Welcome to volume 13, issue 2, of Compass, Journal of Learning and Teaching!

This issue presents an interesting and varied mix of articles, case studies, opinion pieces and technology reviews on current topics, including innovative methods of formative assessment and how best to support students' employability and interpersonal skills. Several papers discuss techniques and tools for working with students in an online or blended context, ideas which are likely to be of particular interest as we adapt to new and flexible ways of working with students in 20-21. There are thought-provoking pieces that reflect on the view of students as digital natives and on imposter syndrome in academics. A brief snapshot of each paper follows.

Xue Zhou, Stella-Maris Izegbua Orim and Peter Wolstencroft of Coventry University offer a detailed and balanced appraisal of the potential benefits of, and challenges involved in, incorporating learning technology into the higher education classroom, with a strong focus on mobile devices. On the basis of studies of the deployment of two digital learning tools, *Tophat* and *Socrative*, and a careful scrutiny of relevant literature, this paper serves to alert teachers to 1) the widespread but erroneous assumption that all students are digital natives with an easy affinity with software and thus 2) to the risks of badging them as a homogeneous group. With a clear portrayal of the teaching and learning context as it has become, with teacher and student roles and relationships very different from the traditional, the authors emphasise the need for the purpose of digital learning to be made fully clear, the technology being to facilitate learning, not to be an end in itself. The paper presents a framework for implementing learning technology in the classroom, with clear caveats about assuming that such resources are guaranteed to be successful.

1A technology review by Brandon Sabourin, of the University of Windsor, Ontario, homes in on another web-based tool, *Mindomo*, designed to facilitate the creation of digital concept maps ("*multimodal document*[s] *created to represent the relationships between connected ideas*"). Brandon's considerable experience in using both concept mapping and *Mindomo* is evident in this authoritative paper, which draws upon his work as the tutor of a pre-service digital teaching course. Like the previous paper, this offers both lecturer and student perspectives, but perhaps most helpful here is the inclusion of a SWOT analysis of *Mindomo*, itself in the form of a concept map, which succinctly summarises the tool's strengths and opportunities. The author is very positive about the value of the medium, but recognises from his students' feedback that using such technology might possibly usurp the development of other important learning processes and recommends interested users to consider carefully whether concept mapping aligns with the goals and outcomes of the learning experience they aim to provide.

In their study of the deployment of blended learning in SEGI College Penang, Malaysia, Krishnamoorthy Kumarasamy, Kalaivani Kalimuthu and Mahalecumy Narayanansamy explore students' and academics' views and seek to determine the benefits, challenges and limitations of the methods used. Based on a qualitative and quantitative survey of both groups of users, the authors report a largely positive response from both groups. Learners seemed to understand online content and enjoyed the flexible scheduling of activities and taking personal control of their learning, while their teachers liked being able to monitor easily their students' individual progress. The authors were able to define from their study

some key elements for successful blended learning: appropriate teacher skills from proper training; provision of suitable resources; raising of student awareness of both the approach and the expectations; training for students in the use of digital tools; opportunities for teacher-student consultation; and, very significantly, teacher enthusiasm.

Another online opportunity, this time for learners of languages other than their own, is reviewed by Hiromi Nishioka, of Waseda University, Japan. *Meetup* offers its general users access to social events of interest to them; it may therefore be harnessed by language learners to have authentic face-to-face interaction with native speakers with similar interests and hobbies. The author explains the workings of the *Meetup* platform and shows its pedagogical potential for providing novice speakers of language with the support of experts, namely native speakers. The constraints of the conventional language classroom, which lacks the dimension of real events in a social and cultural setting for learners to use their target language, may thus be overcome by teachers who recognise that recommending *Meetup* will create appropriate contexts to support what formal education offers. The author identifies many linguistic and cultural benefits, however she also points out that learners who are shy or have less well-developed language skills may not find it easy to participate and may prefer teacher feedback. She concludes that to gain the most from *Meetup*, participants must identify what they mean to gain, attend events regularly and be prepared to develop their autonomous learning ability.

In her second piece in this issue of Compass, Hiromi Nishioka reviews *HiNative*, a question/answer app for language learners, who may ask – using typed word, image or short audio recording – questions of native speakers via nine pre-designed formats for, currently, 110 different languages. The author offers a tabulated breakdown of functions available for premium and non-premium users and a detailed SWOT analysis with informative commentary. As a higher education teaching resource, *HiNative*'s restriction to short questions without social networking, a limitation rather than a disadvantage, enables users to develop their linguistic and inter-cultural understanding through various accessible learning activities and, helpfully for language learning, in small doses; furthermore, with appropriate support, they can take more control of their own language learning beyond the classroom, by participating in online language learning communities where, as expert native speakers themselves, they may eventually assist others.

Heba Ezzeldin Helmy of the Modern Sciences and Arts University, Egypt, chose to *"design and allocate a formative Pecha Kucha (PK) assignment on one economic school of thought to groups of students in a History of Economic Thought class."* The PK is a presentation sequence with twenty images, each shown successively for twenty seconds, with accompanying commentary. With such a piece of formative assessment, the author aimed: to increase students' engagement with technology; to help them to learn autonomously and collaboratively; to tackle breadth as well as depth of learning. This study corroborates others which demonstrate the benefits of PK, especially in relation to skills development in communication, comprehension, language learning and design. With its careful and stimulating presentation of the perceptions of both the instructor and the students of this kind of assignment, this approach has much to offer as a means of getting students to absorb breadth and to present their learning concisely. PK seems to address many of the common criticisms of PowerPoint as a mode of presentation.

John Barrow, Joy Perkins, Pietro Marini and Ann Davidson, from three Scottish institutions, surveyed 300 life sciences students about their responses to a workshop – the two-hour 'Future Ready Ideas Lab' – designed to make them aware of core enterprise skills to be developed during their courses. Exploring *"the interplay between enterprise skills, students and employers"*, the authors emphasise the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in preparing students to be resilient, flexible, creative, innovative and adaptable to rapid change in the world of employment, where having transferable personal skills is more important than mere focus on jobs. HEIs, they aver, must make explicit in their curricula the linkage between academic learning and workplace skills. Though this workshop, now embedded in the curriculum, was designed for bioscience students, the authors believe it to be readily transferable to other disciplines and recommend it as one means of engaging students in enterprise education.

A reflective piece by Poppy Gibson and Samuel Coombes of the University of Greenwich considers how their planning and delivery of a workshop on 'Impostor Syndrome', at the 2019 University of Greenwich 'SHIFT' conference, helped them to challenge and overcome their own fears and self-doubt. Presenting at conference as they did, they suggest, may well help academics – through *"reflection, feed-forward, perspective, support network and talk"* – to deal with the apparently prevalent sense of feeling a fraud. The authors address in turn these five strategy mechanisms, a process offering a coherent explanation of their rationale, and believe that the final one – talk – is fundamental to all of them. The paper leaves the reader with a reassuring sense of the authors' honesty about their private feelings and of the genuine value of mutually supportive interaction between empathetic fellow practitioners.

In a detailed study of the design and delivery of a new team-based learning (TBL) module for third-year Chinese students in Engineering and Technology, Rami Ghannam and Wasim Ahmad of the University of Glasgow explain that, while in Western nations, there is sustained decline in STEM applicants, China is producing very many graduates in these subjects, though they lack the team-working skills for the global workplace. This paper presents the authors' response to a still very teacher-led engineering curriculum: a TBL approach intended to develop the active independent learning, communication, and presentation skills of students in China. They say that TBL requires pre-class guided self-learning of course basics and objectives, then assessment of students' understanding of those – both individually and in teams – and finally the application of this learning to a team project (in this case, the building and working of robotic rovers). Student feedback about the module indicated that most participants felt they had learned more from team involvement than they might have done individually, and they certainly preferred team activity to working alone. The authors recommend this approach to curriculum development and conclude that it is particularly useful for large cohorts, for multiple teams may be facilitated by a single instructor rather than by several.

Silvia Colaiacomo, from University College London, presents results from the Digital Classroom Project at the University of Kent, which investigated the relationship between space, technology, and pedagogy in two new seminar rooms equipped with special furniture and technology. A key feature of the project was the close collaboration between academics, professional services, and students. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected via observation and interview. It was found that both students and staff enjoyed and benefitted from working in these rooms. The author highlights the benefits of having teaching spaces

that facilitate active, collaborative learning and opportunities to experiment with new pedagogical approaches which are customized to meet students' needs.

Finally, Kevin Johnson and Tema George of Ravensbourne University London, provide a detailed look at current strategies and findings around supporting students with disabilities. They point to the recent and substantial increase in the proportion of students at University who have a range of special educational needs and challenges. Their study used questionnaires with staff and students, with and without support needs, to explore views on a range of important and practical issues, for example, awareness of support available, clarity of assessment briefs, benefits of collaborative working and effectiveness of adjustments. They identify key recommendations for materials, teaching and institution-wide approaches to improve provision for students and develop a culture of inclusive practice.

We hope that readers will find these papers stimulating and helpful and will enjoy reading them as much as we have enjoyed preparing our first issue as Co-Editors.

With best wishes to all Compass readers and contributors,

Yang and Rachel