

Letter from the Editors: Volume 10, Issue 2

We are pleased to publish the second issue of *Higher Learning Research Communications (HLRC)* for 2020. This year has been challenging for higher education and a busy year for the *HLRC*. The COVID-19 pandemic continues throughout much of the globe, with over 74M cases and 1.65M deaths since it began early in the year. In higher education, this impact continues to be felt, with many faculty, staff, and students continuing to work, teach, and learn remotely. Higher education has had to develop novel ways to serve its students and other constituents and balance budgets in light of enrollments that continue to be down from previous years. The value of higher education, which has been a subject of ongoing debate, seems to have been heightened due to the pandemic. There are more conversations happening about the value of the college degree and how well academic programs prepare students to be successful in the workplace.

As 2020 comes to a close, we can report successes for the *HLRC*. We have fully transitioned to our new publisher, Walden University, and have completed our first year with Scholarworks. The journal has been indexed with Scopus for two years, and we continue to be proud of the quality of the international research that is published in the journal. Approximately 60% of the manuscripts published are from authors outside of the United States, furthering our goal to present an international perspective on trends in higher education. We also continue to encourage new researchers and practitioners, as well as more seasoned ones, to contribute to the international dialogues on higher education. In addition, we launched a special issue to be published in 2021 that reflects the impact that COVID-19 is having on higher education globally. We continue to receive manuscripts and publish them as they are accepted in our commitment to disseminating research related to higher education practices during the pandemic in a timely manner. We will continue receiving manuscripts for the special issue into the new year, so please consider submitting a manuscript that reflects your experiences dealing with COVID-19.

The manuscripts published in this issue reflect the diversity of topics of interest to our readers.

- *Boswell (2020), Effects of Ratemyprofessors.com and University Student Evaluations of Teaching on Students' Course Decision-Making and Self-Efficacy*, examined the use of student evaluations and those found on sites like RateMyProfessor.com. She found that while students tend to consider online evaluations when deciding on professors to take, the effect of that influence doesn't differ between standard teaching evaluations and external sources such as RateMyProfessor.com. She recommends that guides be developed to help students identify which information on such sites is useful when making decisions.
- *Brown et al. (2020), Creating, Implementing, and Redefining a Conceptual Framework for Mentoring Pathways for Education Doctorate Students*, developed a literature-based Mentoring Pathways Program Model as a framework for faculty mentors to support the progress of doctoral students. The focus is on various aspects of mentoring, including one-on-one mentoring with faculty, peer mentoring with graduate or more advanced EdD students, as well as group mentoring through presentations and roundtable discussions. Such empirically tested models can serve as frameworks that help students graduate from doctoral programs.


- *Nabaho et al. (2020), Quality Assurance of Higher Education Governance and Management: An Exploration of the Minimum Imperative for the Envisioned African Common Higher Education Space*, provide the results of a content analysis of African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. They focused their analysis on the governance and management standard and examined it through a transnational lens. The results of their analysis demonstrate that the goals of the standard are to provide guidelines for quality assessment of governance and management that would apply to all higher education institutions in the African continent.
- *Tseng & Hill (2020), The Impact of High-Fidelity Simulation on Nursing Students' Flexible and Reflective Thinking in Higher Education*, compared the flexible and reflective thinking before and after high fidelity simulations using mannequins and live actors. They found that participation in simulations plays a significant role in enhancing flexible and reflective thinking, which provides further evidence of the power of simulations in education.
- *Strong et al. (2020), Development and Validation of a Global Competency Framework for Preparing New Graduates for Early Career Professional Roles*, provide the initial results of a validation of a global, 21st-century skills framework. The competencies noted represent the 20 most important skills validated by faculty, students, and employers needed for new graduates to be successful in the workplace. The authors provide descriptions of the competencies and rubrics and demonstrate the utility of such frameworks in higher education, such as through curricular improvement and evaluation of student readiness in these skills.
- *Garcia-Ponce & Mora-Pablo (2020), Challenges of Using a Blended Learning Approach: A Flipped Classroom in an English Teacher Education Program in Mexico*, examined student perceptions after a class that had been taught face-to-face was transitioned to a hybrid classroom. Students perceived the flipped practices as innovative and beneficial for their learning, yet the increased autonomy and responsibility required was challenging for them. This has implications in terms of gauging student readiness prior to moving to hybrid formats.

One of our challenges is similar to what many journals face—finding qualified peer reviewers who have time to complete manuscript reviews. Those who wish to serve as peer reviewers are encouraged to contact the *HLRC* for more information. The work we have been investing in indexation and increasing social media presence is resulting in a steadier stream of quality manuscripts that need reviewers.

We look forward to 2021, our 10th year in publication, and invite you to consider *HLRC* for your publishing needs.


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