

Editorial

Paul D. Ryan

Editor

Welcome to Volume 2, Issue Nº 2 of the Tuning Journal for Higher Education, '*Research in Curriculum Development*'. Our first thematic issues have dealt with: development of programme profiles ('*New Profiles for new Societies*', Volume 1, Issue Nº 1); competence based learning ('*Competence based learning: a global perspective*', Volume 1, Issue Nº 2); and policy design and implementation aimed at modernising higher education ('*Policy design and implementation: actions for curriculum reform*', Volume 2, Issue Nº 1). The journal will continue to publish such thematic issues, the next planned dealing with the student learning experience. However, the Editorial Board has decided to dedicate this Issue to unsolicited research contributions. It is the policy of the International Tuning Academy to promote research into all aspects of competence-based higher education.¹ Tuning has always been the universities' response to higher education reform. We, therefore, see ourselves as serving the needs of all stakeholders and wish to provide a platform for those who have research to share with colleagues in our global community.

Another innovation in this Issue is the inclusion of a 'Forum' section. The aim of this section is to promote discussion and debate in two ways. Firstly, we invite comments on articles previously published within the Journal. The authors of the original article will be given the right to reply to such comments. Debate is an essential component of academic life. Secondly, we wish to widen the scope of the Journal by publishing opinion pieces from time to time. Articles for the Forum section will be subject to peer review and editorial control.

In the first article Davies and Williams give a frank account of the Utah Tuning Project. They report that whilst many participants had concerns about 'Tuning', or at least what they perhaps misunderstood 'Tuning' to be, almost all reported favourably upon the interaction and discussions it engendered. This report makes fascinating reading and reminds me of many of the debates

¹ Please see <http://tuningjournal.org/>

we had during the various European Tuning projects (2000-2009). Whilst travelling on the Eurostar recently I was asked by a student how we could possibly reach a situation where all higher education qualifications were recognised globally. He thought that this was a magnificent concept because he had encountered many hurdles to mobility. The only reply I could give was that we should make people talk to each other and then keep them talking to each other. I believe that this report supports that view.

The next two articles deal with developing competence-based learning in Legal and Political Studies in Brazil and have stemmed from work that has been encouraged by the ALFA Tuning Latin America programmes. Musse Felix and Gomma de Azevedo describe the development of a competence-based dispute resolution programme to be used in both legal education and within the Brazilian Court system. This programme reflects the adoption by the University of Brasilia School of Law of a Curriculum embracing *'competence based learning as part of a major change geared to bringing social, cultural and political effectiveness into the teaching of Law'*. The article provides an insight into the challenges of adopting such a collaborative approach in a regulated profession. Groth dares *'to sketch a "metaprofile" of the "good political scientist"'*. His article reviews the challenges facing the teaching of political science in a rapidly changing world and discusses the kind of Political Science needed in this new world. He analyses how the concept of competencies developed elsewhere might apply to a Political Science program in Brazil. On the basis of this analysis he offers his metaprofile. What both of these studies have in common is the intimate involvement of students in the process.

One could argue that one of the most important competencies that should be developed in medical education is that of *'Communication in clinical practice'*. Cabrales offers an account of the feedback from focus groups of 17 residents who shared their ideas on and concerns with communicative competence in health (CCH). These results were analysed using Grounded Theory, a method for organising such feedback into conceptual frameworks. He offers a new concept of CCH and, as the participants felt their training had lacked somewhat in the development of CCH, argues this needs to be taken into account by all stakeholders when planning new curricula.

The matter of curricula leads us to our first article in the new Forum section. Mitchell, who has been involved in Tuning from the beginning, gives a *'personal reflection'* on the role of curricula development in the context of the Bologna reforms. He argues that curricula need to be designed carefully in such a way as to promote mobility, not hinder it. Some subject areas offer only a set of meta-competences, whilst others give guidance as to

topics and what proportion of the curriculum they might occupy and at what level. I find myself wondering whether this uneven treatment reflects the academic reality that there are now so many theoretical, applied and regulated disciplines in modern higher education or the fact that Tuners have yet to fully engage with this topic. I look forward to your feedback.

The Editorial Board welcomes submission of articles that fall within the compass of this Journal (see www.tuningjournal.org).