

**MOVING FORWARD AND MOVING ON:
CONTINUING THE MISSION OF K-12 ONLINE EDUCATION RESEARCH**

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It is hard to believe that 2016 has come and gone, and with it, we wrap up the second volume of the *Journal of Online Learning Research* (JOLR). As Gretchen Rubin once observed, “The days are long, but the years are short.” True words indeed. It seems as if this year has both lagged on and flown by, filled with plenty of challenges and obstacles to overcome. While it hasn’t always been easy, we press on. Our work continues, and with it, important contributions are made to the field of K-12 online and blended education. As always, we wish to thank you for your continued support and readership.

In this, our final regular issue for the year, we have included five articles. The first, “Effects of Educational Technology on Mathematics Achievement for K-12 Students in Utah” by Sarah Brasiel, Soojeong Jeong, Clarence Ames, Kevin Lawanto, Min Yuan, and Taylor Martin, examines the use of 11 technology software applications used to supplement math instruction among 200,000 K-12 students in Utah. The authors look at the impact of the supplemental technology use on student proficiency based on the state-level assessment as well as common perceptions reported among teachers based on their views of the implementation.

Next, Jered Borup and Mark Stevens use the elements of teacher engagement in the adolescent community of engagement (ACE) framework, including designing and organizing, instructing, and facilitating, to explore parent perceptions of course quality and teacher support within a cyber charter school, in their article, “Parents’ Perceptions of Teacher Support at a Cyber Charter High School.” They find that parents expressed predominately positive views of the design of the course and teacher support provided to students.

The final three papers focus on online teacher development and preparation. In their article, "An Analysis of the Curriculum Requirements for K-12 online teaching endorsements in the U.S.," Laura McAllister and Charles Graham use a content analysis approach to describe existing K-12 online teacher preparation programs in the United States to determine how teachers are being prepared to function in online and blended learning environments. Through her work, she discovers that current programs are generally focused on online/blended pedagogy, instructional design, and the foundations of online/blended learning. However, there is a lack of consistency when it comes to acceptable materials/resources. Areas for improvement among programs include curricula that address online privacy, acceptable use policies, safety, and legal issues.

Mamta Roy and Marius Boboc in their contribution, "Professional Development Needs of Online Teachers," seek to understand how educators teaching in K-12 online settings in Ohio are prepared by relying on specific competencies and skill sets in order to better develop a program designed to address their professional development needs. According to the authors, to do so effectively requires understanding the diverse challenges of the online teaching environment together with ways to meet the needs of both learners and teachers.

Finally, with a collaborative team, the editors join Catharyn Shelton, Medha Delal, Laura McAllister, and Sabrina Huyett to produce their article, "Incremental Progress: Re-examining Field Experiences in K-12 Online Learning Contexts in the United States." This study revisits previous research (Kennedy & Archambault, 2010) examining how teacher education programs are addressing K-12 online learning through their field experiences. In this new look, the authors find limited growth, with 15 programs across nine states, representing 4.1% of responding teacher education programs offering a form of field experience in an online setting.

As we wrap up 2016, it is with great appreciation that we thank Dr. Kathryn Kennedy for her vision in leading the creation of this journal. Within a few short years, JOLR has grown as a leading outlet for research related to K-12 online education. As a result, the journal has contributed to building an emerging cohesion for our field. This would not have been possible without Dr. Kennedy's drive, determination, and courage to enter this venture, along with her countless hours of service on the journal's behalf. Given her growing duties as Director for the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute, Dr. Kennedy has made the difficult decision to step down as editor as of 2017. Joining Dr. Archambault in continuing our mission is Dr. Jered Borup, a growing leader and researcher in our field.

We are excited about this next chapter for the journal. Together with his colleagues, Drs. Dennis Beck and Lisa Hasler Waters, Dr. Borup debuts by guest editing an upcoming special issue focused on supporting students in K-12 online and blended learning environments. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Borup as co-editor.

It may go without stating, but the success of JOLR depends on your contributions to our field. As we progress into the next year, we look forward to your submissions. Thank you for reviewing and supporting the journal through your research and feedback. We appreciate the opportunity to have served both AACE and JOLR through our efforts, and we wish Dr. Kennedy much success in all of her future endeavors.

We hope to see you at SITE 2017!

