

## Preface

The first issue of this volume of the International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education is also my last issue as Editor. I have reached the end of my period as Editor-in-Chief, and, while the remaining issues of Volume 19 are inevitably ones that I have been heavily involved with, James Lester takes over as the new Editor-in-Chief from Issue 2. His succession is very good news for the Journal and its readers.

### THIS ISSUE

Given these circumstances, I am taking the opportunity to briefly review the Journal's progress over the last six years and, to some extent, the progress of the field of AI in Education. I will finish with a few speculations about where the field might be going. First, let me introduce the papers in this issue.

Li Zhang and his colleagues have been working in the area of drama-based environments for some time. Inspired by ideas on emotion, drama and metaphor amongst others, they have produced an unusual environment which has some exciting features. "E-Drama: Facilitating Online Role-play using an AI Actor and Emotionally Expressive Characters" provides an agent-based approach to helping children express themselves using free text. The challenges that free text input provides are ones that cannot be "solved" in a single research project - but this paper provides an excellent starting point for further work. The potential for education in the Web 2.0 context is evident.

In the next paper, Magnus Haake and Agneta Gulz provide a theoretical framework for examining the design of agents in pedagogic contexts. "A Look at the Roles of Look & Roles in Embodied Pedagogical Agents - A User Preference Perspective" is a valuable contribution both to those studying the ways in which design decisions influence learning outcomes. It is also helpful to those seeking to design an EPA of their own since the reported work provides a high level view of the design issues.

Finally, Stephanie Ann Siler and Kurt VanLehn provide a useful set of studies examining the notion that face to face tutoring is always better than 1-1 synchronous computer mediated tutoring. The paper, "Learning, Interactional, and Motivational Outcomes in One-to-One Synchronous Computer-mediated versus Face-to-Face Tutoring", provides evidence that suggests the advantages of face-to-face communication are not quite as strong as people have believed.

### THE PAST

Looking back over the time I have been at the helm of IJAIED, we have published 75 articles (excluding prefaces) occupying 2177 pages in 24 issues. Of these, 31 came from the USA, 14 from UK, 12 from the rest of Europe, 11 from Australasia, 4 from South and Central America and 3 from Canada. A reasonable spread of contributions from around the world. Of course, this pattern of acceptance does not indicate the full range of excellent work being done. There is plenty of research being reported in other journals which, I believe, should appear in IJAIED. I would have liked to have seen many more submissions from a range of European countries including France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Greece. I would also have liked to have seen more contributions from India, China and neighbouring countries. This can happen if the research field of AI in Education continues to expand; and that may only happen if funders around the world learn to appreciate the benefits of the work done within the field. So how can this be achieved? Is there a magic bullet? The simple answer is "no"; the more complicated answer requires both strategic and tactical action by the existing AIED community *and* the will to act.

Turning to examine the content of the published papers, I categorised papers in terms of their main contribution(s). While this approach was very much a personal view, it shows up some features of the IJAIED output in these last six years. The main areas were: AIED systems, agents, various aspects of pedagogy, collaborative learning, open learner modelling and evaluation. Other areas of activity included, in approximately



Some areas that, in my opinion, just must grow in importance include work on ontologies - e.g. there is a place for arguing/negotiating ontological structures, and I do not believe that the last word has been written on this one! Also, on a connected point, we need to see mature research on the use of AIED notions in Web 2.0 contexts. This is an urgent issue.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I have many people to thank for their help with the Journal over the last few years. In particular, I'd like to thank Maarten Fröhlich as well as Einar Fredriksson, Marleen Berfelo, and all the others at IOS Press for their help and support. In addition, thanks to the School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh who were willing to host the Journal's website - and to Neil Brown and the support staff all of whom were endlessly helpful. I have benefited greatly from the support of the Management Board of the IAED Society - especially Jim Greer and Helen Pain. Thanks to Judy Kay for her work as Associate Editor. I have really appreciated the friendship and the example of John Self, the first editor of IJAIED - and the excellent advice of Ben du Boulay, the second editor. Thanks also to the Advisory Board, Editorial Board and all the Specialist Reviewers and the many others who have reviewed for the Journal over the last six years. Also to the many authors - both successful and unsuccessful - who have helped to ensure the Journal has been able to publish papers of significant quality. Finally, many many thanks to Shelagh Cooper for her unstinting work in keeping the process on track - from submission to publication, and for her much appreciated proofreading.

Paul Brna