EDITORIAL

Teaching and Learning in a Changing World

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The editors of *Current Studies in Comparative Education, Science and Technology* are especially delighted to present Volumes 1 and 2, December 2020. The challenges that were brought about by the coronavirus pandemic has affected the delivery of education in unprecedented ways. The adverse effect is felt right around the world and has laid bare the uphill battles that educators and education officials are facing. As learning institutions around the world succumbed to lockdown, online classrooms have become fashionable, evidently with numerous and varied issues that parents and teachers are still trying to unravel. Teaching and learning have been forced to take new pathways in an ever-changing, troubled world environment.

There are other strands to teaching and learning that too must bear the brunt of the lockdown disruptions. Burgess and Sievertsen (2020) make this observation: "The global lockdown of education institutions is going to cause major (and likely unequal) interruption in students' learning; disruptions in internal assessments; and the cancellation of public assessments for qualifications or their replacement by an inferior alternative". This observation might appear to cast some dark shadows on the future of education, but this is the actual situation and it should not be ignored.

The papers in these volumes are a mixed bag. Although none of them focuses directly on the current changes that are occurring in teaching and learning spaces, they all point to the need for these changes in educational practices. Antony and Vaughn-Shavuo report on the results of tracking attitudinal changes among selected teacher candidates. The paper emphasizes the relevance of "inclusive and equitable education", which in turn calls for the need to equip teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes that will benefit students. Clearly, it takes more than teachers' dispositions to stimulate student learning. The use us games can inspire learning too. Hollings, Pan, Riaz, Said, Turner and Yasmeen demonstrate how gamification can play a role in the learning environment "to promote self-managed learning". Given that self-managed learning has to do with students developing techniques that will help them to enhance their learning abilities, there is a direct link here between self-managed learning and the online learning environment. The research carried out by Stankovska, Memedi and Dimitrovski found that there is a positive correlation between Internet learning, loneliness and academic success.

The attainment of various skills is crucial in dealing with the many and varied challenges that students encounter in their daily lives (Conner and Gunstone, 2004;

Eilam, 2002). In addition to dealing with the rapid changes brought about by techno-logical advancement, learners are grappling with the transformations brought about by the coronavirus pandemic situation; thus skill development has become ever more vital in helping to meet the future career needs. In spite of all the changes that have been made, Turner makes an interesting observation: "We are still stuck with an imagination that is rooted in the vision of a mechanical explanation of human activi-ty". This observation in relation to Vygotsky's claim that humans are "fixated with the mechanical." Staying with the use of skills notion, Allahnana, Ozoekwe and Vintseh highlight the need for entrepreneurship skills education to be part of the total educational system. They contend that the acquisition of skills is vital for job crea-tion; hence their recommendation that students should engage in entrepreneurship skills that will allow them to "become self-employed after graduation from second-ary schools". Similarly, Tussupbekova, from a trilingual country perspective, under-score the need for language skill development for students as well as teachers. Tus-supbekova insists that it is necessary for educators "to adapt to multicultural, multi-lingual environment for realization of personal and professional needs".

The papers presented in this publication have not put a direct focus on the educational challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, but it is clear that the issues that were researched are directly related to the current issues that stu-dents, educators and education authorities face. They have all highlighted the prob-lematic situations that need to be given serious attention if students are to be success-ful during and beyond their school years. Interestingly, all the papers have educa-tional strands that stretch across science and technology. This testifies to the im-portant contribution that each makes to the debates in the wider scientific and educa-tional environment in these changing and challenging times.

References

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