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Innovative Instructional Technologies

J.UCS Special Issue

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It is a great honour for me to edit this special issue of Universal Journal of Computer Science for the selected papers submitted to "Innovative Educational Technology". As a guest editor of this issue, I am glad to see a variety of articles focusing on mobile learning, interactive learning environments, pedagogical agents, and virtual classes.

The initial paper is called "Effectiveness of Cloud Systems and Social Networks in Improving Self-directed Learning Abilities and Developing Positive Seamless Learning Perceptions". This study aims to analyze the conditions which affect students' perception on self-directed abilities and seamless learning using cloud systems and social network applications. Mobile Supported Seamless Learning (MSSL) spaces support flexibility in place and time of learning, improve learners' self-directed learning, and change their perceptions on seamless learning.

The second paper, "Meta-Cognitive Tool Development for History Teaching: Investigating How Software Usability Affects Student Achievements", presents a Meta-Cognitive Tool (MCT) development for history teaching. The tool was developed to support teaching history of civilization courses at the engineering faculty. In the study, results show that the usability of any education tool has effect on the achievement of the learner. Noteworthy, a correlation was found between Grade Point Average (GPA) and usability scores.

The third paper is "Evaluation of Turkish "E-Okul" System in Terms of Usability". The current study aims at evaluating the "e-Okul" system used by parents, students and teachers in terms of usability, identifying the factors affecting its usability, and later offering some suggestions to increase its effectiveness and quality. According to the results of the study, the users report some design and navigation problems, especially regarding the pages enabling access to student information. Nevertheless, parents and students were found to be satisfied with the "e-Okul" system.

The forth paper is "The Use of Social Networking Sites in Education: A Case Study of Facebook". The purpose of this research was to find out how Facebook and Web 2.0 tools create a positive effect when used in education and to investigate teachers' opinions about the online learning environment. Results indicate that Facebook virtual environment helps teachers to carry out many activities with online classes, which is not possible to do in schools. Teachers are convinced that this environment helps students not only to improve their team work, but also to improve

their learning skills. Based on the findings, recommendations are made about using Facebook in education.

The fifth paper is "Tweeters on Campus: Twitter as a Learning Tool in Classroom?" Twitter is a well-known Web 2.0 micro blogging social networking site that is quite popular for organizing events and sharing updates. Based on these discussions, it was discovered that Twitter has positive impact on informal learning, class dynamics, and motivation, as well as academic and psychological development of young students. However, the potential long-term impact of Twitter on academic performance of students and its long-term effect on learning is still worth investigating.

The sixth paper is "Parent Opinions with Regard to Elementary School Students' Use of the Internet". The study shows that parents of the students hold a positive opinion with regard to internet usage.

The seventh paper is "The Role of the iPad in the Hands of the Learner". The iPad is a well-known hand held interactive multimedia tool that has become very popular lately among teachers and students. The authors highlight the common misconceptions and conflicts related to the use of this new technology and discuss its advantages and challenges. They also sketch some of the future trends relevant to incorporating the iPad into our learning setups.

In conclusion, scholars from all over the world contributed to this issue of the journal. Our special thanks go to all reviewers, the publisher, and those involved in the process of publication. We would also like to express our gratitude to all authors who contributed to the issue. A total of 19 manuscripts were submitted for this issue and each manuscript was peer-reviewed by the reviewers specialized in the related field. At the end of the review process, a total of 7 high quality research papers were selected and accepted for publication.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the papers.

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Guest editor