

Editorial

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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 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 an 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 in the domain of education technology and psychology at PhD level.

As the source of lifelong learning is the notion of longevity and permanence, it is a good recurring exercise to check where the border is between regular, vocational and lifelong learning? To formulate it in a more fundamental way: can we still sustain the term 'learning' when it comes to the never-ending attitude to adapt and adopt in an ever-changing world? Would it be clearer to speak about 'learning as a lifestyle attitude'?

This special issue provides an answer to it; it claims that even when it is a never-ending and ubiquitous survival issue, we need arrangements in order to transform experience and curiosity into learning. Since the dawn of new learning paradigms like active-, autonomous-, collaborative-, intentional- and problem-based learning, we are convinced that learning is a multifaceted process; learners need the awareness that the ultimate learning is one's willingness to change yourself. In this aspect, we can assert that lifelong learning essentially is an existential process as it urges mature learners to reconcile all earlier understanding with the new topic and the new thinking modalities that are at stake.

In the underlying special issue, authors from different parts of the world inform us about new research and state of the art in education and lifelong learning.

Outcome-based education is a challenge, for all actors involved: teachers, institutes and students must adopt a new learning style. A transition is never easy. It is great to share experiences and share effective and less effective measures. In the article “Transformational model for engineering education from content-based to outcomes-based education” Arooj Manzoor, HARIS AZIZ, Mirza Jahanzaib, Wasim Ahmad and Salman Hussain propose a solution: a transformational model that can help educational institutes to transfer their education model. They present also a survey based on the transformation in a specific engineering department located in Pakistan. The conclusions and recommendations are of high value for educational organisation in transition.

All universities in Malaysia offering engineering degree programs are mandated by the Engineering Accreditation Council (EAC) to implement outcome-based education as a requirement for accreditation. The INTI International University in particular fully supports and implements OBE in its engineering programs. MALINI ELIATAMBY, DEEPAK TIRUMISHI JADA, ANNA PONKODALINGAM and VENISHRI PONNIAH highlight the use of and MS Excel Program (IOBET). The program extracts the course learning outcome and program outcome attainment score of each individual student enrolled in the program. The article “Outcome-based personalised learning measurement tool for engineering education at INTI International University INTI OBE Tool (IOBET)” provides the reader with IOBET results. The information helps academics to improve the module delivery through regular assessments, monitoring, CQI action planning and implementation thus ensuring better quality graduates for the demand-driven market.

The article “Study and design of a pico hydropower plant for academic education and research use” describes a microhydropower plant (MHPP) prototype developed in a laboratory. Achour EL HAMDAOUY, Issam SALHI, Said DOUBABI and Mohammed CHENNANI explain possibilities to use the system for educational purposes. Practical scenarios are provided. The article contains figures to explain the performance of the plant.

Robots are everywhere and also in education options, and opportunities to involve robots are tested and investigated. The article “Robotics in primary school in the opinion of prospective and in-service teachers. A comparison study” deals with the possibilities, how to enhance some topics taught in primary schools with the help of robots. The article refers to a widely discussed problem how learners can improve their thinking skills, problem-solving skills and social skills through our fun-learning approach. The experimental data cited in the manuscript confirm that teachers realise the role of robotics in the key competences formation and improving learning motivation of primary school students. Eugenia Smyrnova-Trybulska, Nataliia Morze, Piet Kommers and Wojciech Zuziak state that learning robotics or integrating programming bricks into courses can help to develop pupils’ problem-solving abilities and enhance their learning performance.

Why not? Using Skype to improve the speaking performance. Yen Chen Yen, Huei-Tse Hou and Kuo-En Chang explore the effects of the two environments: Skype and face-to-face learning. In the article “Exploring the effect of VoIP tools as a foreign language instruction on learners’ English speaking errors”, they present the results of an investigation among students from an English conversation class in a business college in Taiwan. In the end the group of students using the Skype environment improved their conversation abilities more. The study presents the research method and data analysis.

Blogging is an interactive form of publishing content on the web. What are the benefits of blogging in the academic world? Agnieszka Gadomska informs us about the

usage of blogging for language learning with feedback, comments and communication channel. In the article “Implementing blogs for developing academic writing skills in a variety of higher educational contexts”, the results of her studies are presented. Important observation is that the blogging takes the student/teacher relation to a different level and contributes to improve the learning outcomes.

Your special issue editors

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