

Editorial

Educational Transformation in Action: Insights into Leadership, Innovation, and AssessmentMargarita Kefalaki ¹ & Fotini Diamantidaki²

We are very pleased to continue producing new issues via our new platform in collaboration with our new partner, the Open Access Publishing Association (OAPA). Since the creation of our journal in 2019, we aim to provide a free and open platform to academics, researchers, professionals, to share knowledge, communicate and exchange via research dialogue and high-quality publications. We are always seeking to evolve and innovate in the context of continuous state of crisis for higher education globally (Rudolph et al., 2024) and our endeavors are paying off thanks to the community we have built with you all. We learn from our community of educators, practitioners, professionals, academics, researchers, and we aim to publish work that inspires us and provides a positive outlook to practice and research (Kefalaki, 2021).

This editorial introduces a set of articles featured in the June 2025 issue of the *Journal of Education, Innovation and Communication*, highlighting interdisciplinary research that reflects the evolving realities of global education systems.

In an age of rapid educational transformation, the merging of innovation, leadership, and pedagogy demands a clear understanding of emerging practices that address the needs of learners and educators alike. Education Leadership is now more than ever a crucial issue for the advancement of education practices and education in general as by fostering collaboration, leveraging technology, and incorporating personalized learning strategies, innovative leaders create dynamic learning environments that enhance student engagement, motivation, and achievement (Riddel & Zulfikar, 2024). Inspirational practices have also a central role in the advancement of education leadership, enhancing collaborative practices and creating a fruitful environment for everyone implicated (Kefalaki (ed.), 2025).

This editorial brings together five timely and diverse studies that collectively illustrate the current shifts in global education—spanning cross-border collaboration, generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), performance-based incentives, leadership models, and authentic assessment. These works underline the importance of contextual responsiveness and multidimensional approaches to teaching and learning.

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The first article by van Breukelen and Crasborn, entitled **Cross-border collaboration to promote STEM education**, examines the EUTech Award, a STEM initiative that crosses national and institutional borders in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine. Their findings emphasize how boundary crossing and team developmental space can create synergy despite friction, promoting sustainable, interprofessional learning. Their proposed I2PL model (inter- and intraprofessional learning) stands as a potential framework for educators navigating collaborative complexity—a notion supported in the European research discourse.

Building collaborative innovation, Jha et al. with the article entitled **Integrating Generative Artificial Intelligence Across the Curriculum**, explore the integration of Generative AI across higher education curricula. Through multi-disciplinary case studies and the TPACK framework, the authors offer practical insights into how AI tools reshape critical thinking and knowledge delivery. This aligns with Diamantidaki and Kefalaki's (2022) discussions in the *Journal of Education, Innovation and Communication* on digital fluency and learner engagement in post-pandemic education. The call for scalable, yet critical, adoption of AI reflects a growing consensus on balancing technological capabilities with pedagogical intentionality.

From a systemic perspective, Wang, Pivovarov, and Amrein-Beardsley investigate the controversial territory of teacher performance incentives in the U.S. Their research, entitled **Exploring Differential Effects of a Teacher Incentive Program** into the Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) demonstrates that incentive programs can produce differentiated effects across student demographics. While some student groups benefited modestly, special needs students appeared to fare worse, indicating that one-size-fits-all policies may exacerbate inequities.

Turning from policy to school-based dynamics, the fourth article by Saeed et al., entitled **The role of supportive leadership style in enhancing job performance**, analyzes the limits of supportive leadership among Pakistani secondary school teachers. Using the JD-R framework, the authors found that although leadership was expected to mitigate burnout, it showed minimal buffering effects in resource-constrained environments. **Contextual infrastructure, not just leadership style**, must be strengthened to sustainably support educators.

Finally, Pais Marden and Herrington, with their article **Designing authentic assessments for foreign language learning environments**, present a compelling case for authentic assessment in blended foreign language classrooms. Their design-based research highlights the educational value of real-world tasks and native speaker collaboration. Despite challenges, students reported increased motivation and learning relevance—findings that closely align with recent publications by Woo, Lam and Diamantidaki (2025) on experiential learning in linguistically diverse settings.

Together, these studies underscore a shared imperative: rethinking educational frameworks to accommodate diversity, complexity, and rapid change. Whether through global teamwork, AI integration, policy innovation, or assessment design, today's educators must remain adaptable and critically engaged. By drawing on multidimensional research perspectives—including the ones highlighted here—we can foster educational environments that are not only innovative but also equitable and human-centered.

The collective insights from these studies serve not only as scholarly contributions but also as practical guidance for educators, leaders, and researchers striving to reimagine education for a rapidly changing world.

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