

Editorial Preface

David Parsons, The Mind Lab, Auckland, New Zealand

Kathryn MacCallum, Eastern Institute of Technology, Napier, New Zealand

Welcome to the final issue of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning for 2019 (volume 11, issue 4). We have six articles in this issue, spanning a range of studies across blended and mobile learning. Articles submitted to the journal have been taking an increasingly long time to be published due to the large number of submissions that are now being made to us. Inclusion in the Web of Science index, among other factors increasing the journal's visibility and reputation, means that the editorial board are having to work ever harder to keep up with the demands of authors. To try to reduce the wait time for publication, in recent months we have seen the number of articles included in each issue increasing. Although the number of articles per issue tends to vary a little, the average number published for the first few years of the journal was four, but now we aim to include six papers in every issue to try to keep up with demand. Hopefully as we process the articles for our 2020 volume we will see accepted work brought to readers more quickly.

The first paper in this issue is "A spotlight on lack of evidence supporting the integration of blended learning in K-12 education: A Systematic Review" by Mark Poirier (Changchun American International School, China), Jeremy Law (University of Glasgow, UK) and Anneli Veispak (Tallinn University, Estonia). This article provides a review of quality empirical research in K-12 blended learning environments by examining relevant work published between 2009 and 2017. The authors assess the quality and scope of these studies and how they report on the effectiveness of blended learning environments on learning outcomes, while potential contributing variables are discussed. Mixed findings regarding the benefit of blended learning in a K-12 setting are reported in the article, and the authors highlight the need for more extensive research in this domain.

Our second paper is "Perspectives of Pre-service Teachers about Blended Learning in Technology Integration Courses" by Olha Ketsman of Northern Illinois University, USA. This article reports on a mixed methods study of pre-service teachers' perspectives towards using blended learning in technology integration courses. Data were collected through surveys and interviews with pre-service teachers enrolled in technology integration courses in a U.S. university. Although the study indicated that the pre-service teachers who responded had a preference for using a blended learning approach in technology-integration courses, it was less certain whether students were equally keen to replace face to face learning with a blended approach. The study has implications for higher education faculty, instructional designers and technology specialists.

Paper number three is "The learning value of personalization in children's reading recommendation systems: What can we learn from Papert's constructionism?" by Natalia Kucirkova (UCL Institute of Education, UK). This article looks at reading recommendation systems developed for 5-11-year-old children, and how they compare with the constructionist theories of Seymour Papert. While constructionism emphasises learning through creative activities and student agency, the author argues that current recommendation systems offer insufficient opportunities for this type of learning. It is therefore suggested that future systems need to challenge children cognitively, offer open-ended opportunities for children's agency and community-oriented spaces for crowd-sourced

recommendations. Practical examples are provided so that the approach described in this article can be used as a foundation for conceptualising and designing children’s reading recommendation systems and personalized learning in the future.

The fourth paper is “All Together Now - A Collaborative Game to Increase Advocacy Among Disabled Individuals” by Lori Scarlatos, Eric Engoron, Pamela Block and Cassandra Evans from Stony Brook University, NY, USA. This article addresses a common problem for people with disabilities, particularly those who rely on mobility devices, which is the difficulty of learning how to navigate a new environment. It describes ‘All Together Now’, a mobile multi-player cooperative game developed for two purposes. First, the game gives disabled students a fun way to learn their way around campus, learn how to report accessibility issues on that campus, and make friends with people who have similar disabilities. Second, the game can be used as a way of fostering awareness and advocacy among students without disabilities, by having them work in teams where one member is someone with a disability that causes them to rely on mobility devices. This paper describes the implementation of the game within a disability studies course and the results of two pilot tests that involved both disabled and non-disabled participants.

Paper number five in this issue is “The Role of Self-Regulation and Structuration in Mobile Learning” by Olga Viberg (The Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden) and Annika Andersson (Örebro University School of Business, Örebro, Sweden). This article starts from the assertion that the roles of self-regulation and structuration in mobile learning are poorly understood. It therefore examines these aspects in relation to the design and use of mobile technology in an online language learning setting. Students’ perceived level of self-regulation was studied, and structuration theory was applied to understanding students’ technology-mediated learning practices. The results show that several factors defining learners’ levels of self-regulation were correlated with their mode of structuration. An implication for practice is that students’ self-regulated learning dimensions need to be taken into account when designing educational software for mobile technology.

Our final paper is “Evaluation of an Augmented Reality Mobile Gamelike Application as an Outdoor Learning Tool” by Lúcia Pombo, Margarida Morais Marques, Luís Afonso, Paulo Dias and Joaquim Madeira from the University of Aveiro, Portugal. The authors present ‘EduPARK,’ a mobile augmented reality game-like app that aims to promote learning in an urban park, and reports on the experiences of students using it as part of the project’s first cycle of design-based research. The focus is the students’ perceptions regarding the usability and functionality of the app. Data collection involved focus groups, questionnaires and information about the app’s usage. The results showed that EduPARK was found to be highly usable and enjoyable and promoted learning. However, improvements and more evaluation experiences are needed to better understand how mobile augmented reality game-like learning in urban parks can best be designed.

With our final issue of volume 11, we look forward to our twelfth year of publication in 2020, and to continued development of the journal’s reputation in the international mobile and blended learning research community.

David Parsons and Kathryn MacCallum
Editors in Chief
IJMBL