
Editorial

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Interaction is an effective instructional strategy to facilitate and enhance student learning. By sharing their ideas and negotiating their meanings, students can generate knowledge together, and this socially constructed knowledge becomes a powerful driving force to guide students to take ownership of the learning process. In the past, interaction was confined in the walls of the classroom and limited to those who were present at a certain time and place. The recent advance of technology has rapidly and dramatically broken down geographical barriers and has removed time constraints, thus pushing student engagement beyond the classroom and class time. Especially social networking technologies have greatly enhanced the ability to connect learners anywhere anytime. Certainly this new development presents exciting opportunities to improve interaction in education; the easy incorporation of a variety of media and the instant ability to create and locate resources enable students to freely build, merge and divide learning communities and to engage in more meaningful interaction, more in-depth reflections and more critical thinking processes. With the explosive interest in the incorporation of social networking media into education, it is important to consider pedagogical implications of these technologies and explore innovative strategies to promote interaction with the tools. Also it is equally important to note that while the educational potential of social networking is exciting, there are possible issues and pitfalls associated with the technologies, such as harmful interactions and unsafe online behaviours that can potentially deter students from building positive learning experiences online. In order to create an effective interactive learning environment, it is essential for teachers and students to be aware of these negative effects of social networking as well and develop ways to prevent and minimise the risks.

The purpose of this special issue is to address this double-edged nature of social networking, aiming at exploring innovative strategies and creative design decisions to promote interaction with social networking and also raising awareness of possible issues associated with the media. Seven articles, centred around this theme, are presented in this special issue.

The first four articles focus on the positive impact of social networking on education. The first and second articles present innovative technological products. The first article, "Preservice Teachers' Uses of SMILE to Enact Student-Generated Questioning Practices", introduces SMILE (Stanford Mobile Inquiry-Based Learning Environment),

a tool that was designed to facilitate student question generation and allow peers to solve questions and rate each other's performance. The authors report the sense of achievement expressed by both teachers and students regarding the student-generated questioning practices and also the challenges of using SMILE in the classroom. The second article, "The Design and Development of an Online Tool to Strategically Support Knowledge Acquisition for Improved Educator Practice", presents another innovative technological tool called EdHub, which was designed to help educators improve practice and share their thoughts within a closed, nested social network. The article shares EdHub's theoretical underpinnings and design principles. The third and fourth articles touch upon conceptual changes and new meaning making attributed to the influx of social networking. The third article, "Explorative Thoughts on Bringing Together Reflection and Social Networking", explores how the instructional strategy of reflection can be reshaped and enhanced with social networking and how social networking technologies can stimulate more insightful interaction online. The fourth article, "Integrate Social Tagging to Build an Online Collaborative Learning Community", reviews social tagging as a new way to organise digital information and collaborate with others. The authors examine graduate students' perceptions and uses of social tagging and explore the contribution of social tagging practice to building collaborative learning communities.

The last three articles, the fifth, sixth and seventh articles, take a critical approach to the effects of social networking to provide a balanced perspective on the topic. The fifth article, "Threats through Facebook - A Project with Students in a German Vocational School to Foster 'Facebook Competence'," shares how much the use of Facebook permeates students' daily lives in Germany and describes a project that was adopted to prevent Facebook cyberbullying, threats and risks in a German vocational school. This alarming side effect of social networking continues to be addressed in the sixth article, "Cultivating Positive Social Interactions through a Web-Based Cyberbullying Prevention Program." The article raises awareness of negative impacts of social networking onto students' lives and presents the design and development of a cyberbullying prevention training program for adolescents. The seventh article, "Effective Innovation or Dumbed-Down Distraction: Qualitative Content Analysis of 10 Years of Social Media and Writing Research", looks back on 10 years of studies about using social media in writing education and highlights the importance of periodically reviewing research practices and filling a gap in knowledge about social networking, which echoes the very purpose of putting forth this special issue.

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