

GUEST EDITORIAL

The International Conference on Information Communication Technologies in Education (ICICTE) family has grown over the years, and each year we build on the success of years past, honoring the past, living in the present, and looking toward the future. We gather to engage in dialogue and collegial debate, renew old acquaintances, and spawn new ideas. As scholars and educators, we labor to determine the shape of meaning in our experience of the world as well as to provide the means for our students to do the same. Our active participation in ICICTE supports this endeavor as we collectively acknowledge not only the value of teaching and learning and the dynamic interface between teacher and student, but also the learning platform and outcome. ICICTE is a time to reflect on and re-imagine the role of the teacher and the methods we employ to create meaningful learning experiences in the face of rapid advances in information technology, methods of social interaction, and the political and economic climates we are presently within. The papers within this special issue are a collection of papers reflecting the breadth of some of the dialogue and deliberations had at this conference.

Understanding how to support teaching and learning, and the learning needs of the next generation of learners, is important for students' intellectual development and job readiness. While higher education institutions are increasingly incorporating "innovation in education" into both strategic and academic plans, the same institutions still struggle to define innovation. As the 2016 keynote, Dr Tannis Morgan points out, "in the past five years, higher education has seen the rise and descent of MOOCs, MOOC platforms, learning management systems that promise to be more mobile, feature and user friendly, and the growth of cloud-based technologies whose primary purpose is to collect user data for goals that are not obviously revealed to the user. At some point as educators, we find ourselves asking the question: are these 'innovations' solving higher education problems?" In the context of student-centered instructional models, the proliferation of new technologies and diminishing institutional budgets, there is a need for more focused dialogue concerning which educational technologies best support student learning, and are sensitive to the different needs of students across disciplines, age and socio-economic status.

This special issue provides some insight into the use of technology-driven education solutions across the lifespan, student and instructor views on use of technology in education, explores the use of virtual worlds in education, and the impact of socio-economic status on the use of technology in teaching and learning. If we accept innovation as the development and implementation of better or more effective solutions that meet the specific needs of a population, then we can agree that the novel use of technology discussed in this special issue may well describe innovation in teaching and learning, highlighting some of the successes while discussing the limitations of technology-driven approaches in teaching and learning.

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