

EDITORIAL

Innovating in a globalised world

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Innovating in a globalised world

Welcome to the second issue of the *Journal of the NUS Teaching Academy* (JNUSTA), which was successfully launched in November 2011. As a gesture of our support of the environment, we made JNUSTA an online publication but limited hard copies of the inaugural issue were printed to facilitate distribution and accessibility of our first issue. We have received constructive feedback on different aspects of the journal and would welcome further input to help us improve the quality of the journal. In a bid to promote lively discussion of interesting topics, we have set up our JNUSTA online forum (please visit the forum at <http://jnusta.activeboard.com/>), where we hope to raise issues that are shared concerns in Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL). Some discussion has since been generated, but we hope to see more reader participation. We are encouraged by the fact that visits to the journal site continue to increase and look forward to more contributions from all educators.

We are happy to bring you a slate of 5 articles in this second issue. The articles in this issue explore two different but related issues of globalisation and innovation in education. We start with globalisation and globalised education, with a contribution by William Choy, on the need for environmental scanning. Choy begins with a discussion of the nature of globalisation, pondering the question how IHL can prepare students for the realities and challenges of an age of globalisation, whilst equipping students with necessary life skills. He proposes the need for environmental scanning to understand the external environment in the context of globalisation. With environmental scanning, leaders in IHL will be alerted to critical trends and events that may have consequences for their organisations and enable them to make appropriate and timely responses. More importantly perhaps, the paper also discusses how an organisation can promote a learning culture amongst its staff members in response to rapid changes in the globalised environment. The paper goes on to reveal the efforts of the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore to equip and empower students with core life skills to meet the demands and challenges of the 21st century.

One effect of globalisation is increased movement across borders. Cross-border movement of students is one of the fastest growing phenomena in higher education in the 21st century, with increasingly high numbers of international students seeking to pursue their higher education outside their home country. While many international students seem readily adaptable

to their new host environment or institution, many others may also need to make multiple adjustments and require strong support as they pursue their education experience abroad. Hence, in a globally engaged university, issues relating to academic learning advising and the support services rendered to international students are highly critical. In his article, David Pang shares his experience on advising international students in New Zealand. He proposes a conceptual organiser for academic learning advising that views student learning along a continuum that moves from the generic and prescriptive to the developmental. This approach is manifestly incremental and cumulative, yet at the same time it is flexible and allows intervention at any point.

There are a wide variety of factors that propel the globalisation of education. Technology plays a major role in this drive and IT innovation has a critical role to play here. Thus, in response to globalisation many schools and IHL respond with an increasing use of IT and other non-traditional teaching aids. The article by Liao Wen-Chi reports on a two-year experiment he conducted, focusing on the benefits and challenges of using short videos to enrich traditional classroom teaching in a Real Estate Economics course. The findings suggest that introducing short videos in class can help students make relevant connections between theoretical knowledge with real-world practices, increase students' interest in the subject, and stimulate their critical thinking about the issues taught. These videos can also enliven lectures and help students to stay focused. The article, however, alerts us to the challenges faced during the implementation of this pedagogical innovation. They include the difficulty in identifying and locating relevant, objective videos; the inappropriate length; and non-optimal uses of videos. However, Liao also suggests ways to overcome some of these challenges and improve upon the effectiveness of this teaching method.

While Liao's article relates the use of IT in instructional delivery methods to achieve innovative education, Chou and Platt urge us to reconsider other forms of innovative education in a climate where technology is often equated with innovation in the classroom. In their article, Chou and Platt call for a return to experience and context, or what they call "context-sensitive education". The paper describes the implementation of a summer school programme where 3 groups of students from Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia, were brought together for an intensive programme of study and travel in Southeast Asia. This "*Southeast Asia in Context*" programme physically places participants in a cross-cultural setting. This allows them to experience first-hand the very phenomena of culture, history and life, about which they are learning. They argue that the educational innovation

lies in relinquishing control, allowing the unexpected and unplanned to happen, and requiring the students to deal with spontaneous developments. With these experiences, they gain valuable insights into social and historical phenomena, and also into their subjects, themselves, and each other. These insights are often profound and striking, and tend to have a lasting impact on the participants.

Whether one feels the need for more IT or more context-sensitive education as we strive to deliver quality education, all of us need to make critical decisions about where to invest our resources. The final short contribution from Kevin Yee and Jace Hargis is a note that shares the development of a simple, easy-to-use scale that is meant to help IHL educators to make decisions about whether a given technology falls within the spectrum of possible utility and value, thus enabling them to invest resources appropriately to enhance the quality of teaching.

In line with the two issues raised in this offering, we wish to invite readers to participate in our online forum on the topic, “*Technology in a 21st century classroom: To Use or NOT To Use?*”. We hope that you will enjoy reading these five contributions and participate to the JNUSTA forum, and that doing so will prove illuminating and thought provoking. We further look forward to receiving your feedback on the journal, and welcome manuscripts and comments on any topic relating to the theory and practice of teaching and learning.

ONLINE FORUM – POST YOUR COMMENTS @
jnusta.activeboard.com

Technology in a 21st century classroom: To Use or NOT To Use?

Technology has asserted its presence in many classrooms around the world. But is technology truly useful in helping us to deliver our classes better, or to enhance our students' learning? This forum invites all practitioners to reflect and debate on the matter. Please participate in this online discussion — we love to hear from you!

Post your comments at JNUSTA Online Forum. If this is your first visit to the forum you need to register as New Member before you will be allowed to post.