

Editorial Preface

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This issue contains six articles covering a range of issues important in mobile and blended learning. Two of these articles deal with the highly popular field of mixed reality, one providing a critical view of the literature to assess what we have achieved so far in applying mixed reality to education, and the other looking at various data collection techniques for augmented reality learning activities. Coverage of blended learning includes examinations of both cognitive presence and flipped learning, while mobile learning comes to the fore in two studies that look at different aspects of mobile language learning.

Our first article is “Alternate Dimensions of Cognitive Presence for Blended Learning in Higher Education” by Maurice Taylor, Sait Atas and Shehzad Ghani from the University of Ottawa, Canada. This article looks at the cognitive presence of graduate students in a blended learning course, in the context of a Community of Inquiry. A case study was undertaken using several research methods; interviews, questionnaire, focus group and text analysis of student discussion posts and learning autobiographies. From their analysis, the authors suggest that there are five alternate dimensions to understanding cognitive presence; Metacognition knowledge, research and scholarship, professional capacity and self-regulation, communication, and awareness of knowledge limits and creativity. With this perspective in mind, they outline some approaches to helping graduate students acquire higher order thinking skills in a blended learning course through the lens of adult learning.

The second article is “Mobile Device- and Video-Aided Flipped English Classrooms” by Zhonggen Yu of Hohai University, Nanjing, China. One of the most popular topics for mobile learning research is MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning), but comparative studies like this one are relatively rare. In this study, the author compares the use of mobile devices to support a flipped English language class with a video-aided flipped English language class. The results suggest that the learning attitudes, interest and motivation of students using the mobile flipped learning were significantly more positive than those using the video flipped learning. It was also noted that the learning attitudes, interest and intrinsic motivation were mutually correlated in both classes.

Continuing the MALL theme, our third article is “Informal language Learning Through Mobile Instant Messaging Among University Students in Korea” by Aaron Pooley from Soonchunhyang University, Korea, and Warren Midgley and Helen Farley from the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. This article looks at communication between English and Korean speakers using mobile instant messaging in South Korea. Comparing studies undertaken in 2012 and 2015 it highlights changes that occurred over this period. The work reported here demonstrates the need for further research into how mobile instant messaging services support communication between people from different language and culture backgrounds.

The fourth article in this issue is “A Study on the Preview Effectiveness of Learning Contents in ePUB3 eBook-Based Flip Blended Learning Models” by Tina Tsai from the National Taipei University of Education, Taiwan, and Lendy Lin and Jyhojong Lin from Ming Chuan University, Taiwan. The flipped classroom model of blended learning is used to provide students with digital learning contents both inside and outside the classroom. In the work reported in this article, students

preview content before the lesson and subsequent learning activities take place inside the classroom. For flipped learning to be successful, the preview material must be effective. This study looks at the use of ePUB3 eBook-based learning as the preview material platform. One feature of ePUB3 eBooks is the track and test functions that can be used for tracking the preview access and examining the outcomes. This article reports on an effectiveness study on the preview of learning contents by using ePUB3 track and test functions. The authors identify three levels of effectiveness of the materials used in this study; actively effective, passively effective and actively ineffective. In each case they provide guidance on how to further improve the preview effectiveness of the material.

The fifth article in this issue is “The Research Field of Reality Environments in Education”, by Anita Norlund of the University of Borås, Sweden. Reality technologies (i.e. technologies that fit somewhere on the mixed reality continuum) are being increasingly introduced into schools, from simple augmented reality tools such as HP Reveal to low cost virtual reality tools such as Google Cardboard. Educators might expect that such technologies can bring educational benefits, but this claim needs to be examined. This paper explores the literature around three kinds of technology-based environments: virtual, augmented and mixed reality. While this review uncovers a number of areas where empirical evidence is limited, it also suggests some potentially fruitful pathways for future work.

Our final article also looks at mixed reality, “Collecting Ecologically Valid Data in Location-Aware Augmented Reality Settings: A Comparison of Three Data Collection Techniques” by Eleni Kyza, Yiannis Georgiou, Markos Souropetsis and Andria Agesilaou from Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus. With mobile augmented reality becoming increasingly popular in educational research, this article provides a timely analysis of different ways of collecting data in mobile augmented reality settings. This study examines three data collection techniques; (a) tablet-based audio recording, (b) students’ researcher-led videotaping, and (c) head-mounted wearable cameras. Student participants completed questionnaires and participated in interviews relating to their perceptions of the intrusiveness of the various data collection techniques. The article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of each data collection technique as a method for collecting data in location-aware augmented reality studies. The findings of the present study suggest that the wearable cameras provide a promising medium for collecting rich data in the field, through a seamless and less obtrusive data collection process.

We look forward to the remaining issues of volume 11, which will offer equally relevant and interesting selection of articles from the international mobile and blended learning communities.

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