

Editorial / Éditorial

Special Issue: Web-enabled Teaching and Learning: An International Update

Mohamed Ally, Athabasca University

Marti Cleveland-Innes, Athabasca University

The papers in this special issue were reviewed and selected from papers presented at an international symposium on “Web-enabled Teaching and Learning.” Participants of the symposium are faculty and graduate students from China and Canada. The research papers in this special issue provide background information and best practices on the use of the web in blended and online learning. The papers will be of interest to organizations who are making the transition from face-to-face instruction to online and distance education and to researchers conducting research on online and distance education.

The first article by Janice Thiessen “Web 2.0 and Social Media Connecting Learners in Self-Paced Study: Practitioners’ Perspectives” present results of a multiple-case study that included three open universities with in-house design and development of self-paced undergraduate courses. Data were gathered from in-depth interviews with course developers (academics and learning/teaching specialists), self-paced course materials, and institutional documents. Jan Thiessen reports on the ways in which course designers and developers are making use of Web 2.0 and network-based approaches to encourage open, social forms of learner-learner interaction in self-paced courses.

The second article “Persistent Artefacts in an Online Classroom: The Value of a Dynamic Learning Archive,” written by Stuart Berry, reports on a research study that examines the use and value of visible and persistent artefacts within an online learning environment. The study also investigated the impact of learner engagement with artefacts over the life of multiple iterations of a course within this socially networked online learning space. The research results show that the use of a socially networked online learning environment can offer a rich and supportive place for teaching and learning. Also, the use of an archive containing artefacts from learners in prior iterations of a course is beneficial.

Shuang Li, Qi Tang and Yanxia Zhang provide the article “A Case Study on Learning Difficulties and Corresponding Supports for Learning in cMOOCs” which uses a case study to identify student difficulties and support requirements at the beginning of a cMOOC. The researchers used content analysis of messages posted by learners and instructors in four main

online course learning spaces to identify themes. This study provides information on learning support required for cMOOC and how to overcome difficulties when implementing cMOOC for the first time.

In the fourth manuscript “Factors Influencing Self-Regulation in E-learning 2.0: Confirmatory Factor Model,” Hong Zhao reports on a study that investigated the influences of the e-learning 2.0 environment on self-regulation. The study identified the factors that influence self-regulation in such an environment and determine the relationships between Web 2.0 factors and self-regulation. A theoretical model to categorize the success factors for self-regulated learning is proposed for the e-learning environment. The data was analyzed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique where the relationships between environmental factors and self-regulation were analyzed. Results showed that several factors (system quality, information quality, service quality, and user satisfaction) affect self-regulation in the e-learning 2.0 environment.

The final article by Madelaine Befus “Conducting a Multivocal Thematic Synthesis on an Extensive Body of Literature” describes how to bring systematization and organization to a large body of research to support the work of other researchers, practitioners, and policy makers; and to provide an up-to-date methodology framework for creating an online database from large bodies of literature with a common reference. The data used in the thematic synthesis study consisted of full-text copies of peer-reviewed research articles. The deliverables of the study are 1) a multivocal thematic synthesis analysing contexts, populations, learning and teaching environments, and aspects of learning being studying through the lens of the CoI framework; and 2) an online, open, dynamic compendium of all CoI empirical research citing the seminal Community of Inquiry paper (Garrison et al., 2000).



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