



Dear readers,

Research on teaching and learning addresses numerous aspects of the classroom environment. Much of the literature explores the ways in which the process of learning is experienced or can be enhanced by both the teacher and the student. This issue of the International Journal of Instruction (IJI) offers twelve articles that address five different themes. These are; traditional teaching practices, technological innovations in teaching and learning, prepared to perform in the classroom, evaluation and gender issues.

I. Enhancing Teaching and Learning

Learning should help students develop intellectual skills that enable them to be productive citizens and fulfill individual potential. Teaching fosters the learning potential of students and helps them achieve their educational goals. A selection of papers related to various methods of enhancing teaching and learning are summarized below.

In the paper “Rhetorical Structure and Graphic Organizers: Effects on Learning from a History Text” by Manuel Montanero and Manuel Lucero, the authors examine the effects of different methods used in enhancing students’ understanding and learning from a text. Researchers compared the efficiency of a text revision procedure with inferential activity engagement in the comprehension and recall of a History text. Findings suggest inferential activity could be more useful than providing a previously elaborated graphic representation.

Emel Ültanır in his paper titled “An Epistemological Glance at the Constructivist Approach: Constructivist Learning in Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori”, examines how individuals benefit from previous experiences when resolving problems. In analysing the foundations of constructivism, including Vico, neurobiological studies, Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori, Ültanır suggests knowledge is constructed from the meanings one attributes to nature and the environment.

The paper “The Impact of Years of Teaching Experience on the Classroom Management Approaches of Elementary School Teachers” by Zafer Ünal and Aslihan Ünal investigates whether or not years of experience affect teachers’ classroom management approaches. Findings suggest that experienced teachers are more likely to prefer to be in control in the classroom than beginning teachers. The authors report that pre-service teachers prefer non-interventionism

(minimum teacher control) and support interactionism (shared control) during their early career, and prefer complete teacher control when they become experienced teachers.

Vali Mehdinezhad, in his paper “Faculty Members’ Understanding of Teaching Efficacy Criteria and Its Relation to Their Characteristics”, aims to understand more about university faculty members’ sense of teaching efficacy criteria. Mehdinezhad found that the faculty members felt efficacious in their work in the following criteria: communication skills, assessment, subject matters, curriculum and instruction, learning environment, and technology implementation.

In researching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Harison Mohd Sidek examined in his paper “EFL Reading Instruction: Communicative Task-Based Approach” if Communicative Task-Based Language is the overarching instructional approach for the Malaysian EFL secondary reading curriculum. The curriculum was examined in terms of theories of SLA, theories of L2 reading as well as learner roles in relation to Communicative Task-Based Language Teaching (CTBLT) characteristics. The findings of the study suggest that the majority of reading tasks in the selected EFL secondary reading curriculum is highly lacking CTBLT characteristics.

The paper “Developing EFL Teaching and Learning Practices in Saudi Colleges: A Review” by Hussain Ahmed Liton explores the new developments in EFL teaching and learning in the intermediate level in Saudi Arabia. Liton investigates language learning motivation as it relates to developing and incorporating EFL teaching and learning programs. The paper offers useful and effective recommendations for improving EFL learning outcomes based on the results of statistical data analyses and observation.

II. Innovations in Learning

Instructors continue to find innovative ways to engage students. Teaching and learning in the technology age can take place in many different forums and locations. New tools and strategies are helping teachers transform the traditional classroom into distance learning courses, blended classrooms, and collaborative online learning environments in order to enhance the academic experience.

In the paper “Barriers to the Introduction of ICT into Education in Developing Countries: The Example of Bangladesh”, Md. Shahadat Hossain Khan, Mahbub Hasan, and Che Kum Clement suggest Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an effective educational technology which promotes dramatic changes in teaching and learning processes. However, developing

countries are far from reaping these benefits because of certain barriers. The authors present a comprehensive review of international articles relating to barriers encountered when introducing ICT into classrooms in order to identify factors that influence teachers' decisions to implement ICT.

The article titled "Cooperative Learning in Distance Learning: A Mixed Methods Study" by Lori Kupczynski, Marie Anne Mundy, Jaya Goswami, and Vanessa Meling suggests that distance learning has facilitated innovative means for including Cooperative Learning (CL) in virtual settings. The authors compared the effectiveness of online CL strategies in discussion forums with traditional online forums. Quantitative results revealed no significant difference on student success between CL and Traditional formats. However, qualitative data revealed that students in the cooperative learning groups experienced more learning benefits than the traditional group.

III. Pre-service Teachers

Student teachers receiving pre-service education learn professional development skills that will help them succeed as educators. Understanding the needs of student teachers can help better prepare new teachers for the challenges of the learning environment.

Melih Turğut and Süha Yılmaz, in their article "In Relationships among Preservice Primary Mathematics Teacher's Gender, Academic Success and Spatial Ability", investigate the relationship between pre-service primary mathematics teachers' gender, academic success and spatial ability. A spatial ability test that measured spatial orientation and spatial visualization ability was used. The results indicated that pre-service primary mathematics teachers' spatial ability level is low; there is a positive relationship between spatial ability and academic success; there is no significant difference between spatial ability and gender; and the abilities of spatial orientation and spatial visualization are positively correlated.

In his article "Investigating the Levels of Strain, from the Point of Various Variables, at their Efforts of Obtain Information of Preservice Teachers' of Secondary Education", Abdullah Adıgüzel investigated levels of strain in obtaining information among pre-service secondary education teachers. Study skills and habits of the prospective teachers to learn to be scraped in pre-service education and in-service training of vocational qualifications to support this have been proposed.

IV. Evaluation

Evaluation is an important aspect of teaching and learning. It enables both students and teachers to evaluate both their expectations and accomplishments while helping adjust future lessons to student needs.

In the article “Evaluation of Language and Literature Skills of Secondary School Students in Turkey According to International Baccalaureate Diploma Program Criteria” by Ayşe Yücel Çetin and Hilmi Demiral, the authors discuss evaluation criteria for the teaching of language and literature used in Turkey as well as globally. Research results indicated that teachers do not use common criteria in evaluating language and literature teaching.

V. Gender

Gender is a common variable in researching differences in teaching and learning. Many studies, such as discussed above, include gender as one of several variables studied. Other research chooses to highlight gender as the primary point of interest, as seen below.

“Secondary Physical Education Avoidance and Gender: Problems and Antidotes” by Thomas Ryan and Yves Poirier locates and evaluates the barriers that impact and cause females to avoid secondary elective physical education courses in Canada. The authors suggest the decline of female enrolment in secondary physical education beyond the required single course might have antecedent causes in curricula, program and instructional variables.

Sincerely,

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