Editorial Preface

Special Issue from the 15th World Conference on Mobile and Contextual Learning (mLearn 2016)

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Welcome to this special issue of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning, comprising revised and extended papers from the 15th World Conference on Mobile and Contextual Learning (mLearn 2016), which was held at the University of Technology Sydney, Australia, from the 24th to the 26th of October 2016.

mLearn is the leading international conference on mobile and contextual learning and attracts participants from more than 60 countries annually to the conference. mLearn 2016 provided a forum for researchers, policy makers, professionals and educators from higher education, school education and vocational education, government departments, industries and international organisations as well as IT developers and solutions providers to share knowledge, research and practices and debate critical issues pertaining to sustainable futures for mobile learning. The conference theme for mLearn 2016 was "Mobile learning futures: Sustaining quality research and practice in mobile learning."

Regular readers will know that, as the official journal of the International Association for Mobile Learning (IAmLearn), we regularly publish special issues from the annual conference. The fact that it has taken so long to get work from the 2016 conference to publication indicates the tremendous success the journal is currently having in attracting quality submissions, meaning that we have a full pipeline of publication ready papers several issues ahead of time.

The special issue opens with two articles that address the important theme of mobile learning for indigenous learners, one from Canada and one from Australia. The first of these contributions is "Mobile Learning as a Tool for Indigenous Language Revitalization and Sustainability in Canada: Framing the Challenge", by Marguerite Koole and Kevin Lewis of the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. The authors apply the FRAME model to examine cultural, pedagogical, environmental, and technological characteristics that should be considered in the development of mobile learning tools and approaches for Cree language teachers. The paper highlights the need to follow protocols, to establish good relationships, and to design for areas of low/no bandwidth. Some suggestions are made for the development of much needed mobile apps appropriate for Cree learners and teachers.

The second article is "Enhancing Professional Learning by Mobile Devices for Pre-service Teachers in Remote Communities: An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Example", by Philip Townsend of Flinders University, Australia. The conference presentation upon which this article is based, which used research material from the recently completed PhD thesis by the author, won best paper award at the conference. The paper uses grounded theory to explore the behaviours and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pre-service teachers enrolled in teacher education

programs in very remote communities in Australia. The research identified four educational uses of mobile devices in this context: accessing content, handling administration, collaborating for academic support and sharing personal encouragement. The research provides valuable insights into the special contributions and constraints of mobile learning in remote areas, as well as issues faced by remote indigenous communities in gaining the benefits of mobile learning.

Our third and fourth articles are both by the same pair of authors, Laurel Evelyn Dyson of the University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, and Jessica Katherine Frawley from the University of Sydney, Australia. This work is somewhat unusual since it was first presented at the 13th mLearn conference. The authors took the opportunity of the conference being held in their own city (Sydney) to revisit and extend this work for the 15th conference. The first of their contributions is "A Student-Generated Video Careers Project: Understanding the Learning Processes in and out of the Classroom". This paper describes an iterative approach to students working in teams to understand relevant careers through engagement with IT professionals in their workplace. Student videos, diaries and reflections provided research material on the impact of these activities. In particular, the value of mobile technology for capturing and sharing this context is noted.

Their second contribution is "Literacies and Learning in Motion: Meaning Making and Transformation in a Community Mobile Storytelling Project". This article looks at how mobile tools emphasize communication though user generated content and digital multimedia, and how learning may occur through these activities. It examines the experiences of nine adult participants in a digital mobile storytelling project, where the participants created a range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and diary-style content in a variety of modes and media. The paper notes that the mobile and participatory nature of the project helped the participants make meaning from the world around them and transform their understandings.

The closing paper in this issue is "Nurturing Collaborative Networks of Mobile Learning Researchers and Practitioners", by Thomas Cochrane and Vickel Narayan from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. The focus of the article is a framework for supporting and facilitating collaborative networks of reflective practice using mobile social media. The work is based on a two-year collaborative mobile learning project, while the developed framework has subsequently been used in other projects. The paper outlines the use of mobile social media to facilitate these networks of practice.

With our final issue of volume 10, we complete our tenth year of publication in 2018, and look forward to the next decade of innovation and inspiration from the international mobile and blended learning research community.

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