

▼ Introduction to Advances in Teaching and Learning Technologies Minitrack

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The Advances in Teaching and Learning Technologies Minitrack is presently in its fifth year and serves as an outlet for research dealing with technologies that can be used to augment the teaching process, the learning process, or both. This rather broad designation is intended to capture theories, tools, tool development, enabling platforms, communication media, distance learning, supporting infrastructures, user experiences, research methods, social impacts, and measurable outcomes as they relate to improving teaching and learning. Thus, this Minitrack is intended to include research that encompasses all aspects of learning from the original inceptions of theories and tools through the measurement of learning outcomes. Usage environments range from same-time, same-place to anytime, anyplace that increase interactions among the learners and the teachers or facilitators. The papers this year are organized into two presentation sessions, each focusing on a different aspect of technologies for teaching and learning.

The first session features papers that deal with various aspects of online communities for purposes of learning. This set of papers includes studies that

investigate: the roles of knowledge sharing and trust as requisite factors for building sustainable online learning communities, students intentions of using instant messaging technologies for group project discussions, and the viability of peer-to-peer networks as a vehicle for collaborative learning.

The second session examines a cross-section of tools and theories that support group collaboration to aid the learning process. Included in this session are papers that explore the design of collaborative tools that support case-based learning activities, the effectiveness of verbal and non-verbal characteristics of avatars in conjunction with creative capabilities to support online group learning, and a theoretical analysis of sociocultural theory as a means to ensure that collaborative and constructive learning occurs in different phases of teacher education.

As always, we are very appreciative for the enormous efforts put forth by the researchers who support this Minitrack as well as the many gracious reviewers that help us evolve and strengthen the Minitrack each year.