

# New realities, new challenges: Future proofing?

## Editorial

Mary Gobbi

Editor

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*“And the times they are a changin’”*

(Bob Dylan, 1964)

As I pen this editorial, on the eve of Remembrance Day, Bob Dylan’s song and lyrics to *“And the times they are a changin’”* “resonate in my mind. How apt are the lyrics for today’s challenges, be it COP26 in Glasgow and the endeavours to gain cooperation and collaboration to mitigate and prevent the desecration of our planet, or the tragedy of famine unfolding in Afghanistan, the continuing battle with COVID-19. Dylan’s lyrics have a special message for academics when he wrote:

Come writers and critics who prophesize with your pen  
And keep your eyes wide, the chance won’t come again  
And don’t speak too soon, for the wheel’s still in spin  
And there’s no tellin’ who that it’s namin’  
For the loser now will be later to win  
‘Cause the times they are a-changin’

Lyrics to the single ‘And the times they are a changin’

The urgency, drive and warning in the lyrics remind us to have our eyes wide open, not to miss the moment, yet not speak too soon. We know our world is changing, be it climate, science, culture, politics, morals, or viruses. The question is whether we have the motivation and energy to change ourselves as well as the world around us.

*The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.* (Albert Einstein)

*Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.* (Leo Tolstoy)

Changing the world and changing individuals (be they students or staff) are the cornerstones of good university education. They are present in

mission statements, programme outcomes and the hearts and minds of those eager to learn, enquire, research, critique and innovate. The Higher Education Community comprising students, staff, local community, business partners and other stakeholders, is uniquely placed to both study, critique and create change. Each paper in this edition bears witness to this endeavour. The manuscripts evoke aspects of change: some are innovative, others adaptive, some evolutionary and some are simply pragmatic response to a problem or quality issue. None the less, as a Community, we must identify *what we need to change*, and *how the times are changing* and what this means for our Higher Education structures, policies, practises, student competences and strategic direction. Yet Tolstoy asks whether we, as academics, seek to change ourselves. Of course, those who subscribe to reflective practice /critical reflection commit themselves to a never-ending journey of discovery.

Historically, today, the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, is also the anniversary of many events that have changed the world, our concepts, and experiences. On this day, battles have been won (1444, Sultan Murad II beats crusaders at the Black Sea); freedoms lost (1917, Lenin suspends freedom of the press during the October Revolution); discoveries made (1493, Christopher Columbus finds Antigua; 1897, Henry M. Stanley finds Dr. Livingstone at Ujiji near Unyanyembe in Africa); and freedoms regained (1989, German citizens begin tearing down the Berlin Wall). Each one of these events not only represents a significant change in the lives of people impacted by that historical moment, but also provides wider ripples and consequences with far reaching effects. Our task is to continue the legacy of discovery; to strive for the (re)gaining of freedoms and to engage -when appropriate- in ideological battles.

Our ability to change minds through the effective communication of science is after all a generic competence! However, when faced with the belief that 5G masts spread the COVID-19 virus, how can we respond in a meaningful way? What is the role of the academy? To what extent do members of the public 'trust' the scientist or the science? How do we engage with the changing times of social media in an ethical way? What do our ethicists, experts in international relations, politics and economics have to offer the global 'movers and shakers' with respect to the future of Afghanistan or the migration crises?

Some of these ideological and expert knowledge battles engage the academy with politics or one view of science with another. Given the pressing demands of climate change, the Journal would welcome papers that explore the ways in which Higher Education can foster change and provide research-based education that enables students and staff to create the initiatives needed

to literally ‘save our planet’, ‘face the times’ and leave a positive legacy for future generations.

Once again, we would like to thank our reviewers.

The last 18 months have been challenging for authors and reviewers alike, so we have asked, and do ask for patience and forbearance with the response times.

From our end, we continuously strive for a smooth submission, review, and production process. In this regard, we are pleased to announce that as from 1st January 2022, authors can format their citations and references in either of the two referencing systems of the Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> or later edition): **Notes and Bibliography** and **Author-Date** systems ([https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)). They however are required to use either system consistently. Until to date, they could use only the **Notes and Bibliography** system.

Wishing our readers, good health, and the greetings of the Winter/Summer seasons in North and South.

*The editorial team*

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