
Editorial

Piet Kommers*

Faculty of Behavioral Sciences,
University of Twente,
7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands
Email: Kommers@edte.utwente.nl
*Corresponding author

Margriet Simmerling

Helix5,
Mendelssohnlaan 12,
7522 KP Enschede, The Netherlands
Email: simmerling@helix5.nl

Biographical notes: Piet Kommers is an Associate Professor at the University of Twente, The Netherlands. His specialty is social media for communication and organisation. As a Conference Co-chair of the IADIS multi-conference, he initiated the conferences of web-based communities and social media, e-society, mobile learning and international higher education. He is a Professor at the UNESCO Institute for Eastern European Studies in Educational Technology and Adjunct Professor at Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

Margriet Simmerling is a Peer Consultant/Senior Manager for R&D projects in the area of e-society and web-based communities. She participated in the advisory board for the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and is active as a reviewer for the European Commission. She designs and moderates e-learning modules and workshops e-learning modules and workshops in the domain of education technology and psychology at the PhD level.

In this special issue, we present you articles addressing lifelong learning issues in domains related to MOOCs and e-learning platforms. This collection of papers illustrates that still technological novelties elicit new aspects of learning and training arrangements. MOOCs address the challenge to share and reuse open educational resources (OERs). E-learning platforms allow institutes to stream the process of information delivery and testing regimes more easily. And last but not least: the gathering of students and the use of social media brings us to the question in how far the synergy between the social- and collectivism are endemic to learning cultures anyway? If we take out the e- from e-learning and web-based from web-based communities, then it is clear that learning and communities are inherently tightly interconnected.

- 1 The first reason is that learning rests upon social conventions and societal efforts to prepare the younger generation for its later role as citizens.

- 2 The second reason is that education in itself is a community; learning needs role taking, experimentation and risk taking. The essence of a community is the ‘sense of community’ among its members. There are no strict regulations on how to make educational stakeholders committed. However, we know that problem-based learning is one of the most respected formats for existential development; the layer for ‘deep learning’.

For this reason we have brought the underlying authors and articles together. Over 20 authors from 10 countries (Argentina, Austria, Germany, Greece, India, Sweden, USA, Australia, Switzerland and The Netherlands) inform you about the latest research and developments.

In the first article, Francisco Javier Díaz, María Alejandra Schiavoni, María Alejandra Osorio, Ana Paola Amadeo, and María Emilia Charnelli address the MOOC’s. The article ‘Integrating a learning management system with a student assignments digital repository: a case study’ provides an excellent overview of the process of linking Moodle with an online repository that can be accessed by an international audience. The clear sequencing enables the reader to identify the key stages of the process.

In the article ‘Formulating an adaptable e-training framework to computer science educators’, Michael Paraskevas, Thomas Zarouchas, Panagiotis Angelopoulos and Isidoros Perikos inform us about a national case study that illustrates very well the meaning of the expression: ‘money for value’, that is an established ICT infrastructure having a significant impact on a national computer science curriculum. Interesting information is provided: infrastructure, need analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency and appealing of the system.

The search for a platform to increase the students’ linguistic potential while also enhancing their social skills and boosting their resourcefulness in the use of multiple resources is an ongoing process.

J. Rafael Angel Mendoza presents a solution that might be promising to implement. The article ‘E-approaches to teaching and leaning: a new paradigm for planning and administering a school’s curriculum’ considers a learning environment as a sort of e-portfolio for assessing curriculum design and instructional design solutions provided.

How does the e-portfolio serve the needs of lifelong learning?

Alfred Klampfer and Thomas Köhler address this question in their article: ‘Learners’ and teachers’ motivation toward using e-portfolios. An empirical investigation’. The conclusions are promising: e-portfolios stimulate a new dimension of education methodology. If the e-portfolio is transferred in a development portfolio within professional and vocation context the impact is expected to be successful.

Another promising direction in the domain of LLL is: online co-creation. Could this process be a valuable option for the LLL community?

Wouter Vollenbroek and Sjoerd de Vries present a first step in understanding and developing online co-creation patterns. The article ‘Online co-creating the future of education’ provides a framework of relevant characteristics in starting and developing an online co-creation process for the development of didactics and teaching methods in an open way.

The network society changed the educational setting. It is now normal that student listen to the lecturer and at the same time work with their laptop. How does this influence our understanding of situations and interactions?

Tomas Lindroth, Johan Lundin and Lars Svensson address this issue in their article 'Laptops in classroom interaction: deconstructing the networked situation'. The article focuses on the portable computer. The authors see that mobile technologies and ubiquitously available services introduce new use patterns into the classroom and raise questions regarding traditional definitions of a situation and the mode of interaction the participants expect.

The last article 'Initial design principles for establishing a learning community for public health professionals through authentic e-learning' is addressing educational design for a very practical situation that will save many peoples life: the correct handling of time and temperature sensitive pharmaceutical products. James L. Vesper, Jan Herrington, Umit Kartoğlu and Thomas C. Reeves describe their approach to transform an existing training course into an authentic e-learning program equivalent, capable of providing a quality learning opportunity to many more participants, and establishing a community of learners that would last beyond the temporal span of the course.