

Foreword

This new International Journal on New Trends in Education is a timely initiative not only to stimulate researchers to publish their insights and experiences, but to get readers to reflect on the new trends in education to iteratively self-develop.

On the frontlines of creating new techniques in education and on the frontlines seeing how well they work in actual practice so as to refine and adapt them to the evolving contexts, we all need to read and write – to keep our own learning journals. More than this we need to share these, and in the best circumstances to co-create these. I wrote on this topic in this first issue a short position paper. In this I set out the trends that I saw as current and future. These were convergence by conventional universities towards adopting e-learning and distance education techniques and currently self-merging of the disciplines in these conventional universities. Merging disciplines is leading to named degrees – with individualised curricula and name of the eventual degree.

This movement is fuelled by the improvements in reusable learning objects, now referred to as open education resources. The open access nature of these allows each person to pic-n-mix to design their own learning pathways and goals. Accreditation naturally arises as a concern here, and the future trend I see is then in e-portfolios. The e-portfolio can not only be used in assessment, and accreditation. It can be used in self-assessment, peer assessment, future self-reflection and learning by others. Whole communities can adopt the e-portfolio trend either individually, but to much better result if in a group - not only one village building its own e-portfolio, but their sharing collaboratively this with those from other villages. The whole learning environment quickly explodes into forming learning cities and learning countries. There are currently many projects on paper designated as e-learning for countries including e-China, e-Japan, e-Asia, e-Europe and so on – discussed in my paper. What is largely missing from all these current paper projects is the actual mechanism to achieve their goals. The e-portfolio is a key mechanism suggested there, to achieve these goals.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive position paper. Far from it – the purpose was only to stimulate critical conversation on the current and future trends we are seeing in education. This Journal is an excellent platform for these discussions. I exhort all of you to reflect and write, and to send in your ideas to us. And please read these ideas made public by others to inform your own practice and try out these trends to see what works why and why not, and share your experiences so that trends can be adapted to other contexts in the future.

Thank you.

Prof. Dr. Paul Kawachi FRSA,
Instructional Media Studies Centre
Institute of Open and Distance Education,
Open University of China
Room 1204 CCRTVU Building,
160 Fuxingmennei Dajie, Beijing 100031, P. R. CHINA
E-mail: kawachi@open-ed.net