

EDITORIAL PREFACE

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This issue is divided into a special section of revised and extended papers from the IADIS Mobile Learning Conference, held in Madrid, Spain in February 2014, along with two regular articles and a book review.

SPECIAL SECTION: IADIS MOBILE LEARNING CONFERENCE 2014

Our first article is “Pedagogical Applications of Smartphone Integration in Teaching: Lecturers, Pre-Service Teachers and Pupils’ Perspectives” by Tami Seifert of Kibutzim College of Education, Israel. This article compares the different viewpoints and experiences of school pupils, trainee teachers, and lecturers who train teachers, regarding the use of mobile devices for teaching and learning. The study reported in the article used a number of methods of data gathering; questionnaires, correspondence, personal journals and interviews. Not unexpectedly, there was a difference in the level of technical difficulties the three groups faced, and variations in the personal use each group made of mobile technology and their attitudes towards mobile learning. However the general response was that experience of using mobile technologies for teaching opened up new and positive attitudes towards more innovative forms of pedagogy.

Article two is “Learning and Teaching with Mobile Devices: An Approach in Secondary

Education in Ghana” by Margarete Grimus (Technical University Graz) and Martin Ebner (Graz University of Technology.) The authors examine the case of a Senior High School in Ghana, where a pilot project explored how mobile devices could be integrated into teaching and learning. Through a series of workshops, teachers and students created learning content based on the national curriculum that could be accessed on eReaders and mobile phones. The article explores not only the usual issues of creating mobile content but also the specific challenges of implementing mobile learning in Ghana, which is subject to power outages, lack of wireless connectivity and strict controls on the use of mobile phones in schools. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the importance of enabling such technologies is noted in a quote from one of the students; “It’s the 21st century where technology is used in everything. Therefore, for future development, students need to be empowered.”

REGULAR PAPERS

The third article in this issue, and the first of the regular papers, is “Exploring the Potential of Mobile Applications to Support Learning and Engagement in Elementary Classes” by Esra Wali and Athra Al Mosawi of the University of Bahrain. This experimental study examined the use of the ‘Happy House’ iPad app for teaching English literacy and associated skills in both

public and private schools in Bahrain. Learning performance was compared between students learning with the Happy House app and students being taught the same material in a traditional manner. The authors note that the students in the private school performed better than those in the public school, and postulate that this may be partly to do with language (students in the private school have more English tuition) and partly to do with technology (the students in the private school tend to have had more hands on experience with mobile devices.) However they also note that the mobile learning solution led to better outcomes for both cohorts of students.

The fourth and final research article in this issue is “English-Language Learning at their Fingertips: How Can Teachers Use Tablets to Teach EFL Children?” by Mona Alhinty of the University of Sheffield (U.K.) This review paper describes seven different frameworks that have been proposed for the educational use of mobile technologies, analysing their components and providing a mapping between them into eight common aspects. It then proposes a typology of features, drawn from the literature, which should be considered by anyone planning to use tablets for teaching children learning English as a foreign language (EFL). This typology identifies five types of application that can be used in this context, providing a number of specific examples for each type.

This issue is rounded off with a book review by Los Angeles based Mark P. Ryan, who is Superintendent of the North Valley Military Institute and adjunct faculty member

at Loyola Marymount University. His review discusses “Cases on Technology Integration in Mathematics Education”, edited by Drew Polly and published by IGI Global in 2015. In his review, Ryan highly recommends the book ‘*to K-12 math educators and math education faculty at the university level. It provides thoughtful chapters that challenge the reader to consider how technology is being used in powerful ways to support achievement.*’ Given that the book is an edited collection of chapters from multiple sources, not all are concerned with themes in mobile or blended learning. However, chapters that are particularly of note to readers of the journal include “Local Lotto: Mathematics and Mobile Technology to Study the Lottery” by Vivian Lim, Erica Deahl, Laurie Rubel and Sarah Williams, which blends field and classroom work supported by technology tools, “Teaching Fundamental Math Concepts: There’s an App for That...Or is There?” by Jennifer Wall and Michael P. Rogers, which lays out guidelines for effective mobile math Apps, and “Leveraging Interactive Clickers as a Tool for Formative Assessment” by Drew Polly, Elizabeth Rodgers and Melissa Little.

We have some great issues coming up over the next few quarters, with a number of special issues on the schedule. I look forward to continuing to bring you the best international research in mobile and blended learning.

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IJMBL