EDITORIAL

Digital transformation is perhaps best characterised by the response of virtually all sectors in the form of innovations in teaching methods, learning design and delivery approaches, propelled by technological advancements. The research article section of this volume comprises five articles that showcase the multidisciplinary nature of open and distance learning cutting across the fields of education, health and law. They also highlight related aspects such as appropriate pedagogies for teaching Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) concepts and digital transformation. The authors have approached the issues of equity, inclusion, access and the instructional delivery mandate of open and distance learning (ODL) from different disciplinary perspectives. The commentary section presents a reflective piece and the issue closes with the book review section.

Sotunsa et al report on authentic assessment in open and distance learning which has received a great deal of attention, especially in the context of online learning and since COVID-19. In addition, the demand for new skill sets and knowledge in the 21st century technology-driven workplace has contributed to the need for designing assessments that enable learners to demonstrate competencies and skills in real-life situations and attain required proficiency. In an assessment of learners' performance using the authentic assessment approach in comparison with the traditional mode of assessment, the authors report better performance in authentic assessment and advocate for capacity building in the principles and design of authentic assessment.

Olubiyi et al investigate the digital transformation of the healthcare sector by exploring the use of digital technology in the delivery of healthcare and the transformation of the healthcare system in Nigeria. Premised on the observation of limited utilization of digital technology by healthcare workers, the authors sought to assess the state of knowledge, utilisation and availability of digital technology by nurses in a Nigerian hospital context. Their findings revealed the availability of a few digital devices, adequate knowledge about their use and a fair level of utilisation. The study reflects the need for continuous reskilling

and upskilling to improve healthcare and hospital administration practices in a digital era.

Oladejo et al examine the use of relevant and responsive pedagogies that are culturally and contextually appropriate at the pre-tertiary level. They argue that the lack of pedagogies that make use of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices that learners are familiar with, and through social interaction or collaborative learning contributes to their poor performance in Information and Communication Technology related subjects. The authors highlight the fact that students have consistently performed poorly in computer/ICT subject examinations, especially in understanding concepts like networking, flowcharting, programme development cycle, algorithm, logic gate, basic programming, and machine language. Using the experimental design, the study compared the performance of students taught using the conventional approach with those exposed to the Culturo-Techno-Contextual Approach. The findings from this study underscores the critical role of cultural relevance and contextualisation in learning design to improve performance.

Akinyi and Aghan assessed the contributions of using open and distance learning approaches for educational delivery to prison inmates in correctional facilities with the primary aim of improving the inclusion of the marginalised. The provision of educational delivery using ODL is tailored along the lines of the purpose of correctional facilities, the rehabilitation of inmates. The authors note that although access to education in the prisons is provided, the ODL as instructional delivery has not been effectively utilized in a significant number of correctional facilities. They identify factors such as inadequate infrastructure. Staff, and the lack of a policy framework to support the use of ODL as a means of facilitating rehabilitation. This study touches on the core of ODL's mandate, and therefore is deserving of further comparative study on the African continent.

Exploring the issue of access and ODL as an acceptable instructional delivery mode for the Law programme in Nigeria, **Agama** highlights the prejudices and restrictions that obtain within the legal education space and calls for a rethink to allow for instructional delivery using

technology and thereby equip learners with digital skills, facilitate the teaching and learning of Law and the operations of the Law profession in a digital era. The paper is a useful contribution to the discourse of professional development in the staid discipline of Law.

In the commentary section of this volume, is an invited piece by **Professor Paul Prinsloo** which is a reflection title, Improving Student retention and success: realizing the (im)possible. The paper overviews the notion of student retention and success in higher education widely and ODL specifically. Prinsloo acknowledges that the nature of ODL changes how students learn and impacts the students and the institution. He underscores the effect of internet technology on ODL and foresees an increase in enrollment across Africa and the consequent increase in the volume of available student data. This is where he identified likely pitfalls to the use of students' data for decision-making, improvement of student retention and successes and the role that learning analytics can play.

In the book review section, **Felix Olakulehin** reviews a book by Richard Heller titled, The Distributed University for Sustainable Higher Education.

I would like to thank our contributors for choosing WAJOFEL as the platform to share their research, our reviewers for their contributions and the editorial team for putting together this issue. We hope readers will find this issue useful and look forward to receiving more manuscripts from across the globe.

Professor Christine Ofulue,
Managing Editor, *WAJOFEL*