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EDITORIAL

Effective Pedagogies for Leveraging on Technology and Emotional Experiences

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Digital tools are no doubt a huge support for education and learning and an enabler of continuous education. So it should come as no surprise that this issue of AJSoTL should report on some of the exciting new trends in information delivery and knowledge-building that involve such technological advances. One such trend is the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that allow students to access online lessons from top universities around the world; yet another is the growing popularity of mobile applications (Apps) as a valuable instructional support complementing conventional methods of teaching. While many universities have shown a willingness to use MOOCs and have taken the initiative to integrate them within traditional curricula, a challenge they must face is the sustained delivery of high quality education and the ability to engage the interest of a wide-ranging international audience. A unique advantage of mobile Apps is that it can be customized to serve diverse needs in teaching and learning, especially through its multi-media content, and to create a positive sense of community. While such new technologies have shown great potential for enriching and transforming the learning environments of students and equipping them with the critical competencies and dispositions for becoming effective citizens in the 21st century, it is nevertheless important to bear in mind the alienation and fragmentation an extreme reliance on technology can bring, especially if it entails a concomitant reduction in personal human contact. It is quite apposite therefore that this issue of AJSoTL should include also a reminder to our readers of how essential it is for educational institutions to nurture the 'whole' person, by providing not only a range of cognitive stimulus but also by attending closely to the affective and emotional development of our students.

This issue starts off with a reflection from Kathleen Quinlan on the public lecture she gave during her tenure as Educator-in-Residence at the Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning, National University of Singapore. If one were to go by the rhetoric often mentioned in higher education circles, the intention is to provide holistic experience for students – comprising of both cognition (thinking) and emotion (feeling). Quinlan opines that the emotional dimensions of higher educational experiences remain underexplored and its power in developing students' sense of personal and social responsibility remains wastefully latent. Readers are requested to also view the video of her public lecture – the talk, interspersed with her own poems, serves as a powerful reminder for educators to seek ways of enhancing university education by including emotional literacy that seems so vital for dealing with formidable 21st century challenges.

Next, Cathy Sandeen provides a critical evaluation of the myths, hype and potential of MOOCs. In her state-of-the-art review, Sandeen traces the history of the MOOCs right up to what she terms MOOC 3.0 – the interesting list of pedagogical approaches that have been derived from the 'original' MOOCs. Sandeen presents both student perspectives and institutional motivations for offering MOOCs and closes her article by making several bold predictions on the future shape that this very dynamic format and space is likely to evolve into. She assures us that "Colleges and universities will not disappear because of MOOCs."

In his article titled "Rapid growth of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and the market for university graduates", Aamir Hashmi explores several scenarios using a simple labour market model. Hashmi demonstrates the effect of changing supply and skill level of university graduates on unemployment and underemployment. Using 2 different values for number of graduates (supply), 3 different values for skill level, and normal distributions for the required skill levels for jobs, Hashmi explores six scenarios. Based on the model assumptions, the highest unemployment occurs when there is an excess supply of unskilled graduates while high underemployment results when there is an excess supply of highly skilled graduates. The model employed by Hashmi is obviously limited in details but offers some very interesting insights. Hashmi frames the results from the six considered scenarios against the backdrop of recent macro-level discussions on the possible effect of MOOCs. Together with Sandeen's article, there will be plenty for the reader to reflect on the future evolution and impact of MOOCs.

Switching our focus from MOOCs to innovative educational methods, Song-Iee Hong presents her study on a simulation-related experiential-learning technique. In her article "Ageing simulation games: A module for enhancing students' understanding of older adults", Song-Iee shares with readers some of the ageing simulation games she uses in her "Social Gerontology" module. She reports that by getting social work majors to play the role of ageing adults (by wearing specially designed equipment), she could notice a positive impact on students' interest in working with older adults, attitudes toward older adults, as well as increased gerontological knowledge.

In the last article of this issue, Emelyn Tan Sue Qing and Debbie Teo Jia Ling report the findings of their online survey on students' interest and reception of a technology-enhanced educational method. This survey was undertaken to explore the pedagogic potential of mobile learning using chemistry apps. The extensive survey probes how students make use of mobile devices for academic purposes and the frequency of such usage. In addition, the survey also evaluates their perceptions of the impact of mobile device and apps on academic success.

We hope that the articles in this issue spark critical reflection into our teaching practices and inform our readers how educators may meaningfully employ technology and experiential learning to engage students deeply in the learning process. We welcome readers to initiate useful conversations within their departments/faculties and contribute to further discussion in AJSoTL's online space or through an original article or commentary in a future issue of AJSoTL.