

Editorial Preface

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Welcome to volume 9, issue 3 of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning. We have four papers in this issue, one that is a revised and extended version of a published conference paper, and three regular papers. As usual, the published work covers a broad range of aspects of mobile and blended learning, from professional leaning for nurses and vets, to the application of grounded theory, and blended learning for adult learners.

The first paper in this issue is ‘Reflections on Distributed Leadership for Work-based Mobile Learning of Canadian Registered Nurses’ by Dorothy (Willy) Fahlman from Athabasca University, Canada. This is a revised and extended version of a paper originally presented at the 12th International Conference on Mobile Learning (IADIS Mobile Learning 2016), which was held in the Algarve, Portugal, during April 2016. The paper focuses on two aspects. First, it describes the many benefits that Canadian registered nurses have found from using mobile technologies for their work-based learning. These benefits include accessing resources at point-of-need and collaborating within their on-line communities of practices. The second concern of the paper is the number of Canadian healthcare organizations that have not yet embraced work-based mobile learning. The goal of the paper is to stimulate discussion on how mobile learning can be further embedded into the learning strategies of Canadian healthcare workplaces. In addition to the technology, the paper explores the role of distributed leadership, an important leadership theory in professional development and one that can be supported by digital tools.

The second paper in this issue is ‘Student voice in the mobile phone environment: A grounded theory approach’ by Wajeeh Daher of Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education, Israel. This paper is based upon a study of students undertaking outdoor mobile learning activities in mathematics, but its specific focus is an analysis of student voice in the mobile context. The author suggests that the activity described in the paper facilitated student voice through factors including freedom, autonomy, equality, participation, collaboration, decision making, sharing of ideas and taking the responsibility of the teacher. The author also asserts that the learning context had both affective and social consequences

Our third paper is ‘The Use of Reusable Learning Objects to Enhance the Delivery of Veterinary Education: A Literature Review’ by three authors from the UK; Emily Chapman-Waterhouse of Harper Adams University, and Ayona Silva-Fletcher and Kim Whittlestone from the Royal Veterinary College. The focus of this review paper is to examine the use of Reusable Learning Objects (RLO) in veterinary-related degree courses. Factors that are considered in the paper include the effect of computer confidence, students’ choice to use and the impact on student performance. The paper concludes that prior experience of technology, alignment of content, and availability of technical support are some of the key drivers for usage and reuse. A recommendation from the paper is that practitioners within the veterinary education sector should draw from findings from other subject areas in order to develop the application of RLOs within their teaching.

The final paper in this issue is ‘“We Had A Blast!” An Empirical Affirmation of Blended Learning as the Preferred Learning Mode for Adult Learners’ by Stephen Asunka of Ghana Technology University College. Over the period of this journal’s publication, we have included several articles from various African nations relating to blended learning, as universities across the continent explore the potential of this learning mode, often examined within the particular constraints imposed by their national and regional contexts. This study of adult learners included forty-eight graduate students

engaged in a six-week long blended learning course. The author used a grounded theory approach to analyse the qualitative data that were gathered. This analysis revealed high levels of student engagement and satisfaction with the learning process. The author notes that this may be related to the demographics of the students in the study, since mature students are said to be more self-directed learners, though the mode of delivery was also found to enhance interactivity. An implication of the findings is that higher education institutions must consider learner characteristics when choosing how to integrate ICTs into their curricula.

With only one more issue to go in volume 9, it won't be long until we begin our tenth year of publication, another milestone in the steady progress of the journal. Our last issue of the year will be a set of regular papers, but we also have some great special issues planned for 2018.

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IJMBL