

Editorial
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We are pleased to launch the maiden issue of the International Journal on Open and Distance eLearning (IJODEL), a university-based academic journal dedicated to the study and pursuit of open learning, distance education, elearning, mobile learning and other related concepts through research-based and conceptual papers, reviews and commentaries to further the understanding and appreciation of the theory and practice behind open and distance elearning. This first issue of IJODEL is introduced by a defining article that presents open and distance elearning (ODEL) as a world view providing a framework with which to organize theorizing, research and practice in the field of open and distance elearning.

The lead article, “Open and Distance eLearning: New Dimensions in Teaching, Learning, Research, and Extension for Higher Education Institutions” written by Grace Javier Alfonso and Primo G. Garcia, suggests that the philosophy of openness, the affordances of distance education and the modalities of elearning imbued with the university value system and operating in a digitized and connected world can lead to social transformation. Further, it shows the relevance of the ODeL framework in the higher education context particularly in relation to its teaching, research and public service functions using the experiences of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). It recognizes the role of information and communication technologies in contemporary education and espouses the use of open educational resources (OERs) in a culture of sharing that could be exemplified by the concept of a knowledge hub bringing together all elements of 21st century education in a digital environment.

Central to a digitized teaching and learning environment, ubiquity and portability are affordances of ICTs that are recognized as enhancing the learning process. In this issue, three articles deal with mobile learning in the Asian educational context. Tuliao, Duldulao, Pagtaconan, and Galang presented a mobile learning tool for Kindergarten which provides a new learning pedagogy integrating ICTs in the learning process. The study focused on the development of the “iSuro”, a mobile learning application. The iSuro provides a new tool in teaching and learning in the Kindergarten curriculum, digital information content, a user-friendly environment, and a solution to the scarcity of learning materials.

Similarly, the paper by Miguel, Salvador, Guillen, and Nisperos presented the results of a research on mobile application as a supplementary tool in teaching Philippine history. “HiStorya” is an interactive mobile game developed using the Android platform; the Digital Game-based Learning-Instructional Design Model was used to evaluate the mobile application. The topics, teaching methods and evaluation techniques of teachers, and game preferences of students were identified through surveys and interviews. The immersive, challenge, and reward aspects of the game were shown to motivate the students to study and learn more about the country’s history. Teachers identified the game statistics report generated by the system as a useful aid to evaluating subject proficiency level of students.

Following is Ahmad Sobri Shuib and Muhammad Nidzam Yaakob’s article on the perceptions and willingness to use mobile equipment and mobile technology among 120 randomly selected pre-service teachers in the Institute of Teacher Education Campus Darul Aman, Malaysia. The study reported that pre-service teachers had a positive attitude towards the use of mobile technology in teaching and learning.

Finally, in this maiden issue, we feature a historical report on the journey of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU) as it responded to challenges in the learning environment through its 20 years of existence. Written by Felix Librero, UPOU's former Chancellor, the account details the technological, organizational, socio-political and academic antecedent events that played out at critical stages of UPOU's development as an institution. The article narrates how UPOU addressed salient issues of online learning leading up to a collective and continuous effort to understand the emergent concepts in open and distance elearning.

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