Editorial / Éditoiral

Heather Kanuka, University of Alberta

Our first article in our Winter 2012 issue is "Pilgrims' Progress: The journey towards a knowledge building community in a university undergraduate class." This study examined the progress of 3rd and 4th year undergraduate science students as they created a knowledge building community in a blended class. The outcomes of this study reveal that there was disparity between high-frequency note postings and low-frequency with the ratio between the highest and lowest to be almost 3-1. A similar pattern was also found with the responses.

The next article, "Using the Spanish online resource Aula Virtual de Espanol (AVE) to promote a blended teaching approach in high school Spanish Language classrooms," explores the effectiveness of the implementation of blended teaching by combining AVE with face-to-face delivery in two high schools in Canada. The findings of this study reveal that this mode of delivery is effective. Specifically, the blended approach had a positive impact on students' attitudes toward the study of Spanish, as well as motivation and participation levels. Another interesting finding of this study was that blended learning could respond to the diverse learning styles of the students.

Our third article, "A Symbiosis between Instructional Systems Design (ISD) and Project Management," looked at the relationship between instructional systems design and project management. This article argues that ISD and project management should form an integrated perspective using three concepts of project management as a bridge for the integration.

The article "Highly Relevant Mentoring (HRM) as a Faculty Development Model for Web-Based Instruction" describes a model for meeting the professional development needs of faculty who teach web-based courses. This article examines relevant theories to guide HRM in web-based teaching.

The article "Critical Appraisal of Information on the Web in Practice: Undergraduate Students' Knowledge, Reported Use and Behaviour" examined pairs of web sites containing conflicting information based on different aspects of critical appraisal. Results of this study showed that students failed to use critical appraisal criteria. This research demonstrates that there is a need for alternative strategies for critical appraisal instruction and assessment.

The article "The Role of Digital Technologies in Learning: Expectations of First Year University Students" investigated the gaps and intersections between first-year undergraduate students' uses and expectations for digital technologies inside, and out, of the classroom. The outcomes of this article are a list of recommendations for uses of digital technologies that build on the learning potentials of digital technologies for strategies that embrace the social construction of knowledge, as well as individual acquisition.

This issue concludes with the article "Delivering Empirically-Based Design Guidelines for Advanced Learning Technologies that Foster Disciplinary Comprehension." This mixed-method study explores the fostering of reading comprehension that mediate expertise in the social sciences. The findings reveal that highly-skilled reading is characterized by critiquing text information, relating information to prior knowledge, and evaluating one's own understanding of text information.