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## Summary

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The third issue of Qwerty consists of three papers, an invited note and a review.

Two of the three papers discuss some interesting issues connected to activities organized in online courses. The first (Veermans and Lallimo) analyses different types of student participation depending on their different motivational and individual profiles; the second (Rossi, Giannandrea e Magnoler) reports on the development of tutor competences in an online course. The third paper (Underwood and Pearlman), by contrast, focuses on the impact of technology on the development of communication skills in autistic children.

In their paper, Veermans and Lallimo use a multimethod approach to show that students with different motivational profiles had different participation patterns, and nevertheless, their performance during the course was graded at the same level. The authors suggest that this may indicate that adopting an inquiry-based learning model makes it possible for students to participate in a variety of ways, and always in a productive way.

Rossi, et al. describe a model of a wholly online course used to train tutors. The main tutor functions introduced in this course are: welcome and negotiation in the virtual classroom, and planning in small groups. The main skills developed by participants are social and technological, as well as being related to design, organisa-

tion and knowledge construction.

Underwood and Pearlman investigate the effectiveness of a computer-based intervention, *Bubble Dialogue*, in stimulating communication skills in autistic children. The study uses a pre-test/intervention/post-test methodology with independent measures of communication skills and of Theory of Mind. Autistic children heightened their interaction as indicated by longer dialogues, increased turn taking and number of comments; therefore they seem to play a more active role when performing the post-test communication task. There is a positive trend in the autistic children's development of Theory of Mind skills.

The invited note included in this issue is based on the key-note talk Neil Schwartz (Chico State University – USA) gave at the the CKBG seminar on Technology, Culture and Instruction held in July 2006. Schwartz used the *Da Vinci Code* novel as a metaphor to analyse the role of visualization, supported by technology, in the knowledge building activity, both from the cognitivist and socio-constructivist points of view.

Finally, Luca Tateo reviews the book of Zuccheromaglio and Alby "*Groups and technologies at work*". The book discusses some problematic issues concerning the relationship between the technological and social aspects determining the uses and, in some cases, the misuses of technology.