

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION - Volume 2 no 1

David.Palfreyman@zu.ac.ae - Zayed University, Dubai

This is the second issue of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives, and it continues certain themes from the first issue, as well as adding certain elements. Building on the contributions from Zayed University, UAE, which constituted the first issue, the papers in this second issue of the journal begin to draw on the wider Gulf context by including a contribution from Oman. We hope in future issues to continue this broadening of perspective, while maintaining a focus on the Gulf region.

Sonleitner and Khelifa present a research study on the challenges which new Western-educated faculty experience when they begin to teach in a Gulf university setting. The university teachers surveyed perceived many differences between their previous experience and that in the Gulf, and reflect upon the consequences of these for teaching, as well as new approaches which they have developed in response.

Goodliffe's paper discusses the introduction of Personal Development Planning for students in one college in Oman. She provides a convincing rationale for the teaching of "soft skills" such as self-evaluation and professional communication and an outline of how these skills are taught in her institution; she also describes also some of the cultural and other challenges involved in this implementation.

Two papers focus on the use of information and communication technology. Radecki's paper describes an experimental course which blends distance and face-to-face instruction, using videoconferencing, asynchronous messaging and other technologies. He provides useful insights into the ways in which Emirati culture shapes the use of these technologies, and how teachers may make their use of the technologies more locally appropriate. Schoepp's paper focuses on the other side of technology use: the barriers which hinder educators' use of technology for teaching purposes. He takes an institutional perspective, suggesting measures which can help to address lack of uptake of available technology.

Hassall and Ganesh have a dual focus in their paper, reflecting the specializations of the two authors. They discuss the use of a statistical technique which helps to make sense of complex data about the attitudes of teachers, students or others, in relation to an example from one academic field: the teaching of English as an International Language in a global context. The statistical technique is of relevance to research on learning and teaching in various contexts, and the global issues raised in the content of the research are also more broadly relevant to those working in other disciplines.

A significant addition to this issue is a Book Review section. The review in this issue is a collaborative one, written by two academics from different disciplines. We hope in future issues to continue this format, which embodies the spirit of interdisciplinary dialogue that this journal aims to promote.

LTHE aims to promote discussion of learning and teaching issues in colleges and universities in the Gulf region. As in the first issue, each paper contains a link to a LTHE online discussion forum for readers to discuss the papers in this issue; and in this issue each author offers three questions at the end of his/her paper, to stimulate discussion and reflection on the issues in the paper, in relation to readers' own educational contexts. We welcome submissions relevant to our focus from educators and others with knowledge of the Gulf region. To find out how to submit a paper to the journal, please see the [Call for Submissions](#). I would like to thank the other members of the editorial group who helped in selecting and reviewing papers and shaping the direction of the journal:

Kenneth Carr, Fiona Hunt, Gregory Skulmoski, Keith Van Tassel and Lea Wells, as well as other reviewers who responded to drafts of the papers in this issue of the journal.