INNOVATIVE PRACTICES
of TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LEARNING
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CONTENTS

Preface vii
Acknowledgements xiii
List of Contributors xv

1 Technology-Enhanced Learning: Benefits and Considerations 1
   Kenny Cheah Soon Lee and Donnie Adams

2 Blended Learning in Action: Innovative Practices, Methodologies, and Implications 21
   Donnie Adams and Kenny Cheah Soon Lee

3 Technology Applications used among Undergraduates from 2013 to 2018: Implications for Instruction 35
   Dorothy DeWitt and Norlidah Alias

4 Perceptions and Challenges in Blended Learning Approaches among University Educators 55
   Kristina Francis

5 Implementing E-Book in a Mathematics Course: Investigating Postgraduate Students Patterns of Usage 67
   Malathi Letchumanan, Balakrishnan Muniandy and Mariam Mohamad
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors/Editors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Eye-Tech”: Flipping Fundamental Funduscopy For Medical Students</td>
<td>Prabal Bhargava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gamification in a Blended Learning Environment: The Mojo of ClassDojo</td>
<td>Kee-Man Chuah and Fitri Suraya Mohamad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Screencasting for Assessment of Content Knowledge: Learners’ Experiences and Beliefs</td>
<td>Dorothy DeWitt and Norlidah Alias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Augmented Reality (AR) Experiences: A Tool to Enhance Conceptual Understanding for Education Counselling Students</td>
<td>Vinothini Vasodavan, Dorothy DeWitt and Norlidah Alias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Blended-Learning Applied in a Joint Master Program in Vietnam –Voices from Professionals</td>
<td>Le Hoang Dung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Instructor Characteristics and Satisfaction In a Blended Learning Implementation Environment</td>
<td>Mugenyi Justice Kintu, Chang Zhu and Edmond Kagambe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Building a Creative School Environment to Push Technology – Enhanced Learning – Case Study at Schools in Vietnam</td>
<td>Vu Thi Mai Huong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Virtual Reality for Evoking Emotions: A Motivational Design for Instruction</td>
<td>Dorothy DeWitt and Donnie Adams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About the Editors and Contributors 271
Technology has the potential to transform teaching and learning practices. Information communication technologies (ICT) for transforming education has been noted in research through the last three decades. Although the conceptions of use of ICT and the effect of the transformation seem to vary, the focus was always on learning and improvements in the cognitive processes for learning. The emergence of web 2.0 technologies led to the need for transformative practices in higher education. Bates and Sangra (2011) in their book “Managing Technology in Higher Education: Strategies for Transforming Teaching and Learning” addressed this need as they suggested ways to use technology to transform educational practice in higher education.

The process of transforming teaching and learning is a complex process which may involve changes in teachers’ beliefs and conception of teaching and learning. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015 – 2025 (Higher Education) lists transformation of the delivery of higher education as one of the shifts in the aspiration to deliver a world-class higher education system. For this purpose, change is required in the processes of learning so as to develop students with enhanced capabilities to be future-ready Malaysians, as well academics who could perform this task (Ministry of Education, 2015). Hence, academics and students alike may need to unlearn and relearn concepts of teaching and learning.

This book is an effort to achieve the aim of transforming education through technology-enhanced learning (TEL) and to showcase practices from Malaysia and surrounding regions. The task of transforming education is not limited to Malaysia, as the concept of education is evolving. This is especially made evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when the delivery of education had to change.
Hence, in order to be competitive, all higher education institutions need to consider transformative practices. Traditional practices of teaching may not be suitable for preparing our youth for the technology-rich and competitive future. Hence, TEL practices may help enhance this transformation.

TEL is concerned about the “enhancement” of learning using technology. In the Malaysian context, technology has been used as an “enabler” when the Smart School concept was introduced in 1996, putting emphasis on the pedagogy rather than on the technology. Hence, technology is an enabler when access (including at anytime and anywhere) to resources on online platforms or courses such as on Learning Management systems and Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) is provided. Technology is also an enabler when contextualised situations and simulations are provided for the learner to visualise and practice in sometimes risky situations (Gauttier, & Arnedillo-Sanchez, 2016).

The concept of TEL needs to be carefully determined. UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/) defines TEL as the use of “information and communication technologies as mediating devices supporting student learning”, which encompasses different applications and processes from the delivery of digital content to creation of resources to inform learners and enable learners’ reflection so as to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge structures. Although the collaborative processes for learning is highlighted in the UNESCO’s definition, they do state that TEL is also referred to as ‘e-learning’ (or electronic learning) and ‘digital learning’. Hence, a common misconception is that TEL is e-learning.

The role of technology in TEL is to enable new learning experiences and enrich learning through interactive and collaborative digital media (Laurillard, Oliver, Wasson, & Hoppe, 2009). In Kirkwood and Price’s (2014) review of literature on TEL, there were three types of interventions for TEL practice: interventions that replicated existing (traditional) teaching practices new technologies; interventions that supplemented existing teaching with resources or tools so as to increased flexibility for learners, and interventions which transform and enrich teaching and/or learning processes and outcomes, example active learning and collaborative learning. Hence, the current practice of TEL may still be related to traditional teaching and not all has been transformative. Hence, with this book, we hope that the TEL practices
outlined will enable other researchers to use as exemplars to transform and enrich their students’ learning.

In TEL, technology is the “enhancer” of learning. Gauttier, & Arnedillo-Sanchez (2016) claims that this is a person-centered event, and in this case, a student-centered event, to extend the abilities of the individual, either his competency, mood or performance. This could mean enhancing memory, flexibility or time spent on a task, improving engagement or attitude, test scores, deeper understanding and reflection, or even improved interactions and sharing online (Gauttier, & Arnedillo-Sanchez, 2016). Hence, in this book, Laurillard, Oliver, Wasson, & Hoppe’s (2009) definition of TEL is taken, where the role of technology is to enable new learning experiences and enrich learning through interactive and collaborative digital media.

In Chapter 1, Technology-Enhanced Learning: Benefits and Considerations, the evolution of technology from computer-based training to e-learning models is discussed before going into the tools for TEL and the benefits. Lastly, suggestions on implementing TEL are shared.

In Chapter 2, Blended Learning in Action: Innovative Practices, Methodologies, and Implications, an overview of blended learning and the characteristic features is elaborated. Blended learning is one form of TEL due to the flexibility of the learning as well as the interactive processes involved. Several models of blended learning are discussed, and findings regarding students’ readiness for blended learning is described. This data indicates the form of blended learning preferred (50% blended) as well as the forms of online media preferred. This would be useful for lecturers and teachers when designing their TEL environments.

Chapter 3 is on Technology applications used among undergraduates from 2013 to 2018 and the implications for instruction. The technology applications used by undergraduates is elaborated. Most of the applications are collaborative and interactive tools which may not be used specifically for learning. However, there is potential for some of these tools to be used for learning as majority of students have access to them. However, the trends related to the use of tools shows that some technology apps that were popular 5 years ago have declined in popularity. Hence, technology changes according to the needs of the community. Instead of focusing on learning specific technology tools, it is more important to encourage life-long learning skills, and allow students to develop on their existing skills, using apps
that students were familiar with for learning. This may also engage learners for TEL.

Lecturers may not have the capabilities and skills to implement TEL. Hence, it was important to investigate the perceptions of TEL among university educators. For this purpose, in Chapter 4, Perceptions and Challenges in Blended Learning Approaches among University Educators, was investigated. In the higher education institution sampled, majority of educators do not have sufficient knowledge in using blended learning. The implication of this study is that administrators and managers need to be aware of this situation and provide opportunities for educators to be trained in TEL practices. This would enable the transformation of educational practices in line with the needs of the students so that their institutions could be competitive.

The next section of the book looks into implementing TEL in the classrooms. As the aim of the book is also to share best practices in TEL so that it can be implemented by other practitioners, the chapters have been organised such that the definition of the technology and some additional links to implementing the technology are given. In addition, the instructional strategies in using the technology is suggested.

A mobile e-book for learning abstract algebra was used for TEL in Chapter 5, Implementing E-Book in a Mathematics Course: Investigating Postgraduate Students Patterns of Usage. The patterns indicated that there were some difficulties in some of the tools which the students used. In addition, the search feature in the e-book was useful for the students. Hence, e-books and other resources should be considered for interaction and collaboration in TEL.

Videos were used in flipped classrooms in Chapter 6, “Eye-Tech”: Flipping Fundamental Funduscopy For Medical Students. Flipped classroom, a form of blended learning, can be used for TEL as it enables interactions and collaborations, especially during the face-to-face sessions. In this chapter, the limited class time was spent in more effective processes.

Features of gamification can engage learners. In Chapter 7, Gamification in a Blended Learning Environment: The Mojo of ClassDojo, presented a strategy for using this application in engaging students, based on the Octalysis model. The challenges that arose from using this app was also discussed.
Assessment related to TEL may pose some difficulties. In Chapter 8, an innovative form of assessment is presented in Screencasting For Assessment of Content Knowledge: Learners’ Experiences and Beliefs. Learners develop screencasts based on their readings and present it among the other participants in their community of learners. The ability of the learners in developing their screencasts and the effectiveness of conveying their knowledge was investigated. As a form of assessment, this can develop cognitive processes and higher order thinking for TEL.

TEL should enhance understanding, especially when the cognitive processes are activated. In Chapter 9, Augmented Reality (AR) Experiences: A Tool to Enhance Conceptual Understanding for Education Counselling Students, additional information in the form of videos was augmented on posters students viewed to enhance understanding. The usability of the tool and the effectiveness for learning was investigated. This proved to be an engaging way to learn and to collaborate.

In Chapter 10, Blended-learning applied in a joint master program in Vietnam – voices from professionals, discussed the voice of instructors using a learning tool, Brightspace. The study was discussed from the dimensions of blended learning. The thoughts and pedagogical implications in using TEL was recorded.

Learning Management Systems such as MOODLE offer a suite of applications on a platform, which is at most times customised to the institution. Most times, the instructor need not even look for other applications as the most pedagogically-sound tools would have been included for TEL. In Chapter 11, Instructor Characteristics and Satisfaction in a Blended Learning Implementation Environment, instructor characteristics as well as level of use and satisfaction was investigated. It is hoped that the predictors of the characteristics of successful instructors for TEL implementation could be determined.

In the next chapter, a creative school environment is designed. Chapter 12 is on Building A Creative School Environment to Push Technology- Enhanced Learning – Case Study at Schools in Vietnam. Creative TEL environments could be designed and the researchers suggest several solutions.

Lastly, In Chapter 13, a motivational instructional design model is used to engage students in using virtual reality for learning. Virtual
Reality for Evoking Emotions: A Motivational Design for Instruction used the ARCS motivational model to design an environment to engage with trainee counsellors and show them the potential of this tool to engage their clients and evoke emotions during sessions as future counsellors.

REFERENCES


1. Introduction

There is a myriad of definition on the term of blended learning. As an introduction, it is an educational approach that integrates online teaching resources to assist students in their learning as compared to traditional face-to-face classrooms (Adams, et al., 2018). While conventionally blended learning is used in the contexts of educational settings across different faculties (Poon, 2013; Tselios, Daskalakis & Papadopoulou, 2011; Alkhatib, 2018; Chen, Zhang, Han & Xie, 2018; Zhu, Huang, Gao & Liu, 2018), there are newer contexts where blended learning has been used for continuing education such as professional development and human resource trainings due to the cost and geographical factors of communication (Attwell, 2019; Becker & Eube, 2018; D’Agostino & Kowalski, 2018; Dede, Richards & Saxberg, 2018; Smyth, Houghton, Cooney & Casey, 2012).

It is important to differentiate that blended learning focuses on the ‘learning’, rather than the ‘teaching’. In other words, it is
concentrated on the students’ perspectives on learning, although teachers’ perspective on ‘teaching’ would also be influenced by how students learn in cyberspace, and vice versa (Wong, Hwang, Goh & Mohd Arrif, 2018; Luo, 2018; Prescott, Bundschuh, Kazakoff & Macaruso, 2018). For the benefits of the reader, we shall not opt on the latter stand as there are other considerations to explain about the teaching aspects in blended learning.

The essence of the enjoying a successful learning experience through blended learning rests on many factors, mainly can be categorized into internal (within the learner) and external factors (out of the learner) from the assessment point of view (Zheng, Wang, Doll, Deng & Williams, 2018). On the broadest term, basically, three distinctive features that characterise successful blended learning:

a. The availability and access to online educational resources and the teacher in cyberspace (Aspden & Helm, 2004)
b. The ability student and the teacher to engage online in the teaching and learning process (Bosch & Pool, 2019). However, the success of the learning outcome tilts on the ability of the student (also called student-centric or personalized learning) to control his time of learning, his place and pace of his learning (Heinze & Procter, 2004). Teachers act as facilitators to ensure the materials are sufficient, effective and accessible (Barnard, Lan, To, Paton & Lai, 2009).
c. The quality of interaction resulting from the communication between the students, the computer-mediated tools for teaching and learning, and the teacher in cyberspace (Boyle, Bradley, Chalk, Jones, & Pickard, 2003).

The use of Social Media, wikis, forums, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and Blogs have all contributed to the betterment of Blended Learning (Jimoyiannis, Schiza, & Tsiotakis, 2018; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010; McCarthy, 2010).

2. Importance of Blended Learning

One of the key functions of Blended Learning is revolutionizing teaching and learning and breaking away from the traditional classroom approach (Adams, et al., 2018). Learners can enjoy the availability,
access, quality, and equity to education according to their personal and environmental circumstance (Kaspar, 2018). Thus, learners are able to improve their time efficiency in managing personal learning, experience their professional development in a meaningful way whilst providing more opportunities for collaboration with other people (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010).

Historically, the term blended learning was first conceptualized in the 1960s, and with the boom of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) that is fuelled by the exponential growth of the Internet in the 1990s the terminology evolved by leaps and bounds (Dziuban, Hartman, Juge, Moskal, & Sorg, 2006; Sheshasaayee, & Malathi, 2018). In the year 2006, Bonk and Graham in their book Handbook of Blended Learning enhanced the terminology of blended learning to encompass learning systems that integrate between computer-mediated instruction with face-to-face instructions (Hinkelman, 2018). As a result, the learner is in control over the context of where, when and how they work (Lynch & Dembo, 2004). The technological device is only used as a tool to maximize the opportunity for personalization and social learning (So, & Bonk, 2010; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; So & Brush, 2008). In other words, blended learning can be described as a mix of learning online and face-to-face approach (Ginns & Ellis, 2007).

In line with these educational developments, one of the main initiatives of the Malaysian Ministry of Education under the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) is the use of Blended Learning (BL) as a conduit for transforming existing pedagogy. “Blended learning models will become a staple pedagogical approach in all HLIs [Higher Learning Institutions]. Key initiatives include: Making online learning an integral component of higher education and lifelong learning, requiring up to 70% of programmes to use blended learning models” (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013, p. E-16).

Although blended learning can serve its purpose to reach out many students (extended reach), it may have its limitation and challenges in aspects of technology usability, the readiness, and capability of students in computer literacy. These three factors may be prominent in less developed countries as compared to First World Nations. Without a doubt, there are both positive and negative aspects in blended learning (Moskal, Dziuban & Hartman, 2013; Holley & Oliver, 2010). Additionally, the Learning Management System
The process of transforming teaching and learning is a complex process which may involve changes in teachers' beliefs and conception of teaching and learning. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015 – 2025 (Higher Education) lists transformation of the delivery of higher education as one of the shifts in the aspiration to deliver a world-class higher education system. For this purpose, change is required in the processes of learning so as to develop students with enhanced capabilities to be future-ready Malaysians, as well academics who could perform this task (Ministry of Education, 2015). Hence, academics and students alike may need to unlearn and relearn concepts of teaching and learning.

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