

Editorial

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Editor

Welcome to the second issue of the Tuning Journal for Higher Education which addresses “Competence-based learning: a global perspective”. The change in third level education from *syllabus-dominated* to *competence-based* programmes of learning can perhaps be described as a move away from assessing students by what they *did* during a programme of learning to assessing them by what they *can do* at the end of it. The first three contributions provide insights into how this new paradigm come about and how it can be implemented. The next three articles provide examples of how implementation fosters internationalisation.

Wagenaar describes the role played by the Tuning Higher Education in Europe Project (Tuning) in persuading academics, institutes and governments from across the continent to adopt the competence-based approach as part of the Bologna Process of Higher Educational Reform. The subsequent global interest in the Bologna Process has led to the Tuning methodology, developed by academics as a response to these reforms, being adopted in some 100 countries. This methodology has always emphasised the importance of generic competences which, whilst they underpin learning in a given subject, can be considered as part of a holistic education which allows students to transfer knowledge to the wider society or the work place. At the start of a Tuning project, stakeholders are surveyed concerning both the generic and subject specific competences they feel should be developed within a particular subject area. Tuning has some 69,000 returns globally from students, academics, graduates and employers. The second contribution by Bartolomé and Beneitone presents a statistical analysis of the largest of these data sets for generic competences and shows the similarities and differences between cultures. This provides an insight into programme design that is relevant to all those involved in, for example, employing graduates from other systems of higher education, running joint international degree programmes or who aim their graduate output at the global, rather than the local, job market. Many academics, like myself, have found this new way of formulating degree programmes in terms of competence-based learning and assessment of learning outcomes a challenging process. One problem has been that the

concept of competences has become multinational. The language in which they are defined has become more and more generic and smeared across many cultures. Adelman in his article addresses this issue head on. He challenges us to write our degree programmes in exciting, informative language. That is not to say we should ignore the concepts behind the globally agreed wording, but we must communicate them in ways that demonstrate our passion for the subject.

The next three contributions illustrate how a coming together of stakeholders can promote internationalisation of competence-based learning programmes. Varella describes the European Chemistry Thematic networks Eurobachelor[®], Euromasters[®], Chemistry Doctorate Eurolabel[®] and the Chemistry Short Cycle Eurolabel[®]. These provide an example of a subject area qualifications framework which has been made possible by each participating institution profiling its degrees in Chemistry. A clear statement of the competences that are developed within the learner is fundamental to such profiles. Bedny, Erushkina and Kuzenkov describe how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) programmes have been transferred from a syllabus-based to a competence-based system in Russia, a vast country which has national standards for all higher education programmes. This transformation has taken cognisance of the needs of both the Russian and the European ICT industries. Namubiru, Ezati, Bisaso, Pekkola and Hölttä describe a methodology which allowed a joint degree programme to be developed between an Ugandan and a Finnish university. This process involved a series of workshops in which an understanding of the required competences played a key role but was culturally sensitive and preserved the values of the African programme whilst aligning it with one in Finland.

The Editorial Board has decided that each issue in the first two volumes should have several thematic articles. However, it is our policy that each issue should also contain research articles not specifically related to this particular theme. In this issue, we include two such articles. Aardema and Churruca explain the work leading to the development of the European Universities on Professionalisation on Humanitarian Action Project (EUPRHA) aimed at improving the recognition of qualifications within the humanitarian sector and whose ultimate goal is the development of a European Humanitarian Qualifications Framework. The last work by Serbati and Surian reports the results of a survey of a focus group, the Tuning Russia Social Work Subject Area Group, analysed using appropriate software. Such surveys as to the effectiveness of Tuning, or indeed any methodology, in developing new degree profiles are currently rare but comprise an essential component in maintaining and improving quality.

The Editorial Board welcomes submission of articles that fall within the compass of this Journal (see www.tuningjournal.org) and in particular articles that would be relevant to the theme of our next issue, Volume 2, Issue N^o 1, “Policy and Implementation: actions for Curriculum Reform”.