

Editorial

Welcome to this first edition of e-JIST for 2006.

First and foremost my apologies for the lengthy delay between the previous edition and this one. Following some significant changes to organisational structures at the University of Southern Queensland, I have recently been appointed to a new position of Executive Director, Division of Academic Information Services which includes responsibility for both the Library and the Distance and e-Learning Centre. This has severely restricted my time to spend on the development of new editions of e-JIST. I hope to improve the frequency of future editions as soon as possible.

On a more sombre note, I am very sad to report the passing of one of our e-JIST Editorial Board members Dr Magdalene Juma from Kenya. Dr Juma was a wonderful ambassador for distance and e-learning in Africa, serving students in many countries through her work with the African Virtual University. I will miss her strong advocacy for improved education resources throughout Africa and her thoughtful insights about educational issues generally.

This 'bumper' edition contains a number of articles on a wide range of contemporary issues from contributors all over the world. As always, your feedback on any of the published works would be most appreciated.

The theme of our Full Papers section is around the student learning experience. It starts with a contribution from Lee-Ann Burke and Elizabeth Murphy from Memorial University of Newfoundland about female students' experiences of computer technology in single- gender and mixed- gender school settings. Christopher Irwin and Zane Berge from the University of Maryland Baltimore County then provide a most interesting paper on socialization in the online classroom – a 'must read' for those using the online environment as a means of class interaction. A collaborative effort from Ken Ryba and Tom McIvor from Massey University, Maha Shakir from Zayed University and Di Paez from University of the Sunshine Coast examines university students' perceptions and experiences with continuous automated speech recognition. Finally, Jim Woolnough, C. Leah Moore, Andrew Cheetham and John Rayner from the University of Canberra examine student responses to learning physics through multi-mode delivery.

The Current Practice section also provides some interesting food for thought. From Taiwan, a case study from Mei-Sheng Chao, Jin Tan Yang and Nan Hui Chiang on the impact of three navigation models on students' learning performance; from India, a case study from Y. B. Gandole, S.S. Khandewale, and R. A. Mishra on students' attitudes towards computer software support and traditional laboratory practical learning environments in undergraduate electronics science courses; from the University of Texas, USA a case study from Cristina Torres and Hamide Dogan-Dunlap on technology use in ability-grouped high school mathematics classrooms. Finally, from the United Kingdom, Nicola Whitton and Niki Hynes evaluate the effectiveness of an online simulation to teach business skills. All four contributions show the interest and preparedness of these current practitioners to improve the educational experience for their students.

The final contribution in the Commentary section comes from Erdal Toprakci based in Turkey. His paper examines the obstacles confronting local schools in relation to implementing information and communication technologies. He uses opinions from teachers and principles of primary and secondary schools in Turkey to support his conclusions.

As always, submissions of new material to e-JIST are most welcome. You will find submission guidelines on this website. I am particularly interested in new developments

involving the appropriate used of technologies in the creation of learning environments.

Until the next edition.....happy reading!

Alan
Executive
e-JIST
smith@usq.edu.au

Smith
Editor