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TECHNOLOGY IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

PART ONE

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International Handbook of Information Technology in Primary and Secondary Education

Part One

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CONTENTS

Preface	xxvii
Introduction	xxix

Part One

Section 1 Education in the Information Society	3
<i>Section Editor: Ronald E. Anderson</i>	

1.1 Implications of the Information and Knowledge Society for Education	5
<i>Ronald E. Anderson</i>	

The Information Society	5
The Knowledge Society	5
Information vs. Knowledge	6
Knowledge Societies in Education	6
Implications of the Knowledge Society for Learning Priorities	7
ICT	8
The Twenty-First Century Skills Movement	9
Parallels in Education and Management	10
Some Knowledge-Based Models in Education	11
The Emerging Pedagogical Practices Paradigm	12
Student Knowledge Framework	12
Knowledge-Related Skills	13
Knowledge-Related Task Phases	14
Knowledge Capabilities and ICT Tools	15
Knowledge Societies and Cooperative Work	18
Knowledge Societies and Learning to Learn	19
Implications for Education in the Era of Knowledge Societies	20

1.2 New Literacies for the Knowledge Society	23
<i>David Mioduser, Rafi Nachmias, and Alona Forkosh-Baruch</i>	
Introduction	23
The Knowledge Society	24
The “New Literacies”	26
Basic Issues Underlying Our Discussion of the “New Literacies”	27
Seven Literacies for the Knowledge Society	29
Epilogue	38
1.3 Theoretical Perspectives Influencing the Use of Information Technology in Teaching and Learning	43
<i>Chris Dede</i>	
Overview	43
Behaviorist Instructional Technologies	46
Cognitivist Instructional Technologies	48
Constructivist Instructional Technologies	50
“Next-Generation” Pedagogical Media	53
Illustrative Historic Controversies About Technology and Pedagogy	54
Conclusion	59
1.4 Students in a Digital Age: Implications of ICT for Teaching and Learning	63
<i>John Ainley, Laura Enger, and Dara Searle</i>	
Introduction	63
ICT Use: Access and Confidence	63
Behavioural Engagement	70
Emotional Engagement	73
Cognitive Engagement	75
ICT and Learning	76
Conclusion	78
Note	79
1.5 Traditional and Emerging IT Applications for Learning	81
<i>J. Enrique Hinostroza, Christian Labbé, Leonardo López, and Hans Iost</i>	
Introduction	81
General Background: IT in Education	82
Potential Impacts of IT	84
Factors Affecting the Use of IT for Learning	86
Trends in Emerging Technologies and Learning	90
Conclusions	93

1.6 Driving Forces for ICT in Learning	97
<i>Alfons ten Brummelhuis and Els Kuiper</i>	
Introduction	97
Conceptual Framework	97
Example of a Contrasting Position in Instructional Practices:	
Teacher or Student as Regulating the Learning Process	104
Discussion: Technology Push vs. Educational Pull	107
 Section 2 IT and Curriculum Processes	 115
<i>Section Editor: Joke Voogt</i>	
 2.1 IT and Curriculum Processes: Dilemmas and Challenges	 117
<i>Joke Voogt</i>	
A Curricular Perspective on IT in Education	117
Rationales for IT in Education	118
Learning to Use IT	118
Using IT to Learn	120
Current Use of IT in the Curriculum	121
Realizing the Potential of IT in the Curriculum	122
Innovative IT-Supported Pedagogical Practices	124
The Attained Curriculum: Student Outcomes from Learning with IT	127
Conclusions	128
 2.2 Impact of IT on Science Education	 133
<i>Mary Webb</i>	
Introduction	133
The Use and Impact of IT on Science Learning in Schools	134
Evidence for <i>How</i> IT Enables Science Learning	134
Pedagogies with IT in Science	140
IT Use and the Nature of the Science Curriculum	143
Implications for Teachers and Curriculum Developers	143
Conclusions: Ways Forward for Science Education with IT	144
 2.3 The Potential of IT to Foster Literacy Development in Kindergarten	 149
<i>Judy Van Scoter</i>	
Introduction	149
Literacy Development	150
IT and Literacy Development	150
Word Processing	151
Hypertext and Reading Potential in the Classroom	152
Integrated Learning Systems and Drill and Practice	153
Integrating IT in the Kindergarten Classroom	154
Print-Rich Environment	155

Technology Center	155
IT and the Classroom Reading Corner	155
Connection with Real Worlds	156
Products and Presentations	156
Technology and Literacy in the Inclusion Classroom	156
Implementation Concerns	157
Technology as a Benign Addition	158
2.4 Innovative Pedagogical Practices Using Technology: The Curriculum Perspective	163
<i>Rafi Nachmias, David Mioduser, and Alona Forkosh-Baruch</i>	
Introduction	163
ICT, Curriculum and Innovation	165
Curricular Issues in ICT-Based Innovations: Secondary analysis of SITEsm2 cases	167
Epilogue	176
2.5 Changing Assessment Practices and the Role of IT	181
<i>Ola Erstad</i>	
Introduction	181
Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	182
Assessment Practices, IT, and Change	183
Different Conceptions of IT and Assessment	184
Conclusion: Are We Changing Practices?	190
2.6 Information Technology Tools for Curriculum Development	195
<i>Susan McKenney, Nienke Nieveen, and Allard Strijker</i>	
Curriculum Development Aided by Technology	195
Three Cases of IT Support for Curriculum Development	200
Future Directions	206
Section 3 IT and the Learning Process	213
<i>Section Editor: Kwok-Wing Lai</i>	
3.1 ICT Supporting the Learning Process: The Premise, Reality, and Promise	215
<i>Kwok-Wing Lai</i>	
Introduction	215
The Learning Process and ICT Use	216
Research on ICT Effects	217
ICT and Learning Environments	218
Computer-Supported Learning Environments	220
Conclusion	227

3.2 Interactive Learning Environments: Review of an Old Construct with a New Critical Twist	231
<i>Mark Brown</i>	
Introduction	231
Origin of Interactive Learning Environments	231
What is the Domain of Interactive Learning Environments?	233
What Assumptions Underpin Instructional Design?	235
Digging a Little Deeper	237
Connecting the Metaphors	239
Cleaning Up a Messy Construct	240
Mind Tools for Instruction	242
Mind Tools for Construction	243
Mind Tools for Inquiry	243
Mind Tools for Community	244
Interaction for What Kind of Future	244
Conclusion	245
3.3 Online Learning Communities in K-12 Settings	249
<i>Seng Chee Tan, Lay Hoon Seah, Jennifer Yeo, and David Hung</i>	
Introduction	249
Defining Online Learning Communities	250
Theoretical Foundations of Learning in Online Communities	253
Review of Studies on Online Learning Communities in K-12 Settings	254
Knowledge Building Community	254
Quest Atlantis	256
Virtual Math Team (VMT) Project	256
The Web-Based Inquiry Science Environment (WISE)	257
Comparison of the Four Online Learning Communities	258
Pertinent Research and Implementation Issues	261
Conclusion	263
3.4 Collaborative Learning and Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Environments	267
<i>Maarit Arvaja, Päivi Häkkinen, and Marja Kankaanranta</i>	
Introduction: Collaboration Defined	267
Research Traditions on Collaborative Learning	269
What is Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning?	270
Challenges of CSCL	272
Structuring Collaboration to Overcome Challenges in CSCL	273
Methodological Issues with CSCL Research	274
Conclusions	275

3.5 Computer Contexts for Supporting Metacognitive Learning	281
<i>Xiaodong Lin and Florence R. Sullivan</i>	
Common Metacognitive Learning Outcomes	281
Recall and Memory	282
Content and Domain Subject Learning	284
Social Interactions as Learning Mechanisms	290
Conclusion	295
3.6 Collaborative Inquiry and Knowledge Building in Networked Multimedia Environments	299
<i>Carol K.K. Chan and Jan van Aalst</i>	
Introduction	299
Changing Theories and Metaphors of Learning	300
Views of Learning Underpinning Multimedia and Networked Learning Environments	302
Classroom Innovations in Networked Multimedia Environments	305
Theoretical, Pedagogical, and Methodological Issues	310
Section 4 IT Competencies and Attitudes	319
<i>Section Editors: Gerald Knezek and Rhonda Christensen</i>	
4.1 The Importance of Information Technology Attitudes and Competencies in Primary and Secondary Education	321
<i>Gerald Knezek and Rhonda Christensen</i>	
Introduction	321
Role of Attitudes	322
Requirements of Competency	322
Verification Through Standards and Tests	323
Concerns About Overstandardization	323
The Need for Asking Good Questions	324
Theoretical/Conceptual Foundations	324
Formal Models of Attitudes and Achievement	326
Self Report and Observation Measures for Determining Attitudes and Competencies Toward Technology	327
Summary and Conclusions	328
4.2 Information, Communications, and Educational Technology Standards for Students, Teachers, and School Leaders	333
<i>Lajeane G. Thomas and Donald G. Knezek</i>	
Rationale for Information and Communication Technology Standards	333
Establishing New Learning Environments Supported with Technology	335
ICT Standards for Students	335

Barriers to Adoption of Standards for Students	335
New Skill Sets for Teachers	337
ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers	339
ICT Standards for School and School-System Leaders of K-12 Education	341
Preparation of Specialists for Leadership in ICT	344
Essential Conditions to Support ICT in Educational Environments	345
Potential for Catalytic Change	345
Summary and Conclusions	347
4.3 Self-Report Measures and Findings for Information Technology Attitudes and Competencies	349
<i>Rhonda Christensen and Gerald Knezek</i>	
Introduction	349
Self-Report and Survey Research	349
Self-Report vs. Observation	350
Assessing the Magnitude of Self-Report Findings	351
Findings	352
Student Attitudes and Competencies	357
Discussion	359
Summary and Conclusions	359
4.4 Observation Measures for Determining Attitudes and Competencies Toward Technology	367
<i>Renate Schulz-Zander, Michael Pfeifer, and Andreas Voss</i>	
Introduction	367
Observation as an Approach to Researching IT Competencies and Attitudes	368
A Synthesis of Empirical Research Results	372
Conclusions	377
4.5 Computer Attitudes and Competencies Among Primary and Secondary School Students	381
<i>Martina Meelissen</i>	
Introduction	381
Measuring Computer Attitudes	382
Students' Computer Attitudes	384
The Influence of the Social Environment	386
Students' Computer Competencies	390
Summary and Prospects for Future Research	391

4.6 Characteristics of Teacher Leaders for Information and Communication Technology	397
<i>Margaret Riel and Henry Jay Becker</i>	
Introduction	397
Teacher Leadership and Professional Engagement	398
Describing a Route to Teacher Leadership	400
Teachers Leaders Represent the Highest Level of Professional Engagement	403
Variation in Professional Engagement: Findings from the TLC Study	404
Teacher Leaders' Beliefs About Teaching and Learning	405
Leadership-Inspired Instruction	406
Teacher Leaders' Use of Computers: TLC Study Findings	408
Studies of Teacher Leadership Among Technology-Expert Teachers	410
Dimensions of Teacher Technology Leadership	412
Toward a Culture of Teacher Leadership with Technology	414
Section 5 IT, Pedagogical Innovations, and Teacher Learning	421
<i>Section Editor: Nancy Law</i>	
5.1 Teacher Learning Beyond Knowledge for Pedagogical Innovations with ICT	425
<i>Nancy Law</i>	
Introduction	425
ICT as a "Disruptive" Force in Pedagogical Innovations	427
Teacher Learning for Pedagogical Innovation with ICT: Beyond Knowledge	429
Teacher Learning Through Innovations – Conceptualization of Support for Teacher Learning Beyond Knowledge	431
5.2 Benchmarks for Teacher Education Programs in the Pedagogical Use of ICT	435
<i>Paul Kirschner, Theo Wubbels, and Mieke Brekelmans</i>	
Introduction	435
The Pedagogy and Effects of Teacher Education	436
Benchmarks	438
Discussion	444
5.3 Factors Affecting Teachers' Pedagogical Adoption of ICT	449
<i>Bridget Somekh</i>	
Insights from Socio-Cultural Theory	449
The Processes of Pedagogical Adoption of ICT	451
Examples of Transformative Pedagogies with ICT	453

The Shaping of ICT-Mediated Pedagogies by National Culture	455
Providing a Context that Supports the Pedagogic Adoption of ICT	457
Integrating Research with the Pedagogic Adoption of ICT	458
5.4 Models and Practices in Teacher Education Programs for Teaching with and about IT	461
<i>Anne McDougall</i>	
Introduction	461
Goals, Purposes and Aims of Teacher Education Programs	462
Structures and Strategies	466
Evaluation of Teacher Education and Professional Development Programs	471
Conclusion	472
5.5 Multimedia Cases, Teacher Education and Teacher Learning	475
<i>Ellen van den Berg, John Wallace, and Erminia Pedretti</i>	
Introduction	475
Cases, Teacher Learning and Knowledge	475
A Typology of Multimedia Cases: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Use	480
Anchoring Multimedia Cases in Teacher Education Programs	483
Conclusions	485
5.6 Communities of Practice for Continuing Professional Development in the Twenty-First Century	489
<i>Chee-Kit Looi, Wei-Ying Lim, and Wenli Chen</i>	
Challenges that Teacher Professional Development Face	489
Community of Practice as an Effective Professional Development Strategy	490
CoPs for Continuing Professional Development in the Twenty-First Century	492
Online Community of Practice for Teachers' Professional Development	493
Design Tenets for Building CoPs in the Twenty-First Century	494
Technology Architecture Supporting Establishment of CoPs	498
Teacher Professional Identity Formation in CoPs	501
Conclusion	502
5.7 How May Teacher Learning Be Promoted For Educational Renewal with IT?	507
<i>Niki Davis</i>	
Introduction	507
A Global Perspective	508
Schools' Local Area as an Ecology	510

A School Perspective	511
The IT Coordinator	512
A Teacher Innovating with IT	513
Simultaneous Renewal of Preservice Teacher Education and K-12 Schools	515
Summary and Conclusions	516
 Part Two	
Section 6 IT in Schools	541
<i>Section Editor: Sara Dexter</i>	
6.1 Leadership for IT in Schools	543
<i>Sara Dexter</i>	
Introduction	543
Dimensions and Aims of IT Leadership	543
IT Leadership to Set Direction	545
IT Leadership to Develop People	546
IT Leadership to Make the Organization Work	548
Roles and Responsibilities in IT Leadership Teams	549
Conclusion	551
 6.2 Framing IT Use to Enhance Educational Impact on a School-Wide Basis	 555
<i>Peter Twining</i>	
Introduction – Importance of Consistent Understandings	555
Frameworks for Thinking About IT in Education	556
Achievement Frameworks	557
Cognitive Frameworks	559
Software Frameworks	559
Pedagogical Frameworks	563
Evolutionary Frameworks	568
Conclusions	574
 6.3 Quality Support for ICT in Schools	 579
<i>Neal Strudler and Doug Hearrington</i>	
Introduction	579
Need for and Aspects of ICT Support	580
Teacher Professional Development	583
Staffing for ICT Support	585
Support Staff	588
Conclusions	593

6.4 Distributed Leadership and IT	597
<i>Nigel Bennett</i>	
Introduction	597
Analysing the Elements of ‘Leadership’	597
Moving on from ‘Top–Down’ Leadership	602
Distributed Leadership	603
So What? Distributed Leadership and IT in Schools	610
6.5 Total Cost of Ownership and Total Value of Ownership	615
<i>Kathryn Moyle</i>	
Introduction	615
Policy Contexts	616
Data-Driven Decision-Making	618
Measuring Data	619
Cost, Value and Impact	622
Conclusion	628
6.6 The Logic and Logic Model of Technology Evaluation	633
<i>Yong Zhao, Bo Yan, and Jing Lei</i>	
Introduction	633
A Critical Appraisal of the Evaluation Literature	635
Where Are We Now?	642
A Proposal for Moving Forward: A Logic Model for Evaluating Technology	644
Conclusion	651
Section 7 IT and Distance Learning in K-12 Education	657
<i>Section Editors: Roumen Nikolov and Iliana Nikolova</i>	
7.1 Distance Education in Schools: Perspectives and Realities	659
<i>Roumen Nikolov and Iliana Nikolova</i>	
Introduction	659
Defining the Area	660
The Phenomenon of ICT-Based Distance Education in K-12 Schools	661
The ICT-Driven Educational Reform	662
Virtual Learning Environments for ICT-Based DE	665
Pedagogical Dimensions for VLEs in ICT-Based Distance Education in K-12 Education	667
Effectiveness of ICT-Based Distance Education	669
The Future of ICT-Based Distance Education	670
Conclusions	672

7.2 Pedagogical Principles, Problems, and Possibilities in Online Global Classrooms	675
<i>Malcolm Beazley, Julie McLeod, and Lin Lin</i>	
Introduction	675
Pedagogical Principles	676
Problems	683
Possibilities	689
Concluding Remarks	691
7.3 Virtual Schools: Redefining “A Place Called School”	695
<i>M.D. Roblyer</i>	
Introduction: Virtual Schools as Defining Initiative	695
Background on Virtual Schooling	696
Current Virtual School Issues	701
Research on Virtual School Implementation and Impact	704
Challenges for the Future of Virtual Schools	706
Conclusion	709
7.4 Distance Learning – Enrichment: A Pacific Perspective	713
<i>John H. Southworth, Curtis P. Ho, and Shigeru Narita</i>	
Introduction	713
DL-E Applications in the 1970s	715
New Developments in the 1980s and 1990s	716
DL-E Projects in the Twenty-First Century	717
Fostering Cultural Awareness	719
Techniques for Classroom Technology Integration Using DL-E	720
Assessment of Added Value of DL-E	722
Concluding Remarks	722
7.5 Technology and Open Learning: The Potential of Open Education Resources for K-12 Education	725
<i>Neil Butcher and Merridy Wilson-Strydom</i>	
Introduction	725
Distance Education and Open Schooling	726
Open Learning	729
Technology and Open Learning	733
Open Education Resources (OER)	735
OERs in Action: A Practical Example from the K-12 Sector	741
Conclusion	742

7.6 Online Professional Development for Teachers	747
<i>Márta Turcsányi-Szabó</i>	
Introduction	747
Teacher Training in Europe and Beyond	749
Virtual and Distance Learning for Teachers	750
Trends in Knowledge Delivery	751
Lessons Learned in Asia and The Pacific Region	753
The Case of Hungary	754
Conclusion	758
 Section 8 IT and the Digital Divide	 763
<i>Section Editors: Thérèse Laferrière and Paul Resta</i>	
 8.1 Issues and Challenges Related to Digital Equity	 765
<i>Paul Resta and Thérèse Laferrière</i>	
Introduction	765
Conceptual Framework	766
Issues and Challenges	768
Conclusion	775
 8.2 Gender and Information Technology	 779
<i>E. Dianne Looker</i>	
Introduction	779
Identifying the Issues – The Developed World	779
Identifying the Issues – The Developing World	780
Why is This Important?	781
Educational Interventions	782
Conclusion	785
Further Research	786
 8.3 Meeting the Learning Needs of All Learners Through IT	 789
<i>Jutta Treviranus and Vera Roberts</i>	
Introduction	789
Assistive Technologies	789
Guidelines and Specifications	790
Accessibility Guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium	790
Metadata	792
Matching the Resource to the Needs of the Learner Through Metadata	793
Transformation	795
Reusable Learning Resources	796
Content-Free Activity Templates	798

Accessibility in Practice	799
Challenges	800
Conclusions	800
8.4 Critical Success Factors in Moving Toward Digital Equity	803
<i>Joyce Pittman, Robert T. McLaughlin, and Bonnie Bracey-Sutton</i>	
Introduction	803
Example Cases: Initiatives that Have Made Progress in Moving Toward Digital Equity in Different Global Contexts	804
Success Factors for Moving Toward Digital Equity	812
Future Trends and Challenges in Moving Toward Digital Equity	814
8.5 The Relationship of Technology, Culture, and Demography	819
<i>Loriene Roy, Hsin-liang Chen, Antony Cherian, and Teanau Tuiono</i>	
Introduction	819
Historic Information on Incorporation of Technology by Indigenous Peoples	819
What Are the Relations Between IT and Indigenous Cultures?	822
A Final Word: Cultural Protocol and Balancing Local Control and Access to Intellectual Content	829
8.6 Global Partnerships Enhancing Digital and Social Equity	833
<i>Ian W. Gibson</i>	
Shrinking World: Global Responsibility	833
The Potential of Technology in Redefining Access to Learning Opportunities	834
Benefits of International Participation: An Example	836
Preparing Teachers for the Future: A Focus on Teacher Education	840
Benefits and Conclusions	842
Section 9 Emerging Technologies for Education	847
<i>Section Editors: Cathleen Norris and Elliot Soloway</i>	
9.1 An Instructional Model That Exploits Pervasive Computing	849
<i>Cathleen Norris and Elliot Soloway</i>	
Introduction	849
The Current Situation: Limited-Access Computing	850
The Transition to Pervasive Computing: Predicting a Disruption	850
The Elements of a Pervasive Computing Infrastructure	851
Pervasive Computing Enables Project-Based Learning	852

An Example of Virtual Learning Environment to Support Project-Based Learning	854
Concluding Remarks	859
9.2 M-Learning in Africa: Doing the Unthinkable and Reaching the Unreachable	861
<i>Tom H. Brown</i>	
Introduction	861
Why M-Learning in Africa?	862
Overview of Current M-Learning Activities in Africa	863
Examples of M-Learning in Africa	864
Premises for M-Learning in Africa: Lessons Learnt from Pilot Studies at the University of Pretoria	867
Conclusion	870
9.3 Personal, Mobile, Connected: The Future of Learning	873
<i>Mark van't Hooft</i>	
Introduction	873
Rethinking Teaching, Learning, and Technology	875
Rethinking Teaching	875
Rethinking Learning	876
Rethinking Technology	877
An Example	878
Conclusion	879
9.4 Use of Wireless Mobile Technology to Bridge the Learning Divide	883
<i>Mohamed Ally</i>	
Introduction	883
Capabilities of Wireless Mobile Technology	884
The Design of Learning Materials for Wireless Mobile Technology Devices	884
Use of Wireless Mobile Technologies in Practice	886
Conclusion	887
9.5 Information Technologies for Informal Learning in Museums and Out-of-School Settings	891
<i>Sherry Hsi</i>	
Introduction	891
IT Transforming Informal Learning Institutions	892
IT Extending the Museum Experience (Pre- and Post Activities)	893
IT for Distant Learners and Browsers of Museum Experience	894
Informal Learning Transforming IT Activities	896
Trends for the Future	898

9.6 Emerging Technologies for Collaborative, Mediated, Immersive Learning	901
<i>Jody Clarke, Chris Dede, and Ed Dieterle</i>	
Introduction	901
How Collaborative Mediated Immersion Helps Teaching and Learning	902
Multi-user Virtual Environments	903
Augmented Reality	905
Conclusion	907
9.7 Three-Dimensional Computer-Based Online Learning Environments	911
<i>James G. Jones and Scott J. Warren</i>	
Introduction	911
3D Computer-Based Multiuser Online Environments	911
Educational Environments	913
Cognitive Scaffolding	916
Educational Affordances	916
The Future of and Barriers to Educational Integration	917
9.8 Trace Theory, Coordination Games, and Group Scribbles	921
<i>Charles M. Patton, Deborah Tatar, and Yannis Dimitriadis</i>	
Coordination in Learning	921
Group Scribbles	922
Group Scribbles and Coordination: Key Aspects of Design	
Enable a Focus on Coordination	925
Using Trace Theory to Describe and Specify Coordination	
Structures in Group Scribbles	927
Alternative Versions of the Jigsaw Pattern	930
Summary, Conclusions, and Future Research	932
9.9 One-to-One Educational Computing: Ten Lessons for Successful Implementation	935
<i>Kyle Peck and Karl Sprenger</i>	
Introduction	935
Lesson One: Focus on an Expanded Educational Vision	936
Lesson Two: Expand Participation and Commitment	936
Lesson Three: Think Software, THEN Hardware	937
Lesson Four: Embrace Professional Development	938
Lesson Five: Re-assess Infrastructure Needs	938
Lesson Six: Focus on Functionality and an “Always Up” Learning Environment	939
Lesson Seven: Minimize the Number of Vendors	939
Lesson Eight: Have an Insurance Plan	939
Lesson Nine: Be Prepared to Add Technical Support Staff	940

Lesson Ten: Assess Morale and Prepare for Turbulence	940
Conclusion	941
9.10 Making the Most of One-to-One Computing in Networked Classrooms	943
<i>William R. Penuel</i>	
Potential of Classroom Networks	943
Which Way the Future?	947
9.11 Graphing Calculators: Enhancing Math Learning for All Students	951
<i>Jeremy Roschelle and Corrine Singleton</i>	
Introduction	951
Features of Graphing Calculators	952
Alignment of Graphing Calculators with Standards and Practices	953
Pedagogical Affordances of Graphing Calculators	954
Research on Graphing Calculators	955
Discussion and Conclusion	957
Section 10 Researching IT in Education	963
<i>Section Editor: Margaret J. Cox</i>	
10.1 Researching IT in Education	965
<i>Margaret J. Cox</i>	
Introduction	965
Evolution of IT Resources	966
Uptake of IT in Education	970
Measuring Learning and Motivation	971
Teachers' Beliefs and Practices	972
National and International Contexts	974
Complexity of Researching IT in Education	976
Conclusions	977
10.2 Research Methods: Their Design, Applicability and Reliability	983
<i>Gail Marshall and Margaret J. Cox</i>	
Introduction	983
Research Goals	984
To Measure the Impact of IT on Learning	985
Uptake of IT by Schools and Teachers	985
Effects of IT on Learning Strategies and Processes	986
Effects of IT on Collaboration and the Learning Context	986
Attitudes Towards Computers in Education	986
Effects of IT on Pedagogies and Practices of the Teachers	987

Computer Use by Girls vs. Boys	987
Contribution of IT to Enhancing Access and Learning for Special Needs	987
Total Operating Costs and Cost Effectiveness	988
Epistemological Theories and Research Design	988
Standards for Research	992
Formative and Summative Studies	994
Critical Factors	997
Conclusions	997
10.3 Measuring the Impact of Information Technology on Students' Learning	1003
<i>Rachel M. Pilkington</i>	
Introduction	1003
Impact of IT on Learning – Experimental Research Designs	1003
Impact on Learning – Survey-Based Approaches	1006
Impact on Learning – Case Studies and Meta-Analyses	1008
Future Schools: Making Progress and Managing Change	1012
Revisiting Learning Theory: Issues for Design	1013
Conclusions	1015
10.4 Large-Scale Studies and Quantitative Methods	1019
<i>Yuen-Kuang Cliff Liao and Yungwei Hao</i>	
The Meta-analysis Research Method	1019
Review of Studies of Meta-analysis on Information Technology in Education	1022
Evidence Outcomes Achieved Through Meta-analysis on Information Technology in Education	1028
Meta-Analysis on Information Technology in Education: To Use, or Not to Use?	1031
10.5 Evaluation of the Design and Development of IT Tools in Education	1037
<i>Thomas C. Reeves</i>	
Evaluation of the Design and Development of IT Tools in Education	1037
Background	1038
Formative Evaluation	1038
Summative Evaluation	1040
Contemporary Approaches to Evaluating IT Tools in Education	1041
A Decision-Oriented Rationale for Evaluation	1042
Primary Components of an Evaluation Plan	1044
Evaluation Reporting	1046
The Future of Evaluation of IT Tools in Education	1046

10.6	Methods for Large-Scale International Studies on ICT in Education	1053
	<i>Willem Pelgrum and Tjeerd Plomp</i>	
	Introduction	1053
	Historical Sketch of ICT-Related WISCEAs	1055
	Questions Underlying ICT-Related WISCEAs	1056
	Conceptual Frameworks	1057
	Design Issues	1058
	Potential Outputs of ICT-Related WISCEAs:	
	The Example of SITES 2006	1063
	Recommendations for Future ICT-Related WISCEAs	1064
	Reflections	1065
Section 11	International and Regional Programs and Policies	1069
	<i>Section Editor: Jef Moonen</i>	
11.1	Evolution of IT and Related Educational Policies in International Organisations	1071
	<i>Jef Moonen</i>	
	Evolution of IT and its Potential Impact on Educational Policy	1071
	An Overview of Policy Support by International Organizations	1073
	A Framework to Categorize Educational Policies in Relation to the Introduction of IT	1076
11.2	Comparative Analysis of Policies for ICT in Education	1083
	<i>Robert B. Kozma</i>	
	International Significance of ICT Policy	1083
	The Rationale for Strategic Policy for Educational ICT	1084
	Strategic Educational ICT Policy Rationales	1085
	Operational Components of ICT Policies	1089
	Policy Recommendations	1091
11.3	ICT and Educational Policy in the European Region	1097
	<i>Claudio Delrio and Claudio Dondi</i>	
	Socioeconomic, Educational and Cultural Context	1097
	Rationales and Influencing Factors for a Policy About ICT in Education	1099
	Specific Policies About ICT and Education in the European Union	1101
	Reflections and Future Steps to Improve a Policy About ICT in Education in Europe	1104

11.4	ICT in Educational Policy in the North American Region	1109
	<i>Susan Patrick</i>	
	Educational and Cultural Context	1109
	Specific Policies About ICT in Education	1110
	Reflections and Future Steps to Improve a Policy About ICT in Education	1114
11.5	IT and Educational Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region	1119
	<i>Yew-Jin Lee, David Hung, and Horn-Mun Cheah</i>	
	Socioeconomic, Educational, and Cultural Context	1119
	Rationales and Influencing Factors for Policy About IT in Education	1120
	Specific Policies About the Introduction of IT in Education	1123
	Reflections and Future Steps to Improve a Policy About IT in Education	1129
11.6	ICT and Educational Policy for the Latin American and Caribbean Regions	1133
	<i>Patricia Ávila Muñoz</i>	
	Socioeconomic, Educational, and Cultural Context	1133
	Rationales and Influencing Factors for a Policy About ICT in Education	1134
	Specific Policies About ICT in Education	1137
	The Appropriate Introduction of ICT in Schools	1139
	Reflections and Further Steps Toward Improving ICT Policies	1140
11.7	IT and Educational Policy in the Sub-Saharan African Region	1145
	<i>Frank Tilya</i>	
	Socioeconomic, Educational, and Cultural Context	1145
	Rationales and Influencing Factors for a Policy About IT in Education	1147
	Specific Policies About the Introduction of IT in Education	1151
	Reflections and Future Steps to Improve the Introduction of IT in Education	1154
11.8	IT and Educational Policy in North Africa and Middle East Region	1161
	<i>Amr Ibrahim</i>	
	Socioeconomic, Educational, and Cultural Context	1161
	Rationales and Factors Influencing a Policy about IT in Education	1163
	Specific Policies about IT in Education	1165
	Reflections and Future Steps to Improve Policy about IT in Education	1165

11.9 Policy From a Global Perspective	1171
<i>Jef Moonen</i>	
Introduction	1171
Combined Overview	1172
A New Policy?	1176
Glossary	1179
Contributors	1195
Name Index (Vol_I)	521
Subject Index (Vol_I)	535
Name Index (Vol_II)	1205
Subject Index (Vol_II)	1221

PREFACE

Since the introduction of the computer into education in the 1960s its potential for primary and secondary education has been recognized by many – researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. In the International Handbook of Information Technology in Primary and Secondary Education we seek to provide researchers, policymakers and practitioners with an integrated overview of the field.

There is a vast amount of research on Information Technology (IT) in primary and secondary education. In this Handbook we aim to synthesize this research from a broad international perspective. The Handbook has 76 chapters to which 136 authors have contributed. The authors are from 23 different countries spanning five continents.

Consensus on the focus and structure of the Handbook was reached among 15 section editors and the external advisors during a joint meeting at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris. The two main themes addressed in the Handbook were determined to be (1) the potential of IT to improve primary and secondary education, and (2) the support that is required to successfully implement IT in educational practice. These two themes are addressed in the 11 sections of the Handbook. Each section addresses the relevant theme(s) from a specific point-of-view.

For each section the editors summarize 5–6 chapters in a two-page overview and introduce their topic in an introductory chapter. In a parallel fashion, in the introductory chapter to this Handbook, the editors-in-chief discuss how the terminology used in the field evolved, explain the focus and structure of the Handbook and discuss intriguing trends that emerged across sections.

The editors-in-chief express their gratitude to the section editors and the authors for their valuable and interesting contributions to the Handbook. External advisors, Prof. Dr. Tjeerd Plomp (the Netherlands), Prof. Dr. Takashi Sakamoto (Japan) and Dr. Fred Litto (Brasil), contributed to the Handbook from the initial stages and helped strengthen the Handbook through critical, but constructive feedback. We particularly thank each of them for their wisdom and support throughout the process.

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IT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION: EMERGING ISSUES

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Introduction

This chapter introduces the main themes addressed in the International Handbook of Information Technology in Primary and Secondary Education. The challenges of information technology (IT) for education have been studied for about 40 years. Due to rapid technological developments the field is continuously changing in intriguing ways. There is a vast amount of research on IT in primary and secondary education, yet most of it is scattered, and a synthesis of the research from a broad international perspective has not yet been achieved. This Handbook aims to provide an overview of major directions of research in the field for researchers, policymakers and practitioners.

Since the beginning of research in this domain the implementation of the potential of IT in educational practice has been a recurring theme. In this Handbook the potential of IT, as well as its implementation in educational practice, is being examined from several perspectives. In this introductory chapter we first address the evolving terminology used in the field. Then we present the focus of the Handbook and finally we discuss common issues emerging across sections.

Evolving Terminology on Computer Use in Education

Since the introduction of the computer into education in the 1960s its potential for primary and secondary education has been recognized by many – researchers, policymakers and practitioners. The development of computer technology from processing information to also supporting communication augmented its potential for education. Owing to the enormous impact of these technologies, our society is in transition towards an information or knowledge society (e.g. Anderson, 2008). The term computer technology has been replaced by information and communication technology (ICT) (mostly used in Europe) or information technology (IT) or technology (in North America). Information and communication technology refers to all technologies

used for processing information and communicating. Because of the integration of computers with communication systems, including audio and video technology, also terms such as multimedia or digital media are being used (Anderson, 2008).

It is generally accepted (Lai, 2008) that IT as such does not support learning. Only when IT is well integrated into a learning environment does the full potential of IT for learning become realized. In the early days of computer use in education these “learning environments” were narrowly defined and referred to the computer software that supports certain types of learning. The term computer-assisted instruction (CAI) was adopted, indicating either a type of software programme for education or a type of instructional process. Steinberg (1991), for example, emphasized CAI as computer-presented instruction that is individualized, interactive and guided.

CAI fits well in a behaviourist approach to education, where students have to learn facts, concepts and theories and be able to apply and illustrate concepts and acquire basic procedural skills (Dede, 2008). CAI was conceptualized as an assistant for teachers by taking over some of their tasks. CAI software has the capacity to provide feedback to the learners and to keep track of their performance. A major benefit of software for education in this category is that it became possible to individualize instruction. The first CAI programmes were introduced in education when large main frame computers were still in use. With the introduction of the personal computer (PC) in the early 1980s in schools (in North America and Western Europe) expectations of CAI to improve teaching and learning were high. The introduction of the PC in schools also triggered the development of a much broader use of IT in education. As a consequence, also other terms in addition to CAI evolved, such as computer-based instruction, computer-based education and computer-assisted learning. These terms were sometimes used in ways similar to CAI, but often also reflected a broader conceptualization of different kinds of computer use in education. Watson (1994), for instance, used the term computer-assisted learning for the whole variety of ways in which the computer is used in education.

The rather confusing terminology is partly due to rapid technological changes. By the twenty-first century, computer technology has become mobile, personal and networked; stand alone desktop PCs are being replaced by laptops, personal digital assistants or mobile phones. These developments also triggered the evolution of new terms, to indicate the use of computers – or more generally Information Technology (IT) – in education.

More recently, new terms evolved to indicate computer use in education, such as E-learning (electronic learning), M-learning (mobile learning), Web-based education or learning, multimedia learning and ubiquitous learning. The term E-learning is used for learning that is facilitated or delivered through the use of computer or communications technologies, Internet, CD-ROM and/or television. Similar to E-learning, the term M-learning emphasizes the facilitation of learning through the use of mobile computer technology, such as mobile phones, personal digital assistants and laptops. If the World Wide Web in particular is used to deliver instruction also the term Web-based instruction or Web-based education or learning is also used. The term multimedia learning is often used when a mix of audio and video technologies is integrated in the learning environment. The most recent term that is emerging for

computer use in education is ubiquitous learning. Ubiquitous learning comes from ubiquitous computing, the ever-presence of computer technology in the environment. Ubiquitous learning refers to the potential of computer technology to make learning possible at any time and at any place. These more recent terms refer to broader conceptualizations of computer uses in education.

IT not only has the potential to enhance teaching and learning processes, it may also change the concept of education. Education is no longer limited to taking place in one physical environment at a certain time during the day. Rather, education can become available at any time and at any place. In this introductory chapter we will use the term information technology. However, based on the backgrounds of the scholars in this Handbook, as well as their perspectives on IT in education, the various terms, briefly introduced here, can be found throughout the Handbook.

Focus of the Handbook

Ten Brummelhuis and Kuiper (2008) in this Handbook distinguish four key elements that affect learning processes directly: the learner, the teacher, the curriculum and the infrastructure. Learners and teachers are the key players in the learning process. The curriculum determines the content and focus of the learning process, and the infrastructure deals with the physical (and/or virtual) learning environment, including the learning materials. Teaching and learning processes take place within an immediate social environment and simultaneously within a wider social context. The school, as the immediate environment, provides the organizational structure for the learning process. In the wider social context, the society, perspectives on education are discussed and educational policies are being developed and implemented, which affect how teaching and learning take place and are organized. Figure 1 presents a graphical representation

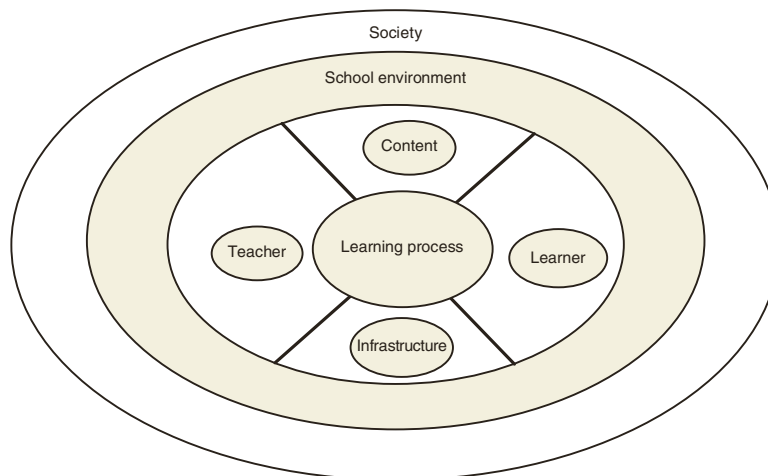


Fig. 1 The learning process: key elements and influencing factors (adapted from Plomp, Ten Brummelhuis and Rapmund, 1996; Voogt and Odenthal, 1997)

of the key elements, as well as the influencing factors affecting the learning process. This figure serves as a conceptual framework to discuss the focus of this Handbook.

The Potential of IT to Improve Education

The first theme of this Handbook addresses the *potential* of IT to improve education. Often two main perspectives are distinguished for IT in primary and secondary education: IT as an object in education, affecting learning content and goals, and IT as a medium to enhance teaching and learning processes (see also Voogt, 2008). The first view affects the curriculum, while the second role primarily affects the physical (and virtual) infrastructure for learning. From the perspective of IT as an object, improving primary and secondary education focuses on how learning content and goals should be attuned to the needs of society. From the perspective of IT as a medium, improving primary and secondary education concentrates on facilitating teaching and learning with IT. Although these perspectives can be distinguished separately, in research and policy debates they are often intertwined.

Within this first theme we aim to synthesize research on the design and impact of IT-based environments for student learning. Much research being carried out in this domain is especially focused on how to design IT-rich learning environments. These environments are based on up-to-date knowledge of fostering learning processes. In the Handbook we address this line of research in Section 3 (IT and the learning process), Section 7 (IT and distance learning in K-12 education) and Section 9 (Emerging technologies for education).

In Section 3 (IT and the learning process), research on some major educational software applications is presented and synthesized from the perspective of how these applications contribute to interactive learning, collaborative learning, inquiry learning and meta-cognitive learning.

Since the use of communication technologies became widespread, education has been attracted by the potential of IT to go beyond classroom walls. In Section 7 (IT and distance learning in K-12 education) the potential of IT for distance learning in primary and secondary education has been explored with particular attention paid to the virtual high school (or open school), the global classroom and the potential of distance learning for teachers.

Technology increasingly becomes part of our daily life. Section 9 (Emerging technologies for education) explores the potential of ubiquitous computing environments. Particularly, mobile technologies and Web 2.0 environments appear to have the potential to enhance education. Issues related to the design of learning environments using these emerging technologies are also addressed.

Infrastructure and Support Required to Implement IT in Education

The second theme addressed in this Handbook focuses on the *support* that needs to be in place to successfully *implement* IT into daily practices in primary and secondary education. This theme deals with the barriers and opportunities for IT implementation. As shown in Figure 1, factors at several levels may affect how IT is being used in learning processes. First, IT use is being influenced by the perceptions, attitudes

and competencies of teachers and learners as the key players in the learning process. Curriculum content and goals may also affect how IT is used, and the available infrastructure either provides opportunities or restricts IT use in educational practice. In the immediate environment school leadership as well the way a school is organized may promote or hinder IT implementation. At the local, state or national level IT-in-education policies guide the way IT is used in teaching and learning.

In this Handbook research, on the implementation of IT in primary and secondary education is discussed from several perspectives. First the perspectives of the learner and the teacher are addressed in Section 4 (IT attitudes and competencies) and Section 5 (Pedagogical innovations, and teacher learning). The curriculum perspective is addressed in Section 2 (IT and curriculum processes), while in Section 6 (IT in schools) research on IT leadership in schools is presented. The influence of educational policy as the wider environment of teaching and learning processes is discussed in Section 8 (IT and the digital divide) and Section 11 (International and regional programmes and policies).

Since the early days of IT use in education, attitudes towards computers and IT competencies of learners (and later teachers and school leaders) have been in the domain of interest of researchers and practitioners, because they appeared to be an important factor in the decision to use IT in educational practice. Section 4 (IT attitudes and competencies) describes research in this domain. Utilizing the potential of IT in educational practice often implies that the role of the teacher has to change. The teacher not only has to learn IT basic knowledge and skills, but more importantly, has to learn appropriate pedagogical skills to be able to integrate IT in a sound way into educational practice. Section 5 (Pedagogical innovations, and teacher learning) addresses the implications of the use of IT in educational practice for the teacher and for teacher professional development.

The intentions for use of IT in the curriculum have not always been realized. Section 2 (IT and curriculum processes) discusses how IT might influence content, aims, organization and assessment of the curriculum. The section discusses these implications of IT in specific domains, and in cross-curricular settings.

An important condition for successful use of IT in schools is the support of school leadership in the implementation of IT. Section 6 (IT in schools) discusses IT leadership in schools and the activities that IT leaders could carry out to facilitate IT integration schoolwide.

Educational policy may also contribute to the implementation of IT in education. In Section 11 (International and regional programmes and policies) international and regional policies for IT in education are analysed, with the intention of identifying the contributions of particular policies to optimizing the impact of IT in education. From a global policy perspective the gap between those who have access to IT and those who have not, often referred to as the “digital divide”, is a growing concern. Strategies for realizing digital equity are addressed in Section 8 (IT and the digital divide).

A few additional topics are addressed in the Handbook. First of all the role of education in the information society is addressed (Section 1, Education in the information society). This section offers a rationale for the other sections. Particularly, attention

is paid to new generic competencies that are needed for citizens to be prepared for the information and knowledge society, the role IT could play to acquire those competencies and how these new competencies affect curriculum and teaching and learning processes. Finally, in Section 10 (Researching IT in education) various aims for researching IT in education and the opportunities and limitations of several research approaches are discussed.

In the remaining part of this introduction chapter we briefly address major themes that emerged across the different sections of the Handbook.

Emerging Issues Across Sections

Different Views on the Role of IT in Education

The potential of IT to improve primary and secondary education can be discussed from several – sometimes competing – perspectives. In this Handbook two major rationales for the integration of IT can be found. First is the generally accepted belief that the society is changing from an industrial towards an information or knowledge society. This change implies that students need to be prepared for jobs that might not yet exist. Being able to use IT is seen as one of the core competencies for the twenty-first century. Anderson (2008) and Mioduser, Nachmias and Forkosh-Baruch (2008) elaborate on twenty-first century competencies. The second rationale is the belief that IT has the potential to enhance teaching and learning processes. Dede (2008) in this Handbook shows that IT applications have been developed on many different theories of learning. Although it is believed that IT applications particularly have great potential to facilitate the realization of constructivist approaches to teaching and learning, Dede argues that for some learning tasks simple CAI can be very effective.

Ten Brummelhuis and Kuiper (2008) offer a slightly different perspective. They distinguish between two instructional paradigms driving the integration of IT in education: the belief that IT has the potential to change education (see, for instance, Sections 7 and 9) vs. the belief that IT may contribute to addressing educational needs. Ten Brummelhuis and Kuiper position these two perspectives as opposing each other. For the belief that IT is considered a catalyst for educational change they use the term “technology push”. For the belief that IT has to follow educational needs they introduce the term “educational pull”. Table 1 is an effort to summarize what these different perspectives imply for the focus of technology use in education, as well as the kind of technology used.

Studying the Impact of IT on Student Learning

The ever-changing technology environment makes effective research into IT in education difficult, complex and challenging. This is particularly true for studying the impact for IT on student learning (Cox, 2008). The high expectations about the potential of IT for student learning could not easily be confirmed by convincing evidence

Table 1 Perspectives for technology use in education

	Information society	Enhancing teaching and learning processes
Technology push		
Focus	Creation of learning environments to encourage flexible learning	Enhancing existing (behaviourist/cognitivist) teaching and learning practices
Examples of IT applications	Content management systems, online learning environments, virtual high schools, mobile technologies	Commercially available IT-enhanced curriculum materials (e-books, websites added to textbooks)
Educational pull		
Focus	The use of technology to master twenty-first-century skills	Enhancing in-depth learning; in constructivist learning environments
Examples of IT applications	General application software; GPS systems, Internet; e-mail	Specific IT applications for education (simulations, games), knowledge-sharing environments, augmented reality

from research. Problems related to studying the impact of IT on student learning can be summarized as follows.

The kind of student outcomes. Initially it was expected that IT could enhance student achievement in traditional learning goals, as could be established by standardized tests. However, many IT applications also aimed at contributing to conceptual understanding of difficult concepts and the mastery of higher order cognitive skills such as problem-solving, which are different from traditional learning goals and could not easily be determined with standardized achievement tests. In addition, room was asked to pay attention in primary and secondary education to twenty-first century competencies next to traditional learning goals.

New indicators are needed. From the perspective of policymakers, higher scores on standardized tests attributed to the use of IT are a relatively easy and reliable way of determining the success of IT in education. However, more sophisticated IT applications contribute to other learning goals. From this perspective, standardized tests are not always a valid measure of the impact of IT on student learning. Small-scale studies about the impact of specific IT applications have developed their own tests and assessments for determining effects, but those findings could hardly be generalized. Increasingly, evidence about the impact of IT on student performance in the so-called twenty-first-century competencies becomes available in the form of self-report data. Although these data are considered an important source of information, they are not accepted as clear evidence of student performance. To be able to study the effect of IT on performance in more complex cognitive skills, efforts are needed in the development of “standardized” performance assessments.

Nature of research. To study the impact of IT on student learning is not an easy job. Experimental (or quasi-experimental) research designs are appropriate for studying the potential of specific IT applications under controlled conditions. However, it is not easy to transfer findings from experimental research designs to the reality of the classroom. Other research designs and methodologies are needed to take into account the complexity of the classroom, such as mixed methods approaches and design research. In addition, studies researching the impact of IT on student learning also require a careful specification of the IT application involved. In many large-scale studies IT is used as a container concept, which in reality consists of many different IT applications.

Despite the complex nature of studying the impact of IT in education, evidence on the impact of IT on student learning is slowly growing. Several contributions in the Handbook report about the major findings so far. Liao and Hao (2008) provide a comprehensive overview of findings from meta-analysis carried out between 1986 and 2006 in which they reviewed studies that compared IT-enhanced instruction and IT-enhanced distance education with traditional classroom instruction. The overall effect sizes on cognitive achievement, not taking into account specific IT application(s), domains or target groups, appeared small but in favor of computer use in education. A more detailed analysis of studies included in their review showed that IT-enhanced instruction has positive effects on achievement of language-disordered and cognitively disabled students. Liao and Hao also found that IT-enhanced instruction designed by research groups have greater effects on student achievement than commercial IT products.

Results on student achievement are reported for language arts, mathematics, science and twenty-first-century skills. Most convincing evidence for the effects of IT is related to student learning in Language arts (see also Voogt, 2008). The evidence with regard to student learning in math and science education seems less convincing (Voogt, 2008; Webb, 2008). Research focusing on student learning of twenty-first-century skills is scarce, and partly based on self-report measures. However, results so far indicate that more research is needed to be able to better understand how specific IT applications contribute to student achievement in these domains.

IT as Core or Complementary Technology

Collis and Moonen (2001) introduced the terms core and complementary technology. For IT to become a core technology the major activities of the teaching and learning process need to be based on it. To date, this particularly seemed to be realized in online learning contexts, but not in the dominant way of schooling in classrooms around the world. Complementary technologies in schools are often more specific than IT applications that offer a technology-based solution for a pedagogical problem. Collis and Moonen argue that IT can only become successfully integrated when IT has become a core technology for education, comparable to what the blackboard and the text book used to be. The use of complementary technologies in education is strongly connected to pedagogical approaches adopted (see also Dede, 2008); that is why, according to Moonen (2008), it is much easier

to have policies for IT integration accepted for core technologies than for complementary technologies.

IT as Core Technology: The Success of the Virtual High School

Since the use of communication technologies has become widespread, education has been attracted by the potential of IT to go beyond classroom walls to provide learning opportunities at any time and at any place. A relatively new phenomenon in secondary education is the virtual high school or open school. Contrary to the relatively pessimistic views about the time needed to transform education and the role of IT in such transformation (e.g. Moonen, 2008; Voogt, 2008), the rapid increase of virtual high schools, particularly in the USA, is a success story in the history of IT in education (Roblyer, 2008). The goal of the virtual high school is to contribute to digital equity by providing learning possibilities for those in remote areas. Research has shown that the most successful students in the virtual high school in the USA are those who most capable of regulating their own learning. These students are successful in any learning environment. The discussion remains whether education in the virtual high school also will transform pedagogical practices. Some researchers (Nikolov and Nikolova, 2008; Butcher and Wilson-Strydom, 2008) argue that virtual schooling might consolidate behaviourist approaches to teaching and learning. Roblyer (2008), on the contrary, foresees a change because the virtual high school provides learning opportunities at any time and at any place.

IT as Complementary Technology: IT-Supported Learning Environments

To realize the potential of IT for learning, IT needs to be well embedded in a learning environment. The term “learning environment” is no longer narrowly defined, as in the early days of CAI, but covers a broader concept. It comprises people (teacher, students), technology, materials, classroom layout (or the virtual classroom) and the environment (Lai, 2008). In the domain of IT-supported learning environments, some environments have been well designed and studied for more than 15 years. Knowledge Forum (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 2003) is a well-known example of an IT-supported learning environment in which students are supported in knowledge creation in many domains. The work of Linn and colleagues (e.g. Linn, Clark and Slotta, 2003) in the domain of science education (e.g. The Web-Integrated Science Environment) focuses on concept learning through inquiry and collaboration. Both examples provide an infrastructure for collaboration between students and between students and their teacher and provide a variety of scaffolds to facilitate collaboration (Arvaja, Häkkinen and Kankarantaara, 2008), knowledge building (Chan and van Aalst, 2008) and meta-cognition (Lin and Sullivan, 2008). These are typical examples of complementary technology. The design and research of these “classics” demonstrate the added values of IT for enhancing teaching and learning processes, and also contributed to a better understanding of teaching and learning. It is unfortunate that despite their long history, they have only found their way to a very limited number of innovative teachers and did not become part of main stream education.

Core and Complementary Technology: Best Practices on IT Use

In comparison to the well-designed and researched IT-supported learning environments described earlier, schools and teachers themselves develop educational practices in which they make use of IT.

Increasingly, these educational practices are studied as innovative or best practices. Many best practice studies on IT use in primary and secondary education have been conducted with the aim of understanding the practice and its implementation conditions. In this Handbook several authors (see e.g. Voogt, 2008; Nachmias, Mioduser and Forkosh-Baruch, 2008) refer to the Second Information Technology in Education Studies (SITES) as a worldwide series of studies (Pelgrum and Anderson, 1999; Kozma, 2003; Law, Pelgrum and Plomp, 2008), paying attention to innovative pedagogical use of IT in education. The SITES studies indicate that increasingly schools and teachers use the basic possibilities of IT in innovative pedagogical contexts to be able to pay attention to the so-called twenty-first-century competencies. Compared to the classics described earlier, these examples do not exploit the full potential of IT. Instead they make particular use of the basic features of technology: communication and information handling. The use of IT in these best practices can often be typified as core (e.g. used as major information resource) and complementary (addressing pedagogical needs) educational resources.

Teacher Learning and IT Leadership

It is widely recognized that using IT for education also implies that teacher's pedagogical practices need to change. Teacher learning, in preservice and inservice settings, is needed to support teachers in changing their pedagogical approach and to learn how IT can be used to facilitate the new pedagogical approach. Research from Knezek and Christensen (2008) has shown that teachers' use of IT is affected by will (attitudes towards IT), skill (IT competencies) and access to IT tools. Teacher IT competency is not limited to basic IT knowledge and skills. A competent teacher is able to blend subject matter knowledge with appropriate pedagogy and IT knowledge and skills. The term technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPCK) (Hinos-troza, Labbé, López and Post, 2008; Law, 2008) is used to emphasize the interaction between these three domains. To guide teacher learning in IT integration, standards for teachers (e.g. Thomas and Knezek, 2008), as well as benchmarks for teacher education programmes (Kirschner, Wubbels and Brekelmans, 2008), have been formulated. Law (2008) argues that TPCK is not enough for IT integration, but that teachers' disposition towards educational change is also important.

It is not only teachers who need to adopt IT and integrate it into a new pedagogical approach. Rather, organizational structures and contexts need to be in place to allow teachers to apply new pedagogical approaches. Davis (2008) argues that a shared school perspective on the integration of IT is needed in order to allow teachers to integrate IT in their educational practice. The importance of IT leadership is recognized by many. IT leadership needs to focus on vision building for IT integration, providing facilities for teachers to develop a vision on why and how to integrate IT into

education, and in organizing support. According to Dexter (2008), a team approach is needed to arrange for IT leadership in schools. Riel and Becker (2008) argue that leadership should be a focus of attention in the preparation of every teacher. IT leadership from this perspective is not only an organizational issue, but also a challenge for the individual teacher. According to Riel and Becker, schools need to develop forms of distributed expertise of teacher leadership to be able to cope with the integration that technology requires.

Towards Digital Equity in IT for Education: The Potential of One-to-One Access

In less than a decade (between 1997 and 2006), the access to computers in schools has improved markedly (Law, Pelgrum and Plomp, 2008). The findings from PISA 2003 (Ainley, Enger and Searle, 2008) also show that the majority of students across countries participating in the PISA study have access to a computer at school, and a slightly smaller percentage of these students have access to computer at home. Hence, in developed countries access to IT does not seem to be an issue in discussions about computer uses in education. However, general figures about access to computers are only partially informative with respect to how computers are used in educational practice. As Ainley, Enger and Searle (2008) make clear, contexts for IT access and use differ among countries. Norris and Soloway (2008) argue that, despite the improved IT infrastructure, computers are still scarce resources. They show that even in many US classrooms teachers have limited access to computer laboratories or have only very few computers available in their classrooms. In such circumstances, one may not expect teachers to integrate IT into teaching and learning activities. Norris and Soloway (2008) argue that to make use of the full potential of technology in education, one-to-one access to technology is a condition sine qua non. The rapid development of low-cost mobile computing devices makes it possible that one-to-one access can indeed be realized in education.

The emergence of low-cost mobile computing devices also contributes to access to technology on a global scale. With the widespread use of cell phones throughout the world (Brown, 2008), as well as initiatives such as the One Laptop per Child Project (OLPC) from MIT, there is a real possibility that access will no longer be a problem for countries with fewer resources (Norris and Soloway, 2008). Although important, increased access to hardware and connectivity is only one of the strategies needed to increase digital equity. Resta and Laferrière (2008) propose five strategies that contribute to digital equity: (1) access to hardware, software and connectivity; (2) provision of content in local languages; (3) qualified educators; (4) quality research to enhance learning with IT and (5) access to content creation. Particularly, the availability of content in local languages and access to content creation seem to be of paramount importance to strengthen designated groups with technology. The importance of content is described by Roy Chen, Cherian and Tuiono (2008), who show how IT can be used to document cultural and historical artefacts of native Americans. In this way, IT may even strengthen minority groups in their struggle to survive within the majority society.

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