Editorial Preface

Special Issue on the 5th Irish Conference on Game-Based Learning

Patrick Felicia, Department of Computing, Mathematics, and Physics, Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, Ireland

Tim McNichols, Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin, Ireland

Welcome to the fourth issue of the International Journal of Game-Based Learning (IJGBL). IJGBL publishes empirical and theoretical articles on the design and evaluation of Game-Based Learning solutions. This journal seeks to inform researchers and practitioners on how learning and motivation can be improved through video games. This issue includes research papers selected from the 5th Irish Conference (formerly symposium) on Game-Based Learning that was held in Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland, in June 2015.

The Irish Conference on Game Based Learning (iGBL), formerly Irish Symposium on Game-Based Learning, provides a forum for all stakeholders interested in exchanging ideas, projects, and best practice on the use of games and game-based approaches to support motivation, learning, and change. It is a forum for like-minded people (i.e., students, teachers, researchers, or companies) to meet and share this enthusiasm for this platform.

The six articles included in this issue cover a wide range of topics such as the use of games to teach languages or mathematics, to introduce mindfulness concepts, or for social change or the challenge of increasing both engagement and learning through game-based solutions

In the first paper entitled, *Unmasking the Mystique: Utilizing Narrative Character-Playing Games to Support English Language Fluency*, the authors uncover the importance of providing a creative implementation for fluency instruction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in which learners interact through a virtual character-playing simulation called *Place Out of Time (POOT).*

In the second paper entitled, *Gaeilge Gaming – Assessing How Games Can Help Children to Learn Irish,* the authors address some of the key challenges in teaching a second language to primary school children by adopting a novel approach using an online detective game in Irish.

In the third paper entitled, *Even Buddhist Monks Use a Gong: A Mindfulness Skills Programme for Young People Delivered through the "Mindful Gnats" Computer Game and App,* the authors unveil the expert design and content required to create a unique role-playing game to teach mindfulness and relaxation skills to young people.

In the fourth paper entitled, *Digital Gesture-Based Games: An Evolving Classroom,* the author demonstrates the importance of involving pupils and teachers in the classroom when designing and developing gesture-based games to enhance mathematics education.

In the fifth paper entitled, *Games for Social Change,* the author puts forward a strong theoretical case for the potential of massively multiplayer online games (MMOG) to create a space and mechanism for enabling the emergence of movements for social change in communities.

In the final paper entitled, *Towards a Conceptual Framework of GBL Design for Engagement and Learning of Curriculum-based Content*, the authors investigate both pupils' and teachers' feedback to explore how the engagement process works to determine which approaches and elements of GBL are the most engaging for pupils.

We hope that you enjoy reading this issue. We also hope that you will consider submitting an article to subsequent issues of the journal, or attend the Irish Conference on Game Based Learning (iGBL), and contribute to the expanding body of knowledge on Game-Based Learning.

Patrick Felicia
Editor-in-Chief
Tim McNichols
Guest Editor
IJGBL