

Editorial

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This issue of the Italian Journal of Educational Technology includes five articles that tackle a range of different research topics and one short paper in the Field Experiences section. In the first of the five articles, “*Should Britain leave the EU? An exploration of online argument through a Toulmin perspective*”, the authors Michael Hammond and Marina Charalampidi discuss the importance of adopting theoretically based frameworks of analysis for online argumentation in educational settings. Although Brexit has now become a reality, this study offers a valuable contribution by using an adaption of Toulmin’s approach to provide a feasible and useful framework for assessing the force of argument within educational forums.

The second article, “*Laboratorio per apprendere le competenze del 21° secolo: percorsi didattici con Scratch per i futuri insegnanti della scuola primaria*” by Lorella Gabriele, Francesca Bertacchini, Pietro Pantano and Eleonora Bilotta, tackles computational thinking and presents a study about how groups of pre-service teachers were involved in coding activities. Working in groups, the participants developed a number of educational projects using Scratch software and applied planning and coding techniques for the exploitation of educational contents.

In “*Gran Sasso videogame: la fisica e il gioco nei laboratori sotterranei del Gran Sasso*”, Alessia Giampaoli, Lisa Lazzarato, Francesca Conti, Alba Formicola and Ivan Venturi present a videogame which is set in Italy’s Gran Sasso National Laboratories. Through the game, students learn about concepts such as neutrino physics, dark matter and nuclear astrophysics generally. A preliminary series of experiments with students and teachers generated promising results and paved the way to improvements and further experimentation.

The fourth of the research articles, “*Assessing a MOOC user’s experience in a virtual mobility project: preliminary results for quality enhancement*” by Antonella Poce, Francesca Amenduni, Mariarosaria Re and Carlo De Medio, describes a quality framework for OERs and MOOCs which was developed in the Erasmus+ project Open Virtual Mobility for OER and MOOC. It presents a case study in which experience data from a small number of MOOC learners were collected and analyzed to improve the quality of the framework.

In the fifth and last research article, “*Teachers’ attitudes towards educational robotics in compulsory school*”, Lucio Negrini presents a study about educational robotics as a learning tool to promote disciplinary and transversal skills at school. The study analyzed the attitudes of almost two hundred teachers towards educational robotics and showed that they perceive some potential in the use of robots for the development of transversal skills.

Finally, the short paper in the Field Experiences section, “*L’insegnamento della conservazione dell’energia meccanica tramite le simulazioni online PhET*” by Daniel Doz presents a simulation available

on the Colorado PhET website regarding the conservation of mechanical energy. Results from an experiment conducted with 15 high school students studying Applied Sciences have shown that online simulations can help increase student knowledge of the conservation of mechanical energy.