

Editorial Preface

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Welcome to the fourth and final issue of the *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning* for 2020 (volume 12, issue 4). The five articles in this issue cover the usual wide range of topics that we have come to expect from the contributors to this journal, including device ownership, smart classrooms, flipped classrooms, online social presence and student engagement. Authors in this issue hail from Indonesia, the USA, the UK, Spain, Turkey, and Israel.

The first article in this issue is “The Role of Device Ownership and Infrastructure in Promoting E-Learning and M-Learning in Indonesia” by Ahmad Raf’ie Pratama (Universitas Islam Indonesia) and Lori Scarlatos (Stony Brook University, NY, USA). This article provides important insights into the context of developing countries where cell phones are more common than other forms of connectivity. It presents data from secondary school students in Indonesia showing how they are using e-Learning and m-Learning and the influence of device ownership on that learning. The results show that students who prefer m-Learning on mobile devices over traditional e-Learning activities on PCs tend to be more active and collaborative learners.

The second article is “Social Presence in Blended Course Forums in the Training of Preservice Teachers” by Gila Cohen Zilka from Bar-Ilan University, Israel. This study looks at the factors that affect social involvement in online course forums by preservice teachers in a blended course, and their perception of threats and challenges. One significant finding was that many students felt a threat reading the posts written by other students, more so than they felt regarding writing their own responses on the forum. Such insights can help to inform the ways that we use such forums in blended learning.

Article number three is “Developments for Smart Classrooms: Schools’ Perspectives and Needs” by Jordi Mogas Recalde and Ramon Palau from Universitat Rovira i Virgili and Neus Lorenzo Galés and Ray Gallon from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. This article presents results from a focus group of school principals regarding the educational impact of smart classroom technologies. The participants indicated that schools see the development and implementation of this type of technology as necessary for future classrooms. Issues such as furniture, lighting, acoustics and air quality came to the fore, supported by technologies such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and big data. Concerns were raised, however, that the cost of such developments could create a gap between schools.

The fourth article in this issue is “Enhancing Student Engagement Using a Blended Learning Approach: Case Studies of First-Year Undergraduate Students” by M. Mahruf C. Shohel (University of Sussex, UK) and Rosemary Cann and Stephen Atherton (Aberystwyth University, Wales). This exploratory action research project was designed to enhance teaching and learning using a blended learning approach to increase student engagement. The article presents three case studies of individual students to demonstrate how a digital workspace helped to develop the practice of participatory teaching and learning during a first-year undergraduate module. This study indicates that listening to students’ voices through a blended learning approach helped to increase student engagement.

The fifth and final article is “The Flipped Classroom Effect on EFL Learners’ Grammar Knowledge” by Cem Bulut, Turkish National Defence University, Kocaeli, and Zeynep Kocoglu,

Yeditepe University, Istanbul, Turkey. This article investigates the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in teaching grammar to EFL learners. Results from a study conducted with two English language courses in a vocational school in Turkey indicated that the flipped group achieved higher scores than the non-flipped group and that the difference between two groups was statistically significant. These results were also supported by a survey and a focus group interview.

As we come to the end of our issues for 2020, and look forward to publishing the best of mobile and blended learning research in 2021, we hope you enjoy the articles in this issue and continue to find the work published in IJMBL valuable and informative.

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