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## Editorial

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## Editorial

I am delighted to introduce the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the ITB Journal, the academic journal of the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown. This special edition presents a diverse offering of papers from the Humanities Department at ITB reflecting the vibrant role research plays in the department. The topics presented have a universal appeal and range from social policy to accessibility of education to identity, social justice and much more.

The first paper by Aoife Prendergast, ‘Interprofessional Education – Challenges in Contemporary Social Care Placement Education – A Reflection’, draws attention to the increasing emphasis on all health and social care professionals to learn how to be competent collaborators. This emerging shift in education has led to a new interest in different approaches to the delivery of health and social care professions education which embraces more opportunities for interactions amongst and between learners across disciplines.

The second paper, ‘Discussion, Cooperation, Collaboration: The Impact of Task Structure on Student Interaction in a Web-based Translation Exercise Module’ by Mary Ann Kenny addresses the major challenge facing the online translation instructor in designing learning opportunities that encourage communication and the sharing of ideas between students. It draws on an empirical study carried out at Dublin City University and asks how such group interaction may be facilitated. In particular, it evaluates the impact of task structure on student interaction in an online translation exercise module and concludes that online interaction is most successful in discussion groups, followed in order of positive outcomes by cooperative groups and collaborative groups.

The third paper by Kevin Murphy, ‘The Social Pillar of Sustainable Development: A literature review and framework for policy analysis’ attempts to develop a clearer understanding of what the social pillar of sustainable development means and how it relates to the environmental pillar. In doing so, this paper provides a conceptual framework identifying four overarching social concepts – public awareness, equity, participation and social cohesion - and links them to environmental imperatives.

The fourth and fifth papers in this edition venture into the virtual worlds of video gaming and the virtual learning environment. In the fourth paper, ‘Virtual Interaction: A Real Alternative’, Lavinia McLean and Emmet Tuite report on a project they undertook which was intended to respond to difficulties students encountered while on placement in social care settings. In this paper, it is argued that an online support strategy may be the key to providing the necessary support the students need while on placement. This student-led initiative goes beyond the traditional model of support that social care students receive during placement and allows students to engage in reflection with the support of their peer group and academic staff throughout placement. The fifth paper is a collaborative empirical study undertaken by Lavinia McLean from ITB and Mark D. Griffiths from the International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University called ‘Violent video games and attitudes towards victims of crime: An empirical study among youth’. This study addresses the on-going debate over the impact of violent video games on young people. In particular it investigates the relationship between playing violent video games and attitudes towards victims of crime and examines the potentially dehumanising effects they can have.

The sixth paper by Gaël Le Roux, ‘From Granddad’s to Granddaughter’s binge drinking: a recent evolution of heavy episodic alcoholic consumption in Ireland’ is based on an empirical study which is aimed at understanding how female students perceive and explain the feminisation of binge drinking among their age group in Ireland. It focuses on older

generations and the female student's quest for gender and ethnic identity as possible explanations for their increasing level of episodic heavy alcohol consumption.

'Equality of access to higher education: discussion of emerging issues regarding the performance of migrants at the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown' is the title of the seventh paper and is a collaborative article by Ruth Harris and Bríd Ní Chonaill. This paper presents the findings of a small-scale study of the impact of English language competency on the performance of migrants in higher education and is based on a case study of first year social studies students at ITB. ITB is located in Dublin 15, an area with one of the highest proportions of migrants nationwide and this diversity is reflected in the ITB student population also. Some of the issues that emerge from this study include factors impacting performance and progression such as written production and mastery of academic English. The eighth paper by Colette Murray, 'A Minority within a Minority? Social Justice for Traveller and Roma Children in ECEC', discusses recent policy developments at European level regarding Roma and Traveller integration and Early Childhood Provision and draws on the Irish experience for analysis and insights on policy and practice. This article examines the problems associated with integration strategies to date for Travellers and Roma and at the minority within the minority, Roma and Traveller children and concludes that it is nonetheless possible to move on from fragmented initiatives and towards systemic change.

The final paper, 'Community Education and the Labour Activation Challenge' by Liam McGlynn is a comprehensive literature review which seeks to address the research question: *In what ways does community education meet the labour activation and employability challenge of the current unemployment crisis in Ireland?* It is set against the backdrop of a world attempting to recover from the global economic crisis of 2008 and presents evidence of the contribution that community education is making toward labour market activation in Ireland.

We hope that you enjoy the papers in this issue of the ITB Journal.

***Dr. Karen Feery***  
***Guest Editor for this Humanities special issue***

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