Editorial Preface
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A variety of articles awaits the zealous reader in this issue of the International Journal of Information & Communication Technology Education (IJICTE). From assessment and analysis investigations to useful ideas for teaching team competencies concepts, this issue of IJICTE has something in it for everyone interested in information technology.

**Trainers’ and Trainees’ Assessment of the Implementation of ICT Program for Secretaries at the Staff Training Centers in Southwestern Nigeria**, by Raymond Uwameiye and Janet Adegbenro Bolaji of the University of Benin, Nigeria, was based on available literature combined with a 29-item questionnaire developed just for their study. The population of the study was made up of information and communication technology (ICT) teachers and secretaries in training in southwestern Nigeria, and the findings reveal an urgent need to recruit more competent teachers to staff government training centers and a need to supply adequate and modern equipment for secretarial training.

A team of legal and technical authors collaborated to produce **A Comparative Analysis of Online and Traditional Undergraduate Business Law Classes**. Shelley, Swartz and Cole examined the rising utilization trends in online learning due in part to the soaring cost of higher education, a changing student profile, lack of traditional classroom space and the recognition that distance learning has created a new paradigm of instruction. Universities and colleges wishing to maintain or expand enrollments need to be able to respond effectively to the educational needs of working adults, students in the military and residents of rural communities as well as of other countries. Their collective contention is that online course offerings constitute a creative and increasingly popular response to these challenges. As more and more institutions of higher learning offer online courses, the question arises whether they are, or can be, as effective as courses offered in the traditional classroom format. Answering the question for the preparation of law students has similar application for other online and traditional classrooms. The study found no significant difference between the two formats with regard to student satisfaction and student learning, but you need to read their article for additional findings comparing online and traditional instruction modes.

**Cultivating Greater Acceptance of Women in Technology: A Pilot Study** by Mara H. Wasburn, Purdue University, is recognized with the IJICTE Editor’s Award of Excellence. Congratulations on a well-written article that was uniformly acknowledged as best of the submissions by the IJICTE editorial review board. Wasburn recognizes the increasingly critical shortage of skilled professionals in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in Western nations. Still, women do not seem to be taking full advantage of these shortfalls to prepare themselves to fill these critical career fields. The study discusses how the media has impacted acceptance by women; specifically, how television dramas showing women engineers, computer profession-
als and/or engineers in leading roles might attract more women to STEM fields. This article identifies a theoretical rationale for a media-centered strategy, and describes a pilot study whose data suggest that a media-centered approach might have some success in producing greater interest among women in pursuing STEM careers, particularly information technology careers.

Wiesner-Steiner, Schelhowe and Wiesner from the University of Bremen, Germany, offer readers The Didactical Potential of Robotics for Education with Digital Media. They review a well-known project by one institute and how it complements the previous article by examining how to promote girls’ interest in sciences, mathematics and technology. The article goes on to present results from scientific evaluation and suggest a new pedagogical approach towards the use of robotics in education. The authors discuss didactics and technology and how robotics itself plays into these roles. They draw conclusions regarding general educational concepts for digital media and whether robotics not only suits boys’ and girls’ interest in technological messiness but enables them for a technological-mediated life instead of just feeling overwhelmed. Interested in robotics? This article is for you.

For readers interested or responsible for designing the architecture of an agent-based e-educational system, Hong Lin’s article, Agent-Based Architecture of a Distributed Laboratory System, is a must-read. In addition to proposing a model, Lin demonstrates the effectiveness of his methodology by applying it to the design of a computational grid built for lab activities. The integrated lab package was developed to allow students to utilize the grid services and support the learning process, and the architectural design strategy validates the model.

Supporting Arguments for Including the Teaching of Team Competency Principles in Higher Education, by Jewels and Albon, extrapolate principles of optimum workplace effectiveness in knowledge-intensive industries to the field of pedagogy and classroom teaching. Readers of knowledge management and team dynamics realize the importance of taking into account not only the competencies of individuals but also the competencies of the teams in which they must operate. Examples of how these principles are blended into a successful implementation are not plentiful and models for teaching competency principles are also rare. The authors present arguments for including the teaching of team competency principles in higher education, supported by an original multi-dimensional team competency teaching model, a taxonomy for assessing team competency levels and an example of the implementation of these principles.

The final article in this issue presents two popular methodologies in teaching as well as in practice: data flow diagrams and use cases. Millet and Nelson explore student perceptions of the validity and value of these two processes in their article, Data Flow Diagrams vs. Use Cases – Student Perceptions. The study employed both methodologies during the teaching of 12 sections of a required systems analysis course. Questionnaire results indicate that students perceive these methodologies as equally easy to understand and use, but believe that Data Flow Diagrams are better at communicating with users and programmers.

Please allow me an editorial comment to conclude my remarks for this issue of the IJICTE. Specifically, I would like to encourage readers of the journal to join past and current authors in claiming a stake in the success of our journal. More manuscripts are needed to ensure the quality of the journal remains high and the topics of most interest to the information technology community are included in the pages of our publication. If you have a research synopsis, practice abstract or book review to share with your information technology colleagues, the IJICTE is one of the best vehicles for distributing your ideas and garnering a reaction from the best and brightest. Please consider submitting your manuscript to the IJICTE. See the submission information on the inside front cover of this issue, check out the IJICTE web site at, http://www.idea-group.com/ijicte or e-mail your proposed article directly to the editor-in-chief. Become part of our network of scholars.
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