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About This Issue

*Kim Hales, Editor-in-Chief
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This issue of the *Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence* is filled with the things I love about education. Every submission shows a genuine passion for how we can be the best educators possible and deliver the best of ourselves to our students.

The first three articles are relevant to instructors of all mediums. Beginning with the article by Rodriguez and Sharp (2018), we receive practical tips on helping learners improve their writing through peer feedback, with best practice recommendations for establishing a writing community and designing and implementing assignments effectively. Further tips for facilitating an effective learning community are provided in the article by Jenkins (2018), who shares timely insights and questions designed to help educators evaluate their cultural responsiveness, thereby creating an environment that is supportive of diversity. In article three, Meng and Rentschler (2018) offer suggestions to help faculty bridge the gap between their own research and teaching by sharing their original research with their students in the classroom. Beyond noting the benefits of this approach to students and faculty, the authors share first-hand examples of how they used this approach in their teaching.

The articles by Luongo and O'Brien (2018) and Bowne et al. (2018) are of special interest to faculty developers. Continuing the theme of building vibrant educational communities, Luongo and O'Brien highlight the benefits of providing faculty mentorship to new distance education instructors. Such mentorship, they argue, can make the key to achieving effective distance learning environments. Bowne et al. (2018) add research evidence to this argument. Following a rigorous survey methodology, they report that online students whose instructors successfully completed an online instructor certification program were more likely to rate their course and instructors highly with regard to instructional quality. They suggest certification models in which online instructors act as online students.

Continuing the theme of online education, but from a program design standpoint, Hawks and Gast (2018) provide a valuable case study in program development as they detail their efforts developing an online Masters of Public Health degree. They suggest a competency-centric, backwards design approach built around equivalency theory (Simonson, Schlosser, & Hanson, 1999)—providing useful curriculum plans in the process.

As the new editor of JETE, I thank our contributors for their time, research, passion, and sharing of ideas. This Journal offers all educators interested in the improvement of the academy an opportunity to grow together as educators, and it is a privilege to see all that is being done. I welcome and look forward to future submissions, suggestions, and insights as we grow the Journal of Empowering Teaching Excellence together.

Sincerely,

Kim Hales

Editor-in-Chief

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