

Introduction to Section II of the December Issue of the Online Learning Journal

Peter Shea, Editor-in-Chief, OLJ
University at Albany, SUNY, USA

In addition to the special section in this fourth quarterly volume, this issue also contains 13 articles from our regular submission process. These articles cover a broad range of related themes such as AI use, video-based learning, flipped classrooms, the Community of Inquiry framework, mobile learning, and other topics.

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot are increasingly used by English as a foreign language (EFL) students, yet limited research explains why learners adopt these tools or how their intentions translate into actual use, especially in the context of the global south. Our first paper in the section, “Understanding EFL Students’ Adoption of Generative AI for English Learning: An Integrated UTAUT2 Model and Self-Determination Theory” integrates the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to examine the technological and psychological factors shaping Indonesian EFL students’ behavioral intention and actual use of GenAI for English learning. Using a cross-sectional survey of 462 students from three private universities and analyzing the data with partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the study found that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, habit, autonomy, and relatedness significantly predicted behavioral intention, whereas competence showed no significant effect.

As higher education expands online offerings, educators face persistent challenges in designing learning experiences that preserve the rich social and cognitive benefits of collaborative problem solving. In “Student Reflections on 360-Degree Video for Pseudo-Synchronous Collaborative Problem Solving in Online Mathematics Learning” the authors examine a novel learning approach that uses 360-degree video excerpts of authentic classroom problem-solving sessions to support asynchronous online learners of mathematics. Using an exploratory mixed-methods survey design with 56 pre-service teachers, the authors analyzed students’ online and face-to-face problem-solving experiences through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings indicate that while students generally prefer face-to-face collaboration, the 360-degree video environment provided meaningful opportunities to observe peer reasoning, compare strategies, overcome moments of impasse, and engage in reflective, metacognitive thinking.

Flipped classroom models are increasingly used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, yet little is known about how to enhance their effectiveness for complex learning tasks such as academic writing. “EFL Learners’ Writing Performance and Perception in a Flipped Classroom Model with Self-Regulated Strategy Development Instruction” extends the classic flipped classroom model by integrating Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) to strengthen students’ writing strategies and learning self-regulation. Using a quasi-experimental design with 90 Indonesian EFL students across 13 weeks, the authors compared three conditions: a flipped classroom combined with SRSD, a flipped classroom without SRSD, and a conventional writing classroom. Quantitative analyses of pre- and post-test writing performance

revealed that the flipped classroom with SRSD produced the highest gains, significantly outperforming both comparison groups.

Research on generative artificial intelligence (GAI) in education has expanded rapidly since 2022, yet much of the emerging literature focuses on operational issues while overlooking the foundational learning theories that explain how humans think, develop, and learn. This scoping review, “A Critical Analysis of GAI Learning Research: From Theory to Implementation Risks” analyses 465 studies published between 2022 and 2024 to identify how current GAI-in-learning research aligns with—or diverges from—core principles of Cognitive Load Theory, Constructivism, Sociocultural Theory, Activity Theory, and Bloom’s Taxonomy. Findings reveal significant theoretical gaps: although GAI supports writing, feedback, and efficiency, the literature rarely addresses its implications for schema formation, social meaning-making, intrinsic motivation, or cognitive progression.

Research on teaching presence within the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework has typically centred on asynchronous discussions, leaving limited understanding of how teaching presence is demonstrated across diverse instructional materials in accelerated online courses. In “An Examination of Teaching Presence in an Accelerated Online Bachelor of Business Administration Course” the authors conduct a multi-source quantitative content analysis of an accelerated online Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) course to examine how teaching presence is manifested through instructional design and organization, facilitating learning, and direct instruction. Data were drawn from module overview pages, course announcements, instructional videos, discussion prompts, instructor discussion replies and feedback, assignment instructions, and assignment feedback. Findings indicate that direct instruction was the most prominent category, followed by facilitating learning and instructional design and organization,

Online student engagement remains a persistent challenge in higher education, particularly in people-centered fields like Guidance and Counselling, where learning traditionally relies on interpersonal interaction and experiential practice. This design-based study “Do Interactive Technologies Enhance Online Students’ Engagement? Insights from a Post-Graduate Guidance and Counselling Course” examines how three widely accessible interactive technologies—Padlet, Google Docs, and video-embedded quizzes—support postgraduate counselling students’ engagement in a fully online course at a regional Australian university. Using pre- and post-surveys grounded in Redmond et al.’s (2018) online engagement framework, the study explored how these tools shaped cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and collaborative engagement. Results indicate that while students viewed technology as essential to both their current learning and future professional practice.

Subjective wellbeing (SWB) is closely tied to students’ academic engagement, motivation, and mental health, yet little is known about how SWB is shaped by social relationships in fully online university programs. The next paper, “The Role of Social Relationships with Peers and Teachers for Undergraduate Students’ Subjective Wellbeing in the Context of University Synchronous Online Learning”, examines how undergraduate students enrolled in a synchronous online program perceive the role and quality of their relationships with teachers and peers in relation to their SWB. Eight semi-structured interviews with second-year computer science students were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings highlight the

centrality of teacher–student relationships for students’ sense of support, security, and emotional wellbeing.

As colleges and universities expand online and blended offerings, many instructors continue to report uncertainty, workload strain, and reduced confidence when transitioning from face-to-face to online teaching. To better understand these challenges, “Like Throwing Darts at a Dartboard: A Literature Synthesis of Higher Education Instructors’ Interactions in the Transition to Online Teaching” analyzes findings from 31 empirical studies published between 2010 and 2022 that document higher education instructors’ experiences as novice online teachers. Using Anderson’s (2003) model of educational interactions as an analytical lens, we examined qualitative evidence from more than 200 instructors across diverse institutions and disciplines. Two major domains shaped instructors’ experiences: teacher–content interactions and teacher–student interactions. Faculty described extensive time demands, the need for clearer course structure, challenges transferring face-to-face content to digital formats, and the design of new learning activities and media assets.

Asynchronous discussion boards are a core component of many online courses, yet instructors frequently struggle to elicit meaningful student participation or deep learning. The action research study “TiLTing the Discussion Board: Rethinking the Purpose of Online Discussion in an Online GE Writing Course” examines how the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TiLT) framework can be used to redesign asynchronous discussions in an online undergraduate general education writing course. Using a multi-semester redesign process, data were collected from student work, discussion posts, peer responses, midterm check-in surveys, and Student Evaluations of Instruction across four course sections. Analysis showed that explicit discussion purposes, transparent grading criteria, and structured response guidelines (including the 3-2-1 feedback model) improved student performance, increased peer-to-peer interaction, and promoted indicators of deep learning such as questioning, perspective-taking, and reflective engagement.

Micro-credentials have rapidly emerged as flexible, skills-focused alternatives and supplements to traditional qualifications, gaining particular traction in online and digital learning environments. Despite accelerating global adoption, the field lacks a comprehensive synthesis that maps research trends, technological innovations, and implementation challenges. The next paper, “Towards a Future of Qualifications: A Systematic Review of Micro-Credentials” presents a systematic literature review of 205 publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, following PRISMA guidelines, and complemented by bibliometric, text-mining, and social network analysis techniques. Findings reveal five dominant impact areas: (1) the strategic positioning of micro-credentials for higher education; (2) workforce-aligned upskilling and reskilling through flexible curriculum models; (3) digital proof of skills and competencies enabled by technologies such as blockchain, digital badges, and AI-driven credentialing; (4) design, development, and institutional implementation frameworks; and (5) critiques and challenges related to quality assurance, accreditation, policy alignment, and standards.

Mobile learning continues to expand in higher education, yet the psychological and performance-related factors that shape students’ acceptance and use of mobile learning tools remain insufficiently understood. The next study, “Unraveling Factors Affecting Engineering

Students' Acceptance of Artificial Intelligence in Blended Learning Environment Context” examines how perceived enjoyment, self-efficacy, satisfaction, and learning performance influence students’ behavioral intentions to adopt mobile learning in a Vietnamese university context. Using a quantitative design, data were collected from 527 students and analyzed with structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Results show that learning performance is the strongest predictor of behavioral intention, highlighting the importance of demonstrable academic benefits for sustained adoption.

As online and blended formats become increasingly central to second-language instruction, there is a need to understand how learners—particularly adult migrants—experience bichronous models that combine synchronous and asynchronous online modalities. The next paper in this section, “An Exploration of Immigrant Students' Experiences with Bichronous Remote Teaching in the Context of Swedish as a Second Language Education” explores the perspectives of immigrant students enrolled in Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) courses who participated in intentionally designed bichronous online instruction. Drawing on thematic analysis of semi-structured group interviews (n = 10), the study identifies key benefits and challenges associated with the model. Students reported that synchronous sessions supported listening comprehension, speaking practice, and immediate teacher feedback, while asynchronous work enhanced grammar, writing, and self-paced learning. However, challenges emerged around peer interaction, real-time communication anxiety, limited digital competence, and the self-regulation demands of autonomous study.

Developing critical reading skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses remains a persistent challenge in online learning environments, where opportunities for interaction and deep engagement vary widely. The mixed-methods study, “Virtual Literature Circle: Fostering Critical Reading Skill, Collaborative Learning, and Learning Outcomes for EFL Students” examines how Virtual Literature Circles (VLCs) foster critical reading development, collaborative learning processes, and student engagement among 25 EFL students enrolled in a Critical Reading course at an Indonesian university. Quantitative data from structured questionnaires revealed notable gains in students’ confidence, analytical ability, and engagement, while qualitative interviews illuminated the mechanisms underlying these outcomes.

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