

Editor's Introduction

Dr. David Palfreyman

Zayed University, Dubai

This issue of [Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives](#) offers a variety of contributions from faculty and students in various locations in the Gulf Region.

Shana's paper presents work which she has done on using an e-portfolio with her students. She reviews literature on e-portfolios and on learning in the Arab world, and presents findings from three different year-groups of her students who have prepared online portfolios of their university work. Following this, Brandt's paper tackles a question of widespread interest in the Gulf Region: the preparation of students aiming to study in English, for whom this is a second language. Brandt reviews the advantages and disadvantages of addressing these students' language needs using a) generic academic materials or b) discipline-specific materials linked to students' specializations; and presents data suggesting that a third path, focusing on language through a combination of generic materials and individualized assignments, is worth exploring.

Barrell and McBride offer a research note regarding a method which they have used for gathering culturally-related data in their research: a focus group discussion based around a carefully-chosen text. They explain how this can draw out students' perceptions of sometimes sensitive issues; and they offer advice for how to make such discussions as productive as possible in a Gulf context.

Two students reflect on their experience in university courses: Aisha Al-Hamiz Al-Suwaidi provides insight into the experience of students who feel less than comfortable using Arabic for academic purposes; she relates how she became more confident in this area through her Arabic lab course. Hind Al-Ateeqi reflects on what she learned from a course on graphic design, and what the teacher did to help her in this learning.

Finally, Harold reviews a recent book which is very relevant to the work of university and college teachers in the Gulf Region: *Teaching International Students*, edited by Carroll and Ryan. This book addresses issues of cross-cultural understanding, cultural variation and quality in university/college teaching.

As always, thanks go to the LTHE Editorial Group and the peer reviewers for their help in preparing this issue of the journal. We look forward to receiving submissions for the next issue of the journal by **18 February**: see <http://www.zu.ac.ae/lthe/call.html> for details.