BJET Editorial November 2016

Greetings to the BJET community from the new editorial team. We took over in July 2016 and are excited about the opportunity to lead and shape this esteemed journal. In this editorial we outline our policies and vision for the future and report on our first few months in post.

First and foremost we wish to thank the previous editor Nick Rushby for all his efforts over the many years of his editorship and the strong global reputation that he and the previous editorial board and "corresponding editors" built up for the journal. Despite its name, the British Journal of Educational Technology is a truly international journal with readership, peer reviewers and submissions from all corners of the world, and most are outside Britain. It is highly respected, vastly oversubscribed, and regularly ranked in the top 10 journals in the field of "edtech" globally and the top 20% of all education journals. We thank all of the journal's supporters for your valuable contributions to date and are pleased to report that the journal's impact factor rose in 2016. We are also grateful to our publisher, Wiley, for the considerable administrative support and expertise provided to us; indeed our role would not otherwise be manageable.

Our objective is for BJET to go "from strength to strength" under our stewardship, increasing its quality, reach, and impact. Specifically, we aim to focus on quality submissions and articles published and reduce the time taken to publish. We have begun our term of office by focusing on the important role that reviewers play in supporting both editors and authors to ensure that the best quality articles are published. Our aim is to reduce the amount of work reviewers are asked to do by carefully considering whether articles meet the journal's criteria of *original and substantial contribution to the field* and demonstrate *methodological and/or theoretical rigour* – before sending them for review. Manuscripts deemed not to meet, or potentially meet, these criteria are rejected, only after careful consideration by at least two editors. We have listened to the pleas of previous Board members concerning reducing the volume of papers offering purely descriptive and under-theorised rather than *analytical* accounts, especially stand-alone surveys of users' perceptions, and we strongly discourage these.

BJET receives submissions from over 60 countries right across the globe from Sweden to Chile; Nigeria to Brazil and Taiwan to Ireland. Inevitably the majority of published articles come from countries with the biggest edtech research programmes such as the USA, UK, Taiwan, China and Australia. Under the new editorial team BJET will continue to publish a diverse range of theoretical perspectives, methodological developments and high quality empirical research that demonstrate whether and how applications of educational technology systems, networks, tools and resources lead to improvements in formal and informal education, professional development and corporate training. Our vision for the journal will build on these notable strengths along three key themes:

Internationalisation: BJET has always sought the best work from across the world. This is a tradition we will continue, with a strong focus on the application of learning technologies to practice across different cultural contexts, enriched by developing understandings of how learning theories and pedagogical practices are influenced by national systems of education. This will be increasingly relevant as understandings

develop regarding how learning technologies are embedded within formal educational structures. How these findings impact on the development and evaluation of educational technology policies will require strong analytical work. Submissions need to demonstrate *both practical and international significance* of all research reported. Studies carried out in one setting or even a single institution need to present their work in a widely appealing manner, ensuring that articles are genuinely of wide interest. Authors will be expected to make the international significance of their findings clear, explicitly drawing out implications for those working in other educational contexts.

Inclusiveness: In our vision for the journal, BJET will continue and extend its focus on inclusive technologies. This will include technologies for those with disabilities, but will expand the journal's focus on increasing understandings of their practice with learning technologies, and how inclusion can be extended not only through use but also through design. The theme of inclusion will have a strong commitment to "non-traditional" learners, in particular exploring the role of technology in addressing social exclusion and marginalisation both nationally and internationally, including the unintended structural inequalities of technology resulting from power differences and gender inequity. Of significant interest will be the development of improved understandings of how to bridge formal and informal learning. Inclusion will also be interpreted broadly to include studies that aim to improve equity of participation of *all* learners in educational activities through technology use.

Innovation: BJET has always maintained a strong focus on technologies and their use for learning across formal and informal contexts. This will be extended under our editorship to include emerging technologies and a growing exploration of the relationship between pedagogical practice and technological innovation. Examples could include: (i) the contribution of learning theory and practice to improve the applicability of machine learning algorithms, (ii) an understanding of how collaboration occurs in professional contexts and (iii) impacts on the design of future online learning environments. Importantly, the focus will be firmly on learning and teaching (at all levels) in contexts enhanced by digital technology, rather than on technology itself. Innovation will extend to engagement with emerging theories and a wider range of theory in general, in exploring and analysing uses of technology, and the factors that influence its adoption and scalability.

Our vision is to increase the journal's *'critical edge'* and widen the theoretical and methodological foundations of the published articles. To facilitate this we have raised the word length from 4,000 to 6,000. We aim to maintain the *sharp focus* of papers and the journal's strong tradition of *application to educational practice;* Practitioner Notes remain of crucial importance. We have tightened up the journal's scope statement to reinforce the above points and to clarify that "technology" refers to digital technology. We have retained the broad scope spanning all phases of education including higher, technical and vocational education, professional development and training, and informal educational settings as well as formal ones. To clearly communicate the current policies and procedures, we have updated the author guidelines and scope statement accordingly. The journal team expects all submissions to adhere strictly to them; we regret that those not fully compliant will be returned to authors – so please read them carefully! Authors are reminded that all articles need to be *written in fluent and correct English* and those with multiple errors interfering with readability are filtered out by our Editorial Office before they even reach us. We,

fortunately, continue to receive a more than sufficient volume of high-quality submissions to keep the journal afloat and welcome you to keep them coming our way.

In August 2016 we appointed our vibrant new Editorial Board of 30 colleagues and introduced an International Advisory Board of 9, through open competition. The new Boards take different roles in shaping and supporting the journal from the previous Editorial Board and Corresponding Editors: The Editorial Board consists of experienced, rigorous reviewers from around the world and with diverse interests. Along with providing expert and informed reviews, members of the Board promote the journal and act as 'critical friends' to early career researchers (more on this below). We will review membership of the Editorial Board annually based on activity and quality reviews. The International Advisory Board's primary purpose is to provide strategic guidance to the journal from diverse perspectives, both in terms of geography and subject expertise.

We were immensely pleased to receive a very strong field of well over 200 applications for the new Boards. We subsequently appointed some previous Board members and BJET reviewers who are longstanding supporters of the journal, along with some "new blood"; all submitted very impressive professional profiles and enthusiastic applications. The final decisions between the best applicants were made so as to ensure geographical representation from across our international readership; the many highly qualified scholars we were sadly unable to include were invited to join our increasingly strong base of regular reviewers.

You will all be aware how important good critical reviews are to the journal and we would like to thank all those who have provided such reviews in 2016. High quality reviews are vital to authors and with this in mind, we would like to invite readers of the journal who are not currently included in the reviewer database to consider reviewing for us. All articles are reviewed by at least two peer reviewers and all reviews received by the editors are rated based on their timeliness and quality. Additionally, we would like to draw authors' attention to the importance of clearly and fully responding to both editors' and reviewers' comments. This not only helps editors and reviewers to make quick decisions on revised manuscripts but also ensures that your article can advance to the next stage in a timely manner.

Critical Friends are often the key to the development of quality articles. This is especially true for those at an early-career stage or those from low-income countries who may not have the 'research infrastructure' to support them. For these reasons we have chosen to reintroduce the Critical Friend scheme. This is run on a voluntary basis and may be applied for or suggested to an author by the editors. The Critical Friend will be a Board member or other expert in the field who is available to offer support as an author develops their manuscript. Further details of the scheme and role of the Critical Friend and requirements of the author can be found on the website.

Special Issues (SIs) play a particularly important role at BJET. BJET policy is that they should collate papers and reflections on specific topics in our rapidly moving field, and take an analytic (not purely descriptive) stance. Quality of all papers included needs to be high as we only have scope to publish *one special issue per yea*r, which may be proposed by authors or invited by the editors. The next deadline for submission of proposals is June 30th 2017. We will also consider themed sections

within an issue (of between 3-5 papers), which may provide a faster route to publication. For more details on Special Issues, please see:

http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-8535/homepage/bjet_special_issues.htm.

BJET is owned and managed by BERA and we will continue working closely with the organisation, which monitors standards and policies, and provides substantial support for the editors. This year we introduced a biennial award for the best presentation in the area of EdTech at BERA annual conference. The 2016 award went to Louis Major, University of Cambridge for his presentation on *Digitalised Dialogues Across the Curriculum (DiDiAC): introducing Talkwall*. Each award winner receives £100 in book vouchers, and is invited to develop their presentation into a full paper to submit to BJET, which if successful will be published with free access. In conjunction with Wiley we are continuing the biennial BERA BJET fellowship scheme. This is a one-year award of £5000 made available to an applicant with the most compelling proposal for a piece of research in the field of educational technology. A progress report on the funded research will be presented at the BERA Conference, and is expected to lead to the submission of an academic paper to BJET.

We look forward to working with all of you to strengthen and promote the journal internationally. Further to our efforts as editors and beyond the support of the editorial and the international advisory boards, the success and quality of the journal depends on all of you as readers, authors and reviewers. Please feel free to contact us with any queries or comments.

The Editorial Team

Dr Carina Girvan, *Lecturer, Cardiff University*
Carina's interests lie in the use of emerging technologies to create transformative and pedagogically underpinned learning experiences. Her current work focuses on virtual worlds and robotics with adults and children in online and face-to-face settings. Methodological and ethical opportunities and constraints of conducting educational research in and with new technologies are also of interest.

Dr Sara Hennessy, *Reader, University of Cambridge*
Sara's recent work explores the potential of using technology – especially interactive whiteboards/display screens and mobile devices – to support subject learning, critical thinking and inquiry through classroom dialogue. Some of her research is focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching in sub-Saharan African schools and teacher education. Outcomes of her research include analytic tools and open, multimedia professional learning resources.

Dr Manolis Mavrikis, *Reader, UCL Knowledge Lab, University College London - Institute of Education*
Manolis' research revolves around the design, development and evaluation of supportive technologies for learning, teaching and research, i.e. (a) digital environments that, through their design, support learners to understand abstract concepts and provide direct, individualised, adaptive feedback and (b) tools that

utilise students' digital traces to increase teachers' and researchers' awareness of the outcomes and processes involved in learning.

Professor Sara Price, *Professor, UCL Knowledge Lab, University College London - Institute of Education*
Sara's research focuses on understanding the ways in which emergent technologies (mobile, sensor, tangible) can support new forms of interaction, learning and pedagogical approaches. The work centrally engages with digital-physical forms of interaction, and involves the design of new technologies or applications using participatory design processes; qualitative evaluation of learning interactions; and exploration of new methodological directions for researching embodied forms of learning.

Dr Niall Winters, *Associate Professor, University of Oxford*
Niall's main research interest is in understanding how educational interventions can help to address inequality. He focuses on how technology can support the strengthening of education and training capacity. More specifically, Niall works to design, develop and evaluate technology-enhanced learning (TEL) interventions that support the professional development of learning practitioners, primarily in the Global South.