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Rory McGreal

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Editorial – Volume 24, Issue 2

Rory McGreal

IRRODL Editor in Chief, UNESCO/COL/ICDE Chair in OER, Athabasca University, Canada

In April, the IRRODL PKP application was ported to an external server and updated to OJS version 3.3. Because of this we were offline for nearly two weeks. We have had glitches in the working of the new environment, which are slowly becoming resolved. I would like to apologise to our readers, authors, and reviewers for any inconveniences these changes may have wrought. We believe that this new IRRODL environment will prove to be more robust and easier to work with for both contributors and staff.

We have also been investigating the potential and the problems that could result from the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by researchers, authors, and by our reviewers. We do not believe in banning the use of AI by researchers, but we do insist, for ethical reasons, that when strong AI has been used to assist in the writing of an article, this must be acknowledged by the authors. For example, in APA7 style, see the [APA blog on citing ChatGPT](#). This, of course, does not include spelling and grammar/style checkers. We also welcome submissions about AI related to open and distributed learning. Note that the latest version of Turn-it-in, which we use to scan all submitted articles, now includes detection of AI content.

This issue includes research articles from Turkiye, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, USA, and UK. Issues covered include MOOCs, OER, SDL, LMS, leadership, ethics, and student and instructor perceptions.

The lead article, “Exploring the Influence of Countries’ Economic Conditions on Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Participation: A Study of 3.5 Million MITx Learners,” by **Cagiltay, Tolker, and Cagiltay** highlights the potential of MOOCs to bridge the educational gap between developed and developing countries. Although MOOCs provided low-cost education to all, there were significant differences in the behaviors of learners in developed and developing countries. The authors suggest several actions to help remedy the disparities.

Bradshaw and McDonald in their article, “Informal Practices of Localizing Open Educational Resources in Ghana,” address a significant gap in OER research, namely how the localization of OER occurs in practice. Their research revealed that localization occurred informally with workarounds, spontaneous translation, cultural recontextualization, content substitutions, social responsiveness, etc. Their findings suggest a need for OER creators to leave space for this informal localization and linguistic flexibility.

From Iran, **Mirmoghtadaie, Keshavarz, Kohan, and Ahmady** write “Developing a Conceptual Model of Self-Directed Learning in Virtual Environments for Medical Sciences Students.” Their model was developed and used to explore the formation of a process for graduate students in a virtual environment. The themes included backgrounds, support, learning management, efficiency, excellence, and others as forming a basis for planning and evaluating student skills.

“Scrutinizing Learning Management Systems in Practice: An Applied Time Series Research in Higher Education” by **Tuğtekin** compares two learning management systems. The authors found that the dialogue and autonomy factors were significantly higher for the Moodle LMS than for ALMS while other factors showed no significant difference.

Al-Azawei, Abdullah, Mohammed, and Abod investigated students’ perceived leadership behaviors of educational leaders in their paper, “Predicting Online Learning Success Based on Learners’ Perceptions: The Integration of the Information System Success Model and the Security Triangle Framework.” Higher education students in Iraq were surveyed and their constructs were significant predictors of their use of online learning.

The impact of Artificial intelligence on distance education is the subject of “Stakeholder Perspectives on the Ethics of AI in Distance-Based Higher Education” by **Holmes, Iniesto, Anastopoulou, and Boticario**. The authors attempt to understand the ethical concerns of students, teachers, and institutional leaders on AI issues.

In this article, “Instructor Leadership and the Community of Inquiry Framework: Applying Leadership Theory to Higher Education Online Learning” **Meech** and **Koehler** investigated online instructors’ perceived leadership behaviors. Applying organizational leadership theory and the Community of Inquiry Framework, the authors investigated the perceptions of both students and instructors. They found that the perceptions of students differed markedly from those of the instructors.

Shah, Murthy, and Iyer, provide us with a different perspective on MOOCs, in their article, “Is My MOOC Learner-Centric? A Framework for Formative Evaluation of MOOC Pedagogy.” The authors conducted expert reviews and internal validation to test the perceived usability and usefulness of their framework in improving pedagogy.

The following article, “How Instructors’ TPACK Developed During Emergency Remote Teaching: Evidence From Instructors in Faculties of Education,” highlights the technology pedagogical content knowledge as perceived by the instructors engaged in emergency remote teaching interventions. **Çakıroğlu, Aydın, Kurtoğlu, and Cebeci** explain how higher education instructors in Turkey felt about their experiences during the pandemic period. The instructors perceived themselves as having a very high level of knowledge.

In the *Book Notes* section, there are two reviews of open access books by distance education leaders, Martin Weller and Tony Bates. These are followed by three articles in *Notes From the Field*. The first looks at partnerships of higher education institutions with K-12 schools. The second article looks at critical issues in distance education from a Chinese perspective. The last paper consists of observations from the ICDE OER Advisory on the UNESCO OER recommendations.

