Notice to Authors

Due to the overwhelming number of submissions to IRRODL, the journal has already met its publication quota for 2019. As a result, for a period that will not exceed six months, IRRODL will no longer be accepting submissions after May 1, 2019. In order to improve our service to the academic community, and to ensure a six month review to publication cycle, IRRODL will be moving to a regularized publication schedule in 2020. More information will be provided later this year.

We thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for their unwavering and exceptional support in making our journal one of the world’s most successful, open access journals in the field of open and distributed learning.

Research Articles

When is a Learning Object not an Object: A first step towards a theory of learning objects

Mike Sosteric
For some, “learning objects” are the “next big thing” in distance education promising smart learning environments, fantastic economies of scale, and the power to tap into expanding educational markets. While learning objects may be revolutionary in the long term, in the short term, definitional problems and conceptual confusion undermine our ability to understand and critically evaluate the emerging field. This article is an attempt to provide an adequate definition of learning objects by (a) jettisoning useless theoretical links hitherto invoked to theorize learning objects, and (b) reducing the definition of learning objects to the bare essentials. The article closes with suggestions for further research and further refinement of the definition of learning objects.

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Mike Sosteric, Ph.D., is a professor at Athabasca University – Canada’s Open University. His interests centre on inequality, social injustice, and social transformation, and his research focus is on using technology to provide opportunities to engage the world in a critical and transformative manner. He is the founder of the first fully electronic (and free) journal of sociology, the Electronic Journal of Sociology. He is also the founding editor of Radical Pedagogy. In 1998, founded the International Consortium for the Advancement of Academic Publication (http://www.icaap.org), a research institute / publication house that provides technological support and production expertise for independent scholars seeking to publish their own journals. ICAAP currently has close to 90 affiliated resources, including the International Review of Research of Open and Distance Learning.

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To assimilate an object into an existing mental schema, one first needs to take into account or accommodate to the particularities of this object to a certain extent. For instance, to recognize (assimilate) an apple as an apple, one must first focus (accommodate) on the contour of this object. To do this, one needs to roughly recognize the size of the object. The concrete operational stage is the third stage of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. This stage, which follows the preoperational stage, occurs between the ages of 7 and 11 (preadolescence) years,[38] and is characterized by the appropriate use of logic. During this stage, a child’s thought processes become more mature and “adult like”.