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OTL Website

For the AERA OTL SIG website, go to:

www.AERAOTL.com.

This website has information about the OTL SIG, membership, committees, officers, and related activities at the AERA Annual Meetings.

Graduate Student Research

We are seeking research proposals and briefs for the new graduate student research column in the OTL newsletter. Please send your entries to Tugce Aldemir (stfa5065@psu.edu).

EDITORIAL STAFF

Gina J Mariano, Editor - gjmariano@troy.edu
Tugce Aldemir, Content Editor - tfa5065@psu.edu
Denise Nadasen, Associate Editor -
        denise.nadasen@gmail.com
Amanda Jacobs, OLC Coordinator -
        amanda.jacobs@unco.edu
Iwona Lech, Research Section Coordinator -
        iwonalech@gmail.com
Stephanie Colby, Webmaster for the OTL Website -
        stephanie.colby@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Research Highlights

1. Why online? Perspectives, attitudes, and behind the scenes of online learning and teaching:

Frazer, C., Sullivan, D. H., Weatherspoon, D., & Hussey, L. (2017). Faculty Perceptions of Online Teaching Effectiveness and Indicators of Quality. *Nursing Research and Practice, 2017,* 1-6.

Online education programs in nursing are increasing rapidly. Faculty needs to be competent in their role and possess the skills necessary to positively impact student outcomes. Existing research offers effective teaching strategies for online education; however, there may be some disconnect in the application of these strategies and the faculty perception of associated outcomes. Focus groups were formed to uncover how nursing faculty in an online program defines and describes teaching effectiveness and quality indicators in an asynchronous online environment. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 nurse educators from an online university with an average of 15 years of teaching experience in nursing and six years in an online environment. Three categories emerged from the data: teaching effectiveness, indicators of quality, and student success. Effective online teachers facilitate, connect, lead, and work in synchrony with students to obtain indicators of quality such as student success, student improvement over time, and student application of knowledge to the professional role.

2. Online learning and teaching tools:

Rhode, J., Richter, S., & Miller, T. (2017). Designing Personalized Online Teaching Professional Development through Self-Assessment. *TechTrends*, *61*(5), 444-451.

Many institutions use a one-size-fits-all approach to faculty development for online teaching, which does not meet the needs of faculty who often have different levels of experience, skill, and self-efficacy in online teaching and learning. To address these issues, the researchers designed and implemented an online teaching readiness self-assessment. The instrument was developed based on three key attributes and skills needed for proficiency in online teaching: online teaching experience and attitudes, learning management system proficiency, and access to technology. The self-assessment was distributed through a web-based survey tool to the faculty who were identified to develop new online courses. Individual results were used to create personalized frameworks of professional development offerings (workshops, institutes, videos, and consultations) and just-in-time resources to support faculty in their development process.

Tech Trends

Gamification: A New Trend for Online Education?

Gamification has become a hot topic in education, especially in online learning context (Domínguez et al., 2013) by the virtue of having the potential to motivate and engage learners for a better learning process and of generating better outcomes (Kapp, 2012). Considering this, gamification has been applied in several different kinds of educational contexts and topics to enhance the learning experience with the aim of developing different attitudes, behaviors and skills such as self-regulated learning, collaboration and creativity (Caponetto et al., 2014). Gamification, as defined by Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa (2014), is the process by which

services are enhanced utilizing motivational affordances in order to arouse gameful experiences and advanced outcomes in behavior Different elements of gaming such as mechanics, dynamics, components, and design principles, models and methods can be implemented to create educational tools to motivate learners and keep them active, usually by challenges, goals or levels, a system of rewards and indicator of performance level.

Applying gamification techniques for educational purposes may indeed provide an enormous potential for resolving the problems of the lack of student motivation and the inability of the instructors to engage learners in the learning process (de-Marcos et al., 2014). Gamification may also resolve some of the problems faced in online learning, such as the existence of an external media between the instructor and learner communication, lack of instructor presence for a first-hand knowledge transmission and absence of eye-contact (de-Marcos et al., 2014). The potential benefits of gamification in online education have been documented by several studies (i.e. Khan Academy); however, the studies also yielded disappointing results, fueling the skepticisms posited against gamification (Duggan & Shoup, 2013). This emerging approach for online learning design has been criticized for lacking the core game characteristic and trying to build fun by simply integrating some game elements such as points, badges and leaderboards in non-game occasions (Robertson, 2010).
Such mixed attitudes towards gamification may stem from the limited amount of attention being paid much attention to the difficulties involved in designing, implementing and optimizing gamification strategies (Plangger, Kietzmann, & Mccarthy, 2015). It is clear that without exploring the design factors consisting of and how the game elements should get together for a good gamified online learning context, the gamification approach would not be able to realize its potential educational benefits. Given that, there seems to be a pressing need for further studies on gamification design strategies especially tailored for online education.

References

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AERA OTL 2018 Highlights

The Online Teaching and Learning (OTL) SIG hosted 14 sessions including paper presentations, posters, round table sessions and panel discussions at AERA 2018 Annual Meeting, New York City. Research talks were geared towards a wide variety of topics including student perception, engagement, satisfaction, cooperation, activity, discussion, and achievement in online and blended courses. Over the course of conference, the focus of these talks shifted towards understanding the nature of teachers and online teaching and contributing to teachers' professional development. Other topics included design elements, method, and assessment strategies in online and blended environments.

Visualizing the elements of course design was an emerging research topic this year. The paper entitled "Visualizing Course Structure: Using Course Composition

Diagrams to Reflect on Design," with authors Quintana, Tan & Arbor, received the best paper award. OTL volunteers were acknowledged and given certificates for their hard work and dedication. The Business meeting offered a great environment for faculty, staff, and students to engage in formal and informal discussions. Dr. Steven R. Terrell encouraged educators and students to join the OTL and to submit papers for AERA 2019 which will be hosted in Toronto.

See you next year at the 2019 AERA OTL in Toronto.

Higher Ed Flipped Learning Conference: June 14 and 15

Join us in Colorado this June 14th and 15th for the 3rd Annual Higher Education Flipped Learning Conference! Proposals are now being accepted for the 3rd Annual Higher Education Flipped Learning Conference hosted by Math and Science Teaching Institute at the University of Northern Colorado!

- Click here to go to the conference webpage
- Click here to submit a proposal
- We are looking for 45-minute sessions, poster presentations, and 90-minute mini-workshops focusing on flipped learning research, implementation, or professional development.
- Registration will open by late January, look for updates on the webpage and another email soon.

Spread the word about the conference and the proposal submission page! Looking forward to seeing many of you in June!

OLC Corner

Online Learning
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OLC Accelerate Call for Proposals

The Online Learning Consortium invites you to submit for OLC Accelerate 2018: Accelerating Online Learning Worldwide, to be held November 14-16, 2018 at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

The OLC Program Committee seeks proposals that reflect and showcase our vibrant community of practice - promoting theory, research, methodology and/or applied effective practices in online, blended, and web-enhanced teaching and learning. Both research and evidence-based proposals are encouraged for submission. Please align submission to the session type as shown on the session types and details page.

Submit to the OLC Research Center for Digital Learning and Leadership

The OLC Research Center for Digital Learning and Leadership provides five pathways for open publishing. Please review the information on each type to determine which pathway is the best for your empirical or practitioner-based contribution. Once you've decided which type of contribution to submit, please review the Submission Preparation Checklist. Following this checklist can shorten the length of publication time as the review and editorial process is faster. Should you have questions prior to submission, please contact the Sr. Director of Research and Publications, Dr. Jill Buban. While a full review of the contribution will not be conducted prior to submission, questions are always welcome.

Call for Papers: Special Issue of *Online Learning*

The *Online Learning* Journal (OLJ), formerly the *Journal of Asynchronous Learning*, invites the presenters at the 2018 AERA Annual meeting to publish in a special issue devoted to the Online Teaching and Learning Special Interest Group (OTL-SIG).

Topics for the special issue include **but are not limited to** research on:
· Strategies for student engagement
· Virtual or online K-12 schools
· Community of Inquiry, including Social Presence, Teaching Presence and Cognitive Presence
· MOOCs
· Strategies for online discussions
· Blended learning and flipped classrooms
· Integration of tools for online learning environments
· Retention in online courses and programs
· Instructor readiness
· Designing for the online environment
· Assessment strategies and issues
· Data analytics in online environments
· Online teacher education and professional development

Submission Guidelines

Submit abstracts for review to Tadd Farmer, farmer32@purdue.edu by June 11th. Please submit full manuscripts through the Open Journal System (OJS), the OLC journal system as per timeline below. Please select the Special Conference Issue: AERA Online Teaching and Learning SIG within the OJS submission process. The Guide for Authors can be found here: http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/read/guide-authors/ Please note that contributors will also serve as reviewers for this project.