



Editors' Introduction

The papers and case studies in this issue demonstrate diverse ways of harnessing information and communication technologies to support and enhance student learning. A common theme of the contributions is the requirement that deployment of the technologies be pedagogically informed. Whilst few would argue with this view it is also increasingly apparent that student expectations and experiences are influencing deployment of new technologies in higher education; as Benson observes, 'Mobile learners are today equipped with iPods, handhelds, smartphones, or an advanced combination'. It is arguably the case that for students 'e-learning' is becoming as outmoded a term as 'book learning'.

The research of Bates *et al.* shows how careful design of online learning materials can accommodate students' heterogeneous learning needs through offering non-linear online pathways that allow students to personalise their learning. Creanor *et al.* emphasise the necessity of listening to learners' voices by eliciting their experiences, perspectives and intentions related to online learning; we must, they say, acknowledge, 'the integration of learning into increasingly complex lifestyles'. In emphasising the value of learning as members of online communities, Skinner & Derounian translate principles and practices from their discipline area of community development to the creation and sustainability of online communities.

The case studies illustrate succinctly innovative ways of integrating new technologies into vocational and placement learning (Callaghan *et al.* and Sadler & Nelson). They demonstrate how learning can be developed and supported through blogs and podcasts by, for example, 'extending learning activities outside the classroom' (Gallop). Through the use of 'e-galleries' Reeves and O'Brien show how student assessment benefits from constructive feedback and reflection. Webster's conclusion in the final case study might usefully be broadened to encompass the range of strategies presented in this issue of LATHE; he refers to the value of 'useful and enlivening' approaches 'in the array of pedagogic strategies we employ in helping students to engage with us, with ideas, and with each other'.

Phil Gravestock and Kristine Mason O'Connor
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