Editor's Introduction

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With this issue, [Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives](#) enters its sixth year of publication. As well as having a readership around the world, the journal is currently gaining a broader editorial base: the journal's editorial board now includes a member from Oman in addition to the continuing members based at Zayed University (UAE); we are working to include further members from other institutions/Gulf countries; and we are inviting selected leading scholars of teaching and learning worldwide to join an Advisory Board to help develop the journal further.

This issue begins with a paper by Khelifa which analyzes the process of reflection in which faculty engage as they teach in a culture different from their own. He presents findings from a survey of teaching faculty in the UAE, and shows that these people already reflect on incidents and cultural mismatches which emerge in the classroom and other settings, and search for ways to improve their courses. He also suggests a model for understanding such reflection, with a view to facilitating this process which can be so valuable both for faculty and for learners in their courses.

Semmar's paper examines one issue which can highlight cultural factors as well as gender, academic progress and other aspects of teacher-student interaction: students' reluctance to attend professors' office hours. Although faculty may feel that office hours are a valuable opportunity for students to receive individualized feedback, students often shy away from making use of this opportunity. Semmar analyzes findings from a survey of Qatari university students, and teases out the factors which seem to play a part in their readiness or otherwise to seek help from their professors outside class.

Lahkim, Skulmoski and Bruhn examine a curricular issue of concern in many areas of higher education in the Gulf: the development of students' leadership and teamwork skills. The authors present an example of how they have used Problem Based Learning to help students develop these skills within the context of their professional/technical education; and they make valuable suggestions for those teaching in university courses that prepare students for a particular profession.

As in previous issues we include examples of reflections on courses, in order to give our readers an insight into how a range of participants experience university/college courses. By publishing these reflections we hope to stimulate faculty to think about and discuss how their own students perceive aspects of their courses. In this issue we have first a reflection by Al-Marzouqi on how her teacher helped her and other students to draw on a variety of real-world resources to learn in their course. This is followed by our first example of a matched reflection: Crawford, the teacher of an interpersonal communication course, reflects on the planning and teaching and outcomes of this course; and Al-Faqeeh, an ex-student on the same course, summarizes in a concise and forthright manner her motivations in choosing and studying the course, as well as its effect on herself, which she sums up as: *I have changed completely*.

As always, I would like to express my appreciation of the work of the LTHE Editorial Group and of 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 **21 February 2009**: see <http://www.zu.ac.ae/lthe/call.html> for details.