

Editorial: Volume 12, Number 5

Terry Anderson

Volume 12, Number 5, June 2011

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1067562ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v12i5.1052>

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Publisher(s)

Athabasca University Press (AU Press)

ISSN

1492-3831 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Anderson, T. (2011). Editorial: Volume 12, Number 5. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 12(5), i-ii.
<https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v12i5.1052>

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Terry Anderson
Editor, IRRODL

Before introducing the 11 interesting and eclectic articles in this general issue, I wanted to talk about IRRODL indexing and improvements in our presentation format and function.

Soon after we launched IRRODL in 2001, we were informed by potential authors of the necessity for articles to be published in journals that are included in Thomson's Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), known then as Thomson ISI. In many countries, inclusion in SSCI is mandatory for publications that are valued by institutional and national assessors of research. Since our authors freely license work for publication in this journal, the only reward for the considerable effort involved (besides, of course, untold amounts of fame!) is that the publication should be counted for tenure and promotion and for funding from granting agencies.

SSCI is run as a fee service by the Thomson-Reuters publication empire (\$13.1 billion annual sales, 55,000 employees) and subscribed to by most academic research libraries. Journals are evaluated for inclusion in SSCI by a formal investigation. One of the rules for inclusion in the index is that the journal must have been publishing regularly for a minimum of three years. Thus, in 2004, I dutifully completed the application form to have IRRODL indexed by SSCI. For years I received no responses to my follow-up emails requesting results of the evaluation. No rejection or failure of the review – just nothing! In 2009, I was able to begin a series of email exchanges with an editor from Thomson-Reuters and this spring we received notice that IRRODL would be indexed beginning with the first issue of 2010!

Thus ends a long struggle and one of my favorite rant topics. I still contend that as academic researchers we have given far too much control over our affairs to a commercial publisher. However, I am pleased to be indexed and to have this measure of quality applied to our

Journal.

IRRODL managing editor, Brigitte McConkey, continues to innovate with our presentation format. You will notice in this issue, we are including authors' pictures in an attempt to add a visual and personal link to those who contribute to IRRODL. You will also notice that we have installed a Google translate widget so that any of the HTML pages can be translated into any of the hundreds of languages supported by this free service. We welcome feedback from readers fluent in more than English on the quality and usefulness of these translations.

You will also notice that the number of subscribers to IRRODL continues to grow (nearly 5,500) and that we are averaging over 600 visits per day from readers in every continent. You may be interested in following the [ClustrMap link](#) from the main page to see a detailed list of recent visitors and their locations.

Now turning to IRRODL issue 12.5. This issue is certainly one of the strongest we have published. Rather than try to summarize the nine research articles, one research note, and one book review, I will merely list the topics. I hope doing so encourages you to retrieve the full text of those subjects that tweak your interest.

Research articles in this issue cover study orchestrations (a nice alternative to learning styles), the business of publication of open textbooks, the liminality (don't worry I had to look up the word too!) experienced in real-time online communications, a critique of the familiar community of inquiry model and the perhaps oversold impact of social presence, an evaluation of role play learning designs, a review of the use of video in distance education trades instruction, an important investigation of time-on-task while learning, an analysis of cross-cultural influences on instructional design practices, and a fascinating qualitative study on changes in student-teacher, student-content, and student-software interaction at a distance. We also include a research note on the value of start-of-class surveys and a book review that looks at the impact of e-learning on globalization of higher education.

As always, issue 12.5 features contributions from many countries. There are three articles from the USA, two from Sweden, and one each from Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Ghana, and Spain.

We are confident that you will learn from and enjoy this issue! For those readers in the northern hemisphere, we also wish you a relaxing and reflective summer holiday.

Athabasca University 

