

Editorial Preface

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Welcome to the tenth anniversary issue of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning. Completing the first 10 years of publication is a milestone for any journal and provides some indication of the success and longevity of the research area to which it applies. Over those 10 years, the technologies associated with mobile and blended learning have become both more pervasive and more sophisticated, allowing technology enhanced learning activities to become increasingly seamless, with pedagogy to the fore as the technology becomes more familiar and easier to use. These changes, however, do not mean that there is less scope for researchers. In fact, the potential for research in the areas of mobile and blended learning becomes ever broader as we seek to address both the opportunities and the challenges of teaching and learning with evolving digital tools in the 21st century. I hope you continue to benefit from the work that is published in this journal and that the next 10 years sees us making equally substantial progress both in our reputation and in our visibility to the research community.

This issue opens with the article “Student Perceptions of Mobile Video Recording to Learn American Sign Language”, by Elaine Gale and Shiao-Chuan Kung of Hunter College, New York, USA. Mobile video clearly has the potential to support learners in sign language, and this article provides us with valuable insights into how some trainee teachers perceived the value of video recording in an American Sign Language (ASL) class. Results from the study showed the value of recording video with mobile devices, partly due to the wide field of view provided by such videos. Students were able to see themselves signing and improved their techniques as a result. Teacher candidates who participated in the study found video recording helpful not just for assessing their own signing skills but also in clarifying concepts around ASL, with the study subjects also reporting an increased interest in the topic and an increase in their signing skills.

The second article is “Efficacy of Cell Phones within Instructional Design: A Professor’s Perspective”, by Sharon Storch and Anna Victoria Ortiz Juarez-Paz from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA. While many studies in mobile and blended learning tend to focus on the student experience, this particular article looks instead at the experience of the instructor. Ten college professors were interviewed about their own perceptions of the use of cell phones in college level instructional design. Three main themes evolved from this data: pedagogical approaches, value, and setting behavioral expectations. The results from the study indicated that the right balance of intentional and/or impromptu pedagogical approaches can provide value and motivation. However, it was deemed important to set behavioural expectations within the classroom to ensure effective use of mobile devices for learning.

Our third article is “The Effects of Flipping an English for Academic Purposes Course” by Christopher Hughes of Clackamas Community College, Oregon, USA. The flipped classroom is now a well-established technique within blended learning. However, it can vary in its approach and effectiveness depending on the context. This particular paper looks at how a flipped classroom approach worked with some students learning English for academic purposes in South Korea. The results of the study were somewhat mixed, in that students in a traditionally taught class actually

achieved better objective assessment outcomes, while students in the flipped class achieved better competency-based assessment outcomes. Satisfaction was about the same for both groups. The results of this study underline the importance of the particular instructional design applied to the flipped classroom to take account of the specific contexts in which it is being applied, since each context will have different constraints and audiences.

The fourth article in this issue is “Factors Necessary for Engaging Preservice Teachers Studying in Virtual and Blended Courses” by Gila Cohen Zilka (Bar-Ilan University; Achva Academic College, Emunim, Israel) and Orit Zeichner (Kibbutzim College of Education, Tel- Aviv, Israel). This paper explores students’ perceptions about virtual blended learning environments with a focus on the impact of transactional distance and how this may potentially create feelings of challenge or threat in students. The authors report on a mixed-methods study of 578 participants, noting that a number of approaches to interpersonal communication and feedback can reduce feelings of threat and replace them with feelings of challenge. However, the types of interactions required by different students may vary, with some requiring both intellectual and emotional interaction.

The final article in this issue is “Integrating Cooperative Learning into the Combined Blended Learning Design Model: Implications for Students’ Intrinsic Motivation”, by Chantelle Bosch, Elsa Mentz and Gerda Marie Reitsma from North-west University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. Education that integrates online learning always raises challenges in terms of student cooperation and collaboration when they are working remotely from each other. The authors of this article note that there has been limited work previously published on using cooperative learning in a blended learning environment. This article reports on the development of a holistic blended learning design model focusing on the integration of technology. Results from a course module designed using this approach suggested that this model of cooperative blended learning may increase students’ intrinsic motivation.

In publishing our first issue of volume 11, we look forward to another productive year of sharing the best work from the international mobile and blended learning research community.

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