

EDITORIAL

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Different strokes for different folks

The papers in this issue are distinguished by their seeming lack of connection to each other. They cover different practical approaches in differing disciplines including POGIL (Process-Oriented Guided Inquiry Learning) in information technology, learner-centred mobile devices in Science education and the development of “soft skills” in Engineering. Further, they cover students at differing course stages with one author considering learning design for higher degree research candidates.

These papers, collectively, are learning design’s manifestation of the idiom, “different strokes for different folks.” This typically refers to how individuals develop their own ways of living and working and implies an acceptance of this difference and, importantly, a willingness to learn from what others are doing. In teaching and learning, “different strokes” emerge from within learning environments themselves and from the beliefs and experiences of “different folks,” that is, learning designers.

By declaring a “lack of connection” in this issue, we are celebrating different approaches and the practical application of theoretical constructs. Each paper describes a practical pedagogy, that is, they describe and evaluate different approaches to teaching and learning. They are here brought together as novel interpretations to suit given situations and for different student cohorts.

In the first paper in this issue, the authors, Trevathan and Myers offer that:

However, most of ... [current literature on POGIL] relate[s] to a traditional classroom setting where the students and the teacher are all physically present. Therefore, it is not always possible to transition or apply these methodologies in the context of a *purely online* teaching environment.

Their paper, in keeping with the theme of novel customised applications of this issue, thus brings understandings of an existing method to a new setting.

The second paper in this issue, by Sweetser, comes, as does the first paper, from the field of information technology. It specifically focuses on games design and attempts to redress the dearth of rigorous and defensible pedagogical advice in this popular and rapidly growing area.

In our third paper, Kennedy-Clark describes teaching through higher degree (HDR) supervision. In this, the author reconsiders traditional academic practice and generates methodological guidelines for the design and evaluation of educational interventions to

improve the learning of HDR students. The context is one which is not typically addressed in learning design but which is of critical interest in universities.

The fourth paper, by Keshavarz and Baghdarnia, tracks the design and conduct of a “soft skills” course for engineers. It shows how courses can be designed to meet specific needs of learners, and can, in turn, use the conduct of a course to inform and influence future iterations.

Our fifth and final paper, by Marty, Mendenhall, Douglas, Southerland, Sampson, Kazmer, Alemanne, Clark and Schellinger, is concerned with an integration of online and mobile computing technologies designed to assist students’ learning about the nature of science and scientific inquiry on field trips to a natural science museum. These authors have used the affordances of a new technology to a traditional form of inquiry.

Each paper in this issue represents a teacher-led learning design developed to respond to particular learner needs. In sum, and as indicated, they represent “different strokes for different folks” and highlight the extraordinary diversity of learning designs extant in universities and colleges across the globe.

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