

# Andrews University

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February 12, 2015

Dear Dr. Tsai,

Thank you for guest editing an IRRODL special issue on online learning performance and behavior. I am submitting the enclosed article, *The Relationship between Successful Completion and Sequential Movement in Self-Paced Distance Courses* for possible publication in The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning. I think this research fits well with the aim and scope of the special issue. The learner behavior of following the sequence designed by the instructor is examined in light of their successful completion of the online course. I am the sole author of this 6375 word article, which is not under submission to any other journal or publisher. An early draft of this article was presented at the 2013 ICDE World Conference, however it has been revised significantly, with additional data analyzed and the literature review and discussion rewritten.

In this article, I argue for the importance of learner control and some self-direction in sequential movement throughout online self-paced courses. While investigating the sequential behavior of 543 learners in 89 online self-paced courses, I found that students who completed the course in a user-driven sequence instead of following the course design were more likely to complete the course. I discuss the implications for course design, suggesting that using technological measures to force students through a specific learning path is not effective. Instead, I propose that we should design courses to allow for student choice and self-direction, and teach students to make decisions about their learning paths.

This research has the approval of the Andrews University Institutional Review Board.

Thank you for consideration of this article for publication.

Respectfully,



Janine Lim, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Online Higher Education  
Department of Digital Learning and Instructional Technology  
269.471.6546  
[janine@andrews.edu](mailto:janine@andrews.edu)

8903 U.S. 31  
Berrien Springs MI 49104

**Toll-free:** 800-253-2874  
**Phone:** 269-471-7771  
**URL:** [www.andrews.edu](http://www.andrews.edu)

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