



Editorial: oSoTL 2(1)

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We open this issue with a thought-provoking and creative article that seeks to disrupt the dominant discourse of neoliberalism through Critical Reflective Practice (CPR). Through a process of mirror-writing, Wood employs the voice of Malcolm, a disillusioned school-teacher of History, who experiences moments of joy, resistance and hope on encountering a Renaissance text, *I secreti de la signora Isabella Cortese*. These moments are deftly captured in quatrains using the iambic pentameter. In The secret art of pedagogical alchemy, Wood allows us to hold a mirror up to our own teaching practice, discovering hope and joy, and encouraging us to question capitalist values in education and hegemony in the curriculum, resulting in giving hope to individual learners, enabling them to become empowered global citizens.

Turning to another serious issue in education – bullying – Harrison and colleagues have produced the first reliable instrument for measuring victimisation in higher education. Although the authors acknowledge the instrument would benefit from further development, the paper makes an original contribution, devising a reliable inventory to identify and measure the various bullying behaviours that students in higher education are sadly subjected to. These include psychological victimisation, physical act/trace discrimination, social victimisation, and direct verbal victimisation.

Of course, bullying is not the only reason why students might drop out of higher education. Sneddon seeks to identify the reasons why students specifically drop out of physics, after taking it as a first-year subject. Two overarching reasons include negative experiences of course content, and future salary and job prospects. By identifying the reasons, Sneddon argues that staff can work to address the challenges, to retain students in this valuable discipline.

Moving on to the experiences of teachers occupying a 'liminal space', Sutherland and colleagues identify the need to properly equip graduate student instructors (GSIs) for the challenges they will encounter preparing for teaching, and in the classroom. This study of GSIs across the United States revealed challenges relating to course management (course administration and logistics, and workload), and classroom management (student needs and concerns, insecurity, and teaching strategies).

In reflecting on the pivot to online learning during the pandemic, Paltoglou and colleagues highlight that not all emotions associated with learning are positive but that such emotions can be useful for optimising learning. They emphasise the importance of helping students develop their emotional regulation, particularly in relation to group

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work, if they are to be successful in developing necessary skills. Another challenge the authors explore is the level to which they as teachers balance the need for students to develop independent learning skills versus supporting them in a time of crisis, oscillating between 'teaching' and 'coaching' approaches.

Assessment and feedback for learning is the focus of the other papers. Kim and colleagues explore the value of formative assessments – using regression analyses to demonstrate that students' homework and mid-term exam grades can reliably predict their summative performance. Given these results, the authors argue that teachers can use feedback on homework – well in advance of the midterm exam – to provide feedback to students to support their learning. By allowing students to identify their strengths and weaknesses in advance, they can adopt appropriate learning strategies to achieve success.

Selvaretnam and Cheng present the outcomes of a learner experience study of two exam formats: an innovative examination format with group discussion preceding individual work, with an A4 crib sheet, versus a typical open-book exam allowing all paper materials. While there were advantages and disadvantages to both formats, which sought to reduce assessment anxiety and better replicate approaches to problem-solving that students would encounter in the workplace, there was no statistical difference in student performance; however, there was an overall preference for the typical open-book exam format.

Paterson and McAleer provide a practical and useful guide to optimising feedback on assessments. They encourage us first to contrast examples of feedback, in terms of whether they can be applied to a future assessment, whether students need task-specific fine details versus global skills dependent on their programme level, and whether feedback comments are actionable. Teacher strategies for success include asking students to identify sources of feedback, appropriate use of exemplars, and scaffolding reflection on feedback through giving students a series of prompts to work through.

We hope you enjoy this issue and would like to take this opportunity to thank again all our contributors for sharing their valuable work, and our conscientious reviewers for their expertise and time.