

It is with great pleasure that I present to the academic community Volume 17, Issue 2 of the *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives Journal*. This issue, which includes five research papers and a book review, offers readers unique perspectives on a range of matters relevant to Higher Education in the Gulf.

The first three papers in the Issue deal with curricular and pedagogical concerns in the undergraduate education context. In her paper, Shytance Wren describes an intervention designed to determine the extent to which a global citizenship education curriculum can enhance undergraduate students' social responsibility competence. By redesigning the existing curriculum and adopting specific instructional strategies informed by theory and research, Shytance showed that her intervention group made considerable gains in civic awareness, social justice attitudes and diversity attitudes.

The next two papers describe interventions facilitated by technology. The study conducted by Hassan Mahdi, Adil Qadha and Baleigh Al-Wasy describes how social networking tools can be utilized in the foreign language classroom to effectively develop undergraduate students' communicative and pragmatic competence. In the next paper, the use of technology by undergraduate students in informal foreign language learning was investigated by Wagdi Bin-Hady and Nasser Al-Tamimi. The study offers unique insights into the informal learning practices of Yemeni students and discusses how the classification of language learning strategies should include those that are technology-based and useful for independent informal learning.

The last two papers are exploratory research studies that offer unique perspectives relevant to the Gulf Higher Education Context. In her paper, Zsuzsanna Mikecz Munday investigated how freshmen students adapt to a transnational university academically, culturally and socially and the challenges they face. She found that students require more academic support and mentoring from their teachers, while they rely heavily on co-national peers for social and emotional support. The paper by Thuraya Al Riyami investigated Omani students' English Communication skills from the employers' perspective. The study found that university graduates had limited English ability that inhibited their performance in the workplace and emphasized the need for undergraduate curricula to better develop students' ability to use English effectively in the workplace.

All five research papers underscore the need for change in undergraduate education. Consistent with this theme, the book review by Rola Salam and Beidan Mussa looks at specific strategies for implementing gradual changes in the classroom.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the support of the 69 peer reviewers, who devoted their time in reviewing the 42 papers submitted to the journal and helped chose the ones that appear in this issue. Their contribution is greatly valued and appreciated.



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