Editorial Comments

Teaching and Learning in the Coming Decades

Like any new venture, starting a journal is clearly diving into uncharted waters to the extent that the outcome is not predictable. We can, however, answer the simple question a venture such as this is likely to prompt. Why another journal in a seemingly saturated market? The answer is simple really. Unlike most journals that cater to specific sub-disciplinary interests, the journal of Teaching and Learning is a broad spectrum journal that addresses a wide range of issues, for an academic audience as well as practitioners in the field of education and beyond. It is our hope that the journal will break new grounds with its emphasis on innovative practices in teaching and learning.

At the dawn of a new century, it is not surprising that we have chosen to focus on the challenges and prospects of teaching and learning in the coming decades, as the theme of this, our first issue. All four articles presented here, reflect this theme in one way or another. In particular, the articles address one of the challenges in education in the 21st century which continues to be the nature of teaching and learning – the why, what and how of schooling. While these may be perennial issues that face education, they do however, take on a different significance and demand more urgent attention in a fluid postmodern world where orthodoxy is no longer a logical option in teaching and learning nor, indeed, in all matters concerning education.

A collateral problem that continues to dog contemporary societies is how best to provide education for *all*. While there has been much theorising and rhetoric in this regard, there are very few practical examples of how it can be achieved. Our lead article by Patricia Daniel is an exemplar of praxis-oriented intercultural and gender sensitive practices in teaching and learning. Based on her research work in Nicaragua, the result of an on-going partnership between the University of Wales and the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, the article will be useful to policy makers, educational researchers and practitioners, especially those that are charged with designing policies that are reflective of changing times and a changing world.

Experts often agree on the value of critical and reflective practices in teaching and learning at all levels of education. There is however, less consensus as to how this can be achieved. Drawing on their own experiences as teacher educators, Sonya Corbin Dwyer and donna patterson discuss the use of portfolios as an important evaluation tool in teacher education. While the use of such portfolios is nothing new, the methodology described here adds an innovative turn to reflective practice as simultaneous inter-collegial and self-initiated evaluation. Such creative use of portfolios can only lead to better practices and overall improvement in learning outcomes.

Continuing the theme of critical practices in teacher education, the work of Larry Glassford, Noel Hurley and Colin Ball presents the findings of their

research work among newer teachers. Their conclusions suggest that teacher education programs ought to provide more opportunities for novice teachers to better contribute to, as well as adapt to, meaningful educational change.

Increased application of computers and other information technologies to education in the coming decades, is to say the least, inevitable. Yet policy directions in this area remain problematic for educational decision makers. The entry by Craig Montgomerie and Valerie Irvine provides a useful starting point for school systems that are faced with the problem of improving teachers' computer knowledge-base to enable them to provide better instructional support for their students.

As a regular feature of the journal, several books related to our issue theme are also reviewed. We truly hope that our readers will benefit from all the contributions, and we welcome your comments.

Beginning a journal such as this is impossible without the support—moral and material, of other interested parties. I must therefore acknowledge the important role of Michael Awender, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor from 1988 to 2000 (now Dean of Education at Arizona State University). His support of the project, from conception to fruition, is truly appreciated. My thanks also go to Larry Glassford for his valuable contribution as Book Review Editor. I also thank our anonymous reviewers whose constructive critique has enriched each work that appears here. Finally, many thanks to Ian Crawford (Dean, Interim) and my other colleagues at the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor, all of whom have contributed in very important ways, to the project.

Benedicta Egbo
Editor