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March 2024, Pekanbaru, Indonesia



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the inaugural edition of the 2024 Utamax Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education. This publication stands as a testament to the collaborative efforts of our esteemed Editorial Board, diligent reviewers, the members of LITA, and notably, our contributing authors, all of whom have played a pivotal role in the realization of Volume 6, Issue No. 1. I extend my profound gratitude to Dr. David Setiawan, MT, the director of LPPM-Unilak, alongside his dedicated LPPM Team. Their altruistic contributions and inspirational guidance have been invaluable in fostering a platform for academic exchange and enlightenment within our journal's community. This edition proudly showcases seven meticulously peer-reviewed articles, each emanating from a wide spectrum of academic affiliations, thereby enriching our understanding of contemporary educational paradigms.

The inaugural article, authored by I Gede Yoga Permana, Ni Wayan Monik Rismadewi, and Nyoman Canestra Adi Putra, hails from Indonesia and delves into the "Gamification in EFL Classroom: Results of Implementation and Teachers' Point of View". This study critically examines the impact of gamification on enhancing students' proficiency in English and evaluates the pedagogical reception towards its integration within the EFL educational framework. The findings illuminate significant positive shifts in English language acquisition, underpinned by a favorable pedagogical perspective towards gamification, thereby contributing invaluable insights into the discourse on innovative educational methodologies and their potent effects on student engagement and academic outcomes.

Following, the article "Empowerment at the Crossroads: Women's Educational Challenges in Karachi's Higher Education" by Aisha Bano Rahat et al., explores the nuanced challenges confronting female students in the realm of higher education within Karachi, Pakistan. This investigation uncovers the multifaceted barriers impeding women's educational advancement and highlights the societal impediments to gender equity in education. The study emphasizes the imperative for fostering gender equality, enhancing support mechanisms, and advocating for diversified leadership within academic institutions.

Dea Andini and colleagues present "Powering Up Learning: How Interactive PowerPoint Transforms Student Engagement and Outcomes in Biology", a research piece that scrutinizes the efficacy of interactive PowerPoint presentations in bolstering student motivation and comprehension of virology within the biological sciences. The study's outcomes signify a remarkable enhancement in both student motivation and academic performance, validating the strategic incorporation of technology-enhanced learning tools in educational practices.

Yakub Ta'ba and his team, in "Turning a New Page: Using Pop-up Books to Motivate Students with Learning Disabilities", investigate the pedagogical benefits of implementing pop-up books as a novel visual learning aid aimed at motivating students facing learning challenges. This study not only highlights the transformative potential of innovative learning materials but also offers a detailed examination of the underlying factors affecting student motivation.

Yetty Faridatul Ulfah and co-authors explore the pivotal role of communication in "The Language of Learning: Exploring How Family and Instructional Communication Drive English Education Context", shedding light on

how familial and instructional dialogues significantly influence students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning English. This research broadens the analytical lens beyond one-dimensional studies, offering a comprehensive exploration of the synergistic impact of various forms of communication on English language learning among eleventh-grade students.

In "Indonesian Pre-Service Teachers' View on Developing Critical Thinking in English Language Teaching", Nurul Apwani Harahap and Rahmah Fithriani focus on the imperative of nurturing critical thinking skills among pre-service English language educators. The study reveals a nuanced understanding of critical thinking and highlights the diverse pedagogical strategies employed, emphasizing the essentiality of critical thinking in devising innovative solutions to complex problems, despite the challenges presented by varying student interests and limited educational resources.

Lastly, "Understanding Classroom Activities in Speaking Courses in College: A Case Study in the Post-Pandemic Era" by Nadiya Kaltsum Ulayya & Hesti Wahyuni Anggraini, provides an insightful examination into the pedagogical strategies employed in enhancing student engagement and comprehension within a speaking course. The study categorizes classroom activities into structured stages, demonstrating their significant impact on fostering a dynamic and interactive language learning environment.

As Editor-in-Chief of this distinguished journal, I am immensely thankful to all contributors for their exemplary research and significant scholarly contributions. Each edition of our journal offers a plethora of insightful articles and studies pivotal to the advancement of educational research. We cordially invite submissions from global scholars on practical and theoretical issues across all educational disciplines.

In conclusion, I extend a warm welcome to academics, researchers, and practitioners in the field of teaching and learning to this latest issue of the *Utamax: Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*. This journal, characterized by its international peer-reviewed, open-access platform, continues to champion the dissemination of exceptional academic achievements within the educational research community, steering towards the internationalization of scholarly journals.

Wishing you all continued success,  
Utamax Editorial Team



Dr. Budianto Hamuddin

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