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EDITORIAL

Learners as Focus in 'Learning for Development' (L4D)

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The *JL4D* focuses on research and case studies oriented to innovation and how does it contribute to development. In the past years, the dominant themes have been OER supporting TEL, the concept of L4D itself, and innovative technology applications to address contextual needs. As Mays (2023) points out "we need to keep thinking about the why (learning for development) and the how (technology-enabled) and keep evaluating what we are achieving (lessons of experience and research) in order to close the feedback loop into improved practice". Within this framework, a major focus of L4D is the *learner*, and how learners are innovating and leveraging resources (especially technology-enabled learning resources) for self and community development. The present issue of the *Journal* is devoted to focusing on learners in 'learning for development'.

Learner-centred learning and learner-centred learning designs assumed considerable significance in research and development and in practice during the last quarter of the past century, though the work of John Dewey in the first quarter of the twentieth century (and the works of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky) significantly contributed to experiential learning and active learning in the classroom. Subsequent developments led to personalised learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning (see Calkins & Light, 2008; Das et al., 2022), case-based learning, inquiry-based learning (Mieg, 2019), scenario-based learning and portfolio-based learning, among others. Portfolio-based learning had the potential to foster self-regulated learning, and enhance learner autonomy and meta-cognitive skills to ensure control over learning, and learning for development. A recent work on design framework for increasing student engagement in student-centred learning (Lee & Hannafin, 2016) may be useful literature to refer to. A recent scholarly review on the science of learning and development may be of considerable significance to our understanding of research and practice in this field (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Implementation of learner-centred education (LCE) globally, in both national policies and institutionalised practices, has been problematic and half-hearted, and, as Schweisfurth (2013) points out, we need to get into micro-level planning and "local understandings in researching and operationalising LCE" (p. 1). Both the learner and the context assume prime significance. In the context of internationalisation of education, Braskamp et al. (2009) used the term 'global learning and development' in which personal, interpersonal, cognitive and socio-cultural development are essential to the design of such programmes. Alongside learner learning, L4D also includes teacher 'professional learning and development' (Timperley et al, 2007). Adults as learners, especially (lifelong) learning outside the institutionalised provisions, but influenced by developments in media and technology (Sandlin et al., 2011), also need to be seen within the lenses of LCE and L4D. Such learning may also

include workplace learning, which involves more flexible self-directed learning toward adult learning for development (Ellinger, 2004).

Based on human-computer interaction (HCI) design processes, Soloway et al. (1996) developed a constructivist learning based learner-centred design (LCD), which posited that students develop problem-solving skills with computers in an environment that facilitates active engagement and construction of meaning. Subsequently, user centred design (UCD) was developed, though it was limited to structured computer interaction. LCD went beyond this to include individual flexible pathways and scaffolding in consideration of its components of context, task, tool, and interface. Subsequent developments have led to the application of 'design thinking' in education and teaching-learning, and also universal design for learning (UDL; Ecker, 2023). Learner-centred education has been facilitated more due to the tremendous technological developments and research on learning and development. The present issue has been collated to address this area through contributions by our reported researchers.

This issue comprises ten papers and two book reviews. In the section on an *invited* peer-reviewed paper, van den Berg and co-authors report the findings of a study on co-development of reflective OER by students with their teachers, which suggests that student reflective engagement in the co-development of resources significantly contributes to enriched OER as a body of knowledge. In the process, they also developed collaborative learning skills as well as skills of critical reflection, and contributing to their research skills and professional development. This in-depth study, though conducted on a small sample, needs further replications in other cultural contexts, which should contribute more to our understanding of the practice of collaborative and critical OER development and use.

In the *research* section, we have included six peer-reviewed papers which deal with themes ranging from virtual scholars' programmes and workplace e-learning to quality inclusive learning designs, the flipped classroom, new models of online education and mobile-based physics literacy learning. In the first research paper, Carr and Beaudry report the findings of a baseline survey and interview-based study on the perceived benefits of virtual student mobility during Covid-19, which suggest that students benefited in their career and professional development in case of both in-person and virtual mobility of scholars. This also provided for accessibility, flexibility and inclusivity, which should be considered by educators and international scholars programmes to leverage technology to address student mobility and student learning. In the second research paper, Serema and co-authors used the PRISMA technique to review research on workplace e-learning practices, which suggested the consideration of factors like attitude, satisfaction and intended behavior in the development and implementation of evidence-based, workplace e-learning programmes.

Irvan and co-authors, in the third research paper, report the findings of a research study on teacher involvement in quality learning in inclusive schools that was conducted on 100 teachers through a mixed explanatory sequential design. Both classroom teachers and special assistant teachers collaborated in their involvement in the learning of students with disabilities, and the researchers also investigated teacher attitude in developing and implementing Universal Design for Learning. Based on the results of low teacher involvement and a lack of friendly environment for students with autism and ADHD, the researchers suggest careful consideration of UDL which caters for differentiated material, flexibility and accessibility and use of assistive technologies.

Salas-Rueda, in the next research paper, discusses the findings of a study on the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in mathematics learning, which suggested that a judicious combination of pre-class YouTube video viewing and in-class application demos considerably contributed to student learning of mathematical functions in terms of active learning, construction of new virtual spaces and technology-integrated learning. In the fifth research paper, Tahir tried out the extended UTAUT model of online learning to study student behavior and intention. The findings, based on structural equation modeling design, suggested that perceived value and convenience by students had positive effect on their behaviour intention (while there was negative effect on perceived risk). Educators need to consider the positive relationship between facilitating conditions and behavioural intention on the one hand and the user behaviour on the other.

In the sixth research paper, Fayanto and co-authors suggested that design and use of Android mobile-application based physics books, developed through the use of various principles of design thinking and scientific literacy approaches, had a positive effect on student and teacher perception of learning resources in remote areas / inhabitation. Educators need to consider the design of videos, games, content and questions based on the scientific process of design thinking.

The three peer-reviewed *case studies* focus on thematic areas of computer-simulated chemistry learning, STEAM-C integrated learning, and teacher effective communication skills. The first case study by Mukama and Prisca report the application of computer simulation for student active participation in knowledge creation in chemistry. The authors suggest pedagogic strategies for student active participation and computer-simulated knowledge construction through four forms of participation, viz self-reliance, collaborative peer-reliance, guided teacher-reliance, and reliance on strategic variation, which facilitated creation of multisensory connections for active learning. In the second case study, Apriandi and co-authors go beyond the traditional STEM to develop STEAM-C (including art, and culture) ADDIE-based integrated learning design (for lesson plans, modules and worksheets) to develop student creative thinking skills, which was found to be very effective. The researchers recommend its consideration and application by teachers in developing students' creative thinking skills in mathematics. In the last case study, Takel and Merve-Erus report the research findings of a less-explored area on the relationship between effective communication and mindfulness and well-being through the application of the bootstrapping method. The results indicated a positive effect of effective communication skills on interpersonal mindfulness, which further contributed to greater subjective well-being. Further, the researchers suggest that interpersonal mindfulness may also contribute to enhancing effective communication skills.

In the *book review* section, Dr Mairette Newman has collated book reviews on two recent books on very contemporary themes — one on education and blockchain technology by Grech and colleagues, reviewed by Rory McGreal; and the other on the Springer handbook on open, distance and digital education by Olaf and Insung, reviewed by Jako Olivier — that should be very useful to our readers.

The research papers and case studies included in this issue, we hope, shall contribute to further articulation of 'learning for development' in contexts of TEL, open educational resources, workplace learning, learner development and teacher-mentor development.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank Dr. Tony Mays, Dr. Jako Olivier, Dr Mairette Newman and Alan Doree for facilitating this issue being published on time. We hope our readers enjoy reading and benefitting from the papers and book reviews of this issue.

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