Highlight: Learning to live together

SimAULA: Training our teachers through innovative methodologies based in serious games
SimAULA project offers a virtual medium for initial and lifelong teacher training. The project’s originality lies in the tool that its participants have designed, a simulation of the serious game variety. The game enables users (teachers in training, in this case) to put their skills into practice in an environment that simulates real classroom teaching.

Empowering youth with digital media and global learning collaboration
This initiative of the Global Education Project at Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University in Japan aims to create an online “agora” (an open gathering place in the antique), and then stimulate global discussion and collaboration among youth in Asia.

Moral education enhanced by internet in IT courses
Combining online moral discussion with traditional classroom IT courses, has the potential to help students to learn to understand each other.

News & Events

Learning with mobile technologies
How can mobile technologies advance literacy for all, especially in countries that are “book-poor but mobile-rich”? How can they support teachers’ professional development to improve education quality? And how can they further gender equality in education and increase opportunities for women and girls? These specific Education-for-All-related questions will be addressed during the Second Mobile Learning Week (MLW) which will take place in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 18 to 22 February 2013.

“Climate literacy” in the classroom
UNESCO and Samsung are launching a US$ 1 million two-year project to develop, pilot and distribute multimedia teacher-training materials on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Viet Nam. Funded by Samsung, the project focuses on climate change responses, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and biodiversity at the primary school level.

UNESCO launches online course in Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue
UNESCO supports the launch of an online course in Media and Information Literacy and intercultural dialogue. It is led by the Queensland University of Technology and will be offered over 13 weeks, from 25 February to 31 May 2013. Deadline: 18 January

Call for nomination for Prize of Excellence 2013
The International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) is inviting to nominate candidates for its Prize of Excellence 2013. The final date for receipt of nominations is April 1 2013.

Programmes & Projects
Mobile learning projects to empower rural women in Pakistan
A UNESCO distance post-literacy project in Pakistan based on mobile technology is getting results; up till 1500 women were already made literate. The Mobile Based Post Literacy programme tries to address the literacy retention issues among young rural women, aged between 15 and 25, by keeping them interested in literacy through the mobile phone.

Resources
Analyzing ICT and education policies in developing countries
For the last year or so, the World Bank had been collecting policy documents related to ICT use in education from around the world, with a specific interest in trying to document policy intent in developing countries, especially in East Asia.

Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities
This paper explores variables related to how well the ICTs related needs of students with different disabilities are being met on campus at institutions of higher education, at home and in e-learning contexts.

How technology can change assessment
Many discussions of technology-based assessments concentrate on automating current methods of testing to save time and cost. However, technology also changes what educators can assess, how and when to assess it, and for what purpose.

Edmodo – “Where learning happens”
Edmodo aims to be a “one stop shopping place for all classroom digital needs”. This free application provides a way for teachers to create a Web 2.0 social learning environment.

Xplore Health – new teaching modules available
This portal aims to introduce students to the cutting-edge of biotechnological health research. Check out games, videos, experiments and teaching materials to teach your students about obesity, AIDS, mental health and genes.

Highlight: Learning to live together

SimAULA: Training our teachers through innovative methodologies based in serious games
SimAULA is a European Lifelong Learning Programme project aimed at offering a virtual medium for initial and lifelong teacher training. The project’s originality lies in the tool that its
participants have designed, a simulation of the serious game variety which enables users (teachers in training, in this case) to put their skills into practice in an environment that faithfully recreates the reality of teaching. Additionally, as a simulation, SimAULA makes it possible to avoid the negative consequences that teachers’ actions could have in the context of a real classroom. Possibilities for SimAULA’s future development include enabling users to customise teaching scenarios, so that classroom activities can be steered towards work related to different values or ethical or social issues of interest within a given curriculum.

When using the SimAULA platform, the teacher in training controls an avatar that interacts with student avatars (controlled automatically by SimAULA) in a virtual classroom, where lessons are taught and a series of situations liable to arise in a face-to-face environment are played out. By way of a specific example, the first version of SimAULA features a simulated biology class in which the teacher avatar has to help student avatars fulfil various learning goals.

As might be assumed, SimAULA requires a model for its student avatars’ behaviour and reactions to the teacher avatar’s decisions. Another factor in the platform’s complexity is its scope for applying different teaching strategies, assessment types, classroom structures, resources, etc. All those elements made it necessary to carry out an in-depth initial study of pedagogical and psychological aspects in play in classrooms. Even so, given the tremendously complex nature of human psychology and the practice of teaching, the resulting model represents only a small range of the possibilities that exist in a classroom.

**The vital role of the teacher in facilitating values in the classroom**

Undoubtedly one of the main functions of the teacher is related to the formation of knowledge, skills and competencies in students, i.e. – their cognitive development. Explicitly or implicitly, however, the teacher is a facilitator to construct the public and own values in the classroom environment and with his/her role models has a significant impact (positive or negative) on the emerging personalities of pupils. The important question here is whether universities prepare future teachers adequately in order to play their role of values facilitators in a way, which positively influences the formation of good and moral citizens.

The study, carried out within the SimAULA project on the key issues of practical preparation of future teachers showed that the value aspects of pupils’ personality development are not in the focus of the practicing students when teaching in the classroom. The priority objectives for them lie in the cognitive area and their main efforts are focused on the knowledge transmission. Objectives related to the values/character formation of the pupils appear to be the most difficult to implement in practical environment.
The research revealed that some serious issues and difficulties are experienced in the practical preparation of future teachers who rank the formation of pupils’ values as the least of the priorities in their practical preparation. On the one hand, the formation of values is an important mission for each teacher while on the other, the way that teachers’ practical preparation is structured and takes place do not allow teachers to learn the appropriate strategies for the formation of the pupils’ personality and be role models for transmission of values.

In this sense it is logical to seek new approaches for the development of such teacher skills, role models and strategies. In this aspect, what functions can take a virtual learning environment such as SimAULA to support development of such skills having in mind the complexity and invisibility of the nature of human values and their formation?

**SimAULA’s potential and specific uses of SimAULA and other serious games for work related to values**

The current version of SimAULA is intended to demonstrate that it is possible for part of teacher training to take place via a virtual platform based on a serious game. The aim is not to virtualise the lifelong teacher training curriculum in its entirety, as some of the learning that such training involves stems from direct contact with students and the experiences that arise therefrom. The current version of SimAULA thus has a number of limited functionalities, basically enough for the purpose of such demonstration. The platform’s envisaged evolution encompasses a whole further range of possibilities that develop the initial concept behind SimAULA, paving the way for greater openness, customisation, control and collaboration. Work related to values takes on particular significance in the light of all our ideas for continuing to develop the platform, as a future version must enable any user to configure their own classroom scenarios by introducing their own curriculum, teaching strategy, student characteristics, etc. The ways in which our platform has the potential to contribute to work on humanistic and social aspects in the classroom are listed below.

- Customising learning scenarios
- Reducing the need for physical presence in classrooms
- Interoperability with other virtual training systems
- Introducing different types of teaching content and goals
- Increasing the complexity of behaviour, the student modelisation, etc.
• Creating and testing new teaching strategies
• Collaborative platform, exchange of best practices
• Proposing a Multiplayer mode
• Working on interculturalism
• Including ‘singular students’ in classrooms
• Exchanging best practices among teachers
• Playing with pedagogical strategies or settings created by other teachers
• Training for teachers who live in remote locations or are unable to travel to placements for work or health-related reasons
• Training teachers around the world
• Assessing the performance of teachers in training

Authors:
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Further information:
• Download the presentation (pdf, 900kb) and paper (pdf, 240kb)

Related links:
Empowering youth with digital media and global learning collaboration

*By Manabu Ishihara, Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University, Japan*

In March 2012, the Global Education Project at Graduate School of Media Design, Keio University in Japan started AGORAsia Youth—a program that aims to provide ICT assisted global learning opportunities for youth in Asia. The name AGORAsia comes from an ancient Greek word agora that means an open gathering place for public meetings and discussions. This initiative is intended to bring this concept into Asia and create an online agora, and then stimulate global discussion and collaboration among youth in Asia. With the support of UNESCO’s CONNECT-Asia (Collaboration for Network-enabled Education, Culture, Technology and Sciences) to call for participants, 35 high and middle school students in Japan, Myanmar and South Korea joined the first series of AGORAsia Youth. The 2-day workshop used videoconference tools to connect all sites and students were given a relevant sustainable development related discussion topic: sustainable energy.

The challenges faced to design a global learning experience in AGORAsia Youth were:

1. **Designing a distance workshop curriculum for sustainable development**
   
   The energy topic is too broad as the program needed to be arranged in an attractive way in order to grab and keep students’ attention. Thus video production and storytelling lecture were included in the workshop. Students were divided into groups and assigned to create a video message on the theme: Energy—what can I do? They were first asked to research basic information and their regional situation about energy, share with peers and then think what people should do to make it sustainable. After that, they created a movie or digital story that summarizes all information. In that process, moreover, participants were encouraged working beyond the local level, exchanging and incorporating others’ materials into their own creations.
Through the global co-learning curriculum, participants could learn about energy issue in different countries with fun.

2. Making the best use of digital media
Whenever applying digital media into learning, educators have to choose tools carefully analyzing pros and cons, and optimize their potential in the learning context. In the case of AGORAsia Youth, students were offered video cameras, laptops and movie editing software for video production, and also a purpose-built website for communication during off session. The website was designed to stimulate empathy among participants even though they could not meet in person. Participants were able to browse students’ e-profile and self-introduction movies in order to know each others’ names and faces. Users could also upload data for exchanging materials for video production and post comments onto a BBS for sharing opinions.

3. English communication support
As communicating with peers overseas requires using a common language, AGORAsia Youth adopted English. However, most of the participants were not comfortable in speaking and writing in English, and the lack of students’ involvement may happen if there was no support. Thus facilitators who assist students’ understanding and speaking in English during the session are needed in each location.

After the workshop, the challenges above were evaluated according to the feedback from participants. In short, the workshop curriculum worked well for raising students’ awareness of sustainable energy. As an example, there was an enthusiastic comment from Myanmar: “I would like to let other people know the importance of energy in society by encouraging our neighbors and friends.” On the other hand, the website didn’t work as well as expected because apparently participants don’t spend much time using the Internet outside the school (off session). And also, English communication support during workshop needs to be improved because we realized that language barrier is thick and hard to overcome with only facilitators’ help. An interesting thing is that all respondents agreed the workshop was favorable even though there were some shortcomings. The results are still encouraging us to design innovative global learning experience for youth.

Further information:
- Download the [presentation](#) (pdf, 1.9mb) and [paper](#) (pdf, 1.5mb)

Related links:
- [The heart of education: Learning to live together](#) - 16th UNESCO-APEID International Conference
Moral education enhanced by internet in IT courses

Jing Ma  
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The rapid development of the internet and mobile technology offers learners more educational opportunities, and the prospect of transformative change in teaching and learning. Moreover, by the growing popularity of Internet culture, network is gradually changing not only people’s thinking ways, values and the spiritual world, but also traditional ethics, especially young people. For example, it is very important to discuss the problems about the intellectual property protection for online file sharing, the personal information leakage from on-line chatting and shopping, the strategies against hackers, cybercriminals, and etc. But the traditional method of moral education is usually to preach, ignoring the student's participation and emotional attitudes. This method is lacking a certain appeal to students, and even lead to make them produce reverse psychology.

Meanwhile, young people are one of the groups of the highest level of Internet users and the most important groups in mobile Internet users. The rates of these young Web surfers who are using the blog, forums, social networking sites and instant messaging, are higher than the average level of overall Internet users. So if they use the internet for fun, why not get them to use it for school? It is possible and necessary to combine the traditional classroom activities with new internet tools to provide limitless time and space for both teachers and students. But how to do it?

Considering this background, the blended learning theory may give an effective solution. Singh and Reed (2001) believe "Blended learning focuses on optimizing achievement of learning objectives by applying the ‘right’ learning technologies to match the ‘right’ personal learning
style to transfer the ‘right’ skills to the ‘right’ person at the ‘right’ time.” Blended learning not limited in one learning theory, combining traditional classroom teaching and online learning, dramatically increases time, space and the interactions between teachers and students. Using different learning methods, blended learning allows every student builds personalized learning space. Teachers’ working in a variety of roles, provide students with individualized guidance. During these teaching and learning process, students are able to access to all kinds of resources combining the advantages of a variety of media.

There are three steps for designing this kind of activities.

a) Choosing appropriate topics for moral discussion.

In order to conduct effective moral education through the activities, first of all, teachers need to choose an appropriate topic. Basically, the topic should be combining the practical skills, basic theories, and information literacy. But information literacy covers a wide area. For students in secondary school, the topic should be focus on basic things and close to students’ daily life. So the topics can be narrowed to the appropriate usage of internet, responsibility, and against crime. For example:

- Keep our computers secure on internet.
- Respect for personal privacy.
- Respect for intellectual property.
- Evaluate information received from internet carefully and objectively.
- Publish information on internet responsibly.

From these topics, students start from keep themselves safe, to learn to respect other people and their intellectual properties and to not only accept but also participate the informational society. Moreover, in order to sustain a high level of participation, these topics should be presented in some ethical dilemmas, and need to combine them with skills and theories.

b) Teaching process combining in-classroom and online study activities.

Figure 1. Teaching process

Both classroom and online activities have their benefits and disadvantages. For example, one of the most important advantages of online activities is the flexibility. They allow students

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to work asynchronously, which mean that they can discuss and continue coursework at the time and place of their choice, providing more space for individual study. At the same time, the disadvantages are also very obvious: the students need to be more self-motivated. Although today's internet technology provide vary of opportunities for instant communication such as message boards, online chatting and even videoconferencing, they still cannot replace the experience of face to face interaction. The traditional classroom allows immediate feedback, and an immediate social environment. So, on-line activities are used before and after the classroom activities (Figure 1.). Teachers give keywords and background materials for students to read and search before the classroom activities. This can improve students' ability of searching and summarizing certain information through internet. After the study and discussions in the classroom, teachers can also provide more materials online for further usage and discussion. The teachers have to think clearly about specific student and curriculum needs and the most effective means for presenting different types of content.

**c) Building appropriate environments for the activities.**

Focusing on the activities, students have different learning methods, while teachers play corresponding roles. So both the teachers and students need a lot of media and hardware. Nowadays, we have many tools developing rapidly and being widely used, such as blogs, wikis, Skype, chat rooms, discussion forums, social networking tools, etc. But, teachers need certain degree of technical proficiency to organize these online tools.

These activities, combining online moral discussion with traditional classroom IT courses, greatly helps students to learn to understand each other better and live to be together in this new virtual world. Furthermore, now, the online activities are using the social network sites, such as Facebook, which is not specially designed for education, and demanding certain degree of technical proficiency. The necessity of developing a unified supporting environment is open to discuss.

Further information:

- Download the [presentation](#) (pdf, 2mb) and [paper](#) (pdf, 440kb)

Related links:

- [The heart of education: Learning to live together](#) - 16th UNESCO-APEID International Conference

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:
UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

Visit our on-line forum and share your views

News & Events

Learning with mobile technologies

How can mobile technologies advance literacy for all, especially in countries that are “book-poor but mobile-rich”? How can they support teachers’ professional development to improve education quality? And how can they further gender equality in education and increase opportunities for women and girls?

These specific Education for All-related questions will be addressed during the Second Mobile Learning Week (MLW) which will take place in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 18 to 22 February 2013.

At the end of 2012 there were an estimated six billion mobile phone subscriptions in the world. The unprecedented uptake of mobile phones in particular, in both developed and developing countries opens up new possibilities for increasing education access, equity and quality. Mobile learning, a growing field of ICT in education, has the potential to significantly impact the delivery of education.

MLW 2013 is the UN flagship mobile learning event and will be attended by an international audience of ICT in education specialists, practitioners, policy makers and representatives from relevant NGOs and corporations.

As with UNESCO’s successful first MLW from 12-16 December 2011, the 2013 edition of MLW will share innovative ways of learning with, and through, mobile technologies, and how they can help achieve the Education for All goals and improve the quality of education.

A two-day symposium, from 18 to 19 February, forms the backbone of the event and features keynote speakers, demonstrations of mobile content and technology, and thematic breakout sessions.

On 20 February, UNESCO, in partnership with the GSMA, will host an invitation-only meeting of high-level government officials to discuss issues relating to mobile learning and policy.
A series of webinars will take place on 21 and 22 February. These online events will allow people all over the world to discuss topics related to mobile learning and will be moderated by leading thinkers in the field of ICT in education.

As the UN agency tasked with coordinating EFA, UNESCO is committed to investigating how information and communication technology—of which mobile devices are the most widespread—can help further progress towards Education for All.

Further information:

- Learning with mobile technologies

Related links:

- EFA crowdsourcing challenge prize winners
- Inviting public input on the UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Mobile Learning
- UNESCO leads discussion on mobile learning at WSIS Forum
- UNESCO and NOKIA held workshop on mobile technologies for teachers
- Mobile Science Project: Engaging students in science through mobile learning

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

- Visit our on-line forum and share your views
“Climate literacy” in the classroom

How to cope with the impact of climate change? This vital question is high on the international agenda. Climate change education is a central element of the global response to this issue. It should aim not only to foster public understanding of climate change and “climate literacy” among students, but also to reorient the entire education system to achieve low-emission and climate-resilient development. Achieving this transformation is UNESCO’s mission.

UNESCO and Samsung are launching a US$ 1 million two-year project to develop, pilot and distribute multimedia teacher-training materials on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Viet Nam. Funded by Samsung, the project focuses on climate change responses, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and biodiversity at the primary school level. UNESCO’s largest country-level ESD intervention, the project involves piloting teacher-training materials in primary schools in coastal Hue, a region particularly hit by the adverse effects of climate change. Materials developed through the project will be made available to all 133 teacher training institutions and 63 provincial Departments of Education and Training in the country. By the end of the project, each of the participating pilot schools will have formulated a school DRR and climate change response plan in collaboration with the local community. Collaboration with national universities and other stakeholders is foreseen.

“The Samsung-UNESCO ESD Project aims to create an enabling environment for promoting ESD and achieving a national vision of a learning society in Viet Nam,” said Katherine Muller-Marin, UNESCO Representative to Viet Nam.

“We would like to share our experience in overcoming challenges and innovations in creating a bright and sustainable future with those children who will shape tomorrow,” said In Yong Rhee, President and head of Samsung’s Communications Team.

The Samsung-UNESCO ESD project builds on UNESCO’s ongoing assistance to the Ministry of Education and Training activities in school-level DRR and climate change response in Viet Nam. The project will be a driving force to realize a resilient and sustainable society in Viet Nam through education.

Further information:

- “Climate literacy” in the classroom

Related links:

- Harnessing ICT to enhance Education for Sustainable Development
- ICTs in Education for Sustainable Development
- Serious games for ESD
Green Standards Week drives tech sustainability strategies
Rio+20 recognizes essential role of ICT and broadband networks as catalyst for sustainable development
ICTs for development: Improving policy coherence
ICTs and environmental sustainability
Launch of climate change education web portal
Sustainable development and education in the digital age
Sustainable ICT in further and higher education
A model for sustainable student involvement in community open source

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

- Visit our on-line forum and share your views

UNESCO launches online course in Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue

UNESCO supports the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) and Intercultural Dialogue University Network in the launch of an online course in MIL and intercultural dialogue. The course is designed for teachers, policy makers and professionals. It is led by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and will be offered over 13 weeks, from 25 February to 31 May 2013.

“We live in a world where the quality of information we receive largely determines our choices and ensuing actions, including our capacity to enjoy fundamental freedoms and the ability for self-determination and development,” says Janis Karklins, UNESCO’s Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information. Therefore, this course will assist teachers, policy makers and professionals to become agents of change through the development of MIL competencies in their communities and through enhancing intercultural understanding.

The course will focus on the following subjects:

- Intercultural dialogue and citizenship;
- Freedom of expression, freedom of information and understanding the news;
• Representation and languages in media and information;
• Advertising and citizenship;
• Information literacy and library skills;
• Communication;
• MIL and teaching/learning;
• MIL policies and strategies;
• Citizens and the media and technologies;
• Global media/technologies in an increasingly connected world; and
• Internet opportunities and challenges.

The course will be offered through QUT’s online learning system, Blackboard, and via Blackboard Collaborate. Most sessions will be self-directed, with ongoing interaction with the course presenters in the online space. There will be four ‘live’ sessions presented globally by international guest lecturers.

Participants will be able to complete the programme at basic, intermediate or advanced levels. Participants who successfully complete the basic and intermediate levels will receive a certificate of completion. Participants who successfully complete the advanced level of the course will be eligible to receive advanced standing towards a Master of Education or Graduate Certificate in Education at QUT.

Queensland University of Technology is an Australian and world leader in the provision of media and information literacy courses for students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. QUT’s Faculty of Education is Australia’s largest one and in the top two faculties for educational research.

In order to successfully complete this course participants will need regular access to a computer and Internet access to download documents, listen to podcasts and view online videos.

To apply, please download and complete the application form by 18 January 2013. There are no associated fees to participants who wish to follow this course.

This online course is part of UNESCO’s strategy to foster media and information literacy in societies, which includes:

• preparation of a model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers;
• facilitation of international cooperation;
• development of Guidelines for Preparing National MIL Policies and Strategies;
• articulation of a Global Framework on MIL Indicators;
• setting up the MIL University Network;
• articulation of and establishment of an International Clearinghouse on MIL in cooperation with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations;
• provision of Guidelines for Broadcasters on Promoting User-Generated Content and MIL.

Further information:

• UNESCO launches online course in Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue

Related links:

• Digital literacy across the curriculum handbook
• Common Sense media - providing trustworthy information in a world of media and technology
• Microsoft Digital Literacy
• Promoting teachers competencies on integration of ICT in teaching and learning

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

• UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

• Visit our on-line forum and share your views

Call for nomination for Prize of Excellence 2013

It is time to nominate candidates for the ICDE Prize of Excellence 2013!

The International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) Prize of Excellence was inaugurated in 1999 as the global prize of excellence in open and distance education. The ICDE is pleased to announce that ICDE Prizes of Excellence will be awarded in October 2013, at the 25th ICDE World Conference in Tianjin, China, to deserving institutions and individuals for the
highest possible excellence in the fields of open and distance education.

The ICDE Prize of Excellence will be awarded to deserving institutions and individuals in the following areas:

1. The Institutional Prize

This prize will be awarded to an institution, an association or a network of institutions for very significant achievements or contributions to the international community of open and distance education during the past five years. This relates particularly to leadership and innovation through mainstream developments, which contribute to the continuing enhancement of open and distance education, across cultural and linguistic barriers.

2. The Individual Prize

This prize will be awarded for:

A: Very significant contributions to the field over the past five years. The prize will focus on rewarding innovation and progress in the field, as well as very significant contributions to the international community of open and distance education during the past five years.

B: The Individual Prize of Excellence may also be awarded to individuals who have shown great leadership and excellence in the work of an educational association of open and distance education at national, regional or global level over the past 5-10 years, and moved the international agenda of ODL cooperation forward in a decisive manner.

3. The Prize for Lifelong Contribution to the field

The prize will award very significant lifelong contributions to the field. These lifelong achievements should represent significant contributions to the international community of open and distance education.

Nomination procedure /check list:

- Nominations can only be made by confirmed ICDE members for the year 2012/2013 and can be for institutions and individuals.
- Nominations should include a statement of support pointing out the concrete grounds for the nomination.
- Nominations must be signed either by the Chief Executive of the nominating institution or by at least three Senior Academics of ICDE member institutions.
- Self-nomination of an institution or individual is not permitted.
- Websites and links about the nominated candidates should be included in the documentation.
- Nominations could be sent by post or by e-mail.
• The ICDE Executive Committee and its members may not nominate candidates, though the institutions they represent may make nominations.

Selection of prize winners:

• The selection will be based on merit alone and according to the call for nominations.
• Prizes will be awarded only when the Jury agrees that a nominated candidate fulfils the criteria for excellence.
• No political or cultural considerations will be made.
• No member of the ICDE Executive Committee or the ICDE Board of Trustees may be eligible for the individual prize while in office.
• Nominees will be informed about the outcome in due time before the Prize ceremony.
• The Prizes will be awarded in the form of the ICDE Prize of Excellence Statuette.
• The Prizes will preferably be awarded to the Prize winners in person during an ICDE conference.

The ICDE Prize Ceremony will take place 18 October 2013 in Tianjin, China during the 25th ICDE World Conference.


THE FINAL DATE FOR RECEIPT OF NOMINATIONS IS APRIL 1 2013.

Nominations should be sent by e-mail to icde@icde.org.

More information: burns.idium.net/icde.org/en/icde_news/Call+for+nomination+for+Prize+of+Excellence+2013.b7C_wJDO5e.ips

Programmes & Projects

Mobile Learning Projects to Empower Rural Women in Pakistan

A UNESCO distance post-literacy project in Pakistan based on mobile technology is getting results; up till 1500 women were already made literate. The Mobile Based Post Literacy programme tries to address the literacy retention issues among young rural women, aged between 15 and 25, by keeping them interested in literacy through the mobile phone. In
Pakistan, more than 100 million people have access to a mobile phone. They have become a significant means of communication among the youth population.

Recently, 50 additional literacy centres were established in Pakistan and an extra 2,500 women were expected to finish the Mobile Based Post Literacy programme by end of November 2012, after receiving test messages for 2-5 months. The programme consists of two parts. In the first part, the women receive daily text messages in Urdu and are expected to respond to them. The messages contain interesting topics which participants can relate to such as health and religious values. In the second part of the programme, a monthly evaluation is given to assess the knowledge and literacy levels gained by participants. Interactive exercises and additional resources are also provided.

UNESCO implemented the “Mobile Based Post Literacy Pilot Project” in 2009 in partnership with Mobilink Pakistan and BUNYAD Foundation, Lahore (a leading NGO in the field of Literacy and NFBE). Due to the success of the previous phase, additional partners joined the project, such as Dhaka Ahsania Mission Pakistan and the Punjab Department of Literacy and NFBE, Lahore. As a result, UNESCO, in collaboration with all the partners, initiated a third phase in March 2012. In this phase, other forms of ICTs are being used in the classrooms during the teaching cycle. UNESCO is providing its interactive DVD, “Becoming Literate” and Nokia Pakistan developed the Application “e-Taleem” based on the contents of this interactive DVD, which can be accessed through Nokia’s mobile phones. This App is also available on the internet at UNESCO Islamabad’s website.

UNESCO is also implementing a six-month project, starting in December 2012, for capacity-building of 30 Rural Female Teachers on Literacy & NFBE methodologies using Mobile Technologies in collaboration with Punjab Department of Literacy and NFBE, Lahore. During this project over 750 mobile messages on various topics, such as health and hygiene, language, religious values, numeracy and teacher training will be sent to the teachers. After six-months, the project will be evaluated by a third party.

Illiteracy represents an enormous challenge for assuring a high standard of living. An estimated 122 million youth globally are illiterate, of which young women represent 60.7%. In Pakistan, a country with one of the lowest literacy rates in Asia, there is a particularly large gender gap. The literacy rate for males over 15 years is 67% while for females it is 42%. One of the reasons for this low literacy rate is a limited access to reading materials. New literates should have constant access to reading materials for at least three months after learning to read. Furthermore, it is difficult to keep new literates motivated to stay literate. Mobile phones can bring a solution to this problem.
Further information:

- Teacher Support and Development
- Mobile-based Literacy Programme
- Beyond basic training: 30 teachers to be taught through mobile phones (The Tribune)

Related links:

- New publication: Mobile learning and policies: Key issues to consider
- Inspiring the young Thais via SMS
- Collaborative Learning 2.0 for Pakistan
- New UNESCO paper on mobile learning: Global themes
- Learning in a book-poor, mobile-rich world

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Resources

Analyzing ICT and education policies in developing countries
*By Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, World Bank*

For the last year or so, we [The World Bank] have been collecting policy documents related to ICT use in education from around the world, with a specific interest in trying to document policy intent in developing countries, especially in East Asia. This is one component of a larger initiative at the World Bank called Systems Approach for Better Education Results, or SABER. As part of our SABER-ICT project, we are trying to help policymakers as they attempt to assess and compare their own policies against those of comparator countries around the world. Here's a very real scenario:
An education minister approaches the World Bank and asks for help in formulating an 'ICT in education' policy, in preparation for what is intended to be a large scale investment in educational technologies. She asks us:

**What might be important to include in such a policy?**

While a lot of useful things have been written on this topic, it can often be difficult to present evidence-based policy advice related to ICT use in education to inform large scale investments in educational technologies across an education system based on hard, rigorously collected data for the simple reason that there is actually not a lot of rigorously collected, globally comparable data out there.

(This is slowly beginning to change: For a few years the World Bank has participated in an international Working Group on ICT Statistics in Education (WISE) led by UIS, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, that is gathering internationally comparable data in this area as part of a larger international, multi-stakeholder initiative to improve the availability and quality of ICT data and indicators, particularly in developing countries. The results from this important initiative will provide key inputs into the World Bank's SABER-ICT initiative going forward.)

This is not to say that we know nothing about policy development in this area. Here at the World Bank, we have of course had some quite useful and successful experiences in helping dozens of countries with the process of developing such policies, and we do try to stay connected to and learn from experiences in other countries where we are not, or have not been, directly involved. (For many years, we used something called the ICT-in-Education Toolkit for Policymakers, Planners and Practitioners to help facilitate this process; unfortunately this web-based collaborative planning tool is no longer maintained) [Note: The toolkit is still accessible, however hasn't been updated since a while - the editors]

Rather, it is meant as a reminder that

(1) much of what we do 'know' is based on anecdotal evidence, or on theories (*hypotheses* might actually be the more accurate term) that are not supported by a rich evidence base demonstrating cause-and-effect (or sometimes, even loose correlation)

(2) much of what we collectively 'know' is derived from experiences from OECD countries that may or may not be relevant to middle and low income countries

(For what it's worth, we do seem to have an increasingly good handle on what doesn't work.)

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*Back to the question that was posed near the top of this blog post*: One response to the challenge from the education minister would be to present what global best practice suggests are the important components of an ICT/education policy in a general, abstract sense. This is useful, but only to a
certain point. We find that ministries of education are often more (or at least just as) interested in studying the specific policies in place in other countries as part of an exploratory process of investigating, identifying and articulating what they wish to include in their own policies.

In our experience, countries are interested in policies from four types of places:

1. **Global 'best practice' examples**
   As a practical matter, these usually tend to be policies from places like the United States, Singapore and South Korea. While often rightly considered leading global examples, the relevance of such policies for (for example) a low-income country in Africa just now seriously considering investments in educational technologies, and so contemplating the development of its first related policy, or even for a middle income country from Eastern Europe or Central Asia which has had more experience over a longer period of time, but only a very basic related policy to help guide new investments, can often be somewhat questionable.

2. **Countries that are 'just a bit more advanced than we are in this area' (aspirational comparators)**
   While policies from Country X may represent global best practice, policies from Country Y, which not too long may have been in the position much like that of the country considering the development of a new ICT/education policy, may actually offer better models.

3. **Similar countries (comparators)**
   Ministers are often interested in what countries 'like us' (essentially at the same general stage of development, with similar characteristics, etc.) are doing.

4. **Neighboring countries**
   Not surprisingly, ministers are also often quite interested in 'what the neighbors are doing'.

It is not terribly difficult to find the small number of policies that fit under category #1, as most places look to OECD examples in this regard, and policies from such places are often quite easy to track down on the Internet, or via consultants who regularly work providing related advice.

Do experiences from OECD countries (or those at similar level of economic development, like Singapore) in this regard really represent 'best practice'? I am reminded of the story about the man who lost his keys, and so was found looking for them under a lamp post, 'because that's where the light is'. Perhaps the keys are indeed to be found in the near vicinity ... but it just might be useful to shine some light on other places as well.

Policy documents from middle income or upper lower income countries that may offer more relevant short and medium term inspiration (category #2) are often more difficult to locate, however, and those from categories #3 and #4 can often be *extremely* difficult to find. We are especially interested in investigating and sharing policies from these last three categories. As part of this effort, we maintain a big list of policy documents that we have collected. (Here’s some [background](background) on this [effort](effort), and a link to the [latest full document list](latest_full_document_list). If we are missing any,
please send them along to us!) And who knows: It just might be possible that some of the
policies under categories #2-4 may belong in category #1 as well!

We readily concede that there is a major limitation in just examining policy documents: They
only signal *intent*, and typically contain little insight into whether a given policy (or policy
component) was or is being implemented faithfully, nor do they document what impact (if any)
resulted from the implementation of related policy guidance. Still, we think there is a value in
trying to investigate and analyze policy intent -- if you don’t know what you hope to achieve,
how will you know what you should be monitoring over time, let alone to link any observed
outcomes or impact with specific policy guidance that may have been offered?

Based on our preliminary review of policy documents, we find that most ICT/education policies
address the following topics to varying degrees:
1. Vision & planning
2. ICT infrastructure
3. Teachers
4. Skills and competencies
5. Learning resources
6. Education management information systems
7. Monitoring & evaluation, research & 'innovation'
8. Equity, inclusion and safety

We have also noted a number of 'cross-cutting themes' that regularly appear in a few policies,
related to things like distance education / distance learning; ‘mobile learning’; early childhood
development (ECD); open educational resources; community engagement; and data privacy
that are on the agenda for certain sub-sets of countries.

Now, reasonable people can perhaps disagree on whether or not these are in fact the
components that good ICT/education policies *should* contain. One (decidedly modest, perhaps)
initial goal under SABER-ICT is to try to document what such policies *actually do* contain, in the
belief that such information is operationally relevant to ministries of education and their
partners who are devising such policies going forward. Over time, it appears that how various
national policies address these eight topics appears to change, and so we are also trying to
assign a general ‘stage’ to each country’s consideration of a particular topic. *Our intention in
doing so is not to judge* -- given that we can’t link various policy components to specific outcomes,
we don’t pretend to be able to say what is necessarily a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ policy approach to a
given topic. Instead, our hope is that, by making this classification, countries may be able to
more quickly locate policies that are relevant to their particular circumstances.

Here’s a concrete example of what we’re talking about:

As part of a policy component that seems to relate to ‘vision and planning’, many countries
identify specific institutional arrangements related to the oversight and implementation of
ICT/education initiatives. Generally speaking, policies seem to address this issue in four ways by articulating intentions related to having:

1. No dedicated group/unit/agency for ICT in education
2. A plan to set up a unit/agency on ICT in education (or a very small group exists with this responsibility)
3. A dedicated, professionally staffed unit/agency for ICT in education
4. A dedicated, professionally staffed focal unit/agency charged with implementing policies on ICT in education which actively coordinates with other organizations on ICT/education issue

If a country is currently at stage #1 here, it may be useful for them to have a look at what policies from countries that have be classified as being at stages #2 and #3 might say, as such countries might offer useful opportunities for learning and comparison. If you are considering doing something that another place has already been trying to do (or indeed has done), perhaps there might be some relevant lessons that can be learned from related experiences in that other place?

Now, there is room for interpretation here, obviously, and the assignment of a policy’s consideration of a particular issue to correspond to one of these four 'stages' is perhaps rather artificial. The World Bank’s education sector has decided to use this sort of four-stage categorization across all of the different policy domains ('ICT’ is just one of them, here’s a full list), and so we have adopted it as well. Conveniently, the Working Group on ICT Statistics in Education (WISE) in which we participate has for many years also utilized a four-stage categorization of this sort to inform its analyses of ICT use in education around the world, so our efforts under SABER-ICT to analyze national ICT/education policies correspond to the general approaches under both SABER and WISE.

By Michael Trucano, Sr. ICT & Education Specialist, World Bank
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Further information:

- Analyzing ICT and education policies in developing countries - EduTech blog, World Bank

Related links:

- UNESCO stresses teachers’ role in maximizing use of ICT in education
- AMFIE 2012 - Summary of the Forum
- New publication: Mobile learning and policies: Key issues to consider
- Statisticians gather in Seoul to discuss ICT4E indicators
Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities

By Catherine S. Fichten, et.al.
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Purpose: To explore variables related to how well the information and communication technologies (ICTs) related needs of students with different disabilities are being met on campus at institutions of higher education, at home and in e-learning contexts. We also explore the disciplines and programmes pursued by students with different disabilities and the specialised ICTs they use.

Method: A total of 1,354 Canadian university and junior/community college students with various disabilities completed the POSITIVES Scale.

Results: Post-secondary students often have several disabilities which may affect how easily they can use ICTs. Students’ disabilities also influence the specialised ICTs they use and how well their ICT-related needs are being met. While the findings indicate that, overall, students’ ICT-related needs are generally well met, the results also show that these are better met on campus than at home, and at colleges than at universities. This is not related to institution size or to students’ disciplines.

Conclusions: Our results show more favourable than unfavourable findings. Nevertheless, there are concerns around the availability of computers with adaptive software/hardware in specialised laboratories as well as with institutional ICT loan programmes; funding for ICTs for personal use; training, both on and off campus; and technical support off campus.

Read the full paper:
• Information and communication technology related needs of college and university students with disabilities

Related links:

• UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities
• Report on the Consultative meeting on ICTs and disabilities
• e-Accessibility Policy Toolkit for persons with disabilities
• Consultative meeting on ICTs and disabilities
• Improving child literacy in Africa: Experiments with an automated reading tutor
• Interactive session on ICT and persons with disabilities

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How technology can change assessment
Many discussions of technology-based assessments concentrate on automating current methods of testing to save time and cost. However, technology also changes what educators can assess, how and when to assess it, and for what purpose.

Assessments can be embedded in ICTs, and have the potential to measure learning processes, in addition to end-of-lesson knowledge. Technology-aided assessments are useful not only in the evaluation of ICTs, but also as part of the design process, leading to iterative improvement.

This brief focuses on assessment in ICTs, discussing how technology-enabled assessments can be leveraged to improve ICT design and student learning.

Read the full publication:

• How technology can change assessment
Related links:

- PeerWise
- Standards for the 21st-century Learner by AASL
- Free administrative software for schools around the world
- UNESCO evaluation shows student achievement increases by combining professional learning, compelling interactive digital content and technology in the classroom

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Edmodo – “Where learning happens”
Edmodo aims to be a “one stop shopping place for all classroom digital needs”. This free application provides a way for teachers to create a Web 2.0 social learning environment.

Edmodo provides methods for teachers to easily assign, collect, and grade work. Links and embed codes can also be used to share work easily, and Edmodo integrates well with other popular educational applications. Teachers can create class-wide schedules to help students keep up with important dates, while students can add their individual details to personal and private calendars.

The application also gives a platform for teachers to create a digital library of necessary files, so that students can access them from any computer. Teachers and students can interact with one another through a system of messages, while the parent connection allows parents to check grades and see posts to the class by the teacher and their child. Finally, teachers can create groups for classes, parents, study groups or connecting with distant classrooms. This feature keeps students safe and contains content only specific to certain groups.

While similar in many ways to BlackBoard or other course management software, EdModo is extremely user-friendly and could be a cost-effective method to use ICT to enhance the efficiency of the modern classroom.
Further information:

- Edmodo

Related links:

- ICT-Supported Project-based Learning: the Myths and Truths
- Connected Community Learning Centres
- ITU launches Girls in ICT web portal
- Inter-Agency Network on Education Simulation Models (ESM)

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Xplore Health – new teaching modules available
Xplore Health is a European educational portal for secondary schools with the aim of introducing students to the cutting-edge of biotechnological health research. Check out the newest games, videos, experiments and teaching materials to teach your students about obesity, AIDS, mental health and genes.

Further information:

- Xplore Health

Related links:
• Explore interactive biology
• explania – Explanations through animations
• Google Body browser – a 3D journey through your body
• UNESCO launches first computer game for young people on HIV and AIDS
• Physion - Physics simulation software

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