBL students engage with a real-world problem in order to apply and develop skills including analyzing, prioritizing and communicating in teams to generate solutions. Bielenberg and Harvey describe how they adapted the PBL approach to integrate English, mathematics and Information/Communication Technology in a foundation program for local students in the UAE.

O'Neill's and Theuri's paper investigates the correlation between students' cognitive skills and their proficiency in English. Using statistical analysis, they analyze the apparent links between different types of cognitive skill (knowledge, comprehension, application and analysis), and measures of English proficiency (including TOEFL score and university English course grades). They make useful distinctions between these different measures, and their findings are valuable for those seeking to develop students' language in tandem with cognitive skills at undergraduate level.

The third paper, by Higgi, presents a model for undergraduate education which has been developed in Management Information Science and offers potential for more general application. The aim of the model is to link three elements: a balance of theory and practice, a motivating learning experience and the development of cognitive skills. The proposed model outlines the relationship between course components including lectures, assignments, case-studies and problems, and the paper also discusses research questions which await investigation regarding this model.

Also in this issue we include a range of shorter papers. We have two short papers by students, in our series *I learned a lot in this course*: Abdulla Al-Banna describes a course in Organizational Behavior and its relevance to his work and life, while Lateefa Al-Mansoori provides a striking example of how expectations about a course can play a part in how students choose courses, and how they benefit from them when they take them. Finally, Christine Coombe and Peter Theuri review two books related to teaching and learning: one on involving students in assessment, and the other on action research by faculty.

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