



Dear Readers,

The fourth issue of the *International Journal of Instruction* publishes five articles that address a variety of representative issues of the whole spectrum of Instruction related Sciences research directions. You will have the opportunity to read detailed studies that try to identify the factors affecting learning outcomes (such as emotions) or the effect of the usage of technological artifacts (such as the graphic calculators) by students, or even the secondary effects of weblogs usage to the writing performance of students. In addition, two articles refer directly or indirectly to Educational Policy, as it can be the case of the need to support the teachers' laptop ownership (in order to improve their teaching methods), or the more typical theme of curriculum reform regarding social sciences in primary education. These five articles, even if they refer to specific countries, can be taken into account by researchers and educators in other countries and continents also.

The first paper deals with factors that seem to influence learning processes, learning performances as well as social interactions in educational settings, while the scientific community has not explored them enough yet, as it is the case of affective and emotional factors. Christoph Randler's article entitled "Association between emotional variables and school achievement" contributes in this direction, exploring the relations (in terms of correlations) between what is characterized as positive emotions (in this study: interest, well-being) and learning outcome, as well as between what is characterized as negative emotions (in this study: anxiety, boredom) and learning outcomes. The present study refers to the learning outcomes of a specific subject matter unit related to biology courses, addressed to an important number of secondary education students.

The second paper refers to the use and integration of graphic calculators to every day teaching courses of mathematics in the school system of a specific country (Malaysia). We should note that these calculators are already integrated in some countries (such as the USA), while in other countries (in Europe, Asia, Africa, etc) this educational policy decision has not been taken yet. The interest of the present study is that it aims to show concrete learning effects of the usage of graphic calculators in secondary education students, regarding specific learning topics (such as straight lines topics), as well as some metacognitive effects (including awareness, strategy, planning, self-checking).

During last years, the study of Web2.0 tools, for formal and informal learning purposes engage an important number of researchers worldwide. Ozgur Simsek's paper invites us to explore the usage of weblogs in a new way, in particular studying the effects of the weblogs usage by university students (primary education students) in their writing performance. The researcher has come to the conclusion that weblog integrated writing instruction improved the writing performance of the students that have favorable perception of weblog use.

The necessity and the effect of computer ownership or even more of laptop ownership by teachers in education has been explored in a smaller or larger scale in a number of countries. In the study entitled "Laptop ownership and use among educators: reflections from school teachers in Malaysia" written by the researchers M.N. Khambari, P. Moses and W.S. Luan, you can read an in depth identification of the benefits and the challenges of owning and using laptops as they are perceived by secondary education teachers in Malaysia.

Reform in Social Sciences Curriculum that involves innovations in the teaching approaches of the subject matter of History addressed to primary education students often constitutes a critical and controversial theme of Educational Policy. The final article of the present volume presents and comments the recent reform of history teaching curriculum in primary education in Turkey, that is organized around learning activities, taking into account children interests and their life's features, while the underlying aims include the development of history related essential intellectual skills, as well as the parallel support of citizenship education involving cultural acquisitions.

We hope that you will consider these papers fruitful for the research, the practice and the educational policy not only in your countries but also worldwide.

Sincerely,

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