

Editorials

Abdulai Abukari

Editor-in-chief

email: abdulai.abukari@buid.ac.ae

The Journal for Researching Education Practice and Theory (JREPT) is once again privileged to present papers based on research from practitioners from a range of practice settings as part of its mission to share practice among practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders in education. This issue presents five papers as follows:

The first paper in this issue focuses on designing a unit of learning that reflects and deals with the needs of expatriate parents in a Dubai private school as an intervention to facilitate effective learning of the Arabic language of expatriate children in the school. Arabic language is a compulsory subject in private schools in Dubai for non-Arabic-speaking expatriate pupils. The paper demonstrates and exemplifies how practitioners can draw on theory to inform practice through drawing on three theories (progressivism, andragogy and authentic learning) to inform the paper. The paper concludes with a proposed model of unit of learning entitled, ‘Arabic Language for Expat Parents,’ which aims to facilitate the involvement of parents in their children’s learning of Arabic as an Additional Language (AAL). The outcome of this paper will be of great interest to policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholders in education in the setting.

The second paper presents the findings of a research that investigates links between the United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policy initiatives and the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) majors’ enrolments, graduates and research and development within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UAE. Using a sequential exploratory mixed method approach, the findings show mixed messages about the influence of the UAE STI; while enrolment of STEM has increased tremendously in some federal universities, in others, there is a decrease which invariably affects graduation. Research and development shows a down

trend in many while one shows improvement. The message from this study is important as it provides evidence of some influence of STI policy on STEM majors enrolments, graduates and R&D, but this impact is minimal and limited. Hence, continuous governmental initiatives and investment are essential to facilitate improvements in STEM majors' enrolments, graduates and R&D in the UAE across all federal universities which will have the potential to develop more Emirati innovators.

Paper three in this issue focuses on understanding authentic leadership theory in practice from the perspective of a successful principal at a private school in Dubai. Based on an in-depth semi-structured interview, the study uses the key characteristics of authentic leadership (self-awareness, internalized moral perspective and balanced reasoning and relational transparency) to assess and determine evidence of elements of authentic leadership in the leader's practice. The finding in the paper reveals evidence of some central constructs of authentic leadership such as self-awareness, balanced reasoning and internalized moral perspective in the principal's leadership practice; although less evident of the construct of relational transparency. As school leadership is increasingly becoming a central variable in educational success, the findings in this research highlights the potential contribution of authentic leadership to effective school leadership.

Shaker and Saleh explores the role of school principals in keeping the novice teachers in the fourth paper of this issue. Designed as a qualitative study, the paper highlights the challenge of novice teacher turnover faced by many schools in Dubai. The paper argues that schools could best deal with the novice teacher turnover menace if schools' leadership move away from the current holistic approach of supporting all beginner teachers to a more individualized approach that takes into consideration the unique needs of every newly train teacher through what the paper term as 'specific learning opportunities'. The outcome from this research has the potential to inform policy makers and school leadership in the UAE about more effective ways of supporting novice teachers in order to decisively deal with the issue of novice teacher attrition.

The final paper in this issue presents an outcome of an investigation into the influence of teachers' leadership style on primary students' learning outcomes. The paper highlights the importance of teacher leadership in facilitating effective student learning. Research data was generated from semi-structured interviews with head of departments, teachers and parents. The finding suggests that participants believed that there is a positive link between teachers' leadership style and students' achievement based on examples from their experiences. As the impact of teacher leadership on students' learning is becoming an area of growing interest by practitioners, researchers and policy makers, the outcome of this research will be of interest to policy makers and practitioners as well as set the tone for further research to understand this phenomenon based on students learning outcomes.