Preface

International Perspectives in Education and Communication

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Rapid technological development, the increasing need for sustainability standards and actions, combined with the constant rise of artificial intelligence (AI), impact all industries and workplaces, including the education sector (Tettamanzi et al., 2023). Our 'new normal', after the COVID-19 pandemic, precipitated educators to implement changes to their teaching in order to help them provide an effective educational learning experience (Tettamanzi et al., 2023), hence making it crucial to redefine our approaches, plan, innovate and readjust to all the novel needs.

The four research papers of this issue discuss ways in which education professionals and beyond innovate and adapt to a 'new normal'.

The first paper relates to the Y-mas project as presented by Karol Puscus and Carlos Romero-Otálora which demonstrates the benefits of *Building Strong International VET Networks* whilst promoting global cooperation and addressing diverse challenges in vocational education and training (Purcus & Romero-Otálora, 2023). By leveraging the expertise and resources of various stakeholders, these networks enhance the quality and relevance of vocational education, benefiting individuals, businesses, and societies. The paper focuses on their role of the German Chambers of Industry and Commerce within the Y-Mas project, which aims to tackle these challenges through education and training. This research adopts a research methodology comprising a literature review on international VET networks and qualitative case studies involving four German organizations operating in Latin America. The findings highlight the important contributions of these networks in fostering cross-cultural dialogue, facilitating partnerships, and disseminating innovative practices (Purcus & Romero-Otálora, 2023).

The second paper entitled *Lost In Space: An Explorative Study of Arrested Emotional Development Among High School Aged Children Post-Pandemic*, by Michael Anibal Altamirano, via a qualitative approach, examines the impact of the pandemic on high school students in USA. The article investigates how this traumatic environment has led to the suggested rampant arrested emotional development among students. Furthermore, the study examines a connection between underdevelopment and the quality of students' currently entering higher education in USA, in order to help us understand the mindset of future university students and to help leaders of these institutions identify and serve future admits.

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The primary data is gathered from a culturally diverse sample of interviewed parents, teachers, administrators, and social workers. The evidence offered within this study explores an emerging issue that is currently under-researched, with the optimism of proposing opportunities for further exploration (Altamirano, 2023).

Fostering interdisciplinary skills in doctoral students from across the disciplines on an English for Special Academic Purposes (ESAP) course is the third paper, proposed by Jennifer Skipp. This paper describes a tool designed for use in the doctoral ESAP classroom at a European university, which adapted elements of Karl Maton's (2013) Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) to help raise awareness of how to communicate with those outside the student's own field. More particularly the paper evaluates this tool through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of post-course evaluations, highlighting how the tool helps students see how they can adapt their contextualised knowledge and specific disciplinary language to their audience (Skipp, 2023). One key advantage of the tool, as Skipp (2023) proposed, is that it enables students to retain discipline identity whilst giving them a means to appreciate non-disciplinary perspectives (Lattuca et al., 2013) or find common ground (Repko, 2008) or discipline interdependencies (Ashby & Exter, 2019), competencies recognised as key for interdisciplinary success.

Kaja Glahn is the author of the forth and last paper of this issue, entitled *Using ChatGPT to Teach English for Academic Purposes: Perspectives from the Classroom.* This study provides empirical evidence about the practical implementation of ChatGPT in the classroom: how it is being used and received by students, and its impact on student learning outcomes, by describing the ways in which ChatGPT was used in an English for Academic Purposes class for bachelor students in the Spring Semester of 2023 and assessing how it was received and used by students. Data suggests that students are aware of both the strengths and the weaknesses of ChatGPT as a writing tool. Nevertheless, students were not able to use it in a way that significantly improved their writing.

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