

EAIT editorial 17-2

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Issue 2 of EAIT for 2012 continues to show the diversity of the field of computers and ICT in education with another six articles covering a wide range of topics.

Laptop and other portable computers are now ubiquitous and the first article in this issue: ‘*Laptop initiative: Impact on instructional technology integration and student learning*’ by Jared Keengwe, Gary Schnellert and Chris Mills deals with this topic. The purpose of their study was to examine how a 1:1 laptop initiative affected student learning at a selected rural Midwestern high school in the United States. Their study suggests that integration of 1:1 laptop computing positively impacts student academic engagement and student learning and that there is thus a need for teachers to implement appropriate computing practices to enhance student learning.

The next article: ‘*Integrating ICT into College English: An implementation study of a national reform*’ by Zhiwen Hu and Ian McGrath describes a mixed-methods case study of a national reform of College English teaching in China which called for the integration of ICT (information and communication technology) into English classroom teaching and self-access learning. Their findings indicated that the reform had represented a challenge for teachers, who were expected to adapt to technologically-enhanced teaching materials, embrace student-centred classroom teaching and guide students’ autonomous learning in ICT settings.

The following article: ‘*The design of a software to enhance the reading comprehension skills of deaf students: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives*’ by Magda Nikolarazi & Ioanna Vekiri, discusses the role of visual resources, namely Greek Sign Language videos, concept maps and pictures, and their allocation in a multimedia educational software designed to enhance reading comprehension in deaf children. In the article they describe the software “See and See” and explain how relevant theory and research regarding visual displays and multimedia learning has been applied to its design.

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‘*Exploring the uses of mobile phones to support informal learning*’, by Ieda M. Santos and Nagla Ali then explores how a group of undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) use their mobile phones to perform informal learning activities related to the content of their courses outside the classroom and addresses the usefulness of informal learning activities to support students’ learning. The main findings suggest that students performed informal learning activities mostly from home, interacting mainly with classmates, and these students were in control of their informal learning activities without teachers’ input. It was found, however, that students used only a limited number of applications but these were considered useful to their learning.

The next article: ‘*Changes in the basic ICT skills of freshmen between 2005 and 2009: Who’s catching up and who’s still behind?*’ is by Kurt De Wit, Dirk Heerwegh and Jef C. Verhoeven. In the article they postulate that as ICT use has expanded enormously in most Western countries, freshmen at university would not only have mastered more ICT skills, but would also use computers more often than their counterparts of 5 years previously. The results of their study showed that freshmen became more proficient in some ICT skills, while proficiency in other skills did not change or even dropped, and that gender is still an important factor to predict ICT skills and the frequency of using computers.

The final article deals with the problem of reducing student dropout from school. Ester Aflalo and Eyal Gabay title their article: ‘*An information system for dropout prevention*’ and examine the effectiveness of a Local Authority Information Center (LAIC) that was developed in Israel to help prevent this phenomenon. Their research findings showed that the use of an LAIC system reduced the dropout rate and raised the number of students studying to the school’s satisfaction. This improvement even intensified 3 years later when the size of the experimental group was increased.

I hope that you enjoy these articles and find them of interest.

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Editor-in-Chief, EAIT