

# Abstracts

## **Encounters on Education: Volume 6, Fall 2005**

### **Les communautés d'apprenants en réseau au bénéfice de l'éducation**

(114 KB PDF)

**Thérèse Laferrière, Université Laval, Canada**

The contribution of information and communication technologies to pedagogical innovation is understood from the cognitive and social perspectives on learning. The notion of networked communities is put forward and three application models are presented: the classroom-based learning community, the community of practice, and the knowledge building community. These three models are illustrated: context, participants, cultural artifacts, and digital tools. These emerging models and related social technical designs are in the reach of those willing to use the Internet for their own learning and for helping others to learn in a collaborative manner.

Key words: Classroom-based learning communities. Information technology. Information society.

### **The Design of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Environments in Higher Education**

(113 KB PDF)

**Begoña Gros, Vania Guerra and Javier Sánchez, University of Barcelona, Spain**

The main goal of this article is to analyze the implications of computer supported collaborative learning in higher education. To achieve this goal, we will describe the situation of the current research in this field and will focus our attention on the issues relating to the design of the conditions to promote collaborative processes and knowledge building. In the second part of the article, we will concentrate on the analysis of the results that we have obtained with the use of the programme Knowledge Forum as a support during the collaborative process in higher education.

Key words: Collaborative learning. Higher education. Information and communication technologies.

## **Educación Superior Sin Barreras: La accesibilidad de las universidades para los estudiantes con discapacidad**

(170 KB PDF)

**Carmen Alba Pastor, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain**

Higher Education institutions have developed online information services and degrees as an echo of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) incidence in all society fields. Equal access to education is a fundamental right; but equal access to higher education for people with disabilities is far from being achieved yet. To this inequality has to be added the difficulty of some groups to participate in the information society, the so-called infoexclusion. The short number of students with disabilities in higher education makes evident the presence of barriers for this people to get into this educational level. One of them is the low degree of accessibility to digital services and studies offered by the Universities, something that can be considered a new kind of segregation.

Key words: Accessibility. Disability. Higher education. Information and communication technologies. Information society.

## **Praxis reflexiva en los espacios virtuales de formación**

(128 KB PDF)

**Joaquín García Carrasco, Universidad de Salamanca, Spain**

Reflective praxis is advocated within the current formative context to the benefit of both the quality of practice and the trainers' own self concept. Action is the main formative tool; it must be understood from its own autonomy and from the representation that teacher educators build upon it. Two main perspectives are offered: the perspective of individual action and the perspective of the action mediated by the inter-subjective relationship and by practice. The reflective praxis becomes an imperative given the cultural contingency posed by the information and communication technologies. The understanding between practices-in and practices-with is differentiated to point

out that formative action is always an action mediated by technology. It is also highlighted that it is in the comprehension of practice where the epistemological continuity between theory and practice takes place. Theory provides the rational scaffolding from which the creativity in practices is built.

Key words: Reflective praxis. Information and communication technologies.

## **Teaching and learning in the knowledge society**

(114 KB PDF)

**Dr Beatriz Fainholc, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Argentina**

The education processes within the knowledge society of the twenty-first century involve a complex analysis and transformation of learning and teaching proposals. The ubiquitous penetration of technology and especially of ICT contributes to new cultural profiles of social, political and economic organizations and of course also has an impact on education. The decentralization, personalization, increased flexibility, technologic convergence, and other effects of telematic networks call for both an extension of educational programs in the framework of lifelong learning programs and also require measures to overcome exclusion in the face of the new social, technologic and economic demands. Strategic learning, the teaching of comprehension, virtual collaborative groups, and teachers as facilitators – both in face to face and remote education – will help to develop autonomy, strengthen communication and technological abilities, and foster problem solving skills in order to make decisions and participate in the improvement of quality of life through flexible structures, open mentalities, and equitable ethical values. Within this framework, learning and teaching in the knowledge society of the twenty-first century will be conceived for personal self regulation and social self sustainable alternative development. The scenarios include creative competencies and flexible attitudes through the practice of comprehensive and critical reading and thinking, emotional education, free expression, contrasted transference into reality, and participation within diversity. The latter implies a respect to local identity to foster the search for universal peace, democratic

coexistence and continuous improvement.

Key words: Strategic learning, Comprehensive teaching in the knowledge society. Self regulation. Self sustainable social development.

## **Guidelines to the Edge: Integrating Information Communication Technologies in Education**

(75 KB PDF)

**Denise Stockley, Queen's University, Canada**

Many institutions are in a state of flux in relation to the implementation and use of information communication technology (ICT) by faculty, staff, and students. Earlier research (Stockley 2002) indicates that most institutions are neither at the beginning – nor the end of the implementation continuum; rather, they are more likely to be found somewhere in the middle as institutions vary in their degree of integration. Institutions that are characterized by technological innovation are a rarity: most of us would rather read about bleeding edge technologies than experience the unwanted fallout first hand; nor can most institutions make the necessary financial commitments associated with being on the leading edge. This paper briefly visits historical aspects of technology innovations, implementation strategies and finally, focuses on approaches or guidelines to assist in getting to the edge.

Key words: Higher education. Information and communication technologies.

## **Information and Communications Technology: Plugging Ontario Higher Education into the Knowledge Society**

(93 KB PDF)

**Jamie-Lynn Magnusson, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Canada**

In this article I examine information and communications technology (ICT) in the context of changes to higher education. My analysis uses Ontario as a case study to illustrate that ICT and the knowledge society discourse is not about technological innovation per se. Rather the discourse legitimates neoliberal

reforms to the higher education sector to lay the ground for participation in international markets. That is, these reforms enable privatization of higher education in keeping with pressures exerted by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). The case of Ontario is interesting because of the strategies used to "sell" massive neoliberal reforms to a public that has been, generally speaking, quite protective of its public services. The strategies and mechanisms used to "plug Ontario into the Knowledge Society" reveal how GATS works in local jurisdictions, and contributes to the study of how education within social welfare states comes to take on market characteristics.

Key words: Information technology, Higher education, Knowledge society, Neoliberal economics, World Bank, GATS, WTO.