

GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Section from the Learning Without Frontiers 2011 Conference

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On January 9-11, 2011, the Learning Without Frontiers Conference was held in London. What started in 2006 as the Handheld Learning Conference that focused primarily on learning with mobile devices has turned into an event that *'brings together leading disruptive thinkers and practitioners from the education, digital media, creative, technology and entertainment sectors to explore, share and demonstrate how new disruptive technologies are driving radical efficiencies and improvements for learning whilst offering equality of access.'* Even though the event has expanded in scope to also include game-based learning and digital safety, mobile learning still plays a prominent role. In fact, an increasing number of voices argue that all learning is mobile, at least to some extent.

The mobile research strand has been an integral part of the HHL/LWF Conferences, and this year's participants included an eclectic group of academics from across Europe and the USA. During a full-day session, a broad range of cutting-edge topics was discussed,

ranging from innovative mobile phone projects and large scale deployments to mobile ethnography and augmented reality. Following the conference, the editors of RCETJ (<http://www.rcetj.org>) and IJMBL collaborated to publish a selection of the presented papers. Four papers were published in the spring 2011 issue of RCETJ (Vol. 7, No. 1), organized in a special section under the header "Innovations in Mobile Learning." An additional two papers are included in this issue of IJMBL.

The first paper, written by Royle and Hadfield and titled "From 'Posh Pen and Pad' to Participatory Pedagogies: One Story of a Netbook Implementation Project with 108 Pupils in Two Primary Schools", investigates the implementation of netbooks as a learning tool in two primary schools. Combining outside evaluation with action research approaches, the authors conclude that *'It is clear from this project that technology is not the answer to creating more engaging schools but it perhaps does allow us to ask the right questions about*

what type of learning we should be developing in this 21st century [...]. This was more about conceptualizing an approach to teaching and learning that used technology as a tool for learning, [... and] it was the fundamental change from teacher as expert to teacher as guide and co-learner that was important.'

The second paper, "The Perceptions of Health and Social Care Students of Using Mobile 360 Degree Performance Feedback Tools in Practice Placement Settings", was developed by Taylor, Dearnley, Laxton, Nkosana-Nyawata, and Rinomhota. In it, the authors describe how they used action research to investigate the use of the Assessment & Learning in Practice Settings (ALPS) mobile assessment tool by 35 Health & Social Care students. The tool allows learner, workplace, and university to be involved in student feedback cycles. The findings are part of the second stage of a larger evaluation study, and indicate that '*when the 360 degree mobile feedback tools*

were used effectively they provided practical and pedagogic advantages and students were in broad agreement about the potential usefulness of them.'

The LWF 2011 papers published here and in RCETJ illustrate that mobile learning initiatives continue to break down obstacles to learning, regardless of whether they are barriers of time, space, or technology. As mobile technologies become more ubiquitous, powerful, and connected, they are also increasingly important learning tools in both formal and informal environments, bridging the gap between the two at the same time. Consequently, as the growing body of research shows, mobile learning can truly be learning without frontiers.

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