MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear APSCE Members and Student Members,

For the past few years, I have been thrilled to witness our society constantly re-inventing itself and launching new programs and services. To take on this momentum and excitement, I am glad to share with you some of the new elements that will be further added to the upcoming ICCE, the key activity of our society. First, several high-standing international conferences (e.g. International Society of the Learning Sciences) will hold receptions at ICCE to enable our members to build links with a larger research community of similar themes.

Second, special sessions of a distinct focus (e.g., “Meet Meet the Associate Editors of Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning” “Funding for Research in Technology Enhanced Learning in the European Union”) will be included where information on journal paper submission and financial supports for research will be available.

Third, a new presentation category, Work-In-Process Posters, is recently being set up to welcome topics of a burgeoning nature. Finally, to help SIGs develop their regional communities and identity, a special fund has been allocated to support various activities (e.g., for invited speaker, SIG gathering, etc.). With the concerted effort of program and organizing committee and APSCE EC members, as can be expected, the academic and professional quality of the Conference will be upheld. Look forward to seeing you in Malaysia in November!

With best wishes
Fu-Yun Yu

REPORTS FROM THE RECIPIENTS OF THE MERIT AWARD

This issue includes the reports of Ke Zhao and Longkai Wu, two of the winners of the APSCE Merit Scholarship Award in 2009. They share with us the experiences gained from ICCE2009.

Ke Zhao is a student at the University of Hong Kong. Longkai Wu is a PhD student at the National Institute of Education, Singapore, supervised by Chee Kit Looi.

Dear Editor,

It is a great pleasure for me to be awarded a merit scholarship by APSCE in 2009, which made my attendance to the 17th International Conference in Computers in Education a most enjoyable and fruitful experience. I am very grateful to the APSCE scholarship selection committee for recognizing my academic research work and my ongoing contributions to the Asia-Pacific computers in education research community.

This is my second time to attend the international conference on Computers in Education. Inspired by the constructive comments and suggestions from the advisers in Doctoral Students Consortium in ICCE 2008, I made remarkable progress in my PhD thesis study and paper writing. My ICCE 2009 paper, coauthored with my supervisor Dr. Carol Chan, entitled as “Conceptual, Metacognitive and Collaborative Learning in Computer-Supported Inquiry for Chinese Tertiary Business Students” was nominated for “Best Student Paper Award” by the panel of reviewers in Learning Sciences/CSCL. To me, the DSC one-to-one mentoring session before the main conference of ICCE was a most valuable learning experience. As a young PhD student, I felt very privileged to have been provided a good opportunity to consult the key scholar(s) in CSCL.
was lucky that, in this event, my paper was reviewed and commented by two prestigious CSCL scholars, Prof. Peter Reimann and Prof. Gerry Stahl. Prof. Reimann’s place and gave their constructive comments on my ICCE paper, which allowed me to better prepare for the paper presentation on the main conference and for the later journal paper revision as well.

Besides, my paper presentation at ICCE 2010 stimulated illuminating discussions on the research design and methods in relation to the key issues in CSCL research. Comments and criticisms were extremely valuable for me to deepen inquiry and further refine research methods and analyses, which provided tremendous inspirations to my thesis writing and journal paper preparation. Listening to other talks by established scholars and raising questions for further discussion helped me keep abreast of the cutting-edge knowledge in the field and participate in the collaborative knowledge building process. I experienced an intellectual growth in this nurturing community.

In addition to my academic growth in the community, I was most pleased to have been able to assist in organizing the Doctoral Student Consortium under the leadership of Prof. YU Fuyun and Prof. Wong Suluan. Working with other colleagues, we made great endeavors to make it a most academic stimulating and community-building event. Junior PhD student participants shared their research ideas and received valuable feedbacks and comments from the three advisers and other senior PhD students. The DSC proceedings helped the participants experience the whole process of paper publication. Social events, such as informal lunch gathering, were relaxing and conducive to socializing and community-building. I myself benefited from organizing this event, even during the busiest time of my thesis writing, for doing this enhanced my collaborative and innovative problem-solving skills and contributed to the community.

ICCE 2009 was important to me in terms of my personal academic and research development as an independent researcher and my contributions to the ASPCE research community, particularly among the junior PhD participants. Again I would like to express my sincere thanks to APSCE for their generous support to make ICCE 2009 a most fruitful experience. The received recognition from APSCE would be a source of motivation to encourage me to continue to serve the community in the future.

Yours sincerely,
Coco Ke Zhao

Dear Editor,

I attended the ICCE 2009 held in Hong Kong Institute of Education and presented the paper, Econie: An Inquisitive Virtual Tutee Promoting Student's Reflection in Tutoring, which is nominated for the best student paper. For me, this was an enriching journey of meeting senior researchers and establishing friendship with fellow researchers in Asia.

I was honored to participate in the newly introduced DSC (Doctoral Student Consortiums) 1-1 mentoring session. It allowed me to introduce my research progress face-to-face to Prof. Riichiro Mizoguchi, a top senior scientist in AIED (Artificial Intelligence in Education). He provided some critical comments and advice on my research and shared his inspiring vision for AIED research.

During the conference, I also held several interesting and productive conversations with other leading scientists around the world. Prof. Gautam Biswas, with whom I had interacted with in my doctoral research, shared with me the progress of his current research projects on Teachable Agents. Prof. Gerry Stahl shared his previous research experiences. Prof. Carol Chan shared her reflection on conducting classroom studies in knowledge building. I even argued with Prof. Tak-Wai Chan concerning some AIED/CSCL issues. All these discussions were very constructive in reshaping my research career.

I got to know several friends in this conference, such as Helen Chang and Louisa Fung (local organizers), Hou Bin (a student studying in Japan) and Victor (a Brazilian researcher working in Japan). I still kept in touch with some of them after the conference.

My trip to Hong Kong allowed me to visit places such as the University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and the Central District. The traveling lets me to appreciate the local culture and broaden my perspectives.

I would like to sincerely thank APSCE for providing the financial support to make this trip possible. I also hope more doctoral students will be supported to attend ICCE and to benefit from interactions with academic researchers and mentors.

Yours sincerely,
Longkai Wu
RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING (RPTEL)

RPTEL is the official journal of APSCE

http://www.worldscinet.com/rptel/rptel.shtml

RPTEL is a multidisciplinary refereed journal devoted to disseminating rigorous research on all aspects of the use of technology to enhance learning. The journal seeks to be a catalyst for multidisciplinary dialogue amongst researchers and practitioners worldwide in the fields of learning and cognition, education, and technology, with a view towards improving practice and achieving real-world impact in technology enhanced learning.

Executive Editor:
Daniel Suthers, University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA (suthers@hawaii.edu)

Associate Editors:
Siu Cheung Kong, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong
Antonija Mitrovic, University of Canterbury, New Zealand
Peter Reimann, University of Sydney, Australia
Su Luan Wong, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia
Fu-Yun Yu, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

The editors welcome submissions and suggestions for special issues at any time. Contributions to RPTEL are to be submitted (MS Word and PDF format) via email to the Executive Editor (suthers@hawaii.edu).

Next issue will be a special issue on Inquiry and Technology, edited by Jim Slotta, Niels Pinkwart and Sascha Schanze. The papers are currently under review.

Meet the RPTEL editors at ICCE 2010

All six Associate Editors of RPTEL will be at this special session during ICCE 2010 to meet potential authors. Two of the Associate Editors, Fu-Yun Yu & Siu Cheung Kong will deliver a talk about getting your paper published in RPTEL. More information about the talk can be found here http://www.icce2010.upm.edu.my/special_session2.html. Complimentary copies of RPTEL will be given to participants of this session on a first-come, first-served basis.

Contents of Vol. 5 (1), March 2010

Editors’ introduction
Siu Cheung Kong

Mixed approach for item selection in e-testing
Chi-Keung Leung

Learning and instruction can be enhanced with the information provided from assessment. Computerized adaptive testing is an effective mode of e-testing as it can be operated in a continual and dynamic mode. It can also cater for individual needs by providing tailor-made tests. In this paper we will examine a new item selection approach which would allow more flexibility in balancing the two competitive goals of accuracy and item pool utilization in computerized adaptive testing. Moreover, a new index for comparing a weighted balance of these two goals is proposed.

Preliminary evaluation of a negotiable student model in a constraint-based ITS
David Thomson & Antonija Mitrovic

Previous research on adaptive educational systems has shown that allowing the student to view their student model is useful in the learning process. Open student models help support meta-cognitive processes, such as self-assessment and reflection, and at the same time increase the student’s trust in the system. Negotiable student models take this a step further, and allow students to negotiate and potentially modify their model. Very few negotiable student models have been implemented, and only in relatively simple systems, not integrated into a complex Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS). Therefore, it is not clearly known whether negotiable student models pose a significant advantage over simpler open student models. This research implements a basic negotiable student model into a version of a complex and internationally deployed ITS. Subjective evaluation
is performed, and shows promising results. Participants felt the negotiable student model was both useful for learning, and enjoyable to use. With a few improvements, this negotiable student model implementation could be used in a wide-scale objective analysis to help determine the usefulness of negotiable student models.

**Integrating weblogs in a pedagogy model for enhancing students’ critical thinking skills**

Kai-Ming Li

This study uses quantitative method to examine whether or not a social constructivist theory-driven pedagogical model integrated with weblogs is associated with improved critical thinking skills. Forty secondary students at the age of 13 completed a series of extra-curricular activities designed according to a proposed model within then months. Half of these students came from high ability class while the other from general ability one. The learning tasks of a topic included practice on thinking skills, written essay on a social issue, and visit to an expert or filed trip relevant to the learning topic as well as reflection on the learning experiences. One group of these students submitted their writing tasks in paper form (Paper Group) while the other in weblog entries (Weblog Group). They also completed a pre-test and a post-test of the Critical Thinking Tests – Level 1 (CTT-1) prior to and upon completion of all learning activities, respectively. The analysis revealed that both groups demonstrated gains in Critical Thinking scores in the post-test. Moreover, a significant gain was observed in the Weblog group as well as in the class of general ability. No significant gender difference was detected. This study was also supplemented with qualitative data to solicit opinions from teachers who assisted in the implementation of the project. Suggestions for improvement were also made at the end.

**Message from the Organizing Chair of ICCE 2010**

The 18th International Conference on Computers in Education

November 29, 2010 - December 3, 2010
Putrajaya, Malaysia.

http://www.icce2010.upm.edu.my

The Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia is extremely honoured to be the host of the 18th International Conference on Computers in Education. ICCE 2010 will be held between November 29 (Mon) and December 3 (Fri), 2009 at Putrajaya, Malaysia. The five-day conference will consist of six theme-based sub-conferences for international research communities to disseminate and share ideas related to the field of Computers in Education. The conference will be truly an exciting event as participants will have the opportunity to participate in six theme-based conference paper presentations, theme-based workshops and tutorials. Selected students will also have the opportunity to take part in the doctoral student consortium sessions and interact with world renowned professors in their respective field of research.

The call for papers of the six theme-based sub-conferences has already closed. We are delighted to receive a total of 219 papers for this year. The review of conference papers will be completed by early August 2010. Please visit our official website to check the list of accepted papers from August 15, 2010 (Monday) onwards. For those who missed the opportunity to submit papers to the six theme-based sub-conferences, you are cordially invited to submit papers for workshops, tutorials and doctoral student consortium sessions. Come and join ICCE 2010 and acquire rich academic and cultural knowledge. I hope to see you in Malaysia soon!

With best wishes,
Su Luan WONG
POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Research Scientist

The University of Memphis invites applications for a three-year Research Scientist position in the Institute for Intelligent Systems. Two NSF-funded projects focus on computational analyses of language and discourse. One project develops an automated mentor for multiparty serious games, with an emphasis on data-mining patterns of team coordination from game logs as well as classifying games states to trigger mentor dialogue. The second project conducts computer analyses of the discourse of political leaders and groups in English and other languages. A Masters or Ph.D. degree in computer science, computational linguistics, or a related field is required. The candidate should be very proficient in programming languages such as PHP, C#, and/or Java and should have some working knowledge of database systems. The candidate should have prior experience and future goals of publishing research. Candidates with an interest in linguistics, computational linguistics, and discourse processes are particularly encouraged to apply. Please complete an on-line application at https://workforum.memphis.edu. Click on the executive & special class box to find the posting for the Research Scientist in Computer Science. You will be required to upload a cover letter and CV. Application review will begin July 19, 2010 and will continue until the position is filled. The University of Memphis is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and encourages applications from women and minorities. For any questions regarding this position, please contact Dr. Art Graesser, a-graesser@memphis.edu.

Dissemination of news and knowledge sharing has been one of the goals of APSCE’s newsletter. Personal news about community members (such as job changes, promotions, etc), research developments (e.g., new centers, books, software), recent academic activities and articles on the latest edtech buzzwords; successful classroom applications of theories, techniques, and tools...etc are more than welcome to be emailed directly to Tanja Mitrovic, tanja.mitrovic@canterbury.ac.nz.

Acknowledgement: Clip art graphics found in the newsletter were downloaded from http://clipart-for-free.blogspot.com/2008/08/free-graduation-clipart.html