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Welcome to the first fall edition of IRRODL. This edition can be divided into two sections; the first is pedagogical and aimed at practitioners. It contains papers researching interaction, focusing on social and collaborative learning, synchronous and asynchronous activities, roleplaying, crowdteaching, grouping, and the effects of learning styles. The second section is aimed at distance education administrators and program directors. It contains papers on management, elearning design, and rating teachers, followed by investigations into student performance in MOOCs and the analysis of data for assessing multiliteracies and student needs.

Section 1: Pedagogical papers

Two papers investigate social networking, one by open educational practitioners and the other by students.The first paper (Schreurs et al.) focuses on the activities of open educational practitioners, describing how their participation is supported in the context of online collaborations. The paper is rather long, but it was felt that the interview quotations were highly relevant and of interest to distance learning professionals. The views of students on their social networking experience in a learning management system is the subject of Özmen and Atici's qualitative research paper. Using semi-structured interviews, the researchers investigate the use of social networking and the students' attitudes towards the experience.

Action research is used by Koechli and Glynn to describe the development of a roleplaying website called Lake Devo as an example of an online role-play environment. The effects of the audio and visual presentations including avatars were the subject of their study, which involved surveying the students and debriefing them at the conclusion of the activities.

Collaborative learning is the focus of three papers. The first by Kear et al. makes use of the technology acceptance model (TAM) to examine and discuss the experiences of students and tutors involved in collaborative groupwork using wikis. The perceptions and needs of both students and tutors are considered. Second, Malinovski et al. use structural equation modeling to analyze high school students' subjective quality experience and expectations during asynchronous and synchronous distance education activities. The third paper by Hwang et al. was a control group/experimental group study. It included an investigation of collaborative learning using the Networking Virtualization-Based Laboratory (NVBLab), which supports online synchronous discussions.

The last two pedagogical oriented papers look at crowdsourcing and learning styles. Recker, Yuan, and Ye investigate the employment of high quality web-based content by teachers as part of a crowdsourcing community. The study examines their usage activities and analyzes their characteristics, concluding that they are engaged in "crowdteaching". In a comparative study, Çakıroğlu examines the relationships among learning styles, study habits, and learning performances in a computer science course.

Section 2: Administration papers

Using Moore's theory of transactional distance and social cognitive theoretical framework, Jowallah evaluates the strategies implemented to support the research activities of postgraduate students in the University of the West Indies Open Campus. This study included the role of teaching/learning spaces, scheduling, and seminars.

Examining multiple articles and texts, Hillen and Landis investigate what kinds of pedagogy, instructional design models, or didactical models are established and proposed for e-learning design in the US and Europe. They study the different educational philosophies, specific theories about learning, and e-learning design.

In their study, Prasad and Usagawa assess the University of the South Pacific teachers' willingness to develop OER textbooks. Research findings include data on teachers' motivation, frequency of more than one prescribed textbook per course, teachers' awareness of costs, the average cost of textbooks, teachers' awareness and use of OER, and teachers' perceived barriers.

Stojić et al. studied the characteristics that affect teacher ratings by students, both at a distance and in traditional classrooms. The parameters considered include the number of teachers in a particular course, the number of courses taught, the teacher's gender and age, and the available resources.

Analyzing pre- and posttests, using item response theory, Colvin et al. studied student learning in an EdX MOOC and a blended learning course. They evaluated various criteria such as the students' level of education, preparation, and overall ability in the course.

The final two papers involve conceptual frameworks using learning analytics. The first, by Dawson and Siemens, posits a framework for measuring individual achievement of multiliteracies using learning analytics. The authors also suggest how this approach can assist in scaling the evaluative process. The last paper in this edition by Prinsloo and Slade proposes harvesting and analyzing student data to inform strategic decisions, including marketing, enrolment, curriculum development, the appointment of staff, and student assessment. They propose using triage, defined as balancing between the impact of the intervention, the scope of care required, and the resources available.

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