Editorial Preface
IJICTE 3(2)

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The most difficult challenge for readers of this issue of the *International Journal of Information & Communication Technology Education (IJICTE)* will be finding the time to read all of the submissions. Volume 3, No. 2 is chock full of important research investigations and practice-based papers for your consideration, in the form of seven questions.

**Interested in adult learning from an international perspective?** Ana Maria Correia Anabela Mesquita presents her case study examination entitled, “Learning in Higher Education: Strategies to Overcome Challenges Faced by Adult Students—Lessons Drawn from Two Case Studies in Portugal.” The development of a knowledge-based society demands a workforce with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies supported by a well-structured initial education and a continuous learning program. Her paper presents the background of an in-country project followed by a review of the relevant literature useful to all readers of the *IJICTE*. The paper contains the aims, objectives and methodological approaches of the investigation of Portuguese cases. Of particular interest, the study examines attitudes and problems of both traditional and adult learners and how technology addresses some of the expectations of these students, their main motivations, and barriers to successful completion of their adult programs. Finally, the author presents the successful activities and strategies that emerged from the analysis of the results, along with some conclusions and recommendations for further study.

**Interested in Web-based portfolios?** John DiMarco’s comprehensive review in “A Statewide Analysis of Student Web Portfolios in New York Colleges and Universities” investigates the existence of Web portfolios on academic Web sites in New York State. The goal of his project was to promote Web portfolios and provide an interpretation of the current level of student Web portfolio use and activity in one state’s colleges and universities. His findings, however, have implications in any educational environment. He found low numbers of Web-based portfolios at the present time and establishes a basis for further research by scholars into Web portfolios within academic settings.

**Do you teach adults?** “The Transformation Model” addresses professional development and is grounded in the research contributions of 205 educators, based on a framework of adult learning begun in 1997. Transformative learning is a theory that describes the experience and cognitive process by which adults critically evaluate previously unexamined beliefs, values, or assumptions; try new beliefs, values, and assumptions to determine the fit for themselves; and then develop a dramatically new perspective of their worldview (Mezirow, 1978). This article describes how the author developed a mixed quantitative and qualitative tool to more broadly gather and analyze data about this experience, focusing on two major groups of traditional adult learners: English as second language learners and adult basic education learners. For those readers responsible for
teaching adults, Kathleen P. King’s paper offers a perspective for practice and experimentation with technology that recognizes the fluid, nonlinear process of adult learning.

**Developing a virtual, online, distance-based school?** Chris Thompson and Zane L. Berge present their investigation into “Developing Staff Training in Virtual High Schools,” a topic particularly of timely interest as virtual schools are experiencing a rapidly escalating (not to mention controversial) growth rate throughout elementary and secondary education. Distance education is impacting not only the education of formerly traditional students, but also the faculty and staff working to support online media. The paper profiles three virtual schools, each at a different stage of development. The barriers encountered, best practices implemented, and the impact on students, faculty, and staff are presented for your consideration.

**Looking for arguments in support of technology-based instruction?** York, Yang, and Dark co-authored an excellent review entitled, “Transitioning from Face-to-Face to Online Instruction: How to Increase Presence and Cognitive/Social Interaction in an Online Information Security Risk Assessment Class.” In their paper, they examine two important, and often incongruous, goals of online education: interaction and presence and their link to learning and motivation to learn. The authors offer guidelines and examples for designing online courses in a manner that enhances interaction and presence. For those tasked with designing and delivering online courses, the practical guidelines and example are perfect for ready adoption in a gamut of educational disciplines.

**Teaching the latest in wireless environments?** Hansen, Smith, and Mariga’s paper, “Wireless Networking Curriculum Model for Network Engineering Technology Programs,” examines the explosive growth both in market size and the number of new standards and technologies. Effectively educating students, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, to have the ability to evaluate, implement, and integrate wireless networks should be a key part of any information technology education program for the foreseeable future. The authors share the results of five years of wireless networking curriculum development and a wireless networking curriculum that offers three courses. The topics are approached from the perspective of integration into enterprise-class wired network, and the courses described include an analysis of current and future trends in wireless networking, as well as areas of prerequisite knowledge, intended audience, course content, and lecture/laboratory integration.

**Is there a gender difference in technology-based collaborative tools?** Read “Are Cross-Gender Conversations in Threaded Discussions Reminiscent of Communicating Across Cultural Boundaries?” by Gefen, Geri, and Paravastu to find out. Sociolinguistic theory recognizes that men and women communicate differently when engaging in open conversation. The authors attribute these differences to divergent social objectives. However, most of the research has been conducted in the arena of oral conversation. This paper examines the realm of threaded discussions in online courses and hypothesizes that gender differences should translate into milder forms of gender segregation, with men showing a greater proclivity to dominate the discussion. Read the article to find out if the data from 233 students in 27 courses supported the hypotheses. Implications on managing threaded discussions are discussed.

**Final comments.** Apparently, my call for manuscripts was heard by our readership and those in the information technology community. Over the last several months, we received a significant increase in the number of excellent manuscripts for consideration by the Editorial Review Board of the *IJICTE*. For those interested in how technology impacts the teaching and learning environment, I encourage you to contribute to the journal. If you need ideas for possible topics, please refer to the Web site for another publication related to the discipline: the *Encyclopedia of Information Technology Curriculum Integration*. This publication, too, seeks investigations, studies, and commentary on the integration of technology for instruction. On its Web site (http://academics.rmu.edu/faculty/tomei/EncyclopediaWebPage/) is an exhaustive list of possible topics related to the field of information technology education. I encourage all scholars to examine this list of topics and consider research, practice, or informational articles that could be shared with colleagues via *IJICTE*. 
Dr. Lawrence A. Tomei is the associate vice president of academic affairs and associate professor of education at Robert Morris University. Born in Akron, Ohio, he earned a BSBA from the University of Akron (1972) and entered the US Air Force, serving until his retirement as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1994. Dr. Tomei completed his MPA and MEd at the University of Oklahoma (1975, 1978) and EdD from USC (1983). His articles and books on instructional technology include: Professional Portfolios for Teachers (1999); Teaching Digitally: Integrating Technology Into the Classroom (2001); Technology Facade (2002); Challenges of Teaching with Technology Across the Curriculum (2003); and Taxonomy for the Technology Domain (2005).