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## Editorial

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We would like to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Innovation in Education (IJIE)*. This issue of the *IJIE* is dedicated to Petra Luck. Since we have been invited to edit an international academic journal, it was obvious to us that sharing duties in a team is the key to a successful editorship. Strongly rooted in academic educational and management settings, Petra Luck not only had a wealth of experiences in publishing and project management, but also a very personal and sensitive approach to her work, making her the natural choice for a member of the editorial team. Petra's sudden death in the spring of 2009 left us all in a state of shock. Because Petra Luck was strongly involved in both the planning and development of *IJIE*, we would like to dedicate our first issue to her.

Many countries are engaged in education reform in order to develop the human resources necessary to remain competitive in the international marketplace. Many of these reforms emphasise 'innovation'. However, innovation in education appears to have multiple meanings. Sometimes, it refers to the need for education to develop innovative people. Sometimes, it refers to new products, processes and business concepts within education itself.

This journal thus subscribes to a broad understanding of innovation in education in order to provide a wide platform for academic and practitioner discussion to create knowledge and exchange ideas on this important issue. We are interested in how innovation may be an integral part of a coherent and powerful classroom, school or education system strategy, and the dilemmas and tensions faced in pursuing innovation

while maintaining quality assurance in education at the same time. We are also keen to explore and examine the future trends of the education landscape worldwide.

The *IJIE* also aims to promote understanding and dialogue across country borders and cultures on the issues of innovation in education by serving as a platform where new theories, research findings and case studies can be published and shared internationally. The journal welcomes worldwide contributions from academics, researchers, policy makers, school leaders and education practitioners.

This journal therefore serves as an international platform to bring together academics, researchers, lecturers and persons in decision making positions, policy makers and practitioners from different backgrounds to share new theoretical approaches and research findings. Further, to enhance understanding and collaboration in issues of innovation and diversity in education.

The issues of innovation in education involve complex and multi-faceted challenges such as education policies, curriculum reforms, new diversity-oriented learning technologies and methods. Moreover, the challenges faced may differ from school to school in each country, and from country to country. Therefore, the challenges will have to take into account the specific nature of the education innovation in question, the context it is located, the teacher and student profile, the historical background of the country or region, local habits, needs and practices, ethics and even religious beliefs.

We have chosen to launch the inaugural issue of the *IJIE* with a special theme of 'Innovation in education: diversity in teaching and learning'. This issue explores the challenges upon the various facets of teaching and learning that arise from the current technological advancements, sociopolitical situations and academic requirements and result in the diversity of practice. This is an area where one will find innovations, diversity and trends, and where there are consensus on some issues and contradictions and paradoxes in others. In particular, it is keen to examine the tensions, dilemmas, contradictions and/or unanimity experienced by educators in the area of teaching and learning.

In this first and special issue of the *IJIE*, the authors' disciplinary backgrounds are diverse, ranging from computing science, management engineering and knowledge management to gender studies, educational sociology and pedagogy. They cover didactical, methodological, technical, epistemological and practical questions and will hopefully cater to a variety of readers.

In the introductory article, Heike Wiesner and Sabine Zauchner addresses the journals emphasis with diversity and delivers strong arguments for the necessity of a context-sensitive approach to diversity in teaching and learning.

Accordingly, Pak Tee Ng studies what is meant by innovation in education. He argues that what we seem to have taken for granted when we say 'innovation in education' is actually a much more complex matter with not one single but many interconnected drivers.

The next paper, Edgar A. Whitley and Alexander Grous focus on the issue of academic writing by international students in the internet age. Their paper therefore studies *diversity in action* and introduces an innovative, exploratory study that identifies important characteristics of student academic writing by focusing on students studying information systems in the UK with diverse academic backgrounds. Several strategies are identified that display how the students make the transition from the ways of studying and writing that they are familiar with to those required to do well in the British system.

The paper by Chris Trevitt, Tony Foley and Aliya Steed focuses on curriculum (re)development in higher education. Looking for the benefits of a collaborative and iterative framework that supports educational innovation, the three authors shed light on another aspect of educational innovation. Their case study describes curriculum redevelopment in a commercial law course of higher education undertaken over a number of years by two lecturers. The authors argue convincingly in favour of a dialogical approach among different parties and on multiple levels – also an expression of *diversity in action*.

Francesco Sofo, Michelle Berzins, Salvatore Ammirato and Antonio P. Volpentesta analyse how the development of critical thinking skills can be enhanced through international and intercultural experiences by measuring the effects of exposing a group of Italian university students to a curriculum delivered by a visiting Australian university professor. Their pre- and post-delivery survey on critical thinking skills finds statistically significant self-reported improvements on three of the twelve items of the critical thinking inventory.

Iris Koall and Verena Bruchhagen discuss how teaching diversity implies an awareness of the rise of complexity. Based on a systems theory approach, the authors explain how paradoxes could be used in teaching diversity. They describe how paradoxes enable complexity to become observable and manageable. They also describe how teaching diversity provides educational opportunities to use paradoxes as beneficial ‘irritants’ to expand students’ frames of perception.

In their paper, Sigrid Schmitz and Katrin Nikoleyczik explore didactical concepts and technical support for transdisciplinary and gender-sensitive teaching. How does transdisciplinarity potentially support gender-sensitive teaching? How can gender-sensitive didactics be realised in transdisciplinary contexts? Their paper outlines the challenges and potential of combining both concepts.

Finally, Marcus Birkenkrahe and Matthias Mundt present how undergraduates craft their own online learning modules. In their case study, the authors investigate the creation of online teaching material by a highly heterogeneous group of undergraduate students using an open source learning management system. Furthermore, they identify and discuss the conditions under which the students can create valuable online learning modules in terms of didactics, student project management, technology and organisational support. The paper also discusses how this approach to blended learning relates to contemporary didactic approaches such as learning through teaching and constructivist/cognitive approaches.

In this inaugural issue, we have also included an individual paper which reflects on the idea of innovation in education and sets the stage for further discussion in this journal.

Although the various authors come from different disciplines and use different research frameworks, they all explore some basic questions about diversity in teaching and learning. We hope that this issue of the *IJIE* will benefit readers in their work, may that be research or practice, and will encourage the exchange of critical thoughts about innovation in education. We welcome your contribution to the *IJIE*.