

EDITORIAL

Online, Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2019 – Selected Papers

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Following the Online, Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2019 in Madrid, the organising committee selected four papers to be expanded upon for inclusion in this collection.

Keywords: EADTU; MOOC; learning analytics; blockchain; virtual classrooms

In this special collection we bring together four papers from last year's EADTU conference. The OOFHEC2019 conference was held in Madrid, Spain with the theme of "Blended and online education within European university networks". Four papers that cover the range of this topic were extended and adapted for publication in this issue of JIME. The papers were selected by the conference organising committee and then subject to peer review from JIME. The articles address MOOCs for language learning, learning analytics, blockchain and virtual classrooms.

Estebas-Vilaplana and Solans examine how a MOOC can be used to improve pronunciation in language learning. Gardner, Jones and Jefferis use a combination of analytics and interviews to gain a clearer understanding on why students might, or might not, engage specific resources. Mikroyannidis, Third and Domingue explore Blockchain as a means to enable decentralisation. They investigate different scenarios for making online education more

open and decentralised, making the case that blockchain facilitates greater learner control. Wopereis offers a rather sobering examination of the effectiveness of virtual classrooms, which indicates that those who took part in the sessions valued them, turnout was low and cost effectiveness was questionable.

What these four papers illustrate is that these approaches are often not new, but we are now seeing more practical applications of them, that both extend their potential, and raise questions about their broad applicability. This focused approach is likely to be more successful than a panacea for all educational needs, and as such will prove useful for educators who are now examining the possibilities of online education in greater detail as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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