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In addition to the conference papers, the June issue also includes 12 articles from our regular submission process. Topics include online learner engagement, instructional designers' experiences, emergency remote instruction among the deaf, data-driven decisions among online faculty, the Community of inquiry in synchronous and asynchronous settings, online credit recovery in k-12 online environments and more.

Many authors (including this one) have written about student satisfaction with online learning, dating back to the 1990s and even earlier. Recent work in this area looks at learner responses to the sudden and involuntary shift to what many of called "emergency remote instruction" to distinguish it from more mature and planned forms of online learning. Even in the early days of online learning, students who opted into online education were generally happy with it and found the convenience and flexibility (especially in asynchronous environments) to outweigh any disadvantages associated with technical difficulties, weaker social ties, or potential isolation that many critics decried. Numerous meta-analytic analyses (see e.g., Bernard et. al, 2019) have concluded that online learning outcomes can be as good as or better than classroom-based outcomes on a variety of measures (including attitudinal dimensions). In "Student Attitudes towards Distance Learning at a Large Urban Public College", authors Peter Tuckel and Kate Pok-Carabalona of the City University of New York's Hunter college examine student satisfaction with COVID era online instruction, which, again, might better be called emergency remote instruction given the urgency with which it was developed. As others have found (e.g., Means and Neisler, 2021), many students struggled with the hastily constructed distance education that novice online instructors managed to develop in extremely difficult circumstances. Tuckel and Pok-Carabalona investigated a relatively large sample of students at two points (Spring 2020 and Fall 2020) in a diverse setting in New York City. Because the authors had a sample of around 500 students in each of the surveys that formed the data for this study, they were able to conduct analyses of subgroups. They found, perhaps not surprisingly, that students who are more satisfied with in-person classes tend to be younger, freshmen or sophomores, those with higher stress levels, and those whose home environments were not conducive for learning. It might be helpful to consider online learning as an innovation for students who experienced it during the pandemic. The United Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model (Venkatesh et. al, 2003) would predict that a lack of "voluntariness" is a significant obstruction when potential users are forced to adopt an innovation. Younger students in residential institutions who have expectations that their college experiences will not be "remote" would be particularly sensitive to the forced nature of emergency remote instruction as predicted by UTAUT. The theory also describes "facilitating conditions" that must be met for innovations to be adopted satisfactorily, predicting that distracting homes and overly stressful lives might

also impede adoption of online learning. Authors who investigate COVID era distance learning might be advised to look to such conceptual guidance and to consider that the flexibility and convenience of online learning are aspects of the "active ingredients" of the innovation and its positive effects on some learners. In other words, volunteering to enroll in online education is not a problematic "selection bias" but rather a significant causal agent in the efficacy of successful online programs for student who choose them. Emergency remote instruction violated the premise that enrolling in online learning would be a choice (setting aside the haste with which it was designed and delivered under COVID), and thus removed the benefits that serve some, but not all students.

In "Keep Learning: Student Engagement in an Online Environment" author Akanksha Bedi of Western Washington University explores another attitudinal dimension of online students – learner engagement. In this study the author hypothesizes that motivation, defined as a student's stable disposition to find academic activities as satisfying and worthwhile, is positively associated with both self-efficacy (an individual's perceived ability to perform a task), and student engagement (measured by four dimensions of student engagement in an online environment: skills, emotions, participation, and performance). The study also hypothesizes that motivation is positively associated with "overall student engagement" (measured by dimensions of learner-learner, learner-instructor, and learner-content engagement). Further, Bedi hypothesizes that the two variables, self-efficacy and general student engagement, may mediate the relationship between motivation and overall student engagement. These relationships do not seem to be very controversial, i.e., it seems clear that motivated students are likely to experience a higher degree of self-efficacy and general and overall engagement. However, a positive relationship between motivation to learn and overall student engagement was not supported. Similarly, a positive relationship between self-efficacy and overall student engagement was not supported. The author explores each of these relationships and reports on results of qualitative data from students and faculty that support much of what is known about good online pedagogy – clear and regular contact between students and faculty is important; a well-organized course is helpful, and a focus on inclusivity and access is essential to support engagement. While the study is well structured, carefully argued, and convincing – it seems to omit the contextual variables initially discussed in the introduction, e.g., students and faculty were struggling to learn, develop coursework, and teach during the pandemic. One wonders if these results would be found in "normal" times.

Instructional designers are a key feature of support for faculty developing and teaching online courses in the normal times mentioned above. Their support helps assure that the quality of online courses are not left to chance or the sole efforts of faculty, especially instructors who are new to online course design. In "The Everydayness of Instructional Design and the Pursuit of Quality in Online Courses" Jason McDonald of Brigham Young University notes that while others have investigated the major instructional design activities carried out by IDs, there is value in looking into the day-to-day tasks that further support online course quality. Utilizing a case study approach and ethnographic research, the author conducts interviews and observations, engages in myriad conversations, and examines the artifacts produced in the day-to-day activities of the team of instructional designers at the research institution. The author focuses especially on some of the more mundane practices that nonetheless contribute to quality – especially the

ongoing tasks of refinement. Other instructional designers will find this paper especially relevant – as they recognize the work they undertake in striving towards ever increasing quality in online design.

In "Data-Driven Decisions of Higher Education Instructors in an Era of a Global Pandemic," Maya Usher and Arnon Hershkovitz of Tel Aviv University suggest that educators in classrooms collect observational data on students in the process of face-to-face teaching that may get lost when instruction is forced online, as is the case with the response to the pandemic. The authors analyzed open-ended survey items from 109 faculty who taught in emergency remote instructional environments. Unlike in classroom setting, instructors teaching in emergency remote instructional contexts reported using a wider range of data sources and a wider range of data-driven decisions, from academic-related issues (e.g., adjusting the course requirements) to socio-emotional-related issues (e.g. promoting collaborations among students). While the author hypothesize that this trend to use a wider range of data and a broader set of data-informed decision is related to availability of this data in online settings, it seems likely that the actual context of the pandemic, which was extremely stressful for both students and faculty, may have also colored the decisions that faculty made. Students, suffering from anxiety induced by social isolation, new to online learning, and confronted with the results of rushed efforts to deploy online instruction, likely needed the kind of relief that faculty (probably sensitive to their own lack of expertise in online design and pedagogy) were willing to provide. The authors do acknowledge this reality noting the instructors were likely concerned about their online students' struggles, which increased their attention to socio-emotional issues. In the end, it is challenging to untangle the uses to which learning analytic data are put in extreme circumstances, but that opportunity exists to make better use of such data going forward.

In "Were the Fathers Available? An Evaluation of Fathers' Involvement in Emergency Remote Education of Learners Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing" authors Olufemi Timothy Adigun and Paseka Andrew Mosia of National University of Lesotho, join Thanduxolo Peace Mngomezulu of the University of Zululand, South Africa to explore the involvement of fathers in the education of their deaf and hard of hearing children during COVID. Without adequate support from parents, other family members, teachers, and school children who are deaf experience significantly worse outcomes than those who receive such support. Mothers play a critical role in providing support and increasingly fathers do as well. The pandemic created new stressors for the deaf/hard of hearing community. The authors of this paper investigated the role of fathers in the education of their deaf/hard of hearing children during the pandemic. They found that there was evidence of increased involvement of fathers in light of the pandemic and that specific factors enabled or inhibited greater involvement. The authors include recommendations for improved paternal support for deaf/hard of hearing children based on these factors.

The next paper in section two of this issue is "Remote Global Learning: The Role and Use of Virtual Exchange for U.S. and Irish Graduate Students" by Katherine Aquino of St. John's University, Elizabeth Tobin and Seaneen Sloan of University College Dublin. Higher educational experiences which promote global collaboration and internationalization are considered high impact practices that contribute to the goals of colleges and universities. While typically these occur at the undergraduate level and are traditionally characterized by study

abroad opportunities, newer forms of exchange can include working virtually with collaborators from other countries involving graduate education. But there is limited research on the latter. The authors of this paper conducted a qualitative study to understand the nature and value of the collaborative online international learning experiences for participants. Focusing on six participants (from a total of 25 participants) in a virtual exchange between institutions in the US and Ireland the authors use semi structured interviews to shed light on these experiences. One key finding was perceptions of inequity in terms of commitment and contribution in the collaborations. Additionally, students enjoyed the opportunity to expand their networks and learn about a different education system. The author offers suggestions on how to minimize the challenges and expand the advantages of this unique form of online education.

Another paper featuring Irish authors is "Building a Digital Educational Escape Room Using an Online Design-Thinking Process" by Jenny Moffett and Dara Cassidy of RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, Ireland. These authors review literature on the increasing value of educational games to support important processes in learning (such as motivation and engagement) and the increasing use of design thinking in developing games (and game environments such as escape rooms) in which students are co-creators as well as players. They further note that much of the research conducted in these areas relate to physical environments and that a gap exists as to the application of *online* design thinking for the creation of digital game environments such as *digital* escape rooms that involve students as collaborators and players in their development. The authors explore how an online design-thinking process can be used to design, build, and test a digital educational escape room and the experiences of learners engaged in this process. The study used design-based research and qualitative data collection and thematic analysis methods to reveal rich contextual data around the game users' experiences.   They conclude that game users were positive about key game elements, and they reported experiences of fun and enjoyment during gameplay, the goal of which was to help these students grapple with uncertainty. Findings indicate that this online design process provides an effective way of harnessing team collaboration and innovation in the development of digital educational resources.

In "A Comparison of Cognitive and Social Presence in Online Graduate Courses: Asynchronous vs. Synchronous Modalities" by Regina Presley and Denise M. Cumberland of the University of Louisville, and Kevin Rose of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, the authors compare synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction on several dimensions. Going beyond what the title suggests, the study examines performance of students in synchronous and asynchronous courses on not only the Community of Inquiry framework, but also on pre- and post-intervention tests of knowledge as well as their ratings of the instructors in these different online instructional approaches. Using a quasi-experimental research design (there was no random assignment of subjects to modes of instruction) the authors found no significant differences on pre- and post-tests of student knowledge of the subject matter or social presence suggesting that synchronous and asynchronous modes may be equivalent (with many caveats of course). It is important to note that self-selection into modality should probably not be considered a bias in this study and that students in real world settings should be able to choose the mode of instruction that they believe suits their learning needs – i.e. this freedom to choose is one of the active ingredients in digitally supported pedagogy. Finally, asynchronous course

delivery resulted in higher ratings of cognitive presence. Read the full paper for interpretations of these results.

Another study that investigates the Community of Inquiry model is "Adaptation of an Activity Theory Framework for Effective Online Learning Experiences: Bringing Cognitive Presence, Teaching Presence, and Social Presence to Online Courses" by Aytac Gogus of Istanbul Okan University, Turkey. This study presents a framework that adapts activity theory to the design, implementation, and evaluation of online courses referencing the elements of the Community of Inquiry framework - cognitive presence, teaching presence. The author provides a review of the models and attempts to develop a more complete theory for effective online learning experience by adapting the Activity Theory within the context of online learning management.

Continuing with investigations of the Community of Inquiry model is "Teaching Presence in Asynchronous Online Classes: It's Not Just a Façade" by Sharon Watson, Daniel P. Sullivan of the University of Delaware, and Kathryn Watson of University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Online faculty can establish their "presence" in the absence of classroom interaction in a variety of ways. The authors note that options include video overviews and lectures provided by the instructor, discussion board interactions with students, in-depth feedback, and other technological tools to increase productive contact with learners. These authors seek to understand which methods are most valuable to the students and to their learning. The study employs factor analysis to identify substantive and stylistic methods of developing teaching presence and finds the former more important than the latter. Students ascribe higher value to components of teaching presence that provide meaningful substance, such as content lectures, assignments that directly apply course material, detailed feedback on their performance, and swift response to email questions. Overall, the authors conclude that students find value in clear, organized classes that are designed to help them efficiently learn while receiving direct, timely feedback from instructors.

In the next paper "Effectiveness of the Flipped Classroom in the Teaching of Mathematics in an Online Environment: Identification of Factors Affecting the Learning Process" by Julio Ruiz-Palmero, Francisco David Guillén-Gámez, Ernesto Colomo-Magaña, and Elena Sánchez-Vega of the University of Malaga, Spain the authors investigate a specific format for flipped classrooms (FC). Recall that the FC approach has "traditionally" entailed having students access virtually materials that might have formally been associated with classroom instruction, such as lectures, notes, videos, etc. Classroom time itself under the "traditional" flipped model would be used for more active learning, whereby students work on problems either individually or in groups with assistance from the instructor – i.e., the kinds of activities students might otherwise do outside the class for homework are instead completed in the classroom. However, in the model used in this study there was no physical brick and mortar classroom – both conditions were done online due to the pandemic. The students accessed materials asynchronously for one component and worked with the instructor and other students synchronously (via videoconferencing) for the other component.   The investigators implemented this online flipped classroom approach with geometry students. They used a quasi-experimental design to try to isolate the effects of the online flipped approach and found that this method has

significant impacts on student learning outcomes with a few caveats that you will find in the full paper.

The final paper in this issue is "Online Credit Recovery School-Level Enrollment: Intended and Unintended Consequences" by Samantha Viano of George Mason University. In pre-college settings, the most common use of online learning has been to assist with what was traditionally known as summer school. Using online forms of education to help student recover credits that were not awarded due to course failure may seem to be an effective use of resources. However, critics have expressed concerns that online credit recovery (OCR) is fraught with problems stemming from the population to which it is targeted, i.e., student who struggle to pass coursework may lack the skills, motivation, or self-regulation to learn and succeed in online settings that may require greater independence. The problem is exacerbated in light of higher course failure rates associated with COVID and the increased allure of using OCR to recover the associated lost credits. Using state-wide data from the North Carolina public school system the author examines the extent to which increasing OCR enrollment at the school level is associated with the intended consequences of increased passing rates of previously failed courses and high school graduation rates and the unintended consequence of lowered proficiency rates on end of course exams. The results support the potential of increasing OCR enrollment to address large increases in course failure rates during the pandemic, though this data was collected in years prior to COVID and might therefore represent a somewhat different population. On the other hand, there is little evidence that the increased credit accumulation from higher OCR enrollments translated into higher graduation rates for the students who used OCR rather than face-to-face credit recovery. Overall, there is a tipping point at which OCR results in diminishing returns and the full paper describes these conditions.

I would like to thank the many reviewers as well as our editorial team and of course, the authors of papers included in this second issue of 2023. I would also like to thanks Dr. Olaf Zawacki-Richter for his efforts in organizing and overseeing the papers in the EADTU Conference Special Issue section. The *Online Learning* Journal will be back with a new issue in September including papers from OLC Accelerate and Innovate conferences.

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