PIERRE DILLENBOURG

PREFACE

For many years, individualizing was the motto of learning technologies. However, since we had more students than computers, it appeared that pairs of students often perform better than individuals. At the same period, late eighties and early nineties, learning theories paid an increasing attention to the impact of social interactions. Moreover, connecting computers to the network progressively became an obvious necessity, and the Web appeared. All the conditions -theoretical, technical and empirical- were met for the emergence of new ways to use computers for education/training. The computer was not anymore perceived as a fake teacher but as an environment where groups solve problems, construct objects, conduct inquiries or projects.

Ten years later, CSCL became the dominant use of technology in education. The community grew from a few pioneers to thousands of researchers. This book series aims to foster quality research in CSCL. No futuristic predictions, no overstatement over the impact of technology. This is not a 'guru' series. Instead, the editorial board aims to encourage serious empirical studies, solid computational models, innovative pedagogical scenarios and robust conceptual frameworks. The best CSCL researchers should find here the space they need to report their findings with the level of details required to convince the reader.

I am very proud to present the very first book of the CSCL series. Several other books will be published in the near future, ranging from basic research to practical guidelines. I am convinced that our efforts will contribute to grasp the educational value of networked technologies and, thereby, to improve the quality of our educational system, for our kids and for us.