

FOREWORD

Science, language learning, and economics are the topics for this issue of the ABAC Journal. We begin with another of a series of articles on international relations by Dr. Ioan Voicu. The current article, concerns an important meeting of Asian and European leaders that took place in Beijing this past October. The worldwide financial crisis gave special urgency to this meeting and Dr. Voicu considers the manner in which the leaders, which included 26 heads of government, dealt with the crisis and made serious progress towards multilateral agreements that would make basic structural changes in the world financial system. Because of the very timely nature of the article we have made certain that it reaches our readers as soon as possible. Because of the importance of the economic crisis and the response at the ASEM 7 we are also printing as an appendix of the journal the text of the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development. We are certain that all of our readers will take great interest in this crucial report.

Dr. Firouz B. Anaraki considers the interaction of cultures at a much smaller level, in an article that explores the use of modern technology to enhance the foreign language learning that is so important for international cooperation on every level. Multilingual skills are extremely important in a highly globalized world but many of the people most in need of these skills tend to be too busy to engage in the studying and drilling needed to master a foreign language. To meet this challenge Dr. Anaraki examines a flash-based electronic teaching tool that allows the language learners to work at their task using an appropriately equipped mobile phone or pda. This would seem to provide a flexibility that would most likely improve language learning, an intuition that is formally tested in the study.

Dr. Susanne I. Lapp, Dr. Valerie J. Bristor, Dr. Philomena Marinaccio-Eckel, and Dr. Jane Brady Matanzo consider a slower method of learning, but one which in its own way provides unparalleled scope and depth to the learning process: the act of reading. Unfortunately, perhaps because of technology there is a tendency to de-emphasize reading in the curriculum. The authors consider attempts to revive reading programs through reading retreats aimed at those being trained as language teachers. At times, it seems, that it is appropriate to use technology to help accommodate the learning process to speeded up lives but at other times the best method is to move from those fast lives back to a reflective act such as reading.

One area where there may be a tension between the need for quick responsiveness can be found in the rapidly expanding field of e-service, systems that allow services to be directly provided through a world-wide-web interface. In his article, Dr. Siripong Charoensuk examines such services in the Thai telecommunications industry. The study in fact finds that willingness to take advantage of this new means of service is closely related to factors associated with traditional services – customer satisfaction, customer value, and service experience, perhaps suggesting that the gap between the rapid response of the new and the human dimension of the old may not have as great a gap as it seems.

In the final article, “Kamma and Chaos Theory” by Dr. David Tin Win, there is a leap back to a broader perspective, in this case not so much economic as cosmic. The author examines the modern scientific ideas of complexity science and finds them closely related to the traditional Buddhist concept of Kamma. In this article, like the first words are joined together which otherwise might have seen quite separate, this bringing together disparate material is in general an essential element of the editorial policy of ABAC Journal. We hope that the relationships between the articles in the issue are both enlightening and thought-provoking.

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