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Editorial – Volume 23 Issue 4

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Welcome to the final issue of the year.

The last two years have seen an unprecedented worldwide scramble and experimentation with alternative approaches to formal schooling and higher education. Consequently, IRRODL has been including articles reflecting the educational community's response to the pandemic. The fallout from the COVID-19 disruption, as well as how this will influence future approaches to teaching, are certainly on the collective conscious of educators everywhere.

It is therefore no surprise that we open this issue with *Impact of COVID-19 on Formal Education: An International Review of Practices and Potentials of Open Education at a Distance* from a global group of almost 20 authors (**Stracke, Sharma, Bozkurt**, et al.) that highlights and analyzes practices and case studies from 13 countries providing insights on effective and innovative strategies.

Innab, Abloushi, Alruwaili, Alqahtani, Alenazi, and **Alkathiri** in their COVID-19 related paper *The Influence of Sense of Community and Satisfaction With E-Learning and Their Impact on Nursing Students' Academic Achievement* underscore the importance of student-student interaction and engagement in providing quality online programs.

Ullah, Khandakar, Aziz, and **Kee**, in their paper *Technology Enabling the New Normal: How Students Respond to Classes* extend the technology acceptance model (TAM) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to depict the factors influencing undergraduate students' intention to attend online university classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Then to better inform future approaches, **Mavroudi** and **Papanikolaou** compare and contrast the experiences of tutors teaching in a distance education university with those who were teaching in a traditional university during lockdown in their article *A Case Study on How Distance Education May Inform Post-Pandemic University Teaching*. The study is intended to shape faculty development programs at traditional universities helping tutors support dialogical forms of online pedagogy.

In *Development of the Online Course Overload Indicator and the Student Mental Fatigue Survey* **Bayne** and **Inan** develop and validate survey instruments specific to the online learner. The aim is to reveal elements that may lead to students being overtaxed in an online learning environment.

In an effort to understand and eventually foster better online discourse, **Lemay, Doleck**, and **Brinton** propose in their article, *SLOAN: Social Learning Optimization Analysis of Networks*, a method for

comparative analysis based on network metrics as more holistic measures characterizing social learning group dynamics.

Khor and **Dave** in their article, *A Learning Analytics Approach Using Social Network Analysis and Binary Classifiers on Virtual Resource Interactions for Learner Performance Prediction*, offer a framework for visualising learners' online behaviour and use the data obtained to predict whether the learners would complete a course.

In their quantitative study, *Open Distance and e-Learning: Ethiopian Doctoral Students' Satisfaction with Support Services*, **Aberra** and **Dauids** assess and report on students' level of satisfaction with the quality of student support services provided by an open distance e-learning university.

The Community of Inquiry framework has been used to analyze the effectiveness of online education and hybrid education. In their study on *Translating and Validating the Community of Inquiry Survey Instrument in Brazil*, **Parulla**, **Weissheimer**, **Santos**, and **Cogo** facilitate its increased use in the Brazilian context and thus extending opportunities for comparisons with different educational realities.

We are presented with three *Book Reviews* in this issue. In the first review **Paskevicius** examines *An Introduction to Open Education* edited by Arts, Call, Cavan, Holmes, Rogers, Tuiloma, West, & Kimmons. This book provides a brief introduction to the topic of open education and was created as part of a graduate class project at Brigham Young University. The second review, *The Finest Blend: Graduate Education in Canada* edited by Parchoma, Power, and Lock is reviewed by **Marifah**. It presents case studies of universities across Canada that are experimenting with blended learning models in graduate programs. **Singh** provides the third review of *The Distributed University for Sustainable Higher Education* by Richard Heller. The book looks at problems facing universities in contemporary times and suggests how a "Distributed University" can reduce local and global inequalities in access.

In our *Literature Review* section **Zhang**, **Che**, **Nan**, and **Kim** provide us with a comprehensive survey of the development and evolution of MOOC research covering over 4,500 articles in the last decade. *MOOCs as a Research Agenda: Changes Over Time* allows the reader to better visualize collective advances historically and proposes novel ideas for future studies.

Finally in our *Notes* section, **Rawson**, **Okere**, and **Tooth** in *Using Low-immersive Virtual Reality in Online Learning: Field Notes from Environmental Management Education* explore the role of low-immersive VR as a desktop tool for online distance learning students.

There is plenty of good material in this issue to help one reflect on the response to the pandemic and how future educational approaches might evolve. Online and distributed learning will no doubt be an important part of that story—enjoy!

