

Dear readers

Welcome to this special issue of JPPPM!

The main purpose of this special issue is to provide a forum to explore how the possibility for online delivery of education was being embraced by the project management community. I was interested in the answers to several questions. How were online delivery opportunities being explored by project management educators? Was the design of the project management curriculum being affected by the possibilities for online delivery? What was the actual impact of online delivery for the development of project managers' skills and knowledge?

These questions had never been asked before in a project management journal — and this issue provides some of the answers.

Our contributors are from around the world and provide meaningful insight into both the challenges and opportunities of the online delivery of project management education. You will find both original research and, for the first time, a teaching case.

Getting into more specifics, you will find ...

- An in-depth profile of Boston University's project management program offered by Leybourne, Kanabar & Warburton. Its prominence in the online delivery of project management education is well deserved, and detailed accounts of participants' experiences are provided. Pedagogical principles are explored, classroom management techniques described and student support explained.
- An exploration of virtual gaming by Hussein as he challenges the assumptions and realities of optimal learning using online technology. This paper addresses various documented shortcomings and proposes a game design that captures real-life challenges associated with applying the project risk management process.
- Compelling research into the use of innovative grading techniques is shown by Lee, Carstens & Malone to dramatically improve the quality and quantity of participation in online discussion forums.
- Two articles are offered by Twiname and Gibbs, each focusing on two different elements of project management: risk and human resources.
 - One provides readers with a teaching case where students are asked to develop risk management strategies in their approach to "ACE Technologies" (a software development firm facing problems with one of its information technology projects). Students are asked to develop communication strategies using both virtual and face-to-face techniques in managing the situation. You, the reader, benefit by having both the case and associated instruction for your own use.
 - The other underscores the importance of project management decision making as part of human resource management education. Critical pedagogical principles are explained and descriptions of the virtual and in-class delivery for undergraduate students are provided.

This special collection contributes to the scholarship of pedagogy and andragogy, and provides specific and pragmatic direction to project management educators as they design future courses and programs. It represents the latest in an ongoing series of steps examining the nexus between e-learning and project management. The questions I raised for this issue have been answered here ... but they are just the beginning.

Please stay tuned for more in future issues of JPPPM and other venues.

Before signing off, I must extend special thanks to Shankar, Gita, my submitters and authors for their creativity and commitment. Together we have brought attention to a new and growing area of research and educational practice.

Cheers for now,

BP

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PS: I would like to thank Beverly for taking on the task of orchestrating this special issue which she has done admirably. I would like to thank all the contributors for some excellent contributions and the reviewers for taking the time to give thoughtful feedback.. Encouraged by the outcomes from this special issue we have now taken on producing two more special issues in 2012. The next one is a special issue on 'Organizational Project Management' to be guest edited by Dr. Nigel Williams and Dr. Beverly Pasion. Please see the announcement of the journal website for more information on special issues.

Shankar Sankaran (Editor)