Editorial

Welcome to Vol. 11 No. 2 issue of the journal. In this issue, we have seven articles from the USA, Uganda, India, Ghana, Malaysia (two articles) and Jordan; these articles report on diverse areas in open and distance learning (ODL) which include ICT (blogs, e-learning, online learning modules, educational software), student dropout, appraisals of the ODL system and professional development.

The first article is by Kessinger and Berge of the University of Maryland, USA which reports on the use of the blog as an instructional medium. The writers provide guidance in utilising blogs as an instructional delivery medium and clarify its strength and limitations. The second article is by Aguti et al. from Makerere University, Uganda which reports on the determinants of student dropout from two external degree programmes of the university. The writers found that socio-cultural and financial factors contribute mainly to the student dropout. In addition, environmental factors, such as teaching and learning environment, feeling of isolation and lack of time management skills also contribute to the dropout.

The third article is by Basu of the Indira Ghandhi National Open University (IGNOU) which reports on the changing landscape of higher education with specific reference to India. The writer reviews the accomplishment of the Indian ODL system through an examination of the major issues afflicting the ODL system in India and how the issues are resolved. The fourth article is by Essel et al. of the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana which reports on the essential elements in the professional development of teachers as part of their in-service training. Based on their study, suggestions to adapt the best strategies to sustain the in-service training and continuing professional development are also provided.

The fifth article is by Jamilah Ahmad of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia which reports on the study of the feasibility of teaching public relations course via e-learning. She found that such a course can be conducted via e-learning but a high degree of commitment on the part of

the academicians is called for, as their techniques and skills have to be enhanced in the technology-based course delivery. The sixth article is by Nazirah Ahmad Azli et al. again of Universiti Sains Malaysia. They report on the preliminary assessment of web-based self-instructional modules and found that students prefer the online modules which are more attractive and have contents which are easier to understand and comprehend. The last article is by Al-Mashaqbeh and Al-Khawaldeh of Al al-Bayt University, Mafraq, Jordan. They report on the educational software used in enhancing adult learners' achievement; the means of pre-test and post-test scores are used for comparison.

I have been the chief editor of this journal from 2006 and my tenure ends with the publication of this issue. Associate Prof. Dr. Zuraini Zakaria will be taking over as chief editor of this journal for the next three years. I take this opportunity to thank the former Dean of the School of Distance Education, Associate Prof. Omar Majid for his continuous and enduring support, contributors,editorial board members, reviewers, editors, copy editors and to everyone who directly and indirectly have put time and effort to make the publication of all the issues possible.

Profesor Hanafi Atan
Chief Editor
(2006–2009)