Preface

This book is a collection of selected proceedings papers from the AECT-LKAOE 2015 Summer International Research Symposium. AECT is the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. LKAOE is the theme of the symposium: Learning and Knowledge Analytics in Open Education. This symposium was organized by AECT in partnership with Indiana State University (ISU) and hosted by East China Normal University (ECNU). The symposium was held on June 17–19, 2015, at the campus of East China Normal University in Shanghai, China.

The purpose of this book was to disseminate the essence of the symposium. Serving as an open-discussion forum, the symposium was designed to draw the best minds together for an intensive intellectual exchange of ideas and information about research, development, and applications on topics related to learning and knowledge analytics in open education in all disciplines. The contributors of this book include many well-known professors in the field, Drs. M. David Merrill and Robert A. Reiser; AECT presidents, Drs. J. Mike Spector, J. Ana Donaldson, Marcus D. Childress, and Robert Maribe Branch; and AECT Executive Director Dr. Phillip Harris. The target audience for this book is higher education faculty members, graduate students, scholars, and practitioners in educational technology and related fields. This book can be used as supplementary reading for courses in educational technology programs, including introductory courses, courses in distance education and instructional design, and beyond. Readers will learn about trends and issues in education today—and tomorrow—and the principles to follow in order to address challenges as the Internet and multimedia technologies continue to develop at tremendous speed.

The title of this book is the theme of the symposium. We decided to adopt this theme for the symposium because, according to ECNU, Chinese scholars in educational technology were most interested in this topic. There were six tracks, including learning-and-knowledge-analytics-related standards, policy, and pedagogy; learning design in open-ended learning environments (OELE); MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and open education; new technology and new

media; instructional designers as change agents in the age of open education; and other learning analytics studies and applications. This book includes chapters related to these six tracks of the theme of LKAOE.

This collection is composed of 16 chapters, arranged based on the order of the tracks for the symposium. The first chapter and the last two are not theme-related. They are included in the book because they were papers that the authors were invited to present at special sessions of the symposium serving special purposes. The first chapter asserts that learning is a journey, not a destination. By declaring so, the authors tell us: "Teachers must recognize the human differences inherent in the many ways their students acquire knowledge and construct understandings. Instruction must proceed in ways that accommodate these differences if the learners' individual journeys are to be successful." This chapter is important and placed as the first chapter because it lays a strong foundation to guide readers' thinking as they read the other chapters in this book. Chapter 15 provides guidance for readers who are interested in academic writing and publishing. The chapter includes "some tips on writing clearly for an academic audience along with an editor's perspective on publishing research." The last chapter reports the findings of a qualitative study about perspectives that the Chinese scholars hold regarding educational technology. The purpose of this chapter was to provide those who are interested in engaging in collaborative programs or projects in educational technology with China with information they will need, such as a general picture of the scholars with whom they are going to work and what projects or programs they may want to consider undertaking with Chinese scholars in Chinese higher education.

Editing this book has been a learning process for me. First, I learned from the chapter authors. Most of them are prominent scholars in educational technology in the USA or China. Their views and the points they made were valuable to all of us who want to be better scholars in educational technology. Second, I learned from my co-editor. His thoroughness and strong sense of responsibility bring back memories of the years when I was a student at Purdue University. The knowledge and work ethics I learned from him as well as from my other Purdue professors made me a successful scholar today. Third, I learned how to work on an edited book. I have had the experience of writing a book as a sole author or co-author, but working on an edited collection was a new experience. I learned from AECT Executive Director Phil Harris his style of working with different people. I find that I truly have learned something from everyone with whom I have worked. I understand that publishing a good book requires more than just knowledge.

I was inspired and motivated to take on this editorial project because I would like to dedicate myself to global education. I chose education as my career because I always have remembered my late parents saying to me: "There are two best professions you may want to choose from—being a medical doctor or being an educator. Medical doctors save peoples' lives and educators inspire learners and help improve the world." I am grateful for the opportunity of compiling and editing this book, one of the best tasks I have been given in my life, awarded by AECT.

I feel equally grateful for the support I received from my co-editor, my professor at Purdue University, Dr. James Lehman. He did the hard part of the task. Without his help, this book would not be of this quality. I hope our readers will enjoy reading this book and learning from the scholars who are represented in its pages.

Acknowledgement

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