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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to our 2024 Autumn edition of IFOTS – this is our 20th year of publishing the journal. It continues to be accessible, free of charge, to a broad global learning community. As we continue to grow in readership, we also continue to expand our exchange opportunities. Stay tuned for our upcoming IFOTS CAMPUS activities: Your source for professional development for teachers, educators of teachers, and trainers in a variety of academic, community, and commercial settings.

This issue is a treasure trove of resources about the kind of education that embraces learner-centered approaches which are not built upon any ~ism or special need or gimmick du jour. It features evidence-based instructional approaches that focus succinctly on the learning preferences which, when applied, support personalized learning because of competent teaching. The authors describe strategies, methods, and pragmatical models, complete with analysis of the knowledge base. The theme of inclusive, lifelong, non-formal, and non-traditional teaching approaches is evident in this issue's contributions.

Leading this valuable collection of information is a most detailed depiction of andragogy, an *old* education philosophy and praxis that is ever so essential for lifelong learning in today's and future societies. Presented are key strategies, methods, and characteristics about adult learners' needs, with a focus on the aging population. The authors emphasize that we are confronted by an unprecedented longevity revolution transforming the world, and they posit andragogically-oriented, longevity literate, and broad partnerships in the quest for a sustainable and growth-focused future.

Next, a thorough systematic literature review over a ten-year period about credit for prior learning (CPL) follows. It examines CPL as a means for under-represented groups to thrive as individuals, capable and competent to contribute to their families, communities, and countries. The authors call to apply CPL to adapt teaching to real and diverse needs of students. They further advise us that working for the benefit of all is through the kind of inclusive education *for* all that requires contribution *by* all.

The concept of lifelong learning is further explored in a history of career technical education (CTE) from the early 1900s through the present. Middle school is identified as a significant time to begin implementation of CTE programs because students develop self-realization and engage in self-exploration during adolescence. Moreover, the need to provide adequate professional development for teachers to deliver CTE circles back to the need for lifelong and life wide learning via adult education and training.

With the changing landscape of education, a White Paper explores the intersection of DEI and artificial intelligence (AI) in learning design. Technology is considered as a potential catalyst for inclusion and ways to mitigate the risk factor of perpetuating inequities, while sound instructional methods are enumerated for improving design and instruction.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations link to the running theme in the article. A study on accessibility of healthcare among undergraduate students attending a predominantly White institution in the Midwest showed that students from all social and ethnic backgrounds encounter obstacles to accessing services on campus. Students from marginalized communities'

lack of accessing healthcare, however, are further hindered in their self-advocacy to access on-campus services.

Finally, in our OpEd section, *From My Perspective: Featuring Reflections from the Field*, we hear one voice, connecting us to much needed insight about remaining open to serious and critical analysis and triangulation of differing data and information that bombard us. We are challenged to consider the notion that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been successful in *creating a mirage of progressivism*. The think piece beckons us to create an intentional and honest dialogue about HEIs and anti-Blackness in the academy.

Within our autumn issue, the authors speak about particular contexts of teaching and learning. However, the connections among the depicted praxes reveal a shared goal expressed in Malcolm Knowles' writings (1973; 1995): *that for educational pursuits to be successful, opportunities for lifelong learning must be self-directed, collaborative, and personally relevant to the learner*. Never in *our* lifetimes has it been more important not to fall for vendor-driven, ideology-mandated, or politics-motivated propaganda, all of which is so prevalent these days; that is, **if** we truly seek equality, equity, and creating a peaceful world by means of education.

Gabriele Strohschen, Ph.D.

Editor in Chief

Chicago, September 2024

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