

Introduction to OLJ Issue 25:3 Section II

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In addition to the papers associated with the Online Learning Consortium Accelerate and Innovate conferences, we also have a selection of studies that have been reviewed and accepted for publication through our regular submission process. The journal continues to receive hundreds of submissions and the Online Learning Consortium appreciates the opportunity to serve as a nexus for researchers in the field. These studies investigate deep learning processes, motivation, compassion, and a wide range of other student, faculty, and institutional issues in both K-12 and higher education online settings.

The first paper in this section is “Development and Testing of a Roleplaying Gamification Module to Enhance Deeper Learning of Case Studies in an Accelerated Online Management Theory Course” by Audrey Pereira of Fitchburg State University and Monika Wahi of DethWench Professional Services. As the title indicates this paper investigates roleplaying and its benefits for nurturing deeper learning processes through cognitive rehearsal, the visualization of one’s application of a skill to a situation through vicarious experience. Research questions asked if using an online roleplaying module results in higher levels of learning, engagement, and satisfaction compared to students using a case study without the module. Scores on the assignment were compared between students who used the module and students who did not; those who did scored statistically significantly higher. One implication of the study is that with relatively simple tools and thoughtful design, gamified online learning modules can be developed that increase deeper learning processes.

The next paper in section two is “The Effects of E-Learning on Students’ Motivation to Learn in Higher Education” by Elgilani Elshareif of Canadian University Dubai and Elfadil Mohamed of Ajman University. As the impact of the pandemic continues to reverberate, many new populations of students around the world are engaging with forms of online learning. This study examines motivation to engage in e-learning using the conceptual framing of the ARCS model and investigates which ARCS motivational variables support students to learn online. Results show significant positive correlations between the elements of e-learning, specifically e-teaching materials and e-assessments, and students’ motivation to learn but lower motivation concerning e-discussions and feedback. The authors conclude that further faculty development and student orientation may be needed to support student understanding of the importance of online asynchronous interaction to their learning.

The third paper in this section is “Student Self-Disclosure and Faculty Compassion in Online Classrooms” by Colleen Lindecker and Jennifer Danzy Cramer of American Public University System. The authors of this paper investigate the phenomena of compassion fatigue as it relates to online student disclosure of distress. Specifically, the paper investigates the prevalence of student self-disclosure to faculty members as well as the prevalence of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction among faculty members. The authors also analyze demographic factors associated with these variables including the relative prevalence of self-disclosure to male and female faculty members. The authors conclude that student disclosure of

personal challenges and trauma was nearly universal and uncover patterns of compassion fatigue among faculty by demographic variables that were explored. These results have significant implications for faculty development and student support.

The next paper is “How Can We Improve Online Learning at Community Colleges? Voices from Online Instructors and Students” by Qiujie Li of New York University, Xuehan Zhou and Di Xu of the University of California Irvine, and Brad Bostian of Central Piedmont Community College. These authors note that the community college sector is open access, has a higher percentage of students who have jobs, serves students who have struggled academically while participating at high rates in online learning and therefore has a unique profile of needs, especially relative to four-year public and private colleges. The paper seeks to answer questions about community college instructors’ and students’ perceptions of effective and ineffective practices in online instruction and critical changes needed to improve online instruction. The study was motivated in part by the existence of a ten-point performance gap between online and classroom instruction in the community college system that was studied. The authors surveyed students and faculty from multiple institutions and analyzed the data with a combination of machine and human coding to identify effective instructional practices from these two sources. The study identifies ways to improve online instruction in community colleges by uncovering specific practices that support and impede teaching and learning in online settings.

The fifth paper in this section is “A Content Analysis of Change Management Strategies for Technological Transitions in Higher Education Institutions” by Ingrid Guerra-López of Wayne State University and Siba El Dallah of the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. The authors of this study note that research indicates the failure rates of organizational change initiatives are as high as 70%. Since various aspects of online learning represent significant organizational change, it is essential for our research community and practitioners to understand such initiatives. This study examines a specific technological change, migration of the learning management system (LMS). Through the paper, the authors develop a theory-informed framework specific for planning and managing such critical technology change in higher education institutions.

The next paper in section two is “Parents’ use of Technological Literacies to Support their Children with Disabilities in Online Learning Environments” by Mary F. Rice of the University of New Mexico and Kelsey Ortiz of the University of Kansas. This study draws attention to the fact that numbers of students with disabilities continues to grow as a significant population served by online education in K-12 settings. Parents of students with disabilities take on extensive oversight of their children’s education and therefore need to develop technology skills to perform their roles. Through extensive interviewing, the authors of this paper identify and categorize the various digital literacy skills parents deploy and outline their implications for research and practice.

The seventh paper is “Student Initiative Empowers Engagement for Learning Online” by Houston Heflin and Suzanne Macaluso of Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas. The authors of this study seek to understand how online students perceive their independence, engagement, effort, and learning in online courses and the impact of experience in online courses on these variables. They also investigate the online learning experiences that students perceive to be most helpful to their learning. Through survey methods, the study reveals that most students reported being more independent, more engaged, and more effortful in their online course than a typical face-to-face class. The study includes implications for faculty development and future research.

The next paper in this section is “Catching Lightning in a Bottle: Surveying Plagiarism Futures” by Zachery Dixon, Kelly Whealan George, and Tyler Carr of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. This paper used a descriptive research design to survey the extent to which students share coursework potentially in violation of university academic integrity standards. The research focused on eight frequently taught online undergraduate courses with multiple sections in which many students enroll. The authors used a web-based application designed to monitor the uploading of university content on CourseHero.com, a commercial website that allows students to share coursework including homework, discussion questions, quizzes, tests, papers, and case studies. Results indicate that almost half of all artifacts collected for the sample courses included graded assignments representing threats to the academic integrity of these courses. The authors conclude that monitoring digital exchange of coursework offers researchers, administrators, and instructors a data-driven means of triangulating academic misconduct.

The ninth paper in this section is “Supporting Student-Initiated Mobile Device Use in Online Learning” by Karen Milheim, Christy Fraenza, and Kim Palermo-Kielb of Walden University. Many students access online courses through mobile devices even though many such courses were not designed for mobile delivery. The purpose of this study was to investigate how and why students use a mobile device for their online courses, the challenges confronted, and strategies to overcome these. Using survey methods with closed and open-ended items the study’s authors present results reflecting a set of themes that illuminate student motivations, hurdles to use, and potential solutions. The study provides a foundation of how and why online students proactively employ mobile devices for their coursework and how they may need support from their institutions for effective use.

The next paper is “Hybrid Flexible Instruction: Exploring Faculty Preparedness” by Enilda Romero-Hall and Caldeira Ripine of the University of Tampa. The pandemic has motivated many institutions to implement a variety of flexible options for accessing coursework. The most flexible of these is known as Hyflex instruction in which students can attend in person or either synchronously or asynchronously in an online format. Such flexible designs can require significant planning to be effective and few faculty members have extensive experience with this mode of delivery. Very limited research focuses exclusively on instructors’ understanding and preparation for this instructional modality. The authors of this paper investigate faculty perceptions of their preparedness for Hyflex instruction as well as effective pedagogical strategies and support needed to implement it successfully. Data were collected via an electronic survey adapted from the Faculty Readiness to Teach Online (FRTO) instrument with a sample of 121 full- and part-time faculty. Results indicate that faculty feel prepared to engage in some aspects of HyFlex instruction, e.g., those similar to competencies for in-person instruction. However, faculty were far less prepared to handle the more complex features unique, such as managing students in two settings during the same class period, which are germane to the HyFlex modality. The clear takeaway is to make sure to address whether institutions have the infrastructure and resources needed for a HyFlex instructional setting including faculty development and student support.

The final paper in this issue is “Developing Peer Review of Instruction in an Online Master Course Model” by John Haubrick, Deena Levy, and Laura Cruz of The Pennsylvania State University. As online learning has grown many institutions have implemented a master course model in which full-time faculty and instructional designers develop courses that may be taught by others, frequently part-time faculty. The benefits to such a model include efficiency

and consistency across course sections. The downsides may include rigidity and limited options for creativity on the part of the actual instructors. Institutions also frequently employ a peer-review process of instruction to support instructional quality while promoting collegiality. The authors of this paper sought to investigate how participation in a peer-review process of courses utilizing a master course model affects instructor innovation and instructor presence. Results suggest that pedagogical agency and innovation is limited because of the master course model. The authors conclude that these findings point to a need to create a sense of community for the faculty members who teach them.

In closing, I would thank our authors, editors, reviewers, and editorial staff for their valuable contributions to the journal and to the field of online learning. We invite you to read and share this issue with colleagues and to consider submitting your own original work to *Online Learning*.