EDITORIAL PREFACE

Special Issue from the 13th World Conference on Mobile and Contextual Learning:
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This special issue of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning (IJMBL) contains four revised and extended articles from the 13th World Conference on Mobile and Contextual Learning (mLearn 2014) held between November 3rd and 5th, 2014, at Kadir-Has University in Istanbul, Turkey. The General Chair of the conference was Marcus Specht while the Program Chairs were Marco Kalz and Yasemin Bayyurt. The other chairs were as follows; Industry: Taner Arsan, Workshop: Feza Kerestecioğlu and Senem Yıldız, Doctoral: Senem Yıldız and Publications: Feza Kerestecioğlu.

The World Conference on Mobile and Contextual Learning (mLearn) was the first conference on Mobile Learning and is the premiere international conference on learning with mobile technologies and learning in and across contexts. The conference provides a unique forum for knowledge sharing and transfer for academia, developers, practitioners, industry, government, and organizations. Every year, mLearn attracts a great number of participants from more than 60 countries representing all continents.

The conference took place in an environment of rapid change. Many innovative topics from previous conferences are now absorbed into mainstream education and training and mobile devices have become a part of the everyday learning environment of teachers and learners. This results in new challenges for the field of mobile learning and future research.

The four articles in this special issue cover a range of aspects of mobile learning, from a review of mathematics research trends, to language teaching in Japan, to oral presentation skills

in Singapore, and blended learning for medical practitioners in Ghana. Each of these revised and extended articles has undergone full blind peer review, prior to being selected for this special issue.

The first article in this issue is 'Research Trends in the Use of Mobile Learning in Mathematics' by Helen Crompton (Old Dominion University, Virginia, U.S.A.) and Diane Burke (Keuka College, New York, U.S.A.) This review paper looked at 36 studies in mobile learning in mathematics published since 2000. The authors report on eight findings from their study. Perhaps one of the most interesting results was that the majority of researchers did not identify a specific mathematical concept being studied. The study also revealed that the most common type of research was a case study or experimental design in a formal setting in an elementary school. This type of article provides a useful guide to researchers in identifying areas of work that may have been previously inadequately addressed, and spurs future research.

Our second article is 'The Effects of Mobile Collaborative Activities in a Second Language Course' by Peter Ilic of Toyo University, Tokyo, Japan. This research was designed to add to the understanding of how smartphones, used in a second language course for collaborative learning activities, impact on the students' learning habits. The method was based on qualitative exploratory interviews combined with Multidimensional Scaling Analysis to provide a detailed image of students' mobile use during collaborative activities. One interesting finding was that two similar studies, three years apart, suggested that the fundamental affordances provided by the technology (portability, anywhere and anytime communication, data access) were relatively stable over time, despite rapid changes in the devices themselves. Ilic suggests that, In terms of curriculum design, this could support a greater focus on these fundamental affordances when planning a seamless classroom.

Article number three is 'Developing Student Oral Presentation Skills with the Help of Mobile Devices' by Susan Gwee, of the English Language Institute of Singapore, and Hwee Leng Toh-Heng, of James Cook University, Singapore. This article focuses on the use of video recordings to help students develop their oral presentation skills. The effectiveness of using video review in developing the oral presentation skills of Grade 11 students in formal and informal settings in Singapore was investigated. Findings revealed that the outcomes from formal and informal settings were different, but that both had positive effects. Students who reviewed their oral presentations in a formal setting created more effective, cohesive, and organised work. However, students found viewing their oral presentations in informal settings to be effective, engaging, convenient, and that it provided immediate feedback.

Our final article is 'A Design Based Research Framework for Implementing a Transnational Mobile and Blended Learning Solution' by Agnieszka Palalas (Athabasca University, Toronto, Canada) and Nicole Berezin, Charlotte Nirmalani (Lani) Gunawardena and Gretchen Kramer (University of New Mexico, New Mexico, U.S.A.) This article reports on a longitudinal study in Ghana, Africa, designed to address a shortage of doctors in that county. The project aimed to help train more Physician Assistants using mobile technology and blended learning. It was a joint effort between the Central University College (Ghana), the University of New Mexico and Athabasca University. The article proposes a modified Design-Based Research (DBR) framework which accommodates the various socio-cultural factors that emerged in the local context, shaped by the need to be responsive to the local cultural and contextual contingencies. The Cross-Culture Design-Based Research (CC-DBR) framework is proposed to inform future transcultural m-learning studies.

As the official journal of the International Association for Mobile Learning (IAmLearn), which organises the mLearn conference series, IJMBL is proud to bring you this special issue. We hope that reading these high quality articles will inspire you to make your own submissions to future mLearn conferences, and to support the mobile learning research community by becoming a member of IAmLearn.

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