

Introduction: Policies and Practice EDITORIAL

Anne Gaskell

It is a very great pleasure to provide a foreword to the July issue of *Journal of Learning for Development* (JL4D) and to introduce myself as the new Chief Editor. Having worked for the Open University UK for over 30 years in a very wide range of roles, I have a long association with the achievements and issues surrounding open, distance and e-learning. I am also delighted to be working with our Associate Editor, Dr Sanjaya Mishra, from COL.

This issue has a particular focus on policy: authors explore the relationship between policy and research (Traxler); the importance of having appropriate policies in place (Awadhiya & Miglani; Nkuyubwatsi; Bose) and new models for economic development, which could inform policies for the future (Weller). Studies on mobile learning also have a major place (Traxler, Awadhiya & Miglani) and are the subject of our book review.

However, our first paper in this issue is a valedictory editorial from Professor Alan Tait, former Chief Editor of the *Journal*. In this he reflects on the first two years of *JL4D* – the subjects covered, the countries represented – and also on what we have discovered about learning for development. Professor Tait remains as Editor Emeritus of *JL4D* and retains his interest in the *Journal's* future.

Two invited articles provide much to consider in the context of learning for development. Professor John Traxler provides an extensive and penetrating discussion of the relationships between policy-makers and research communities in the context of mobile learning in developing countries. His guidelines are also highly relevant to any researcher or policy maker on any subject.

Professor Martin Weller proposes a new digital economic model for education and other development: the Open Flip. This is essentially a model that reallocates resources “away from the purchase of copyrighted resources to the production of openly licensed ones”. This could be liberating for many educational, medical and other developments. Government money could (for example) be invested in the production of drugs, which are then freely licensed, rather than being spent on purchasing medicine from pharmaceutical companies.

Our research papers come from India and Rwanda. Awadhiya and Miglani discuss the challenges that are faced by teachers in India in their use of mobile learning. The lack of support for instructional design and the lack of relevant policies were considered the most serious challenges; perhaps surprisingly “intrusion on personal time due to 24/7 access” was not considered to be particularly important. Also discussing policies, Nkuyubwatsi reviews the potential for Rwanda to open up education for all and is not optimistic at the moment. One of Rwanda’s policy statements, for example, seems to have been copy-and-pasted from Scotland and is not relevant at all to Rwanda. He provides recommendations to enable a real opening up of education in Rwanda.



Finally, our case study by Bose investigates assessment at IGNOU. A large number of policies relate to assessment but have conflicting goals: some are designed to support learning; some aim to cope with the huge numbers of enrolments. Bose argues for a more integrated approach to policy making.

Our book review is also about mobile learning and its potential to transform the delivery of education and training.

Appropriate and informed policies are essential to learning for development and our authors have provided arguments and examples to support this. I hope you will be able to use some of this information to leverage development in your own contexts.

Anne Gaskell
Chief Editor, JL4D