

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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Higher education institutions are at the very nexus of career-focussed education, for students seeking qualifications to contribute positively to their community. Recognising the strength of academia and the challenges that plague access to a range of reliable resources, ensure that policy-makers and educators alike, continue to review best practices in order to provide the innovative delivery of pedagogical excellence. We are proud to present this issue with contributions and perspectives from South Africa, the USA, and Canada. This issue has a strong focus on learner pedagogy, mentorship, digital tools, professional development, and university funding models. Research in these areas provide interesting and informative reading, on how global educators continue with their core business of delivering relevant and meaningful education to their students.

The first article by Mbhalati reports his efforts to develop a South African university funding model that would align with the country's transformation agenda. The research finding results demonstrated that amongst the various sources of funding for the South African university sector, government and National Student Financial Aid Scheme funding were significantly contributing to the transformation agenda in South Africa. His findings confirm the agency theory perspective that funding is a tool that governments use to entice universities towards the achievement of the transformation agenda. The next article by Mewani, et.al., explored students' confidence with digital tools and soft skills, and to determine the effectiveness of a workshop in preparing students for resume building and job interviews. Their result findings reported that the participants unanimously rated the workshop highly despite recommending a longer duration for the workshop. Other themes that emerged were the impact of instructor effectiveness, interaction with the Professor and peers, and skill development. These findings suggest the transformative potential of targeted, hands-on interventions in advancing equity and employability for under-represented college students. The next article is from Millard and Breulkelman that explored the adaptation of assessment models to specific local contexts to increase the potential to enhance both academic and institutional effectiveness. Their study critically examines various assessment methods in tertiary education aligning them with practices in the field of Biokinetics. Their findings underscore the importance of authentic, learning-oriented assessments in fostering student development and achieving educational objectives. The fourth article by Cadieux and colleagues sought to better understand the reasons that incite students to plagiarise, so universities can implement the required support mechanisms to prevent plagiarism and promote academic integrity. As part of an international partnership on plagiarism prevention, they developed questionnaires administered to 1357 teachers and 4661 students across 31 universities in North America and Europe. Their findings showed that when comparing results from teacher and student groups, teachers were significantly more likely than students to perceive subjective norms as an incentive to plagiarise, whereas for students it was the components of the task that prevailed. They recommended that further scientific exploration of contextual or individual factors influencing the empirical structuring of responses, such as the impact of cultural or motivational variables. The fifth article by Mathunjwa and colleagues evaluated the effects of combat sports with physical education on student participation, while developing discipline and academic achievements in higher education institutions. They recommended that in order to ensure sustainability, combat sports and structured physical education should be integrated into university curricula and co-curricular activities, supported by inclusive student development policies.

The sixth article by Ingrid Palmary critically reflects on the challenges and opportunities of mentorship programmes in the South African context, by identifying five areas of debate central to better understanding mentorship programmes. She recommends a research agenda that can lead to more clearly conceptualised mentorship programmes and can better evaluate their impact both on PhD candidates and the broader transformation of the academy. The final article in this issue is from Shange and colleagues who aimed to determine teachers' perspectives on the nature of Continuous Professional Development implementation in uMgungundlovu District in South Africa. Their findings revealed that there was no compliance with the South African Council of Educators policies to implement Continuous Professional Development. This non-compliance resulted in Continuous Professional Development becoming ineffective, which may impact on teachers' effectiveness in their teaching.

As always, we hope you will enjoy learning from our international academic peers through their work published in this issue. We encourage you to contribute your research findings to the IJHE journal, so others in our readership may benefit from your professional research activities. Wishing you all the best with your work.

Warm regards and the season's greetings,

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