

Foreword

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A majority of the papers offered to readers of this issue of *Innovative Teaching and Learning* are evidence of the commitment of our researchers at the Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (ICCS) of BNU-HKBU United International College to the generation, communication, and dissemination of innovative and evidence-based responses to changing societal circumstances and needs. A theme of the conference where these researchers first presented this work was interdisciplinary research, which we at the ICCS see as vital in an unpredictable world in which disciplines and fields of research activity multiply as a changing and more complex world promotes specialisation. Fundamental understandings or solutions to problems are often beyond a single discipline or area of research practice. Yet in academia we too often observe a growing compartmentalisation and commodification of knowledge in research shaped by imperatives to compete against each other rather than seek the benefits of working together. Our institute cultivates an approach that looks beyond artificial disciplinary boundaries. It acknowledges the need to adopt a more holistic approach if we are to fully understand both the problems and possible solutions.

A key objective of ICCS is to empower emerging researchers. Encouraging curiosity and collaboration that transcends boundaries between fields or disciplines includes the cultivation of opportunities for early career researchers to grow through mentorship and training that flows from collaboration with more experienced colleagues. Openness to multi-disciplinarity can have significant implications for career paths and research effectiveness and opportunities. For example, as some of the papers included here illustrate, language teaching and learning has been revolutionised as advance-

ments in technology, and now AI, open up vast array of possibilities for innovations in teaching and learning. Today, researchers both emerging and established need to understand that boundaries can be crossed and to recognise that collaboration across disciplines can increase exposure and research impact. The authors of these selected papers from the conference have done that, and recognised how innovations from other fields can broaden the scope of their research and understanding of sustainable, equitable, and resilient solutions to the complex challenges of the contemporary world.

I hope the publication of these papers in *ITL* will lead to more opportunities for the authors to connect with peers locally and internationally. This will enable them to imagine new possibilities as they explore where their curiosity leads them. My thanks to the authors, the ICCS Committee, and the *ITL* Editor in Chief, for enabling this.