

Editorial – Volume 15, Issue Number 2



Rory McGreal
Co-Editor, IRRODL

This spring edition of IRRODL begins with several articles describing open educational resources (OER) followed by some financial considerations and a MOOC investigation. These papers will also be included in the [OERKnowledgeCloud](#), which is supported by the UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning/International Council for Open and Distance Education Chairs in three countries. ([I am one of them.](#)) For those readers, who are interested in OER and MOOCs, I would recommend that they visit this repository of more than 600 research articles and reports on issues of relevance to researchers in the field. These are followed by papers on student interaction and support as well as synchronous and asynchronous learning. The later articles investigate blended learning, educational research, and the mobile cloud.

Schuerer and Kusters lead off the OER topic with an investigation into mass customization in industry and how it can help address individual learner needs in open content development. Using the concepts of “self-efficacy” and “outcome judgment”, Kelly, in the next article, analyses educator perceptions of OER and makes recommendations on “easy to use” designs to improve the effectiveness of OER. Mtebe and Raisamo expose several “barriers” to implementing OER in Tanzania providing us with a new understanding of how OER initiatives might be implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hilton et al. [return to IRRODL](#) with another analysis of how OER can reduce the cost of textbooks, reporting on open textbook initiatives in eight US colleges. MOOCs can be seen as a development emerging from the OER movement. In his blog mining analysis of MOOCs, Chen highlights some of the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustainability. In contrast, Marty, focuses on monetizing distance education, with fieldwork analyzing the cultural evolution of a French educational institution from a “public good” mandate to a commercial orientation.

The next topic includes the themes of interactivity and student support. Wang et al. provide us with a framework for analyzing interaction within a connectivist paradigm with four levels (operation, wayfinding, sensemaking, and innovation). Barberà et al.

provide us with a tri-country, tri-discipline study on how faculty define competencies and how they design for competency development. Jung and Hong identify the key concerns about student support as expressed by Asian DE students in 10 jurisdictions, noting gender differences. They propose a list of supporting strategies. In a qualitative, self study, Yamagata-Lynch investigates synchronous and asynchronous approaches focusing on how best to provide support services. In a high school environment Chang et al. compare and contrast blended and traditional classroom environments. As expected, this investigation can be added to [Tom Russell's](#) list of more than 350 “no significant difference” articles.

This edition is rounded off with two articles. Teräs and Herrington, using an iterative design and rapid prototyping, show how this helps to “refine design principles” for an authentic elearning programme. Wang et al. provide us with a case study of mobile learning using cloud computing in a higher education institution.

The notes sections include a critique of MOOCs by V. Dolan followed by a book review by T. Anderson.

Athabasca University 

