Editorial

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Biographical notes: Qiyun Wang is an Associate Professor in the Academic Group of Learning Science and Technologies at National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His research interests include social media for teaching and learning, online learning, Web 2.0 tools, web-based learning environment design, and interactive learning.

As the Editor-in-Chief, I am very happy to present to you the second issue of the journal. Included in this issue are seven scholarly articles from a variety of countries: Netherlands, the USA, Spain, Greece, Malaysia (now the author works in Iran), China, and Jordan. Apart from coming from various contexts, these articles also report the use of different ICT tools, such as Facebook, weblogs, discussion forums, online videos, and games.

In the theoretical article written by Plomp, he continues the topic about preparing education for the information society, but focusing more on the curricular changes. In his first article published in the first issue of the journal, he argued that the society had changed from the industrial society to the information society because of the rapid development and use of technology. What young people should learn in school so that they will be optimally prepared for their life in an information society becomes a fundamental question. In this article, he further presents two key aspects of the new curriculum: the interactive character of teaching and learning processes, and the interdependent components of the curriculum. Both aspects affect the integration of 21st century skills into the curriculum. He describes emerging pedagogical practices such as collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, and project-based learning that are suitable for the information society and some thoughts about using ICT as a lever for educational change.

In the current information society, a lot of online videos are freely available on the internet (e.g., YouTube). Users do not only watch the videos but may also share their thoughts and comments after watching a video. The article written by Thompson describes the nature of the comments posted into four online discussion forums on a video web site. This study found that substantial, topic-focused discussions existed on the web site, and clarification, interpretation, and questions were the most prevalent types of posts. However, the categories that indicate high levels of interaction between participants, such as conflict or consensus-building, were less common. In addition, this study also found that some posts in these discussion forums had the potential to go

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beyond the video content and also to counteract some of the known types of oversimplifications that short entertaining videos might inadvertently promote.

In the following article, Méndez, Lacasa, and García-Pernía report the use of a video game and a social environment for secondary school students to learn English and new literacies. In the classroom, students played the game in small groups, taking multiple decisions, creating the main character and living in a virtual world. While students were playing, they talked about the game, planned their actions and took decisions together by using English. Outside the classroom, the students participated in an online social environment (forum) to facilitate their reflection on the game. Using English, they shared what they did during the game and their problems. This study found that the online social space was transformed from being a social network to an online community occurred. In the first few weeks the students just talked about the game and share their personal opinions about the game. But gradually they more reflected together on the game.

In the literature review about using Facebook as a user-generated content environment written by Timonidou, Zotou, Tambouris, and Tarabanis, they reviewed 19 published articles about using Facebook for teaching and learning. By analysing these articles, they found that the common tools used on Facebook were the wall, discussion board, photos, and links; the common activities conducted in Facebook included students asking subject-related questions, continuation of in-class discussions, and students and teachers sharing resources and links. The instructors' roles are more of facilitators and resource providers. In addition to the benefits such as promoting students' collaboration and student-centred learning, they also reported some common problems associated with using Facebook for teaching and learning, including limited tools suitable for education, privacy issues, and low motivation to participate.

In the following article about practicing Socratic questioning in a blended learning environment written by Shahsavar, students used face-to-face sessions to practice Socratic discussions, and used a blog to ask questions and discuss. She found that practicing Socratic discussions was a helpful strategy for promoting students' critical thinking, and using the blog and Socratic questioning was an effective strategy to improve students' critical thinking.

The importance of promoting pre-service teachers' technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) has attracted increasing attention in recent years. In the article written by Zhan, Quan and Ren, they designed a micro-course by following the learning-by-design approach for a group of pre-service mathematics teachers to promote their TPACK. They did a pre-test and a post-test before and after conducting the micro-course. They found that the micro-course could increase the participants' TPACK to a certain extent. However, there was a space for further improving the design of the micro-course. For instance, the design should put more emphases on the elements where the participants were identified weak in the pre-test. Also, having teaching experiences seemed to be crucial for pre-service teachers as the lack of teaching experiences negatively affected their TPACK development.

In the last short article written by Nusir, Alsmadi, Al-Kabi, and Sharadgah, an interactive multimedia game was developed for the first grade primary school students to learn mathematics. They did a comparative study between the young kids who used the multimedia game and those who followed the traditional teacher-led method to learn. They found that the kids using the multimedia game significantly outperformed the other group. In addition, they found that there were no significant differences between boys and girls in each approach.