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Editorial

Michael Osborne, University of Glasgow

In this issue of JACE, we begin with two articles that are focusing on issues of support for adult learners. In the case of an article by Andrade and Matias, the considerations in this regard relate to the how work and family responsibilities can be balanced in by Portuguese working mothers attending a Master's programme. For Brown, Edwards and Perkins from the UK, the core concern is the way in which placement modules support the professional development of students taking a Childhood Studies degree.

Atkinson using an Australian context considers the what he argues as ignored matters in the teaching of adult English language and literacy, namely the sociocultural differences of learners and their aspirations of integration with mainstream society, and the transformational potential of the classroom. He suggests that it is the standardised curriculum that hinders the uptake of opportunities for transformation. Carter, Solberg and Solberg also focus on pedagogy issues, in this case the provision of online education programs for healthcare professionals with advanced training in the field of gerontology to establish proficiency in providing care to the elderly. They describe the issues pertaining to developing academic staff in a College of Medicine in Florida and as their over intent seek to offer their experiences to others considering similar developments.

Transformative learning in adults is a popular field within adult education especially in North America. Roessger, Greenleaf and Hoggan offer a new methodological dimension to work in this area, by highlighting how data collection apps can be integrated into single-case research designs in order to make causal inferences on learning interventions. Whilst such approaches have their limitations, they conclude that these are outweighed by benefits to researchers, programme evaluations and students, including in situations where value for money of provision needs to be demonstrated rapidly with little other available resource.

Griffiths and Inman argue that learning design literature too often ignores context. They suggest that few studies 'consider disorder, created by a lack of consideration for multiple contexts or learning domains (simple, complicated, complex and chaotic) and their governing principle'. The article supports this argument through the content analysis of a systematic review, which itself analysed 384 aspects of literature from pedagogy and andragogy. Self-directed learning as most readers will know like transformative learning is a cornerstone of many adult education practitioners, and of course is core to Knowles' andragogical model. Tan makes an interesting link between self-directed learning and the Confucian principle of self-cultivation in learning, and following a deep analysis of two key ancient Chinese texts, Xueji and Xunzi, offers some new and contemporary implications for adult learning.

Our final article in this issue examines what Fitzsimmons describes as the ‘othering’ of an erroneous fixed Muslim identity and assesses its impact within adult and community education. She argues within her own Irish context that there is a challenge ‘... for adult educators is to create culturally conscious learning communities that celebrate Ireland’s ethnic diversity ...’, and that the presence of migrants is ‘...an opportunity to co-create new knowledge in discursive, democratic and inclusive ways’.