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Editorial – Volume 25, Issue 4

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To close out 2024, this issue of IRRODL offers eight research articles, a book note, two literature reviews, and a leadership note in open and distance learning, all of which contribute to the ongoing changes within this field of education. The IRRODL editors wish to thank our readers, reviewers, and authors for their continued support of the journal and wish that 2025 may provide further opportunities for learning from and with each other in the areas of open and distributed learning.

"Strengthening policies for education, innovation, and digitization through teacher training: Evaluating ProFuturo's open model in Ecuador" by the researchers **Hernández-Sellés** and **Massigoge-Galbis** provide findings from a 2020-2022 study. Through a collaboration between the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education and the ProFuturo program over 7200 primary and secondary school teachers received training to strengthen digital competency among teachers and their pupils. The research also explored the strengthening of mass ICT training for teachers within Ecuador.

Bardakcı sought to understand quality assurance in open and distance education through an examination of published papers. "Unveiling scholarly insights: Quality assurance in open and distance education" provides the results of this recent study. The findings indicate that the scholarship continues to expand with instructional design implications for the micro and macro levels of open and distance education learning.

"Socio-demographical variables as predictors of academic self-directedness" has results from a South Africa study. **Botha** and **Potgieter** applied the Adult Learner Self-Directedness Scale to explore the influences of high school grades, English language proficiency, library access, number of courses taken, and financial commitments as part of the complexities of student success, especially for women, Black Africans, and younger students.

Rohmani, **Zulkarnaen**, and **Winar Cahyo** researched a web application for nursing students and their online learning of nursing documentation. This study occurred in Indonesia with the results from beta testing shared in "Web-based nursing care documentation for students to support online learning."

He, Ding, Liu, Wu, Liu, Guo, and **Wang** report their results in "Teaching reform and practice based on four dimensions and one penetration for sensing and detection technology." This blended learning research involved industry-university collaboration to bring sensing and detection technology to Chinese engineering students learning online. Through this pedagogical innovation, the researchers addressed the disconnect between conventional sensor teaching and practical application during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Navigating challenges in remote speaking tasks: Unveiling technical and non-technical problems faced by students" was a study completed in Indonesia. **Tauchid, Barata, Wafa,** and **Wijayanti** found that both

technical and non-technical considerations are required to support students learning English through speaking tasks.

The Community of Inquiry, student engagement, and transactional distance form the basis of **Gökoğlu, Karaoğlan Yılmaz**, and **Yılmaz**'s Turkish research. Through regression analysis this quantitative study analyzed results indicate that instructional interventions related to transactional distance and the Community of Inquiry have a greater effect on students' behavioral and emotional engagement than on cognitive engagement.

Castellanos-Reyes, Camargo Salamanca, and **Wiley** contribute to open education research with their article, "The impact of OER's continuous improvement cycles on students' performance: A longitudinal analysis of the RISE framework." Through the application of learning analytics and the RISE framework, the researchers found that continuous improvement cycles of targeted OER substantially contributed to student achievement. The authors suggest the importance of user-friendly learning analytics as part of instructional design and continuous improvement cycles for OER.

A book review by **Mandal** offers insight into the edited volume, *Academic Quality and Integrity in the New Higher Education Digital Environment: A Global Perspective*. With the implications of GenAI still unfolding, this book comes at an important time and offers insights for academics, education administrators, and those involved with higher education policy development.

This issue offers two literature reviews. The first, authored by **Akkan** and **Eminoglu Kucuktepe** provide their results of a systematic review that compares distance education practices during the COVID-19 lockdown in four OECD countries. As each country varied in their distance education maturity the response to this pandemic varied with the comparison results given in "Distance education practices during the COVID-19 lockdown: Comparison of Belgium, Japan, Spain, and Türkiye." The second literature review comes from **Chiappe, Díaz,** and **Ramirez-Montoya.** Their literature analysis showed the conditions needed for successful OER development and implementation, the importance of open attributes for digital literacy skill development and the positive orientation of students toward open educational materials and practices. Read the full results in "Fostering 4.0 digital literacy skills through attributes of openness: A review."

The final contribution to this issue is from **Flinn** and **Openo** with their paper "Are we asking too much of OER? A conversation on OER from OE Global 2023." As part of IRRODL's Notes From Leadership in Open and Distance Learning section, these two authors offer their insights and the social intelligence garnered as part of a facilitated conference presentation with respect to OER as disruptor in contrast to achieving OER goals.