

September – 2018

## Editorial



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*Co-Editor, IRRODL*

This editorial is different in part, in that it deviates from IRRODL's usual procedure of introducing the research and authors contained within the newly-published issue. However, we feel that there is a need for the information that is contained here. In the past months, we have seen many submissions that have been rejected, rather than sent out for review, because they have not been related to either open or distributed learning. Unfortunately, we cannot consider these manuscripts for inclusion in the journal. Due to the high volume of submissions - we can publish only a small percentage of initial manuscripts received - we find that we need to be extremely selective about the manuscripts we send out for review. Our key criterion for inclusion is that published papers **must add to knowledge in the field of open and distributed learning**. To determine this, an initial review of an article is conducted to determine if a submission does or does not fit within the scope and focus of IRRODL. (There is a description of IRRODL's scope on the website under [About](#) on the website.) This excerpt below provides information on scope:

Q: Why are some papers rejected by the Editors without sending for review?

A: The Managing Editor rejects papers that are poorly written, do not conform to APA style, or word length. Authors can address the problem(s) and resubmit. The most common reason for the Editors declining a paper is that it is not appropriate for this journal. IRRODL focuses on open and distributed learning, so more general education research, or even educational technology research, is not appropriate for our readers unless the research pertains to IRRODL's focus area. Other reasons for declining submissions by Editors may include an assessment of the quality, originality, or other shortcoming of the paper. Reasons are explained to the authors in an email.

In addition, IRRODL's current and archived content can provide researchers with a good idea about the work that we publish. Learning technologies covers a wide range of educational activities that do not fit the mandate of IRRODL. For example, reports based on classroom-based activities would only fit the IRRODL mandate if the focus is on some aspect of open learning or is combined with e-learning such as blended learning initiatives. Not all technological learning interventions fit this focus. We hope this brief

review of “what fits and what doesn’t fit” IRRODL’s scope will help authors with their submission decisions.

In this third issue of 2018, we begin with articles on the formation of online communities with **Jan and Vlachopoulos** and **Kayode**'s papers on the management of communications among in-service teachers in Malaysia. Following that, MOOCs form the theme of the next five papers, beginning with an investigation by **Verstegen, Dailey-Hebert, Fonteijn, Clarebout, and Spruijt** of online collaborations using problem-based learning. **Lepp, Palts, Luik, Papli, Suviste, Säde, Hollo, Vaherpuu and Tõnisson** write about “Troubleshooters” (help systems for students) and their interactions with students studying a programming course MOOC. This is followed by **Blackmon**'s qualitative study of professors' experiences in developing and teaching a MOOC. The next MOOC investigation by **Bonk, Zhu, Kim, Sabir, and Sari** is concerned with exploring the activities, tools, and resources used and how they can be used to personalize the MOOC. The final MOOC paper by **ValdiviaVázquez, Ramírez-Montoya, and Valenzuela González** examines the factors promoting or preventing course completions, reinforcing the finding that motivation and satisfaction were factors in supporting course completions.

Papers on open issues follow. **Hilton III and Wiley** seek to re-define open pedagogy in the first OER paper as “OER-enabled pedagogy,” while the second OER paper by **Kim** describes a framework for integrating OER into lessons. **Hung, Hsieh, and Huang** discuss the acceptance of e-textbooks in the following paper, which focuses on the difference between experienced and inexperienced learners.

Next follow several diverse topics. First, a professional master's program is the subject of the next paper by **Oliphant and Branch-Mueller**. Using a qualitative methodology, their survey showed that students were “time poor.” Mobile language learning is the focus of the next paper by **Makoe and Shandu**, describing an application called *VocUp*. This is followed by a study of parental and student attitudes towards tablet use in grade 7 classes. The last of the research papers brings us to China, where **Li** shows that although distance education can increase learners' incomes, they are still lower than the incomes of traditional f2f students.

Finally, there is a book review by **Jorge and Ouweland** on the subject of “open” philosophy and practices. And then my own technical note on the appearance of new devices, “**hearables**,” is an attempt at understanding how these in-your-ear computers can provide us with affordances for learning.

Please enjoy this latest research.

