

Editorial for EJEL Volume 15 Issue 2

In this issue, we present eight papers that explore e-Learning from various positions and understandings of e-Learning as a phenomenon, within different fields and with a wide geographical distribution. Thus, the papers contribute to the understanding of e-Learning as a field in constant growth regarding directions and meanings.

In the first paper Arshia Khan, Ona Egbue, Brooke Palkie and Janna Madden draw on the perspectives from their individual and diverse fields in their exploration of various pedagogical strategies for online learning courses. The aim is to identify strategies that can be incorporated into the design of online learning courses in order to foster a high level of student engagement, and based on multiple pedagogies. These strategies are explored in terms of collaborative student engagement tools for the design and delivery, and the role such tools play in creating an atmosphere for students to become active contributors to lively discussions. The paper emphasises the importance of deliberate course design in the pursuit of actively engaging students in online course settings.

In the second paper Nurul Adila Hamdan, Maslawati Mohamad and Shahizan Shaharuddin present a case study involving eleven third-year undergraduate TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) students in order to identify the undergraduate learners' perceptions of hypermedia reading materials for teaching English as a second language, and the factors that may contribute to their reading comprehension. The findings of this study revealed various participants' perceptions regarding hypermedia-based reading materials. The study found that the design of the hypermedia materials and content, in terms of the manner in which information was displayed, were among the factors which improved the learners' reading comprehension.

In their contribution to the issue, Alberto Corbi and Daniel Burgos present a case study that demonstrates how virtual containers enhance the implementation of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths) subjects as Open Educational Resources (OER). The study shows how student engagement and satisfaction increase over time, partly because of the ease of use introduced by the container technology. The study proves that combining containerised educational resources and free and open distribution channels can be one of the cornerstones of a new OER approach in STEAM subjects.

Starting with the necessity for people in the present day to successfully orientate in a multilingual environment, Teodora Kiryakova-Dineva, Milena Levunlieva and Vyara Kyurova present the e-learning platform IPHRAS (Interphraseologie für Studien-und Berufsmobile). Their focus is on the methodology for foreign language learning in relation to IPHRAS as a multilingual electronic environment, where multilingual access is facilitated by thematically structured multiword units and with a priority on easy access to a variety of languages.

In the fifth paper, Manu Gupta, Sophie Marsden, Tony Oluka, Reetu Sharma and Henry Lucas explore some of the key issues involved in implementation of e-learning in higher educational institutions (HEIs) given the resource constraints within which many institutions have to function. The paper presents three case studies from such institutions involved in the education of health professionals. The institutions are of varying size, and each located in a different Lower- to Middle-Income Country (LMICs). The paper suggests that the use of appropriate ICT infrastructure, both in terms of hardware and software, and combined with effective access and bandwidth management policies, is crucial to the successful implementation of e-learning courses on health within HEIs based in LMICs.

The paper by Moses Basitere and Eunice Ndeto Ivala presents the results of a mixed quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The study explores the effectiveness of the combined use of Facebook social media as the communicative medium; Clicker technology as an interactive medium; and Wiley Plus web-based homework system as an adaptive medium for enhancing learning through interaction and dialogue activities, in and outside the first year Physics classroom. The study found that the use of Clicker and Facebook facilitated interactions between students and their teacher, in and outside the classroom as well as deep and meaningful collaborative learning of the subject content. Homework and assignments done on the Wiley Plus web-based homework system may have contributed to the good performance of the students in both mid-term Examination and Final Integrated Summative Assessment (FISA). Additionally, the study found that the

students agreed that if homework was not collected and graded, they would spend less time practicing course concepts.

Using survey analysis of students who participated in formal online learning in Korea, Jamie Costley and Christopher Lange in their study looked at relationships between the following variables: instructional design and future behavioural intentions, instructional design and germane load, germane load and future behavioural intentions, as well as the mediating effect of germane load on the relationship between instructional design and future behavioural intentions. The results show the importance of delivering instructional designs that communicate important information to students to promote understanding of course instruction to a point where students will continue using e-learning in the future.

In the last paper of this issue, Lily A. Arasaratnam-Smith and Maria Northcote present a study that explores the challenges and opportunities associated with the concepts of community and communication in online higher education. Rather than see face-to-face education as the prototype for quality, the authors understand online learning environments as unique and existing in their own right. In relation to online Communities of Practice (CoPs) the study identifies unique ways in which online communication (in the context of learning) is different from face-to-face communication, and consequently four ways in which this can be an advantage for students.

Journal Editors

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