Editorial

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First, a reminder that EAIT is the official journal of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) Technical Committee 3—Education (TC3). 2009 is a special year for TC3 as it sees the 9th World Conference on Computer Education (WCCE) taking place in Bento Gonçalves, Brazil on 27th to 31st July. Registration is now open and is at a reduced rate until 30th April. Comprehensive details are available at <http://www.wcce2009.org/about.html>.

This edition of the journal once again reflects its international nature and range of concerns with papers from The Netherlands, USA, Israel, Germany, Finland and South Africa with the first three papers addressing compulsory education and the final three higher education.

Ton Mooij's paper discusses an area of current concern across much of Europe, self-regulation of learning, or as it is known in the UK—"personalisation of learning." Mooij is concerned with pupils who experience motivational and achievement problems and he presents an analysis of, social, motivational and self-regulative aspects of learning. Following this analysis he presents a 'contextual learning theory' consisting of three parts—differentiation of learning materials and procedures; integration and support by ICT; strategies to improve development and learning. The paper then describes how prototype systems were developed and trialled in Dutch schools.

In their paper Julie McLeod and Sheri Vasinda investigate the perceptions of elementary students, their parents and teachers in relation to the use of e-portfolios. The four aspects that McLeod and Vasinda investigate in their empirical research are assessment, parental participation, student and teacher satisfaction, and the impact of e-portfolios on teaching. The evidence presented leads to the conclusions that students, parents and teachers were all satisfied with the implementation of the e-portfolio process. Students began to think more deeply about content, and themselves as learners, and teachers gained insights into their learners. In addition,

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parents began to perceive the utility of e-portfolios as a means of communicating their child's learning.

The effects of using CD-ROM storybooks on children's early literacy development are reported in Ofra Korat's paper. Korat used a pre-test, post-test methodology and a control group. Having set up three groups Korat measured the subjects on vocabulary, word recognition and phonological awareness. Following this, one group had three CD-ROM storybook reading sessions, the second group five sessions and the control group continued with their normal programme. The post-intervention test and subsequent analysis revealed no age group differences after using the software and no interaction between age group and number of sessions. However, children who used the software five times showed greater progress in word meaning than those who used it three times and both these groups did better than the control group. In addition those who used the software five times showed greater progress in word reading and phonological awareness than the children in the control group.

When considering e-learning the topic of computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL) and the problems of communications between learners and between learners and their teachers appears problematic. Andrea Kienle addresses these issues in her paper which presents the design and evaluation of a CSCL system. The evaluation revealed a mixed level of acceptance by the users. With respect to the interweaving of synchronous and asynchronous communication, Kienle claims a successful technical solution with limitations in usage. The paper concludes with suggestions for improvement of the system, and further evaluation.

Annina Ropponen's paper investigated the use of an online learning system to support post-compulsory education students in studying ergonomics. The student's studies include hands-on projects and learning assignments performed in actual work environments. Ropponen initially describes the background to the course and the theory behind the development of the online system. Ropponen's research investigated student experiences related to the learning; how the online environment influenced learning; workplace assignments; and course workload using an online questionnaire. The paper concludes that the online system when combined with real-world assignments can be a successful way of providing a multidisciplinary course.

The final paper again deals with many of the issues discussed in the other papers in this collection, communications, collaboration, and self-regulated learning. Dick Ngambi and Suki Goodman report on a project that ran for two years with undergraduate students from culturally diverse socio-historical backgrounds. The students were encouraged to use an anonymous online system to consult with peers and faculty. The motivation for this was to support the students learning and increase the responsiveness of faculty to students by exposing gaps in learning. Analyses of student experiences were undertaken after collecting data from focus groups. In addition interactions from the online system were examined and analysed. The study showed that the system appeared to stimulate learners' enthusiasm, and created opportunities for self-regulated and collaborative learning.