

Introduction to Section II: Faculty Attitudes and Student Engagement

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This issue contains two additional articles that were not specifically selected from sessions conducted at the Online Learning Consortium's Annual Conference. These two articles provide insight into faculty attitudes about and student engagement in online learning.

In the first study, Jennifer Bunk, Rui Li, Esther Smidt, Christopher Bidetti, and Brett Malize of West Chester University of Pennsylvania, conduct a replication of research initially conducted by Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman (2012) examining psychological constructs hypothesized to be essential to faculty acceptance of online learning. Bunk and her colleagues found that faculty feelings of excitement and fear both mediate and moderate the relationship between online instructional experience and basic attitudes about online education. Interestingly, these feeling only moderate faculty attitudes toward institutional pressure to put courses online; they do not impact faculty attitudes toward online education quality, effectiveness, and learning outcomes. So, while some faculty may feel more fear than excitement about online learning, they don't seem to be in a panic. Their fear seems to be more about implementing online education without sufficient resources or planning, but that doesn't negatively color faculty perceptions of quality.

The second article in this section Marcia Dixon of Purdue University examines student engagement in online courses. Dixon analyzes the validity of the Online Student Engagement scale (OSE) by linking student self-reports of engagement with student behaviors captured in online course management systems. The author expected that both more passive application behaviors (reading e-mails, reading discussion posts, viewing content lectures and documents) and more active observation behaviors (posting to forums, writing e-mails, taking quizzes) would be positively correlated with self-reported engagement. However, only the more active application behaviors were significantly correlated with the OSE instrument. These results hold promise in making the OSE of both practical and conceptual value in defining online learner engagement.

Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2012). Conflicted: Faculty and online education, 2012. *Babson Survey Research Group*.

Bunk, J.; Li, R.; Smidt, E.; Bidetti C.; & Malize, B. (2015). Understanding faculty attitudes about distance education: The importance of excitement and fear. *Online Learning*, 19 (4), pp-

Dixon, M. (2015). Measuring student engagement in the online course: The Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE). *Online Learning*, 19 (4), pp-