Editorial
Connectedness: Human Relations, Learning, & Wellness .... 3
Safary Wa-Mbaleka

Features
Socio-Pragmatic Role of Songs in the L2 Classroom ....................... 5
Cinthya Samojluk de Graf

Perceived Global Trends Cognition and Management Competencies of Master in Business Administration Students ................................. 14
Gloria Gempes

Lived Social Life Experiences of Female Elderly People ......................... 28
Stella Appiah & Safary Wa-Mbaleka

A Narrative Inquiry of One Female Married-Single: A Story of Loneliness and Isolation ................................................................. 47
Nadine A. Joseph

Small Group: A Model to Enhance Success in Adventist Higher Education ................................................................. 66
Ikchukwu Michael Oluikpe

Quality of Vegetarian Cafeteria Services and Students’ Overall Satisfaction with their University ......................................................... 81
Darrin Thomas
EDITORIAL

Connectedness: Human Relations, Learning, & Wellness

We live in a time of controversy regarding global connectedness. While some say we live in a time of unprecedented connectedness on an individual as well as organizational level, others say that the world is far less connected than it appears to be. Whichever stand one takes, it remains a fact that we need connectedness for better human relations, learning, and wellness at all levels of human functioning. Therefore, the dimensions of connectedness that impact these areas of human life are important to study and consider.

Looking around the world today gives one an idea about the disconnect that exists in society. The technology that was meant to connect people is now keeping human relations farther and farther apart. It is not uncommon to work in the same organization without regular communication—something that was not as frequent decades ago. The compartmentalization of work, responsibilities, and fields is not helping. If concepts such as team work, team player, team effort, team spirit, cooperation, collaboration, among others, are promoted in different social and business organizations; it is probably because connectedness is causing great challenges everywhere.

In education, connectedness is also evading the reality of teaching and learning. Due to the disconnect between class activities and the real needs in the different careers, today several graduates struggle to apply in their work what they learned at school. They still have to go through intensive on-job trainings at the beginning of their job. As for teaching, many requirements are coming from all sides of the educator, from people and agencies with little or no expertise in education. In trying to meet these demands, educators find themselves disconnected from theory and practice in their profession. Everyone outside the classroom seems to have their own expectations about what the educator should be doing. Educators end up being disconnected from their career, their passion, their theory of practice, and from meaningful instruction.

In public health, most of the problems the field is dealing with today are related to the disconnect that is found in the way health and wellness are
approached. A holistic approach grounded in connectedness of different aspects of human life could be preventing many of the health issues that the world is dealing with today. A holistic approach that promotes connectedness is highly urgently needed.

The current journal issue, based on the 15th AIIAS International Conference on Business, Education, and Public Health held at AIIAS in October 2014, is a compilation of six articles that try to make a significant contribution to the theme of connectedness in business, education, and public health. Written by scholars in different countries, this issue presents a thorough look at the theme of connected from different perspectives.

In business, Gempes’s article investigated the research participants’ knowledge of global trends and the relationship between that knowledge and their competence as managers of different organizations. She found that the two were related, thus prompting to recommend higher education institutions to focus more global trends knowledge in preparing managers. It would help connect managers better with their employees and their customers.

In education, three articles focus on how educators can connect better with their students. Samojluk de Graf reviewed the literature and made important practical recommendations on how to use music in teaching additional languages. Oluikpe proposes a small group model to meet better the different needs of students. Thomas’ study on one private cafeteria services demonstrated that serving better, cost-effective, and tasty meals could help connect better with students by meeting their expectations more effectively.

In public health, two articles were presented on this theme of connectedness. Appiah and Wa-Mbaleka explored how connectedness or lack thereof affects elderly people. Findings from their phenomenological study led to the conclusion that social connectedness of the elderly is highly important for the quality of their life. No effort should therefore be spared to involve the elderly in social activities for their own wellbeing. Joseph’s study of one married-single international student showed how the lack of connectedness, as evidenced in her isolation and loneliness, affected her health and even her whole life.

I hope that you enjoy these six articles as much as I did in the editorial process. They all have recommendations for further work. May you be encouraged to continue this important discussion as you consider submitting your next manuscript to the International Forum journal. Congratulations to the authors!

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