Forging New Frontiers:
Exploring Uncharted Territory in the Field of K-12 Online and Blended Learning

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As we begin the second volume of the *Journal of Online Learning Research (JOLR)*, we wanted to thank you for your readership. Over two years ago, we had a dream to develop an open access journal focused on the theoretical, empirical, and pragmatic understanding of technologies and their impact on primary and secondary pedagogy and policy in primary and secondary (K-12) online and blended environments. It has been a labor of love to launch the journal, and we are very appreciative of the tremendous support received from both our editorial review board as well as the leadership and staff of the *Association for the Advancement of Technology in Education*.

We also wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with an overview of the last year and a glimpse of what is to come both in 2016 and 2017. Last year, we published three issues. The first issue was a special issue dedicated to introducing the journal and honoring the scholars who worked to create the foundation for the journal back in 2010. After that issue was published, we accepted six other publications and invited three articles to produce Issue 2 (five articles) and Issue 3 (four articles). Our acceptance rate for 2015, which does not include the invited articles, was 13% (46 submissions and six accepted articles).

In the current issue, Jered Borup and Mark Stevens examine teacher satisfaction in K-12 online learning environments through a qualitative analysis of interviews with online charter school teachers. The authors identify three major factors that influenced satisfaction among online teachers who were interviewed: flexibility in when, where, and how they taught, the opportunity to interact with students individually, and the ability to see direct results in student performance as a result of their efforts.
Beatriz de los Arcos, Robert Farrow, Rebecca Pitt, Martin Weller, and Patrick McAndrew focus on how K-12 educators currently think about and use open educational resources (OER) in face-to-face, online, and blended contexts. In their study, de los Arcos et al. conduct a survey of over 600 international teachers that focused on the types of OERs the teachers used, how teachers incorporated them in their teaching as well as the perceived impact and challenges of using OER as a part of teaching. Their research illuminates that responding teachers adapted OER instead of adopting them as they were. It also explores the notion of implementing OER to personalize learning for students.

Finally, David Adelstein and Michael Barbour compare the major elements of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning’s (iNACOL) National Standards for Quality Online Course Standards to contemporary research found in the K-12 and higher education online course literature. Through the examination of related literature, the authors focus on the first stage of validating the standards.

Each article explores a new and innovative area for K-12 online learning research. Teacher satisfaction in online environments, the use of OER, and validation of online course standards represent important new frontiers for the field. These contributions exemplify the aim of JOLR, to disseminate systematic, quality research related to K-12 online and blended learning that employs the use of both quantitative as well as qualitative methods from a variety of diverse settings.

In addition to this first issue, we are excited to have two special issues in process. The first is due out in June 2016 and is focused on teacher professional development in K-12 online and blended learning environments. Guest editors for this issue are Rebecca Parks and Wendy Oliver. The second special issue is slated for publication in October 2016 and is focused on supporting students in K-12 online and blended learning environments. Guest editors for the special issue are Jered Borup, Lisa Hasler Waters, and Dennis Beck.

In 2017, we are also excited to already have scheduled two special issues. The March issue will be guest edited by Saro Mohammed, and the topic is centered on blended learning research and measurement. The second special issue will be guest edited by Michael Barbour and will be focused on research on cyber schools.

We look forward to seeing your continued submissions as the field of K-12 online and blended learning continues to grow, and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve in our roles for AACE and JOLR.