

Editorial Preface

David Parsons, The Mind Lab by Unitec, Auckland, New Zealand

It is with a great sense of collective achievement that I welcome you to the tenth year of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning. I was invited by IGI Global to become the founding editor in chief of the journal late in 2007, and during 2008, on a sabbatical trip to the U.K., I made contact with several international colleagues to ask for advice and support in getting the journal off the ground. In particular, I had excellent guidance from Professor Mike Sharples (who was at that time still at the University of Nottingham, UK) and Professor John Traxler from the University of Wolverhampton, UK. Together, they helped me to compile an impressive set of papers for volume 1, issue 1, published at the beginning of 2009.

We have five articles in this issue from authors from Africa, North America and Europe. As usual, they cover a wide range of topics in mobile and blended learning. Our first contribution is “*A Thematic Review of Blended Learning in Higher Education*” by John Marco Pima of the Institute of Accountancy, Arusha, Tanzania, Michael Odetayo and Rahat Iqbal of Coventry University, UK, and Eliamani Sedoyeka, of the Institute of Finance Management, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In this review, using the PRISMA methodology, the authors survey articles on blended learning published between 2000 and 2016, looking in particular at theory development, methods, themes, and gaps in blended learning research in higher education. The article outlines 9 themes in the literature, the most common of which are instructional design, disposition, exploration and learner outcomes. The authors go on to identify a large number of sub-themes from the data. In concluding, the article identifies a number of areas of blended learning in higher education where there has been relatively little published research, including institutional adoption and guiding frameworks, providing useful indicators for areas of future work.

Article number two is “*Comparative Study of Elementary and Secondary Teacher Perceptions of Mobile Technology in Classrooms*” and is written by three authors from the United States; David De Jong of the University of South Dakota, Trent Grundmeyer of Drake University and Chad Anderson, from Tracy Area Public Schools. The purpose of this study reported in this article was to explore how teachers perceived the uses of mobile technology in the classroom, in a world where more and more schools are implementing 1:1 mobile device initiatives for their students, with technology embedded in the future curriculum. For the study, ten schools were randomly selected from a region of a Midwestern state in the U.S. From these schools, 273 teachers responded to a survey. The research results showed that both elementary and secondary teachers responded positively to mobile technology in overall classroom uses, in classroom interactions, and in the classroom environment. The authors conclude by stating that school leaders need to be prepared to enable, promote, and drive this new mobile technology evolution, and provide a set of recommendations to support these actions.

The third article in this issue is “*Teaching Basic Programming Concepts to Young Primary School Students Using Tablets: Results of a Pilot Project*,” by Emmanuel Fokides of the University of the Aegean, Greece. The main research objective of the study reported in this article was to examine what the learning outcomes might be from teaching programming concepts to very young students (7-9 years) in a playful way using tablets. The tool chosen for the activity was SurfScore’s Kodable, since

it is simple to use, has game-like features, includes lesson plans and teaching material and provides many levels for practicing programming concepts. Using the results from pre-tests and post-tests of the student's knowledge of programming concepts, the author concludes that tablets, in combination with a suitable application, can become a useful and effective tool that promotes the teaching of programming concepts to young primary school students.

Our fourth article is "*Using Mobile Devices to Facilitate Student Questioning in a Large Undergraduate Science Class*" by Helen Crompton, Declan G. De Paor and Kristen Gregory of Old Dominion University, Virginia, and Stephen R. Burgin of the University of Arkansas. Finding ways to use technology to encourage student questioning in lecture situations has been a common theme of mobile learning research for some years, but as technology continues to evolve, we often need to revisit such themes to investigate new possibilities. This qualitative study looks at how undergraduate students sent SMS text messages to an instructor under two different conditions; a simple console tool and smart glasses (Google Glass was used in this example). In their study, the authors examined the questions asked by the students under the two conditions and allocated them to the following categories; definition, explanation, extension, connections and hypothesizing. The results indicate that explanation and connections questions increased in relative frequency when the instructor used the smart glasses. Interview data from the instructor suggested that perhaps the use of the smart glasses allowed the instructor to be more immediately responsive to questions. Although the authors acknowledge that this initial study cannot provide conclusive results, it provides a basis for further research into the future potential of wearable devices in teaching and learning.

The fifth and final item in this issue is "*Deep Learning; Enriching Teacher Training Through Mobile Technology and International Collaboration*" by Amanda Naylor (University of York, U.K.) and Janet Gibbs (University of Hull, U.K.) This article describes an international collaboration between college students and pre-service teachers in Norway and the UK. Pre-service teachers of English and science from a U.K. University worked with students from a college in Norway, using iPADS and ebooks to support field-based situated learning. Data was gathered through surveys and interviews, revealing themes of collaboration, authenticity and professional learning through the use of mobile technology. The authors conclude with the observation that pre-service teachers need to be prepared for a future where mobile technology is used in schools as a pedagogical tool, so teacher educators need to model good practice and be the ambassadors of mobile technology.

With our first issue of volume 10, we look forward to many more high quality articles and to the continued development of the journal's reputation in the international mobile and blended learning research community.

David Parsons
Editor-in-Chief
IJMBL