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FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION RELATED TO ONLINE COURSE DESIGN

by

April Marie Hixson

A Doctoral Project Submitted to,
the College of Education and Human Sciences
and the School of Education
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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This Doctoral Project was approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Online education has expanded and evolved slowly through the decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-2021 put online education at the forefront of teaching and learning worldwide and sped up the design and delivery of online courses. This study sought to examine faculty attitudes and opinions (amid a global pandemic) toward online course design that may affect their job satisfaction levels. Specifically, it explored factors that could inhibit or contribute to faculty job satisfaction during their engagement in online instructional design. Further, the study was designed to gain an understanding of how pedagogical and technological changes influence the degree of job satisfaction for online faculty. Lastly, a collection of faculty-preferred strategies related to online course creation was sought. Online higher education faculty throughout the United States were asked to participate in an online 12-question survey. Responses were analyzed using *t*-tests, an *analysis of variance*, and means and percentages. The results of the survey suggested that job satisfaction varies based on certain aspects of work and the faculty's work experience or situation. It also suggested that satisfaction levels are dependent upon the amount of support and resources provided during times of change. Finally, the survey highlighted the potential for greater job dissatisfaction when faculty are asked to engage in online design initiatives rather than daily online design tasks and strategies. Based on this, institutional policies, practices, and procedures should be examined to determine the amount of support and authority online faculty are given related to all aspects of online course design.

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I am most sincerely thankful for the opportunity to have attended and learned under the caring and knowledgeable College of Education and Human Sciences faculty at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM). USM is a hidden gem that provided me with a life-changing educational experience. Leading the experience was Dr. Emily A. Johnson. I could not have asked for a better mentor/guide through the process of transforming a simple wondering into a substantial action research study than the one I had in Dr. Johnson. Dr. Johnson was without question the person I needed by my side to help me navigate the trials of taking a research topic from conception through to a finished project. Dr. Johnson is not only an expert in research design, assessment, and evaluation, but is also one of the most sincerely caring and compassionate professors from whom I have ever had the privilege of learning. Dr. Johnson conveyed to me a very real sense that my success as a student and a professional in the education field mattered. But, even more than seeing and caring about me as a student, Dr. Johnson cared about me as a human being, and for that, I am extremely grateful.

Alongside Dr. Johnson, I must also acknowledge the enormous kindness and support of Dr. Holly Foster, without whom I would have been thoroughly lost in the process of achieving my degree. As a first-generation doctoral student, navigating the ins and outs of an unfamiliar system, I valued Dr. Foster's vital support, which calmed my anxieties and advised my progress. Dr. Foster made a difficult journey easier by always being so responsive and willing to help with even the most seemingly mundane questions. Dr. Foster, Dr. Johnson, and the rest of the USM faculty whom I had the pleasure of knowing helped me to realize a dream.

I would also like to thank the students and staff of USM and the volunteers who participated in this study. The support staff at USM was terrific in responding to the various queries I threw their way with prompt answers and a great deal of care for me as a graduate student navigating unfamiliar waters during a global pandemic. The student support through the Research, Evaluation, Statistics, and Assessment (RESA) group under the Research Support Center was vital to me during this study. After working with RESA, I walked away with greater insights into the most crucial piece of the entire process – that is the “making sense” of the data collected. My experience with RESA impressed on me the importance of scholarly research and the importance of properly processing, analyzing, and interpreting data. Also, the support of my student cohort was instrumental in providing me a sense of community by helping me to understand I was not alone in my struggles and successes, for which I am deeply grateful. Finally, I acknowledge that without the kindness of faculty throughout the country willing to take time out of their very busy schedules to honestly answer the study questionnaire, this research project would have amounted to nothing. As it turned out, however, hundreds of willing participants took the time to share their insights in a way that opened my eyes to their daily work and job satisfaction. It is my sincerest hope that I have adequately conveyed their attitudes and opinions regarding online course creation and design and the influencing factors that could lead to greater work satisfaction for them and, ultimately, greater learning satisfaction for students.

DEDICATION

I am dedicating this work to my loving husband, Dean. He gave me the encouragement and confidence to take on a seemingly out-of-reach lifelong dream. Dean read every single paper and every single iteration – offering up sincere thoughts, comments, questions, and editing notes that both challenged and kept me on target. Through this experience, together we found new topics of discussion and a greater understanding of the importance of higher education and the significant roles happiness, satisfaction, equity, and empowerment play in all lives. The experience of writing this study and taking courses through USM during a global pandemic certainly was an unenviable task, but Dean saw me through it unscathed and ready for our next great adventure. I sincerely hope that, together, Dean and I have been admirable role models for our children in the importance of perseverance toward dreams and the great power knowledge attainment and education play in making life fuller and richer. Finally, I would also like to thank and dedicate this to the rest of my family and friends who patiently listened to me rattle on about new passions and discoveries, who hugged me and propped me up when I was struggling, and who showed me nothing but kindness and love through it all. I can never begin to thank you enough and I hope that you all know how much you are loved.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ADDIE</i>	Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate
<i>CAI</i>	Computer-Assisted Instruction
<i>CBE</i>	Computer-Based Education
<i>CPB</i>	Corporation for Public Broadcasting
F2F	Face-to-Face Education
<i>ID</i>	Instructional Design
<i>IPEDS</i>	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
<i>IRB</i>	Institutional Review Board
<i>OLC</i>	Online Learning Consortium
<i>PBL</i>	Public Broadcasting Laboratory
<i>PBS</i>	Public Broadcasting Service
<i>PLATO</i>	Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations
<i>PLC</i>	Professional Learning Communities
<i>READI</i>	Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator
<i>STEM</i>	Science, Technology, Engineering, Math
<i>TUTOR</i>	Logic Programming Tutor/Language
<i>USM</i>	The University of Southern Mississippi
<i>WBSI</i>	Western Behavioral Sciences Institute

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

This study sought to examine the nature of the relationship among the factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) that inhibit or contribute to job satisfaction for those designing and teaching online courses. The purpose of this action research study was to survey online faculty for their perceptions of what they themselves think are influencing factors surrounding their level of job satisfaction when designing online courses, how pedagogical and technological changes play a role, and what strategies they prefer to use related to online course creation. This action research project used a primarily quantitative methodology to provide insights into the job satisfaction levels of online faculty. Participants in this study included higher education faculty throughout the United States who were willing to complete an online questionnaire related to their attitudes regarding their satisfaction levels related to online design tasks, initiatives, and strategies.

Context

Background

The history of online education began in the early 1900s, according to Reiser (2001a), with the creation of visual projectors and expanded to include audio in the 1920s and 1930s thanks to sound-based technologies. As new technologies emerged and economic or political issues arose, online education adapted to become what it is today (Harasim, 2000; Mayer, 1972; Reiser, 2001a). The first widespread use of online education came about due to training needs during World War II (Reiser, 2001a). Within 15 years of the war ending (1960), a computer-based education system was developed by the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, known as PLATO – Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations (Lyman, 1972). PLATO was the first system to look

and act much like today's online environment as it utilized a "high-speed digital computer as the central control element for teaching a number of students simultaneously" (Lyman, 1972, p. 1). This simultaneous delivery became known as "online" education thanks to Grossman and Walter (1978) who coined the term when explaining the pedagogical changes to education that such technology brought about. The impact of change to education, both pedagogically and technologically, was summed up by Harasim (2000) who reported that faculty adopters of online education claimed they had to find a way to be course facilitator, designer, and entertainer.

Online education has continued to grow and evolve since the introduction of PLATO in the 1960s due to advancements in technology and changing student demographics and needs (Harasim, 2000). Although the changes may have been gradual, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic of 2020 thrust faculty and students quickly into the online education environment (Lederman, 2020). Lederman (2020) suggested that "this period could alter the landscape long term for online education" (para. 5). Lederman shared the perspective of Blumenstyk, senior education writer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, who suggested that the coronavirus pandemic may have provided more of a "catalyst" for online higher education than any other change to date - be it technological, pedagogical, or in relation to other driving forces. Lederman shared that those surveyed suggested two potential extremes of outcome for this unprecedented time in history: (1) a "speeding up of" and "embrace of" online teaching and learning, or (2) a "pale imitation" of online learning being created so as to produce a "flawed product" that will negatively impact both faculty and student attitudes toward online education as a whole – creating a major set-back for future growth in online education (p.10). Kim and

Bonk (2006) called online learning the “perfect storm” because attitudes around online education are mixed, often due to myths and misconceptions. Before COVID-19, online learning in postsecondary education rose more than 40% from 2013-2018 (Magda and Smalec, 2020). According to Cavanaugh (2005), online teaching doubles the amount of time faculty must spend on activities surrounding the design and delivery of online courses. Growth in the area of online teaching has the potential to shift attitudes related to job satisfaction.

In a study of elementary teachers (K-5) in Missouri, Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen (2008) found teachers have job dissatisfaction when feeling overloaded in their work. Perrachione et al.’s work emphasized the importance of closing the “teacher job-satisfaction gap” in order to close the “student achievement gap” (p. 28). Wasilik and Bolliger (2009) shared that faculty job satisfaction is directly related to student performance and motivation. Bozeman and Gaughan (2011) suggested that U.S. higher education faculty share some job satisfaction similarities to other professions but also differ in other ways having to do with “distinctive requirements and challenges” (p. 178) related to the tenure system. Bozeman and Gaughan suggested that it is important to consider faculty job satisfaction about: (1) individual/personal attributes, (2) work context, and (3) institutional factors. Lambert, Hogan, and Barton (2002) explained that job satisfaction has been linked to positive behaviors such as performance and negative behaviors such as retention/turnover. There is a general agreement that job satisfaction is “an affective [effective] response by an employee concerning his or her particular job in an organization, and this response results from the individual’s overall comparison of actual outcomes with those that are expected, needed, wanted, desired, or perceived to be

fair or just” (Lambert et al., 2002, p. 116). Online faculty job satisfaction attitudes deserve to be given attention as the outcomes (positive and negative) impact faculty, students, and institutions (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011; Hoekstra, 2014; Kleim & Takeda-Tinker, 2009; Stickney, Bento, Aggarwal, & Adlakha, 2019).

Problem Statement and Justification

Although there has been a great deal of research done on instructional design models and systems approaches, a review of the literature revealed there has been little focus on those doing the work of educating in the online environment. In addition, Lambert et al. (2002) suggested that “job satisfaction is a latent concept that has been frequently studied across a wide array of disciplines;” however, it is “an important subject that needs to be fully understood” (p. 116). This study sought to add to the understanding of job satisfaction as it relates to the work of online higher education faculty. The rationale for this study rested on the notion that by closing the job satisfaction gap for online higher education faculty the achievement gap for learners may, in turn, be closed (Perrachione et al, 2008). Research indicates that online faculty are the key to successful online courses and to student satisfaction and achievement (Eom & Ashill, 2016). Strikwerda (2019) said that the biggest challenge and highest priority to higher education is graduating more students. Strikwerda argued that faculty provide the most direct way to support students and that, sadly, “the research and money being poured into helping improve retention often doesn’t flow to those who are crucial to student success; the faculty and department chairs, program directors, and deans who shape faculty culture” (p. 26). Seaman, director of the Babson Survey Research Group, said that “distance education is saving higher ed” and that “without digital, higher

education would be in far worse shape than it is now” (Ubell, 2018, para. 2). Seaman further said that growth in higher education is “driven by online” (para. 3) – this is especially true post-COVID-19 (Ubell, 2018). At this critical juncture, when both students and institutions are relying on faculty to deliver quality online courses in increasing numbers, faculty must be allowed to share their insights on what factors impact their job satisfaction in the creation and delivery of online courses.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine faculty attitudes toward online instructional design that may affect job satisfaction levels. This study looked to address the following research questions:

1. What factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) influence faculty job satisfaction while engaging in online instructional design?
2. How do pedagogical and technological changes (i.e., trends and initiatives) influence the degree of job satisfaction for faculty?
3. What are faculty-preferred strategies related to online course creation? And, what online design strategies do faculty indicate provide greater satisfaction?

Research Approach

With the approval of The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), the proposed study canvassed full- and part-time online higher education faculty throughout the United States to participate in an online 12-question questionnaire. The sought-after sample size was 68 or more participants, ideally responding to five demographic-type questions; three Likert-type questions that explore different online design factors including: tasks, initiatives, and strategies; and four open-

ended questions seeking detailed information on factors related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The questionnaire was delivered through Qualtrics during the fall 2020 academic semester. Participants were sought through email and social media canvassing and through snowball-networking opportunities (i.e., encouragement to share the questionnaire link with online faculty colleagues). Statistical software was used to import responses in order to run: (1) *t*-tests, (2) an *analysis of variance* (ANOVA), (3) and to determine means and percentages. Data were displayed through tables and charts. Comparisons were made between demographic identifiers.

Researcher Lens

During this action-research study, the researcher was employed as an instructional design consultant for a for-profit, fully online university. Thus, the researcher brought to the inquiry process the lens of one of the “interactive” team members as defined by Grossman and Walter (1978). When discussing PLATO, Grossman and Walter explained that the educational specialist (i.e., instructional designer), faculty member, student, and the computer are all integral members of online learning (i.e., interactive team members). It is important to acknowledge that the researcher’s work experience provided an insider perspective to the design and development of online education, but that it also had the potential to introduce bias to the study. To address this risk and to strengthen the reliability and validity of the study, several people with backgrounds in education were asked to read and respond to the questionnaire to determine if the survey items matched the constructs being studied and to determine if there was an obvious correlation between what was intended to be measured and what was being measured.

Definition of Terms

For this action research project, the following key terms were identified as holding significant importance to the overall understanding of this study.

Face-to-face education

Face-to-face education (F2F) is also known as face-to-face instruction, in which the instructor and the students are in a traditional classroom setting/place that is “devoted to instruction and the teaching and learning take place at the same time” (Purdue University [Purdue], 2018, para. 1).

Instructional design

Instructional design (ID) is the creation (i.e., design and development) of “learning experiences and materials in a manner that results in the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills” (Association for Talent Development [ATD], 2020, para. 1). ID uses a practical process that routinely includes the analysis, design, development, and evaluation (ADDIE) process to create effective learning material (ATD, 2020).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the extent to which people like (i.e., satisfaction) or dislike (i.e., dissatisfaction) their jobs (Spector, 1997).

Online education

Online education consists of courses “in which 80% of the course content is delivered online” (i.e., the internet) (Allen & Seaman, 2011, p. 7). According to Allen and Seaman (2011), online courses typically do not meet in a traditional classroom (i.e., physical)

setting; however, the courses can be delivered either synchronously (i.e., real-time) or asynchronously (i.e., not in real-time) or a combination of both.

Summary

Spector (1997) said the reasons why organizational leaders should be concerned with job satisfaction can be grouped under two perspectives: (1) humanitarian perspective – a recognition that everyone deserves fair and proper/respectful treatment on the job, and (2) utilitarian perspective – a recognition that job satisfaction directly affects the function of an organization. Spector suggested that people have varying levels of satisfaction across different “facets” of their work; in other words, “they tend not to have global feelings that produce the same level of satisfaction with every job aspect” (p. 3). Spector recommended that using a “facet approach” to researching job satisfaction helps the researcher to better identify which “parts of the job produce satisfaction or dissatisfaction” (p. 3), which is useful in understanding where improvements can be made. Spector said that the “easiest way” to determine job satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels is to use an existing questionnaire/scale. Spector, however, offered a caution on the use of an existing questionnaire/scale stating that the “major disadvantage” is that they are limited to only certain facets/factors and do not include more specific areas of concern/interest. Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) found that “faculty behaviors and attitudes have a dramatic effect on student learning and engagement” (p. 173). Behavior and attitude go hand-in-hand with job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). This study sought to better understand what specific facets/factors of course design contribute to or inhibit online faculty job satisfaction levels in an effort to ultimately create improved student learning and engagement.

CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

On average, faculty at Boise State University work 61 hours per week, according to a study by Ziker, Wintermote, Nolin, Demps, Genuchi, and Meinhardt (2014). What Ziker et al. found was that faculty worked generally over 10 hours each weekday and a combined additional 10 hours over the weekend. Weekends were spent primarily preparing for class, and during the week, faculty split their time in 24 different ways, with 17% of their time spent in meetings and only 3% of their day devoted to primary research (Ziker et al., 2014). Cavanaugh (2005) more specifically looked at the hours faculty devote to teaching in a time comparison study at State University of West Georgia. To allow for a direct comparison, Cavanaugh tracked one faculty member teaching the same course in two different formats (face-to-face and online). The faculty member had taught the course for many years in both formats and was able to log their time based on the following activities: preparation, teaching, office hours (time spent with students outside of class time), and final tasks (administrative duties at the end of a course) (Cavanaugh, 2005). What Cavanaugh concluded from the comparative study was that the amount of time teaching online was twice that of teaching a face-to-face class. Cavanaugh suggested that there are many advantages to teaching online; however, the time it takes to teach an online course should be a major consideration for institutions. Cavanaugh's study did not consider the time it took to originally design and develop the course, nor any additional grading time associated with an online course. Searman, Allen, and Seaman (2018) shared that distance education continues to grow with nearly 32% of students in higher education taking at least one online course (outside of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic). This type of growth signifies that more and more faculty are likely to be

routinely teaching at least one online course (post-pandemic), which means a shift in their workload and potentially a shift in their attitudes towards job satisfaction. A study by Wasilik and Bolliger (2009) cautioned that faculty job satisfaction is a crucial/influencing factor in the successful design/development of online courses.

Context

Method

By using keyword combinations surrounding: (1) instructional design and faculty collaboration, (2) social exchange theory and online education, and (3) working relationships between faculty and instructional designers, the researcher was able to collect some preliminary studies for review. However, this initial search provided an abundance of literature on instructional design models and systems-approaches rather than a focus on individuals working in online education. Ironically, by widening rather than narrowing the search during a second literature review and by removing the time period parameter the researcher was able to find more targeted articles. The new keyword combinations included: (1) online learning, (2) online pedagogy, (3) online instructional design, and (4) online faculty. The researcher also switched from searching exclusively through “Seymour Info,” a single search tool available through The University of Southern Mississippi’s (USM) online library designed to provide students and faculty with fast access to scholarly content, to Google Scholar. Google Scholar allows for a broad search for scholarly articles, and it provides analytical data illustrating the number of times an article has been cited. Once key articles were identified, the researcher searched for them in EBSCOhost – a provider of research databases – because it can identify an article as peer-reviewed.

Once more targeted studies were identified during the discovery literature review, key strands and seminal works began to emerge from those whose research/scholarship focused on the human side of online education/technology and job satisfaction. It became apparent that to understand the facets/factors related to job satisfaction for online faculty, it was important to understand the nature/history of online education and how it became a staple in higher education today. Through both Seymour Info and Google Scholar, two authors emerged as experts in the history of online instructional design and technology – Robert A. Reiser and Linda Harasim. Reiser, Associate Dean for Research at Florida State University, has written more than 75 book chapters and articles on the subject of online education, as well as five books on the same subject, and is the founder of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology Division for Design and Development (Florida State University, 2020). Harasim, Network Leader and CEO for the TeleLearning Network Centers of Excellence, oversees a 50-million-dollar research study fund related to emerging online technologies and pedagogies, has written six books and over 40 book chapters and articles related to online education, and is a well-known presenter in the field (Harasim, 2020).

After completing research on the history of online education and key studies surrounding online education pedagogy and technology, the researcher researched works having to do with online faculty job satisfaction. But before diving into a specific focus on online faculty, the researcher wanted to get a sense as to foundational theories/studies related to job satisfaction and educators as well as work motivation in general. Three theorists were routinely mentioned in the literature – Abraham Maslow (*Theory of Motivation*), Frederick Herzberg (*Motivator-Hygiene Theory*), and David McClelland

(*Need Theory*). It was this foundational work that led to some of today's research on the topic of online faculty job satisfaction. The most notable work is that of Doris U. Bolliger, associate professor of STEM Education and Professional Studies at Old Dominion University, and that of Oksana Wasilik, an instructional designer at the University of Wyoming whose research on online faculty satisfaction led to the *Online Faculty Satisfaction Survey*, which has been used by a number of other researchers and has served as inspiration for this particular action research project.

Overview

The review of related research and literature is divided into three strands. The first strand presents a historical overview of instructional movements that have led to the ubiquitous nature of online education today. The second strand reviews the impact of online education on faculty by considering the need to balance pedagogy and technology, the need to build technical self-efficacy, and the growing demand for online education by students and administration. And, the final strand presents an overview of job satisfaction, its general characteristics, and the relationship between faculty job satisfaction and student motivation and learning.

Strands

Online Education – Historical Perspective

Reiser (2001a) suggested that the foundation for today's online education began in the early 1900s when the teachers' guide entitled *Visual Education* was produced by the Keystone View Company to encourage educators to use lantern slide projectors or stereograph viewers to present lesson content. This led to teacher education schools offering courses in visual instruction which continued to grow well into the 1920s and

1930s (Reiser, 2001a). When new technologies were invented, such as radios, record-players, and sound-based motion pictures, education changed from visual to audiovisual (Reiser, 2001a). Reiser shared that although the audiovisual instructional movement slowed down in schools due to the onset of World War II in the 1940s, it grew exponentially in military education. Surveys of military instructors and leaders revealed that the more than four million showings of various training films over a two-year period had been deemed very effective in reducing training time and much more motivating to military personnel as recorded by their physical attendance and expressed interest, however, due to the urgency of the war, the trainees were not directly surveyed as to the success of the program (Reiser, 2001a). Reiser explained that the use of the training films on a large and diverse learner population prompted educational researchers to start studying the impact technology could have on learning. But, shared Reiser, though learning and technology were being researched for the first time, educators were ignoring the research or were not even aware of it, so educational practices were not generally altered. Additionally, most of the research being done was in the form of media comparisons which demonstrated how much students learned depending on how the information was presented to them (Reiser, 2001a). Reiser shared that, from the media comparisons, the greatest focus was on television as a medium for education in the 1950s. By 1952, 242 channels had been reserved for educational content, and by 1959, only 44 existed and most were controlled by a university or school system; generally, the content broadcasted was funded by the Ford Foundation (Mayer, 1972). A few colleges used television for junior college programs; however, according to Mayer, these were “dullsville” (p.49) as they were mostly just recordings of a single faculty member talking

to the camera. As a result, online education through television was seen as a failure and was blamed on a number of factors including lack of funding, lack of entertainment value, and a general lack of understanding by educators as to how to make the most of the technology (Mayer, 1972). Mayer shared that the argument that had real staying power against the use of television as an educational tool was that “television is best at teaching skills...and worst at teaching abstractions that are of necessity the stuff of higher education” (p. 49).

In 1966, though, something happened to bring back to life the original concept of educational television as “seeing at a distance” (p. 50) which was the coming together of Fred Friendly, the former president of CBS News, and McGeorge Bundy, the president of the Ford Foundation, to design a two-hour educational program to be shown every Sunday night (Mayer, 1972). The Public Broadcasting Laboratory (PBL), as it came to be known, failed miserably with the general public, but it had some significant backers in faculty and administrators at Harvard and MIT (Mayer, 1972). Thanks to their support, the Carnegie Commission, in 1967, was encouraged to get involved and as such, determined that the name “educational television” needed to change to “public television” to better represent noncommercial broadcasting (Mayer, 1972). This term eventually evolved into the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) (Mayer, 1972). The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) was formed by a congressional act in 1967, thanks to the Carnegie Commission, to oversee public television (Mayer, 1972). Even with the weight of the Carnegie Commission and Congress, education through television never really took off due to educator resistance, the expense of installing and maintaining the technology, and the inability of television to be adaptive, which forced PBS stations

to branch out beyond educational programming to programming that was of “cultural or informational” interest (Reiser, 2001a, p. 58).

Educational technology and/or instructional technology replaced the term audiovisual instruction in the 1970s, and although most agreed that television had little impact on educational practices, the interest in distance learning via technology did not fade away (Reiser, 2001a). Harasim (2000) explained that with the advent of email in the early 1970s computers as an instructional tool started to take hold. Harasim said that email in education was first used by universities to exchange information, and its use trickled down to K-12 by the early 1980s. Also, by the early 1980s, widespread interest in an emerging technology, namely the computer, started to take hold of faculty in higher education. Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI), as it became known, included a pioneering system that came out of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign known as PLATO – Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations (Reiser, 2001a). Grossman and Walter (1978) from the Department of Dairy Science at the University of Illinois explained their understanding and use of the PLATO system to create laboratory lessons for undergraduate students studying genetic improvement in livestock as being a system that combined computer algorithms with personalized instruction. Grossman and Walter suggested that the student, faculty member, educational specialist (i.e., instructional designer), and the computer together are part of an “interactive” team where the instructor prepares the material, the educational specialist designs the material, and the student responds to the material via the computer which in turn provides performance feedback. Grossman and Walter coined the term “online”

education when they shared the following description of how the PLATO system worked in detail:

The programming language is called TUTOR. It is based on English grammar and syntax and is designed for teachers with no previous knowledge of computers. The instructional material is authored and edited 'online' from any terminal while 'time-sharing' the system with other authors and students. Thus, the lesson material can be revised easily by the teacher to update and improve instruction. PLATO is effective for teaching because it permits the student to progress at their own rate of comprehension and it gives the students a patient tutor that can simulate complex phenomena, drill basic concepts, and diagnose and treat weaknesses. (Grossman & Walter, 1978, p. 1308)

Grossman and Walter addressed issues of pedagogy and technology by suggesting that the advantages of the PLATO system were that: (1) it provided instructors additional time to work more directly with individual students, (2) it allowed students to progress at their own rate, (3) it encouraged interactive learning on the part of the student, (4) it supported learning through discovery, and (5) it improved institutional effectiveness, efficiency, and quality. In 1978, the PLATO system consisted of 1,000 terminals with 5,000 hours of lesson material being used simultaneously throughout the world with one million "user-contact-hours" logged annually at a cost of "\$2.25 per student per terminal-hour" (Grossman & Walter, 1978, p. 1309). The PLATO system was the first student-based computer that visually compares to computers today – using a standard keyboard, limited touch panel opportunities, image display capability, and audio disc options (Grossman & Walter, 1978). In their summary statement, Grossman and Walter shared that students expressed their enthusiasm for computer-based education, and as instructors, it was their hope that education would continue to develop through the PLATO system to "provide an exciting way of acquiring and reinforcing knowledge" (p. 1311).

Only a few years later in 1983, 75% of all high schools and 40% of all elementary schools in the United States were using computers for limited instructional purposes (Reiser, 2001a). During that same time (1982), the first totally online non-credit courses were launched by the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute (WBSI) for executive training programs (Harasim, 2000). Harasim (2000) said that because a 100% online college-level course had never before been offered, faculty at WBSI were designing/developing course content on a trial-and-error basis, which led to a recognition that long lectures were not well received but that collaborative learning activities and discussion boards were better received by learners as they allowed students to “socialize in this new space” (p. 45). According to Harasim, this work provided the foundation for online education today. Despite the enthusiasm for online/computer-based education by some higher education faculty and college students alike, the enthusiasm did not fully trickle down to the K-12 schools immediately as evidenced by the fact that a typical classroom had only one computer for every nine students and was used primarily for word processing (Harasim, 2000).

This was about to change, however, as the World Wide Web’s birth in 1992 sparked a revolution in communication and collaboration that led to changes in everything from the way business was conducted to the way knowledge was distributed (Harasim, 2000). By 1998, K-12 schools boasted one computer for every six students and 90% had access to the Internet (Reiser, 2001a). In higher education, 22% of public four-year institutions offered asynchronous Internet-based courses in 1995, and by 1997 that percentage increased to 60% (Reiser, 2001a). Reiser suggested that the increased usage was due to the ability of the Internet to provide instruction at a relatively low cost to a

global audience and the ability of computers to offer learners easy access to receive knowledge and performance support when and where they needed it. Reiser emphasized that in higher education, online education provided non-traditional students an opportunity not necessarily available to them previously due to family or job responsibility or geographic issues, and it provided all learners the opportunity to interact with content, the instructor, and peers in ways that were more engaging than in the past.

According to the article “Online education ascends,” even though higher education enrollment is falling overall, the number of students taking online courses is growing today (Lederman, 2018). Lederman shared that, according to a report by the Education Department’s National Center for Statistics, over 33% of all higher education students in 2017 took at least one online course which “represents a steady march in the normalization of online learning” (para. 4). Lederman emphasized that the decrease in higher education enrollment overall highlights the importance of online education – without online education, the decrease in enrollment would have been more dramatic. In the article “More students are enrolling in online courses,” Friedman (2018) shared that online course enrollment continues to escalate due to the anytime/anywhere nature of online education, the cost-savings offered by online courses, and the ability to schedule courses in a way that conveniently keeps students on track for timelier graduation. Friedman said that between 2012 and 2016 there were more than one million fewer students studying strictly on a physical campus. The data alone begs the question – are higher education faculty prepared to meet the increasing demand for quality online courses? (Kim & Bonk, 2006). The media are highly keyed in on whether online education offers both quality and value, suggested Harasim (2000), who added that this is

fueled by some faculty who may be slower to “embrace the revolution” (p. 59). Harasim suggested that it is this friction that has led to 30 years of research, testing learning, and teaching models to seek out those that are “effective, exciting, and relevant” (p. 42).

Online Teaching and Learning

Reflection on what Grossman and Walter (1978) described as the “interactive CBE [computer-based education] team” helps to highlight the key players in online education today (students, instructors, educational specialists/instructional designers, and the computer) and gets to the heart of who/what has been the focus of research in the area of online education. An initial literature search in online education highlights a great deal of research having to do with instructional design models such as the well-known ADDIE process (analyze, design, develop, implement, evaluate), while fewer have been conducted on the impact online course creation has on those performing the work, as confirmed by Bawa and Watson (2017). Molenda (2015) suggested that ADDIE is an umbrella term used to help flesh out more narrative descriptions of actual instructional design processes. Molenda said that anyone can attribute whatever they want to ADDIE, making it a predominant topic in instructional design/online education research studies. There are some, however, whose research has less to do with instructional design process/models and more to do with those who are doing the authentic work of curating content for a rapidly changing digital world and helping those who Harasim (2000) said may be slower to “embrace the revolution” (p. 59). Bodily, Leary, and West (2019) concurred after sorting through 65 journals to retrieve all instructional design technology scholarship articles published between 2007 and 2017. What they found was that the field of instructional design has a large international presence, is focused on computer-based

technologies, and is lacking in scholarship on pedagogy/learning theories (Bodily et al., 2019).

Kim and Bonk (2006) said that through their research, they were able to discover some studies covering the interplay of pedagogy and technology. Bawa and Watson (2017) and Saltmarsh and Sutherland-Smith (2010) all completed qualitative research interviews to fill a gap in the understanding of the mindsets/attitudes of faculty designing and teaching in online higher education with a particular focus on pedagogy. Bawa and Watson interviewed both faculty and instructional designers and shared their findings using a narrative that relied on collaborative characteristics defined by the “chameleon” metaphor and acronym: “communication, humility, adaptability, mentorship, empathy, looping, engagement, oscillation, and networking” (p. 2334).

Bawa and Watson said that faculty are resistant to creating online courses for several reasons including: (1) the difficulty in adapting pedagogy from a face-to-face environment to an online environment, (2) the pressure in keeping up with emerging technology, (3) the loss of autonomy in course design/development, and (4) the increased workload that comes with course development and ongoing revisions. Bawa and Watson stressed that because online learning is gaining in popularity in a rapid way, thanks to learners and institutions who are recognizing it as a worthwhile and convenient teaching and learning solution, more must be done to support those creating the content. Bawa and Watson suggested that their study offers up some “nuggets” for consideration to help build a more productive, collaborative, and effective working culture around the creation of online learning content, including: (1) providing more long-term professional development opportunities, (2) asking more questions about the course creation process

and roles/responsibilities, (3) building trust and rapport among the online team by having more face-to-face meetings, (4) providing positive feedback and reassurance to members of the team frequently, and (5) recognizing the challenges each team member is facing and, therefore, treating everyone with compassion/care.

Saltmarsh and Sutherland-Smith (2010) specifically targeted education faculty to get a sense of how they work to find balance with policy initiatives, pedagogy, and online teaching and learning technology. Saltmarsh and Sutherland-Smith contend that many educators view face-to-face classroom teaching as “authentic” and “stable,” - one instructor discusses her initial resistance to the online environment as having judged it “inappropriate” and “ineffective,” though given time and support she became a proponent of online teaching as department lead (p. 21). Saltmarsh and Sutherland-Smith suggested that educators need to have an opportunity to marry their everyday instructional practices with a space to innovate and explore new possibilities; however, to do so, universities must offer professional development in the area of online teaching and learning.

In a mixed-methods study, Binkhorst, Handelzalts, Poortman, and van Joolingen (2015) arranged four different teacher design teams (K-12) to create new educational materials using new technologies to better understand the perceived impact of design teams as a way to find balance with pedagogy and technology and to improve their technical/design skills. The perceptions of the participants were collected through a questionnaire to gain general insights, and a qualitative phase followed to collect deeper insights through interviews that were transcribed and coded for analysis. The participants evaluated their experience by describing their level of satisfaction, pedagogical, or content knowledge they gained, as well as the technical and design skills they acquired.

Binkhorst et al. found that the team of educators who taught the same subject, were tasked with the same goal, and were given the most coaching reported the greatest gains in learning and were far more positive towards the design process compared to the other teams and most especially the team that was a subject-diverse group charged with developing institutionally-directed content while lacking in coaching support. Binkhorst et al. shared that the latter team struggled to find cohesion – suggesting that coaching would have been helpful in defining clear goals and bringing structure to their meetings/activities. Binkhorst et al. said that their study lends support to the notion that teaming, and coaching can be used as “prescriptive tools” (p. 233) for optimizing professional development designed to support instructors tasked with creating content online or otherwise.

Additional research supports the notion of providing space and support for instructors to reduce the tension between pedagogy and technology by improving faculty self-efficacy related to technology use (i.e., faculty training), which Kim and Bonk (2006) said is a “critical component of quality online education” (p. 23). Hixon, Buckenmeyer, Barczyk, Feldman, and Zamojski (2012) added to this by sharing that their research of the relevant literature suggests that trying to adapt pedagogical strategies in the online environment is more difficult for faculty when they are struggling to also learn the latest technology required of them. Buchanan, Sainter, and Saunders (2013) used an online questionnaire to measure internet self-efficacy, current use of learning technologies, and perceived barriers to the adoption of new/changing technologies. Buchanan et al.’s findings showed that faculty who reported high self-efficacy in internet use also reported more use of new technologies than those whose self-efficacy in internet

use was lower. Friel, Britten, Compton, Peak, Schoch, and VanTyle's (2009) study suggested that faculty training on emerging technologies must include a learning-by-doing component along with modeling of instructional strategies and ongoing support. Pre- and post- questionnaires were given to faculty members who participated in collaborative/hands-on training sessions around technology skills (e.g., interactive whiteboard, visual presentation tools, real-time collaborative software, and internet applications), through which researchers learned that 93% of respondents indicated they would attend another training event that was executed using a pedagogical context related to technology (Friel et al., 2009). Georgina and Hosford (2009) collected faculty perceptions regarding pedagogical practices and technical skills. When asked about their perceptions regarding the most effective method for learning new technologies, the faculty indicated a preference for small-group faculty forums led by expert trainers (Georgina & Hosford, 2009).

Hixon et al. (2012) essentially tested Georgina and Hosford's (2009) findings by pairing faculty with mentors to design their first online course while concurrently enrolling them in an online course that provided them expert training in the instructional design process. Participants were asked to complete a post-program questionnaire that asked them to report on their skills, their satisfaction level, and their general experience (Hixon et al., 2012). Hixon et al. compared the responses by faculty over a four-year rollout, revealing that faculty outcomes in this case aligned well to the categories of "adopters" as laid out in *Roger's Diffusions of Innovations* (2003) change theory based on when they participated in the program and how they reacted to it. Using Roger's definitions of adopters, Hixon et al. described them as: (1) *early adopters* – those who

were eager to adopt innovative technology (16%), (2) *majority adopters* – those who were less eager and more deliberate in their adoption of innovative technology (68%), and (3) *laggards* – those who were the last to adopt innovative technology (16%) (p.103). Hixon et al. suggested that institutions should be cognizant of their faculty audience by providing the appropriate level of support, and the support should go beyond merely developing technical skills by recognizing that developing online courses necessitates “a more learner-centered instructional approach, requiring instructors to share control of the learning process with students and take on a more facilitative role” (p. 103).

Hoogveld, Pass, and Jochems (2003) also used a training approach with higher education faculty in their study; their results illustrated that attitudes toward instructional design collaboration varied based on the approach. Hoogveld et al. found that, overall, the faculty preferred designing collaboratively or with a mix of collaboration and individual work when creating study units. According to Hoogveld et al., study participants had formerly completed 2.5 study units per year compared to the collaborative team method or combination of individual and team method which was expected to produce 3.3 study units a year. Hoogveld et al. suggested that based on the way technology education is trending, faculty are going to have to adopt new roles and change their work style accordingly. Supporting the notion of collaborative teaming as a way to meet the challenge of designing for today’s learners, Voogt, Pieters, and Handelzalts (2016) reviewed 14 dissertations to collect evidence on professional development through collaborative design teams (K-12 Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs) and their impact on teachers’ knowledge, practices, and curricula for professional growth and skills related to digital-age learning. Voogt et al. found that

teaming helped teachers to increase their pedagogical and technological knowledge and to develop practical, technical skills. Voogt et al. said that more research, however, needs to be done in this area, with attention being paid to the relationship between collaborative teams and the instructors that are affected by them as well as the effect on student learning outcomes (i.e., impact on stakeholders).

Three qualitative case studies performed in-depth investigations into the nature of online education and its stakeholders (Power, 2008; van Rooij & Zirkle, 2015; Yamagata-Lynch, Cowan, & Luetkehans, 2015). Yamagata-Lynch, Cowan, and Luetkehans (2015) used activity systems analysis to gain insights into how technology can “trigger tensions” (p. 12). As both participants and observers in the study, they had to balance what they were observing and reporting with their own actions in the launch of an online higher education program. Yamagata-Lynch et al. warned that online education is a “disruptive force” that requires a “safe workspace to take innovative risks” where “they [faculty and staff] themselves, their work environment, and current students will not be harmed from new program development” (p. 17).

Power (2008) followed 10 participants over four years who were full-time professors at dual-mode universities preparing for online courses and who were willing to implement a proposed online design model. Instructional designers took careful notes during each working session with faculty, and post-design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the faculty. Faculty artifacts were also collected – all in an effort to create detailed descriptions of how the instructional design process unfolded authentically and the participants’ attitudes towards the process (Power, 2008). Power suggested that efforts such as this help to “optimize” the growth of online education in higher education.

van Rooij and Zirkle (2015) rolled out a case study with the instructional designers and education faculty to create an online undergraduate course to prepare students who may have been considering taking an online course. The challenges of the process were recorded and analyzed, as were student success measures on performance-based assessments and student ratings on their perception of the course. van Rooij and Zirkle suggested that, due to the growth of online courses/programs, institutions need to consider ways in which they can “foster a culture of support” (p. 6) that focuses on the needs of the faculty teaching online. Oncu and Cakir (2011) reviewed research studies specifically looking for recommendations for future research related to online learning due to its rapidly increasing presence. Four needs emerged: (1) enhancing learner engagement with a particular emphasis on collaboration, (2) promoting effective faculty facilitation, (3) developing assessment techniques that both judge the quality of the learning and also provide formative feedback to both the learner and the instructor, and (4) designing programs to support faculty development for quality teaching in online learning environments.

In 2000, Harasim shared a profile of the “virtual professor” as being an online educator who either fully or partially taught online (p. 57). Harasim (2000) reported that the virtual professor/online educator said, “they felt more intellectually stimulated and motivated because their online students were more engaged with learning and developing a sense of group” (p. 57). Harasim said that faculty reported better learning outcomes than in their face-to-face classes and that the students seemed to be more motivated and engaged. Faculty also reported that they had to learn how to become more of a facilitator, designer, and entertainer as opposed to focusing on their more traditional role as a

lecturer (Harasim, 2000). The major complaint, according to Harasim, was the amount of workload and general learning curve having to do with getting up to speed on new/emerging technologies.

Anderson, Davis, Fair, and Wickersham (2010) said that higher education institutions are in a rush to offer online courses in all subject areas as there is an expectation from today's learner that faculty will incorporate technology in some form into course design, including face-to-face courses. Anderson et al. (2010) argued that the rush to offer online courses is done so "regardless of any negative side effects, such as cost or training for faculty, technology continues to advance in society and specifically in the college classroom" (p. 319). Anderson et al. urged decision-makers in higher education institutions to remember that "technology alone does not make the course work" (p. 321). This statement harkens back to Grossman and Walter's statement in 1978 regarding who makes up the online team – faculty, instructional designers, students, and the computer. In other words, technology is only one-fourth of the equation.

Anderson et al. stressed that online education has both positive and negative effects and one of the biggest factors as to which (positive or negative) hinges on the faculty member and their willingness to rework pedagogy and technology in an online environment. Anderson et al. suggested that administrators at universities and colleges will raise enrollment caps in order to generate additional revenue and because they have bought into the notion that teaching online is easier/less work than teaching in a face-to-face environment. Anderson et al. cautioned that the higher enrollment affects faculty on a personal level:

Many times, an instructor's pay does not differ based on the number of students in the course. Once a sufficient number of students enroll in a specific section/course, that class is considered to have [been] 'made.' After a class has reached its enrollment capacity, administrators have the power to increase the number of students allowed in each particular course. Examples of classes having 150 to 300 students are not unheard of at many colleges; however, professors earn the same amount of money whether they teach 30 or 150 students in a class. (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 321)

Anderson et al. shared that online education in its current form is just part of the long history of distance education, and as with all the other various iterations that have occurred through time, online education must rise to the challenge of meeting student demands, keeping tuition costs affordable, and supporting changing demographics. It must also meet the needs of the faculty which include: (1) training on technology and pedagogy, (2) incentives for the design/development of courses, and (3) recognition of all of the components that go into creating successful/quality online courses (Anderson et al., 2010).

Anderson et al.'s study reviewed data available from *the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)* to identify trends related to enrollment, tuition costs, and faculty salaries. Anderson et al. concluded that online faculty workload demands are likely to increase due to student needs, enrollment numbers, and the pressures to maintain course quality. Bender, Wood, and Vredevoogd (2010) lent support to Anderson et al.'s conclusion in their "time-and-task" study which compared the recorded logs of faculty and teaching assistants' work hours for two comparable courses – one face-to-face and one online. In their summary statement, Bender et al. suggested that faculty who read the study may be dissuaded from teaching online especially because their workload is already high without adding the challenges online education brings in

technology and pedagogy. Bender et al. said that their study found teaching online took twice as much time as teaching the course face-to-face. Bender et al. explained that this had to do with grading time, an abundance of emails from students experiencing high anxiety related to technology, and the newness of online learning. Bender et al. suggested that faculty might be more satisfied teaching online if their overall workload was reduced and if the technology could be designed in a way that is more effective and allows for more interaction between students and faculty by limiting redundant information and extending class discussions.

Job Satisfaction

According to Bozeman and Gaughan (2011), a vast amount of research has been done on job satisfaction (the majority being Likert-type questionnaires) which has afforded researchers access to highly nuanced data. However, Bozeman and Gaughan were quick to point out that despite this, “it is nonetheless the case that human beings, complex in so many ways, are relatively simple creatures when it comes to their satisfaction with their jobs” (p. 156). Maslow (1954) formulated the *Theory of Motivation* (i.e. *Hierarchy of Needs*) which simplified human needs down to: (1) *the physiological needs* – needs that relate to basic survival (e.g., air, food, water, sleep, shelter), (2) *the safety needs* – needs that relate to a sense of security (e.g., stability, law, and order, freedom from fear and anxiety), (3) *the belongingness and love needs* – needs that relate to love and affection and the freedom from loneliness and rejection, (4) *the esteem needs* – needs that relate to being valued and respected by others, and (5) *the need for self-actualization* – needs that relate to allowing a person to be what they can and must be.

On the heels of Maslow's work, Herzberg (1959) proposed the *Motivator-Hygiene Theory* (i.e., *Two-Factor Theory*) in which he suggested that employees are motivated by intrinsic factors (e.g., passion for the work, personal/professional growth opportunities, recognition/praise, a sense of social responsibility) that are related to job satisfaction (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017). The other factors are the *extrinsic factors* (i.e., *hygiene factors*) which if absent can cause dissatisfaction with a job (e.g., organizational policies, management, workplace or commute conditions, career stability, and retirement potential) but are not strong enough to be considered "motivators" or job satisfaction creators (Osemeke & Adegboyega, 2017). Osemeke and Adegboyega (2017) shared that researchers/scholars have since questioned the two-factor theory because the participant group that Herzberg used was not generalizable and because the theory does not consider the "situational variable" – that is the things a person may not like about their job while still being satisfied with their job, in general. Despite this, Osemeke and Adegboyega highlighted the work of Sungmin (2011) on the topic of motivation and job satisfaction stating that "most researchers consider Herzberg's two-factor model theory as the best method in predicting job satisfaction" (p. 168).

Osemeke and Adegboyega recommend that organizations looking to improve motivation and job satisfaction should also consider the work of McClelland (1987). Osemeke and Adegboyega said that, rather than looking at motivation as satisfaction versus dissatisfaction or a hierarchy of needs, McClelland's *Need Theory* groups motivation as: (1) *achievement* – motivated by mastery of tasks, (2) *affiliation* – motivated by relationship building, or (3) *power* – motivated by influencing others (p. 169). McClelland (1988) suggested that motivations can shift, and by systematically

changing people's motives, their work/organization may be impacted for better or worse (p. vii). Osemeke and Adegboyega (2017) shared that critics of the *Need Theory* such as Brandon (2015) argued that no one person has only one essential motivation at a time; rather, they are capable of all three at once but in varying degrees. Regardless of the criticisms, Osemeke and Adegboyega insisted that Maslow, Herzberg, and McClelland's theories have "contributed immensely to the knowledge in the area of motivation" and job satisfaction and together share the following similarities: (1) all are motivational theories founded on needs; (2) all propose that a lack of motivation results when needs are not met; (3) all suggest that motivation can be altered through management/leadership; (4) all suggest that there are specific reasons for certain human behaviors; and (5) all believe that humans are motivated differently by various/timely needs (p. 171).

Building off the foundations set by Maslow, Herzberg, and McClelland, researchers have looked to test motivation theories with other populations. For example, Perrachione, Rosser, and Petersen (2008) sought to study the intrinsic and extrinsic (i.e., hygiene) factors that influence teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and retention. Using a random sampling of public elementary teachers (K-5) in Missouri, participants were surveyed through a closed- and open-ended questionnaire as to what factors influenced their job satisfaction and their intention to remain in teaching (Perrachione et al., 2008). In general, the teachers expressed positive feelings towards the profession of teaching; however, when asked about their satisfaction level in their current role, the teachers followed up positive statements with statements of dissatisfaction including: (1) *role overload* – frustration with increasing work responsibilities, (2) *student behaviors* –

frustration with discipline problems, and (3) *large class size* – teacher-to-student ratio increasing yearly (Perrachione et al., 2008, p. 23). Perrachione et al. said that their findings clearly showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influenced job satisfaction, but only extrinsic factors influenced their dissatisfaction – supporting the work of Herzberg. Perrachione et al. concluded that when the teachers were satisfied in their job, the outcome was their willingness to stay in their job, which as Perrachione et al. suggests could help those who “shape the conditions in which teachers work” (p. 28) to look towards improving specific factors such as class size, role overload, and salaries, in order to keep teachers employed. Perrachione et al. emphasized that by closing the “teacher job-satisfaction gap,” institutions of learning might have a way to close the “student achievement gap” (p.28).

The importance of the sustainability of faculty at their institutions is a familiar theme and one which prompted Kleim and Takeda-Tinker (2009) to study the impact leadership had on faculty job satisfaction at the community college level. Kleim and Takeda-Tinker suggested that the reason for studying job satisfaction, in general, is because when more employees report higher job satisfaction levels, the organization itself is more successful overall because performance/productivity and retention/absenteeism is improved. Kleim and Takeda-Tinker studied job satisfaction levels of full-time faculty in a business program at 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System using a closed-ended questionnaire based on the *Leadership Practices Inventory by Kouzes and Posner (2002)* and the *Job Satisfaction Survey by Spector (1985)*. Kleim and Takeda-Tinker revealed that their findings showed a relationship between leadership practices and faculty job satisfaction. Kleim and Takeda-Tinker suggested that if an

area/department is seeing evidence of job dissatisfaction, an investigation into the leadership practices of direct administration is warranted.

According to Bozeman and Gaughan (2011), “university professors differ in so many ways from other workers, including highly educated professional workers” (p. 154). Bozeman and Gaughan also said it was unclear if university professors also differed in factors influencing job satisfaction from other professional workers. Bozeman and Gaughan sought to find the answer through their research because, like Perrachione et al. (2008) and Kleim and Takeda-Tinker (2009), suggesting an understanding could assist with devising more effective strategies for retention and recruitment. Bozeman and Gaughan looked at faculty job satisfaction based on three different components – the individual, the work, and the institution (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Job Satisfaction Model Schematic.

A schematic model illustrating three different components impacting faculty job satisfaction (based on Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011, p. 158).

Bozeman and Gaughan (2011) surveyed approximately 5,000 tenure and tenure-track faculty at Carnegie research extensive universities in the STEM field. After three rounds of survey administration, using a Likert-type questionnaire, Bozeman and Gaughan achieved a 37% response rate. Key findings from the Bozeman and Gaughan study included: (1) overall, faculty were generally satisfied, with men being more satisfied than women and tenured faculty more satisfied than tenure-track faculty; (2) job satisfaction was related to collegial perceptions about work and status; (3) pay perception was linked to job satisfaction (i.e., fair market pay/value); and (4) industrial activity/collaboration had little to do with job satisfaction.

Though some researchers are looking at faculty job satisfaction overall, Stickney, Bento, Aggarwal, and Adlakha (2019) have suggested that as of yet, online education has not received much “scholarly attention” despite its “pervasive” nature (p. 509). Stickney et al. shared that their interest in the topic of online education centered around “micro-level outcomes” – how faculty job satisfaction impacts student learning, student satisfaction, student performance levels, and student retention/persistence (p. 510). Stickney et al. suggested that to understand micro-level learning outcomes and the future impact of online education, one must understand the history of online education and how its growth has shaped the perceptions of faculty towards online education. Reiser (2001b) concurred, stressing that those who work in online education will be “well-positioned to have a positive influence on future developments in the field” if attention is paid to its history and lessons learned (p. 64). By surveying nearly 200 online faculty solicited from universities known to offer online courses, Stickney et al. (2019) received a nearly 90%

response rate to their scaled questionnaire focusing on attitudes related to: (1) training, (2) flexibility, (3) organizational policies, (4) technical elements, and (5) course management software (CMS) ease of use. Stickney et al. highlighted the following results: (1) adequate training for faculty resulted in higher levels of satisfaction, and (2) faculty who perceived online education to be more flexible reported greater levels of satisfaction.

Hoekstra (2014) focused on the question of whether training made a difference for online faculty members in a study of nearly 150 (30% response rate) faculty from the Iowa Community College Online Consortium. Hoekstra used the *Brayfield and Rothe's 1951 – Index of Job Satisfaction* (a Likert-type questionnaire). Hoekstra said that the study was “inconclusive in determining whether training in general increases job satisfaction for online faculty members,” (p. 7) but surprisingly did discover that job satisfaction with online faculty appears to improve with age. McLawhon and Cutright's (2012) research also looked at training for online faculty in an effort to improve satisfaction but with a bit of a twist – as they tried to better understand if faculty learning style/preference impacted satisfaction levels. McLawhon and Cutright said that the primary reason for the study was because:

The quality of work performed by the faculty at an institution affects numerous areas. Perhaps the most important stakeholders affected by high faculty performance are the students. The lifeline of any institution is its students; therefore, retaining those who enroll, thus reducing attrition is one of the most important tasks in maintaining institutional effectiveness. (McLawhon & Cutright, 2012, p. 341)

McLawhon and Cutright stressed that it is not enough to just imply that faculty satisfaction is important to an institution, but it must be outlined for institutions to be able

to act upon those things which will encourage the retention of faculty who produce quality work.

McLawhon and Cutright suggested that most research on learning styles has been done with a focus on students rather than on the instructor. McLawhon and Cutright used the *Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator (READI)* instrument to assess faculty “readiness” for online learning as related to learning styles and technical skills.

Participants also answered Likert-type job satisfaction questions (McLawhon & Cutright, 2012). The combined results suggested that only aural-learners would need more training/support in the use of technology equipment, but no significant findings resulted to link learning style preferences to job satisfaction (McLawhon & Cutright, 2012).

One of the significant findings to come out of the literature reviewed here is the notion that faculty satisfaction is the key to successful online learning (Eom & Ashill, 2016; McLawhon & Cutright, 2012; Wasilik & Bolliger, 2009). Wasilik and Bolliger said that student performance and motivation in an online course are directly related to faculty job satisfaction. Wasilik and Bolliger backed this claim up with data collected from a questionnaire-based survey that they developed (*Online Faculty Satisfaction Survey - OFSS*). As a result of their study, Wasilik and Bolliger identified three major concerns for faculty teaching online: (1) technology-related problems, (2) lack of face-to-face contact with students, and (3) lack of student involvement. The study also identified flexibility and accessibility as key contributors to faculty satisfaction levels – flexibility for participants being able to access content based on their schedules and accessibility of the medium for non-traditional/more diverse student populations (Wasilik & Bolliger, 2009). Interestingly enough, Wasilik and Bolliger shared that 93% of the faculty indicated that

they were looking forward to teaching another online course even though only 38% of the faculty said they were more satisfied teaching online versus face-to-face. Stickney et al. (2019) cited work by Eom and Ashill (2016) where it was found that in measuring the success of online education, learner satisfaction and achievement of outcomes are core and faculty are a “critical contributing” factor (p. 524).

Critique

Online education, or some form of visual education, has been a part of America’s teaching history since the early 1900s, yet research on the topic of audiovisual instruction did not really hit its stride until the late 1900s (Reichard, 2001a). As a result, most of the research has been focused on the systemic/technical aspects of online education rather than the human aspects (Bawa & Watson, 2017; Molenda, 2015). More recent researchers have sought to find solutions for helping faculty who may be slower to adopt emerging technology into their teaching pedagogies (Binkhorst et al., 2015; Buchanan et al., 2013; Friel et al., 2009; Georgina et al, 2009; Hixon et al., 2012; Saltmarsh & Sutherland-Smith, 2010; van Rooij & Zirkle, 2015). Yet, there is still a lack of research on specific factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) that influence job satisfaction for online faculty (Stickney et al., 2019; Wasilik & Bolliger, 2009). Stickney et al. (2019) said that their study, like others on the same topic (i.e., online faculty job satisfaction and its antecedents), was, when “constrained by the relative scarcity of empirical studies about faculty satisfaction in online environments, quite noticeable when compared with the attention given to student satisfaction” (p. 524).

Summary

Bolliger and Wasilik (2009) suggested that the three main categories that may influence online faculty job satisfaction are those that are: (1) instructor-related, (2) student-related, and (3) institution-related (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Categories Contributing to Online Faculty Job Satisfaction.

A schematic model representing online faculty job satisfaction influences (based on Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009, p. 105-106).

Young's (2006) study on online teaching in higher education found the instructor's actions to be paramount to the effectiveness of online courses. Saltmarsh and Sutherland-Smith (2010) cautioned that the instructor's actions (i.e., academic practices) are not "merely consequences of one's technological competence or otherwise" but are instead an instructor's "way of being" (p. 19). In other words, instructors must be given the opportunity to find a balance between pedagogy and technology (van Rooij & Zirkle, 2015). Young (2006) also suggested that online learning is a social activity that requires faculty and students to be partners in the learning experience. Young said that students

benefit the most from faculty who are actively involved in all aspects of the online course to an even higher degree than they are with a face-to-face course. van Rooij and Zirkle (2015) recommended that balancing pedagogy and student needs requires the active involvement of the institution in their fostering a “culture of support for online teaching” (p. 6) that offers faculty incentives such as professional development, funding, and support services. Kim and Bonk (2006) concurred, stating that higher education institutions are “crucial” in supporting faculty in the creation of quality online education. Wasilik and Bolliger (2009) recommended that faculty satisfaction be examined on a larger scale in order to discover how faculty might balance “codependent” factors related to online course creation without dramatically increasing their workload. This study seeks to build on this notion by seeking to understand, in greater detail, the factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) that either impede or support higher levels of job satisfaction for faculty who teach online. This goal reflects on Perrachione et al. (2008) who emphasized that closing the job satisfaction gap for instructors may, in turn, close achievement gaps for learners. It also stands to reason that faculty, as with any employee, will perform better and contribute more to the success of their institution when they have a high level of job satisfaction (Kleim & Takeda-Tinker, 2009; McLawhon & Cutright, 2012).

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY

Efron and Ravid (2013) suggested that educational research tends to focus on “studying the process of teaching and learning” in an effort to “develop universal theories and discover generalized principles and best strategies that ultimately improve the quality of education” (p. 3). In many cases, the researcher is an outsider to the situation/context being studied, which Efron and Ravid suggested creates a divide between research/theory and action/practice. Efron and Ravid said that action research seeks to remove this divide through its unique characteristics, those being: (1) *constructivist* – generating knowledge, (2) *situational* – understanding the “nuances” of the topic/study, (3) *practical* – seeking answers to questions that can bring about improvement to practices, (4) *systematic* – creating a methodical research plan, and (5) *cyclical* – starting with research questions that end up in creating new knowledge that may result in actions that can further be evaluated (p. 7). Arnold (2015) shared that action research is a methodology that approaches/justifies research through a framework whereby:

Action researchers believe, or adopt a position, which says the world can be seen differently from different perspectives. They try to understand and make improvements to practice in an environment where there are probably many viewpoints. Action researchers do not start out with the opinion that there is one way of seeing the world and their research can discover this. Trying to reach decisions and ways forward amongst a complex situation is the business of action research. These underpinning beliefs fit with an interpretivist epistemology. (Arnold, 2015, p. 2)

Arnold further explained that the research questions drive the type of data to be collected and ultimately the type of analysis completed. Alber (2011) concurred by suggesting that the research question(s) direct the entire flow of the project/study leading the researcher to a “thoughtful investigation of a question of importance” (p. 2).

Context

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine faculty attitudes toward online instructional design that may affect job satisfaction levels. This study looked to address the following research questions:

1. What factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) influence faculty job satisfaction while engaging in online instructional design?
2. How do pedagogical and technological changes (i.e., trends and initiatives) influence the degree of job satisfaction for faculty?
3. What are faculty-preferred strategies related to online course creation? And, what online design strategies do faculty indicate provide greater satisfaction?

Research Justification

A study by Wasilik and Bolliger (2009) cautioned that faculty job satisfaction is a crucial/influencing factor in the successful design/development of online courses. In terms of online students, Young (2006) found that faculty are central to online student success in all ways to an even greater degree than on-campus student success. Current research supports the idea that there is a need to better understand what impedes or supports online faculty job satisfaction because the greater the level of online faculty job satisfaction, the greater the chance of successful outcomes for the students and institutions (Kleim & Takeda-Tinker, 2009; McLawhon & Cutright, 2012). Bolliger and Wasilik (2009) suggested that both faculty and student satisfaction levels are critical to quality online education and that a greater focus needs to be placed on faculty satisfaction specifically because it impacts faculty motivation. Hixon, Buckenmeyer, Barczyk,

Feldman, and Zamojski (2012) recommended that current institutional-based research on online instructional design and faculty job satisfaction should act as “a catalyst for investigators to explore this topic more broadly” (p. 106). Bolliger and Wasilik strongly recommended that faculty satisfaction be “continuously assessed to assure quality online educational experiences for faculty and students” (p. 114). Spector (1997) shared that “as it is generally assessed, job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable” (p. 2). Spector further shared that there are advantages and disadvantages to measuring job satisfaction through questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires can “quantify and standardize” the participants’ responses; whereas, interviews or open-ended questions allow the participants to “generate their own areas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction” (p. 5).

Method

Participants

Participants sought for this study were any United States higher education faculty who have taught at least one online course. Both full-time and part-time faculty were welcomed and encouraged to participate in the study. No distinction was sought between faculty who work at private or public institutions or between for-profit or non-profit institutions. This study was designed to gain a broad understanding of online faculty members’ levels of job satisfaction, regardless of their institutional affiliation or personal demographic identifiers. A literature review revealed a number of single-institution studies on the topic of online education, but Bollinger and Wasilik (2009) recommended a research study be developed that is “a quantitative self-report measure of perceived faculty satisfaction in the online environment” (p. 107) that is either done with an

institution that has a larger population of online faculty or is a “multi-institution research study” (p. 114).

In 2019, Gallup conducted a survey for *Inside Higher Ed* of just over 22,000 online faculty members and digital learning leaders to collect their responses on attitudes related to the use of technology (Jaschik & Lederman, 2019). The Gallup survey saw a 10% response rate (Jaschik & Lederman, 2019). This action research study sought to reach a similar sample set. However, as this is a graduate-level action research study conducted by a single graduate student, the expected reach and response was unlikely to be as large as that of the Gallup survey. Using the Qualtrics (2019) Sample Calculator and setting the confidence level to 90% (the lowest acceptable level) and the margin of error to 10% (the lowest acceptable level) with a population of 22,000, the “ideal sample size” was identified as 68 participants. If a 10% response rate could be assumed, as with the Gallup survey, and a sample size of 68 respondents, then the goal was to reach at or above 680 online United States higher education faculty members, regardless of any other demographic or affiliative classifications.

Materials

Survey participants were asked to complete a 27-item questionnaire (Appendix A), which included a five-point Likert-type scale (from one – “not at all satisfied” to five – “completely satisfied,” with zero for “not applicable”) for 18-line items divided into three different online design factors (i.e., aspects of work): tasks, initiatives, and strategies. Additionally, participants’ insights were collected through four open-ended questions designed to collect information on influencing factors having to do with job satisfaction beyond those listed as part of the scaled inquiries. The rest of the

questionnaire consisted of demographic-type questions having to do with employment status, institution type, when the faculty member began teaching online, and the degree to which the participant teaches online. The demographic section was multiple choice.

The questionnaire was presented through the responsive design (i.e., mobile-friendly) platform, Qualtrics, hosted by The University of Southern Mississippi. Each part (demographics, Likert-type matrices, and open-ended questions) had its own grouping/section. The Likert-type matrices and multiple-choice questions asked participants to click one radio-type button that corresponded to their level of agreement. The open-ended questions offered textboxes to be filled in by the respondents. The instrument was an original design based on work experience in the field of online education and concepts brought forth as part of the literature review, in particular, the work of Bolliger and Wasilik (2009) regarding the three driving forces of online faculty job satisfaction, those being: (1) student-driven, (2) instructor-driven, and (3) institution-driven.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) said that the reliability of a research instrument is dependent upon the instrument's use as being repeatable/consistent. Creswell and Creswell said that it is most important that a research instrument use correlated constructs – in other words, all the items on the instrument should make sense in the same way to those being asked to respond to the survey. To ensure the reliability of the researcher-designed survey for this action research project, several people with a background in education were asked to read and respond to the questionnaire in order to gauge their understanding of each of the items. This feedback was used to determine if the meaning applied to each of the items was consistent among those offering their perceptions on the

questionnaire. As for validity, Creswell and Creswell shared that the most important objective in determining the validity of an instrument is to determine if the survey items match the constructs being studied. In other words, the items being measured must actually measure what they say they are intending to measure. To determine the validity of the questionnaire used in this action research project, the same group of reviewers were asked to link each of the items on the questionnaire back to the three research questions to determine if there was a clear correlation between what was being measured and what was intended to be measured.

Design Procedure

This research action plan relied on the goodwill of online faculty volunteer respondents canvassed through listservs, social media postings, and snowballing/networking opportunities. The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) defines itself as a community dedicated to innovative and effective online teaching and learning, universal access, and satisfaction by both students and faculty (Online Learning Consortium [OLC], 2019). The OLC publishes its institutional membership list on its website, through which 577 online higher education personnel were sent a personal message requesting the sharing of an online questionnaire link with faculty (OLC, 2019). In addition to asking for survey support through OLC related institutions, other online educators and administrators were solicited for questionnaire taking and sharing support through a public listing of the U.S. News and World Report “Best online bachelor’s programs.” According to U.S. News and World Report (2020), online bachelor’s programs (345 total) are ranked according to various categories including online faculty credentials. Social media Facebook and LinkedIn postings were made to such groups as:

(1) Facebook: Make a Living Teaching Online with nearly 13,000 members; (2) Facebook: Online Education with nearly 16,000 members; (3) LinkedIn: Online Higher Ed with over 2,000 members; and (4) LinkedIn: eLearning Industry with over 108,000 members. Finally, all respondents who were willing to participate in the survey were encouraged to share the survey link with other online faculty members.

Gorard (2001) said that bias comes through the use of volunteers because they are people who are willing to give of their time in completing a survey. However, in this case, no incentive was planned, the population was not a captive group, such as students in a course, and all potential participants were informed upfront of their risk-level (minimal) and freedom to decline – all in an effort to reduce bias. Gorard also said that the most appropriate use of a snowball technique, such as the one designed for this action research project, is one in which the population size is very large and fully unknown, as is the case with online faculty who may work at an adjunct level to a full professor level. Gorard suggested that with this type of population it is reasonable to start with a convenience sample and build from there to reach more respondents (i.e., snowballing).

The research study was approved by The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in April 2020 (Appendix B). The timeline for outreach began in the summer of 2020 with the collection of emails found through the OLC, the U.S. News and World Report, and web-based university listings. Postings and emails were sent out following the Labor Day holiday (September 7, 2020), allowing faculty time to get their fall courses underway. The plan was to close the survey once 350 participants responded or a month had passed – whichever came first. Qualtrics allows for a maximum of 350 respondents (at the student level) and completing the survey in a

month's time allowed for networking/snowballing to take place while still providing a half-semester for data analysis. The survey closed late evening on September 28, 2020, with an entire sample population of 450 participants.

Plan for Analysis

Gorard (2001) suggested that the first stage of analysis is the “coding, transcription, and cleaning of the dataset generated by the study” (p. 57). Gorard said that the importance of this stage is to build in consistency and accuracy. Once the dataset was organized, statistical software (IBM's SPSS) was used for analysis. According to IBM's website (2020), SPSS is the ideal platform to better understand data thanks to several factors: (1) its ease of use, (2) its effective means of summarizing and highlighting data patterns, (3) its ability to analyze data quickly and reliably, (4) its ability to run both descriptive and advanced statistical analysis, (5) its integration capabilities with open-source software, and (6) its means of keeping data safe. Data were saved from Qualtrics and imported into SPSS where the following tests/tables were run: (1) *t*-tests, (2) *analysis of variance* (ANOVA), and (3) frequency tables. The open-ended questions were categorized by their response type. Gorard (2001) stated that when quantitative data are categorical the standard is to display the data through frequencies (how many), percentages, and means, which can be displayed in a table, pie chart, or bar chart. Gorard highlighted that frequency tables also allow for outliers to be easily identified. The tests/tables applied to this study allowed for a simultaneous comparison to be made between two or more variables by showing each dimension side-by-side (Gorard, 2001). For this action research study, comparisons were made between faculty teaching fully or partially online, tenure-track versus non-tenure track faculty, faculty at Associate's

colleges compared to Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctorate-Granting colleges or universities, and faculty who began their online teaching in different time periods. The goal of this study was to provide a descriptive profile of faculty who teach online and gain a better understanding of how key factors impact their job satisfaction which may in turn impact student learning outcomes and overall academic success. In particular, the study considered various aspects of work including: (1) tasks – key requirements or necessary steps that are part of online course creation, (2) initiatives – pedagogical or technological changes/trends that are often student-, institution-, or faculty-driven, and (3) strategies – various methodologies/approaches faculty use when designing an online course.

Summary

This action research project/study primarily relied on quantitative data with some qualitative data being collected to give a voice to online faculty regarding their added insights into online course design factors that lead to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Efron and Ravid (2013) said that qualitative research gives educators nuanced insights; whereas, quantitative research is most effective in describing, assessing, analyzing, and interpreting, and educators benefit from the “contributions of each” (p. 11). This study incorporated both types through a researcher-designed questionnaire that used open-ended (qualitative) and closed-ended (quantitative) questions to address the satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels of online faculty regarding the practice of designing online courses. This study also was designed to be “cyclical” which, according to Efron and Ravid, means researchers start by building up to research questions and end with new knowledge and new questions that lead to a new “cycle of research” (p. 11). According to

Efron and Ravid, action research involves: (1) the researcher identifying a problem of interest, (2) the researcher completing a literature review of existing/relevant research, (3) the researcher planning the study design and method (4) the researcher collecting the data, (4) the researcher analyzing and interpreting the data, and (6) the researcher sharing the findings (Figure 3) (p. 8).

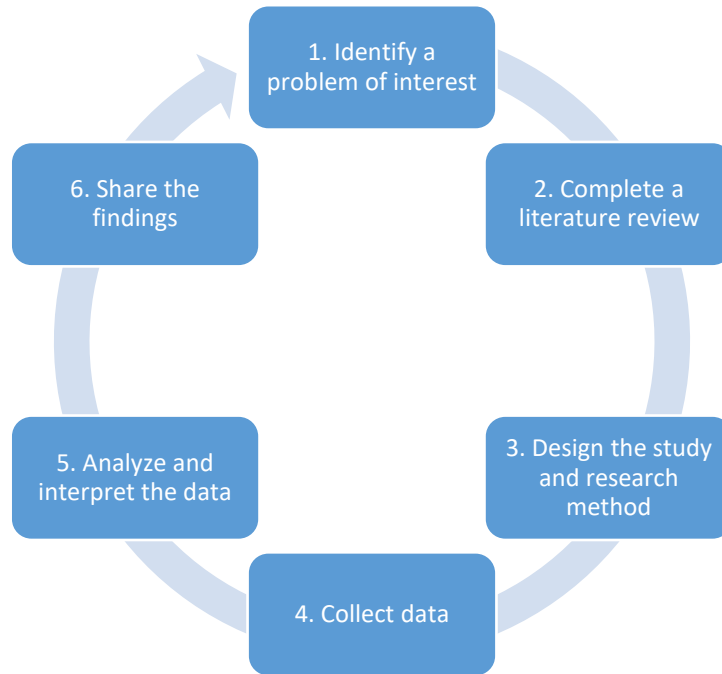


Figure 3. Cyclical Design Steps of an Action Research Study.

A schematic model representing the design steps involved in a cyclical action research study (based on Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 8).

CHAPTER IV – FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine faculty attitudes toward online instructional design that may affect job satisfaction levels. This study looked to address the following research questions:

1. What factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) influence faculty job satisfaction while engaging in online instructional design?
2. How do pedagogical and technological changes (i.e., trends and initiatives) influence the degree of job satisfaction for faculty?
3. What are faculty-preferred strategies related to online course creation? And, what online design strategies do faculty indicate provide greater satisfaction?

These research questions help to fill in gaps in the literature which highlight the need for a greater understanding of perceived satisfaction levels by online higher education faculty toward their work. The University of Southern Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study which sampled full- and part-time faculty throughout the United States. Faculty were invited to participate in the survey through email and social media canvassing and through snowball-networking opportunities (i.e., encouragement to share the questionnaire link with online faculty colleagues). The data collected was compiled, coded, and reviewed to analyze the attitudes of faculty toward online tasks, initiatives, and strategies. The following provides a summary of the data and key findings that help to address the research questions used to sculpt this action research project.

Presentation of the Data

Characteristics of Participants

The survey invitation was presented to thousands of higher education faculty nationwide through emails and postings on Facebook and LinkedIn. In order to capture insights from as many faculty as possible (Qualtrics limits responses on student-researcher accounts to 350), the researcher downloaded raw data on respondents who completed only demographic data (part A) for storage and then deleted those responses from Qualtrics. This allowed more faculty to participate who were willing to complete, at minimum, parts A (demographics) and B (satisfaction levels) of the questionnaire (Appendix). The survey was open to participants for 20 days (September 2020). Combined, the entire sample population ($N = 450$) was made up of those who completed part A only ($N = 88$) and those who completed both parts A and B ($N = 362$).

The primary characteristics of the participants (Table 1) consisted of: (1) *faculty who had taught at least one fully online course*, (2) *faculty who teach some (rather than all) of their courses online*, (3) *faculty who are on a tenure track*, (4) *faculty who teach at a baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate-granting college or university*, and (5) *faculty who began teaching in 2009 through 2019*. For in-depth analysis purposes, only those participants who completed parts A and B ($N = 362$) were considered.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Completed part A only (<i>N</i> = 88)		Completed parts A and B (<i>N</i> = 362)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Online teaching experience				
Taught at least one fully online course	55	63%	340	94%
Not taught at least one fully online course	14	16%	22	6%
Work as an online faculty member				
Teach all courses online	16	18%	140	39%
Teach some courses online	48	55%	220	61%
Primary academic occupational status				
Tenure-track	35	40%	221	61%
Non-tenure track	30	34%	140	39%
Primary workplace				
Associate's college	11	13%	45	12%
Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctorate-granting college or university	53	60%	315	87%
Period started teaching online				
1965-1975	0	0%	1	0%
1976-1986	0	0%	0	0%
1987-1997	1	1%	11	3%
1998-2008	7	8%	102	28%
2009-2019	25	28%	175	48%
Within the last year (2020)	12	14%	16	4%
Within the last year (2020), as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic	20	23%	57	16%

Note: Bolded are the highest percent ratings and primary characteristics of participants.

Satisfaction Levels of Participants

The researcher used a combination of *t*-tests and an *analysis of variance* (ANOVA) to determine the results of satisfaction levels on aspects of work (i.e., tasks, initiatives, and strategies) related to comparable faculty demographics, such as faculty

experience, occupational status, and workplace situations. Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested that *t*-tests and ANOVA are ideal because in “factorial designs where more than one independent variable is manipulated, you can test for the main effects (of each independent variable) and the interactions between independent variables” (p. 173). Efron and Ravid (2013) said that the differences between the means (*M*), the standard deviations (*SD*), and the number of participants “all play a role in the computation of the *t*-value” (p. 204) used to measure variations between groups. Frost (2020) added that the degrees of freedom (*df*) “shape” the *t*-test in order to calculate the *p*-value (a measure of statistical significance). SPSS statistical software was used to run both *t*-tests and ANOVA to compute the *p*-value. Efron and Ravid (2013) said that the ANOVA is similar to the *t*-test in that it computes an *F-ratio* which is also based on the means, standard deviation, and the number of participants. The difference is the ANOVA can measure variations between two or more groups (Efron & Ravid, 2013). According to Efron and Ravid, “in most educational studies, researchers use a *p*-value of .05 as a cutoff point in determining whether the results are reported as statistically significant...which means that there is a 5% or less probability that the results were obtained purely by chance” (p. 205).

For this study, participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction among various tasks, initiatives, and strategies. They were to consider satisfaction to be their confidence-level in their work, their enjoyment of their work, and/or their ability to make a difference in their work (Appendix). If the line item applied to them, participants selected one of five different satisfaction levels each assigned to a point value: (1) not at all satisfied, (2) slightly satisfied, (3) somewhat satisfied, (4) very satisfied, (5)

completely satisfied. Results of satisfaction levels are presented in Tables 2-6. Each aspect of work (i.e., tasks (T), initiatives (I), and strategies (S)) had six corresponding line items on the questionnaire as shown below. Figures 4-11 display faculty ratings on each line item.

- T1: Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes
- T2: Creating an authentic and human experience in an online environment
- T3: Planning for diverse learner needs, access, and expectations
- T4: Building opportunities for multiple means of learner interaction and engagement
- T5: Using an institutionally driven/approved systems approach to course design and development
- T6: Participating in institutionally driven/provided professional development related to emerging technologies
- I1: Reflective teaching and learning using e-portfolios
- I2: Power-sharing – enhanced collaboration and communication between learners and instructors
- I3: Interactive mobile app innovations (touch-type learning) and multimedia usage
- I4: E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)
- I5: Competency-based, self-directed, adaptive, and personalized learning (learning analytics and visualization software)
- I6: Anywhere, anytime, any size, any need learning such as: project-based, just-in-time, blended, open educational resources (OER), MOOCs, and micro-learning
- S1: Working independently to design content using a model, template, or rubric
- S2: Working independently to explore innovative applications of technology for teaching and learning
- S3: Incorporating student feedback into the course design
- S4: Piloting different versions of the course to determine student learning outcomes and satisfaction levels
- S5: Collaborating with an instructional designer or instructional design team
- S6: Collaborating with a peer-based professional learning community

Table 2

Results of Satisfaction Levels: Online Teaching Experience

Aspects of Work	Taught at least one fully online course			Not taught at least one fully online course			$t(360)$	p	Cohen's d
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
Tasks	340	3.166	0.977	22	2.462	0.768	3.309	0.001	0.718
Initiatives	340	2.047	1.212	22	1.174	0.905	3.317	0.001	0.720
Strategies	340	3.071	1.081	22	2.061	1.068	4.251	< 0.001	0.914

Note: Levene's test for equality of variance found no statistical significance for all t -test values. A p -value of less than 0.05 is statistically significant. Cohen's d values are high due to the large difference in the number of participants between the two groups.

Online Teaching Experience. Results in Table 2 indicated a significant difference in satisfaction levels between faculty groups when considering online tasks. Faculty who had taught at least one fully online course ($M = 3.166$, $SD = .977$) reported being "somewhat" to "very" satisfied while faculty who had not taught at least one fully online course ($M = 2.462$, $SD = .768$), $t(360) = 3.309$, $p = .001$ reported being only "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied. Faculty participants who had taught at least one fully online course had a higher mean response ($M = 2.047$, $SD = 1.212$) to satisfaction levels with initiatives. These participants reported being "slightly" satisfied to "somewhat" satisfied. Faculty who had not taught at least one online course indicated they were "not at all" satisfied to "slightly" satisfied ($M = 1.174$, $SD = .905$), $t(360)$, $p < .001$). The 340 participants who had taught at least one fully online course ($M = 3.071$, $SD = 1.081$) and the 22 participants who had not taught at least one fully online course ($M = 2.061$, $SD = 1.068$) indicated a statistically significant response to satisfaction levels for online strategies, with the former group's responses ranging from "somewhat" to "very"

satisfied, compared to the latter group's responses, which ranged from "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied, $t(360), p < .001$.

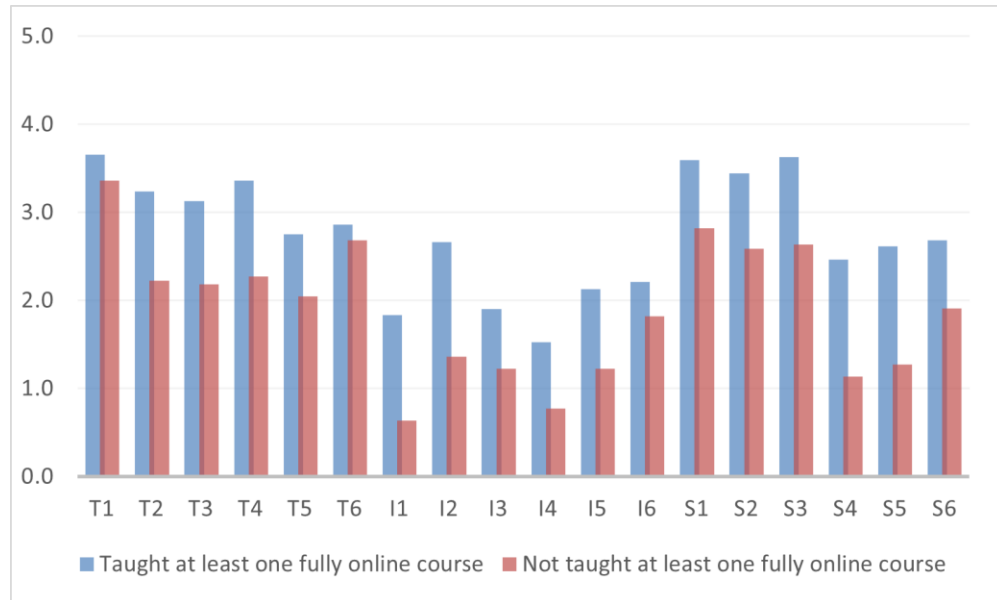


Figure 4. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Means: Online Teaching Experience.

Figure 4 is the reported satisfaction levels by means of those faculty who have taught at least one fully online course compared to those who have not taught at least one fully online course.

Figure 4 illustrates the mean ratings for levels of satisfaction by faculty who have and who have not taught at least one fully online course. For both groups, satisfaction levels were lowest toward online initiatives (I), compared with online tasks (T) and strategies (S) (Table 2). T1: *Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes* had the highest mean satisfaction rating for both faculty groups ($M = 3.7, M = 3.4$). Those faculty who had not taught at least one fully online course rated I1: *Reflective teaching and learning using e-portfolios* as the lowest mean satisfaction level ($M = .6$). Faculty who had taught at least one fully online course also rated an initiative line item as their least satisfactory; I4: *E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)* ($M = 1.5$).

Table 3

Results of Satisfaction Levels: Work as an Online Faculty Member

Aspects of Work	Teach all courses online			Teach some courses online			$t(358)$	p	Cohen's d
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
Tasks	140	3.421	0.947	220	2.941	0.953	4.663	< 0.001	0.490
Initiatives	140	2.293	1.258	220	1.812	1.149	3.730	< 0.001	0.400
Strategies	140	3.114	1.153	220	2.948	1.075	1.387	0.166	0.150

Note: Levene's test for equality of variance found no statistical significance for all t -test values. A p -value of less than 0.05 is statistically significant.

Work as an Online Faculty Member. Table 3 suggests that there was a significant difference in satisfaction levels related to online tasks for faculty who teach all of their courses online ($M = 3.421$, $SD = .947$), $t(358)$, $p < .001$, compared with faculty who teach some of their courses online ($M = 2.941$, $SD = .953$). Those who teach all of their courses online reported being "somewhat" to "very" satisfied when completing online tasks compared to those who teach just some of their courses online, who indicated being only "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied. Faculty participants who teach all of their courses online ($M = 2.293$, $SD = 1.258$) demonstrated a higher satisfaction level with online initiatives than did faculty participants who teach some of their courses online ($M = 1.812$, $SD = 1.149$), $t(358)$, $p < .001$, though in both cases overall satisfaction was on the lower end of the scale ranging from "not at all satisfied" to "somewhat satisfied." Regarding online strategies, the mean score for faculty who teach all of their courses online ($M = 3.114$, $SD = 1.153$) was not significantly higher than that of faculty who teach some of their courses online ($M = 2.948$, $SD = 1.075$), $t(358)$, $p = .166$. Faculty indicated a level of satisfaction that was generally "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied.

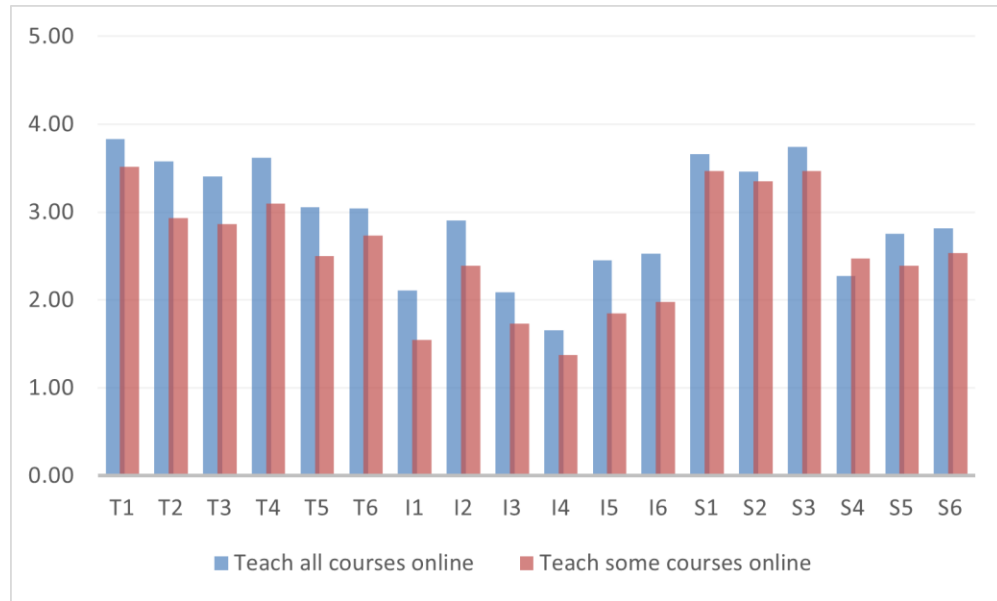


Figure 5. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Means: Work as Online Faculty Member.

Figure 5 is the reported satisfaction levels by means of those faculty who teach all of their courses online compared to those who teach only some of their courses online.

Figure 5 illustrates the reported satisfaction levels by means for faculty who teach all their courses online versus those who teach some of their courses online. Both groups ranked their level of satisfaction highest with T1: *Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes* ($M = 3.8$, $M = 3.5$). They also ranked their lowest satisfaction levels the same. I4: *E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)* had the lowest mean score of 1.7 for faculty who teach all their courses online. For those faculty who teach just some of their courses online, the mean score was 1.4 for the same initiative.

Table 4

Results of Satisfaction Levels: Primary Academic Occupational Status

Aspects of Work	Tenure-track			Non-tenure track			$t(359)$	p	Cohen's d
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD			
Tasks	221	3.040	0.993	140	3.254	0.951	-2.035	0.043	0.220
Initiatives	221	1.817	1.145	140	2.258	1.263	-2.055	0.041	0.360
Strategies	221	2.942	1.088	140	3.125	1.123	-1.538	0.125	0.170

Note: Levene's test for equality of variance found no statistical significance for all t -test values. A p -value less than 0.05 is statistically significant.

Primary Academic Occupational Status. An independent t -test (Table 4) found significance between tenure-track faculty ($M = 3.040$, $SD = .993$) and non-tenure track faculty ($M = 3.254$, $SD = .951$) in satisfaction levels for online design tasks, $t(359)$, $p = .043$. Though statistical significance was found, both groups of faculty indicated being "somewhat" to "very" satisfied performing online design tasks. Tenure-track faculty ($M = 1.817$, $SD = 1.145$) said they were "not at all" to just "slightly" satisfied with online design initiatives compared to non-tenure track faculty ($M = 2.258$, $SD = 1.263$) who said they were "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied with online design initiatives, $t(359)$, $p = .041$. There was no statistical difference found between tenure-track faculty ($M = 2.942$, $SD = 1.088$) and non-tenure track faculty ($M = 3.125$, $SD = 1.123$) in their response to online design strategies, $t(359)$, $p = .125$. Tenure-track faculty reported being "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied, whereas non-tenure track faculty reported being "somewhat" satisfied to "very" satisfied.

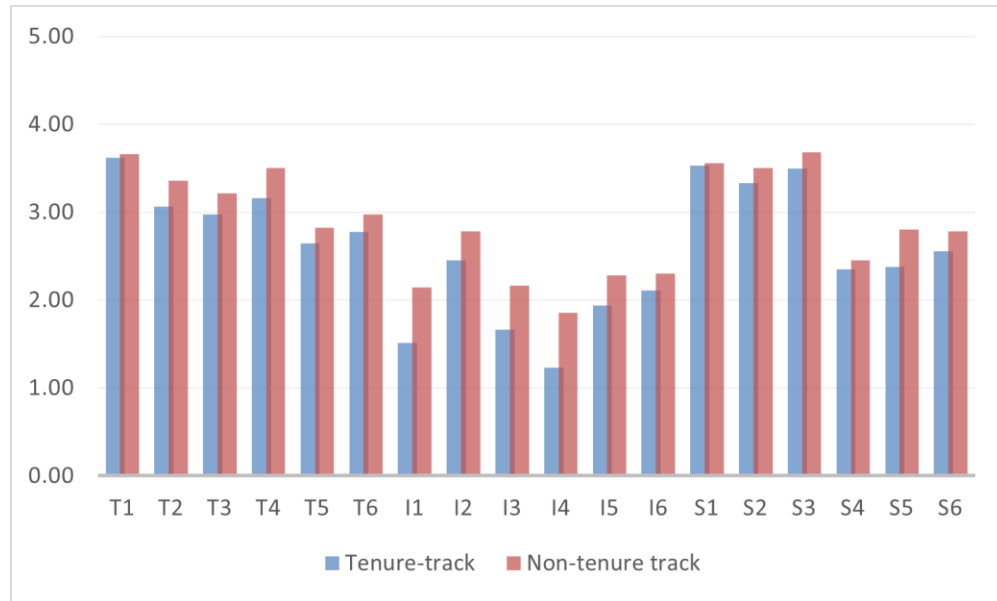


Figure 6. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Means: Primary Occupational Status.

Figure 6 is the reported satisfaction levels by means of those faculty who are on the tenure track compared to those who are on the non-tenure track.

Figure 6 illustrates the mean ratings for levels of satisfaction of tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. For both groups, satisfaction levels were lowest toward online initiatives (I) versus online tasks (T) and strategies (S) (Table 4). Both faculty groups rated I4: *E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)* the lowest mean satisfaction level ($M = 1.2$, $M = 1.9$). Non-tenure track faculty rated S3: *Incorporating student feedback into the course design* as the highest mean satisfaction level ($M = 3.7$). Whereas tenure-track faculty rated T1: *Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes* the highest mean satisfaction level ($M = 3.6$).

Table 5

Results of Satisfaction Levels: Primary Workplace

Aspects of Work	Associate's college			Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctorate-granting college or university			<i>t</i> (358)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Tasks	45	2.944	0.921	315	3.148	0.988	-1.304	0.193	0.210
Initiatives	45	1.822	1.101	315	2.018	1.229	-1.014	0.311	0.160
Strategies	45	2.961	1.102	315	3.011	1.105	-0.288	0.774	0.050

Note: Levene's test for equality of variance found no statistical significance for all *t*-test values. A *p*-value of less than 0.05 is statistically significant.

Primary Workplace. No statistically significant revelation was found in an independent *t*-test (Table 5) comparing faculty whose workplaces differ when considering online tasks, initiatives, or strategies. For example, those who worked at an associate's college ($M = 2.961$, $SD = 1.102$) reported being "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied with online strategies, and those working at a baccalaureate or higher institution ($M = 3.011$, $SD = 1.105$) reported being "somewhat" to "very" satisfied with online strategies, $t(358)$, $p = .774$. As for online tasks, those working at an associate's college reported being "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied ($M = 2.944$, $SD = .921$), whereas those working at a baccalaureate or higher institution reported being "somewhat" to "very" satisfied ($M = 3.148$, $SD = .988$), $t(358)$, $p = .193$. In terms of online initiatives, those who worked at an associate's college ($M = 1.822$, $SD = 1.101$) reported being "not at all" to "slightly" satisfied, and those working at a baccalaureate or higher institution ($M = 2.018$, $SD = 1.229$) reported being "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied.

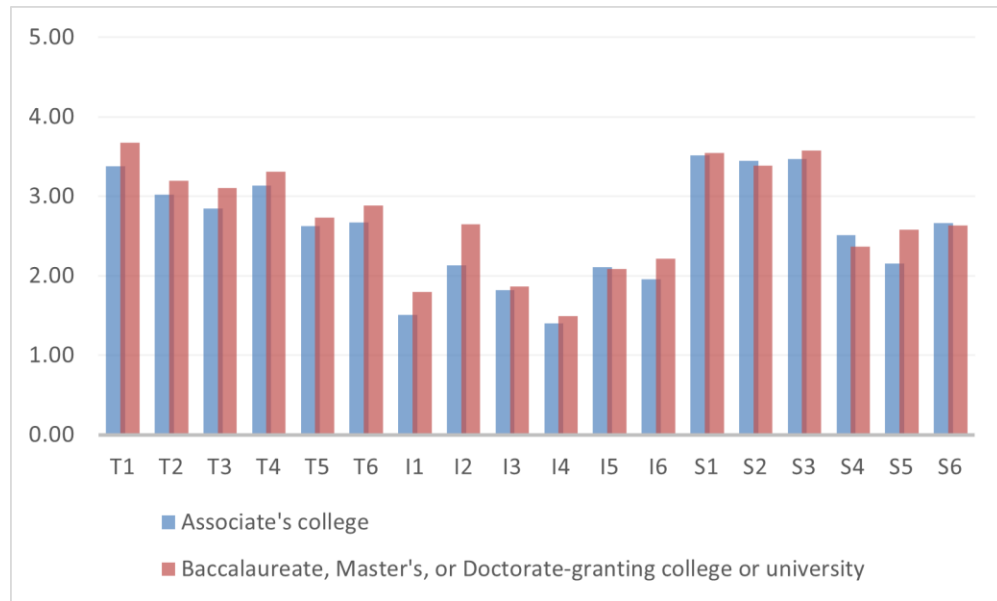


Figure 7. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Means: Primary Workplace.

Figure 7 is the reported satisfaction levels by means of those faculty who work in an associate's college compared to those who work in a baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate-granting college or university.

Figure 7 illustrates the general lack of satisfaction with online initiatives compared to online tasks and strategies for faculty teaching in an associate's college versus those teaching in a baccalaureate, master's, or doctorate-granting college or university (Table 5). Both groups rated I4: *E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)* the lowest mean satisfaction level ($M = 1.4$ associate's college, $M = 1.5$ baccalaureate, or higher institution). For those teaching at a baccalaureate or higher institution, their highest mean satisfaction level was given to T1: *Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes* ($M = 3.7$). For those teaching at an associate's college, the highest mean satisfaction level was given to S1: *Working independently to design content using a model, template, or rubric* ($M = 3.5$).

Table 6

Results of Satisfaction Levels: Started Teaching Online Courses

Aspects of Work	Pre-Recession (1965-2008)			Post-Recession (2009-2020)			Post-Pandemic (2020)			<i>F</i> (2,359)	η^2
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Tasks	114	3.48	0.95	191	3.06	0.95	57	2.62	0.87	16.98***	0.090
Initiatives	114	2.44	1.24	191	1.94	1.15	57	1.27	0.95	19.98***	0.100
Strategies	114	3.38	1.03	191	2.99	1.04	57	2.31	1.13	20.00***	0.100

Note: *** $p < .001$. Periods designating when faculty began designing and teaching online courses were collapsed into three groups based on significant/historic dates that impacted online education and to create larger comparative groups. Levene's test for equality of variance found no statistical significance for both tasks and strategies; however, statistical significance was found for initiatives (.05).

Started Teaching Online Courses. An *analysis of variance* (ANOVA) illustrated statistical significance related to the period when faculty began teaching online to the various aspects of work (tasks, initiative, and strategies), $F(2,359) = 16.98$ (tasks), 19.98 (initiatives), and 20.00 (strategies), $p < 0.001$. Post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD criterion for significance indicated that the mean difference was significant at the 0.05 p -value level which occurred when comparing online tasks between the post-recession group ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .95$) and the post-pandemic group ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .87$) and online strategies between the pre-recession group ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.03$) and the post-recession group ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.04$). Results indicate the post-recession group considered their satisfaction level with online tasks to be "somewhat" to "very" satisfactory compared to the post-pandemic group which indicated they were "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied with online tasks. As for online strategies, the pre-recession group was "somewhat" to

"very" satisfied, whereas the post-recession group was only "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied.

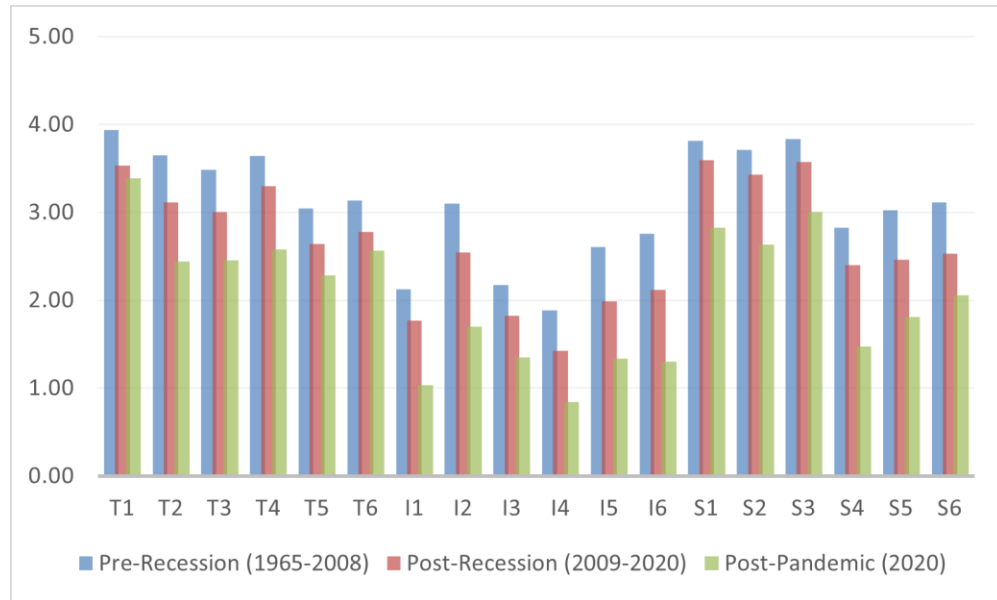


Figure 8. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Means: Started Teaching Online Courses.

Figure 8 is the reported satisfaction levels by means of those faculty who began designing and teaching online courses by key periods. The periods were collapsed into three groups based on significant/historic dates that impacted online education and to create larger comparative groups.

Figure 8 illustrates the reported mean satisfaction levels for faculty depending on when they started teaching online: (1) pre-recession, (2) post-recession, and (3) post-pandemic (Table 6). As with every other faculty demographic discussed, except for faculty who had not taught at least one fully online course, the lowest-ranked mean satisfaction level for the three period groups was applied to I4: *E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)* ($M = 1.9$, $M = 1.4$, $M = .8$). The pre-recession group ($M = 3.9$) and post-pandemic group ($M = 3.4$) rated T1: *Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes* the highest mean satisfaction level. The post-recession

group rated S1: *Working independently to design content using a model, template, or rubric* the highest mean satisfaction level at 3.6.

Barshay (2020) said that “one of the peculiar things about higher education is that it runs in the opposite direction of the economy” (para. 1). Barshay illustrated this through a discussion on the impact of the 2008 Great Recession on both the economy and higher education. Older adults laid off from work and the 2009 Recover Act, which increased Pell Grant monies and expanded the pool of students who could qualify for Pell Grants, were driving factors in increasing student enrollments on the heels of the recession (Barshay, 2020). Barshay said that during the Great Recession, online for-profit universities dominated, but since that time, public and nonprofit postsecondary institutions “have built their online platforms and marketing arms to become big national players” (para. 12). Barshay cautioned that it took 18 months for students to rush to higher education beginning in 2008, and the same may come to pass as a result of the most recent economic downturn due to the coronavirus pandemic. One thing is for certain, COVID-19 forced colleges and universities to ramp up their online course options, which may result in long-term effects on the satisfaction levels of faculty on a broad scale. Figure 8 highlights lower satisfaction levels since the Great Recession.

Collective Insights. In 8 of the 11 demographic identifiers faculty identified the task T1: *Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes* as providing the highest mean satisfaction level ($M = 3.6$). Figure 9 highlights faculty satisfaction in aspects of work related to online tasks, with the greatest response and level of satisfaction going to T1 (42%).

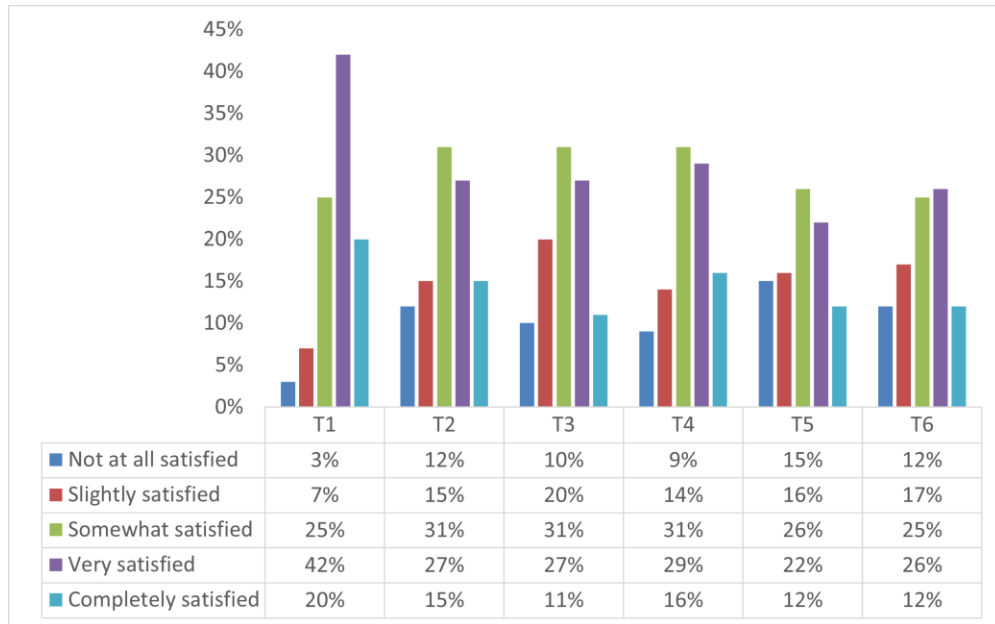


Figure 9. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Percent: Tasks.

Figure highlights the overall percent satisfaction level of faculty participants related to one aspect of work studied, that being various online tasks.

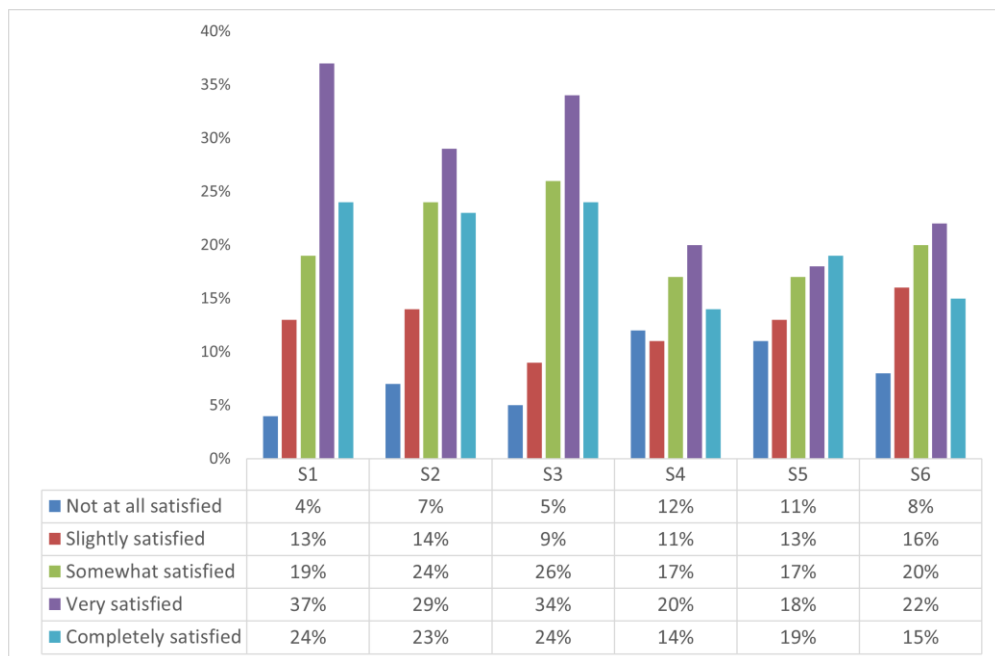


Figure 10. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Percent: Strategies.

Figure highlights the overall percent satisfaction level of faculty participants related to one aspect of work studied, that being various online strategies.

Figure 10 emphasizes the percent of faculty who responded that they were “very” to “completely” satisfied when working on a variety of online design strategies. In all, the most-selected rating by faculty was “very” satisfied with the various strategies except for S5: *Collaborating with an instructional designer or instructional design team*, where the most-selected rating was “completely” satisfied (19%). The largest overall agreement (37%) came with S1: *Working independently to design content using a model, template, or rubric* where faculty indicated they were “very” satisfied.

Faculty consensus was found in 10 out of 11 of the demographic factors where faculty identified the initiative I4: *E-learning scenarios (i.e. gamification)* as the least satisfactory with a mean score of 1.5 (“not at all” to “slightly” satisfied), while faculty who had not taught at least one fully online course selected the initiative I1: *Reflective teaching and learning using e-portfolios* as their least satisfactory aspect of work ($M = 0.6$), suggesting they were “not at all satisfied” in performing this initiative. Overall, faculty indicated they were most satisfied with online design strategies and least satisfied with online design initiatives. Figure 11 highlights the theme that initiatives are rated as less satisfying than tasks and strategies. I2: *Power-sharing – enhanced collaboration and communication between learners and instructors* had the highest associated percent and rating as 27% of the faculty indicated that they were “somewhat” satisfied working on the I2 initiative.

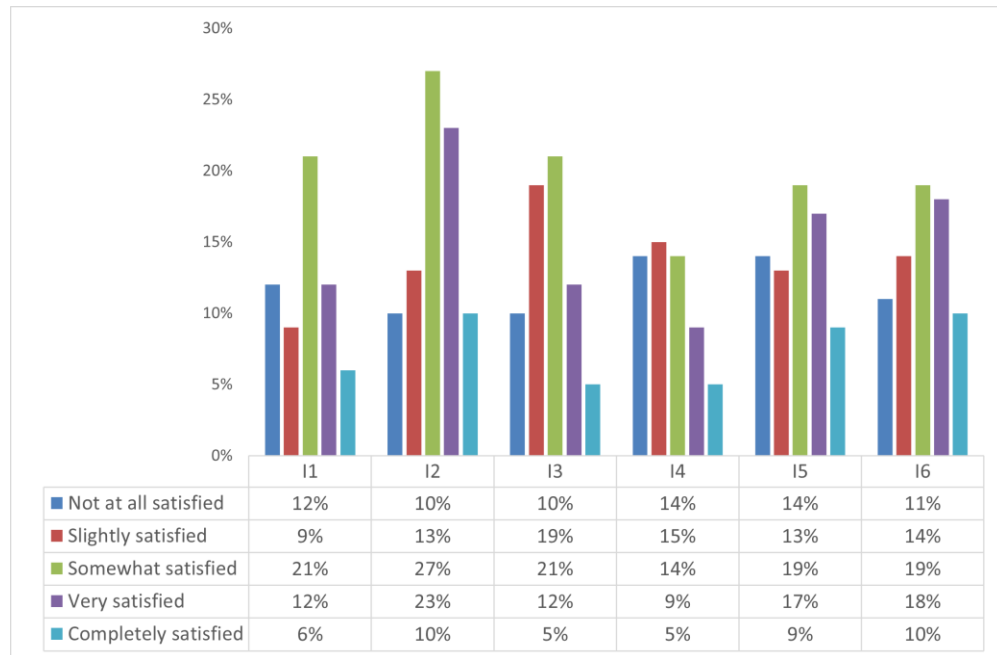


Figure 11. Reported Satisfaction Levels by Percent: Initiatives.

Figure highlights the overall percent satisfaction level of faculty participants related to one aspect of work studied, that being various online initiatives.

When considering the overall faculty response to the aspects of their work having to do with online design and development (tasks, initiatives, and strategies), statistical significance was mixed. When comparing online teaching experience between those who had taught ($M = 3.2, 2.0, 3.1$) or had not taught ($M = 2.5, 1.2, 2.1$) a fully online course, all aspects of work were found to be significant; however, it is important to note that, in this case, there may not truly be a significant finding, as the number of participants who indicated they had not taught a fully online course ($N = 22$) was much lower than the number of those who indicated they had taught at least one fully online course ($N = 340$). When comparing work performed online or academic occupational status, significance was found with tasks and initiatives only (teaching all classes online ($M = 3.4, 2.3$) and teaching some classes online ($M = 2.9, 1.8$); non-tenure track ($M = 3.3, 2.3$) and tenure

track ($M = 3.0, 1.8$). As for comparisons in primary workplaces (associate's college or baccalaureate or higher institution), no significance was found. Finally, when considering the time periods when faculty participants began teaching online, only tasks and strategies showed statistical significance (pre-recession $M = 3.48, 3.38$, post-recession $M = 3.06, 2.99$, and post-pandemic $M = 2.62, 2.31$).

Themes from Write-In Responses

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested that the use of a mixed-methods approach, such as the one taken with this study in which both quantitative (closed-ended) questions and qualitative (open-ended) questions were used, allows both forms of data to be “integrated in the design analysis” (p. 215), thus providing “a more complete understanding of research problems and questions” (p. 216). Efron and Ravid (2013) shared that the goal of collecting qualitative data such as write-in responses is “to bring meaning and order to the mass of collected data by looking for recurring themes, categories and patterns” (p. 166). In line with this goal, faculty were asked to offer their comments in part C of the questionnaire (Appendix) on any additional factors that may positively or negatively influence their job satisfaction levels, the impact of changes such as new trends and initiatives on job satisfaction levels, and finally, whether they had any preferred online course design strategies. Data were then collected and coded to look for the “themes, categories, and patterns” (Efron & Ravid, 2013, p. 166). The purpose of this study was to examine faculty attitudes toward online instructional design that may affect job satisfaction levels, so asking faculty to express their perceptions in their own words allows for a more holistic view of online faculty job satisfaction.

Table 7

Positive versus Negative Job Satisfaction Influences for Faculty

Positive Influences	Negative Influences
Institution- and peer-related	Institution- and peer-related
Institutional/administrative policies and practices that support instructors leading the design process, participating in professional development, and collaborating with colleagues (35%)	Institutionally driven mandates, policies, and procedures including the push to use content and design styles that are not faculty-led (27%)
	Isolation, lack of collaboration, and/or lack of professional development support (10%)
Student-related	Student-related
Work efforts that result in increased student engagement, positive feedback, and successful learning outcomes (24%)	Lack of student engagement/apathy and/or limited technology skills or access (17%)
Individual stress-related	Individual stress-related
Benefits that support work-life balance and financial compensation that aligns to faculty workload (11%)	Stress that is related to workload (too many students, too little time, too little pay) (20%)
Technology-related	Technology-related
Access to appropriate technology and support staff to assist with design, development, and use (10%)	Technology challenges (lack of support, lack of resources, poor interface, poor integration, poor bandwidth) (18%)

Note: Percentages shown are based on those participants who responded to the survey questions regarding positive and negative influences.

Positive versus Negative Job Satisfaction Influences for Faculty. When asked what factors influenced their job satisfaction in a *positive* way (Table 7) four themes surfaced: (1) institutional/administrative policies and practices that support instructors leading the design process, participating in professional development, and collaborating with colleagues, (2) work efforts that result in increased student engagement, positive feedback, and successful learning outcomes, (3) benefits that support work-life balance and financial compensation that aligns to faculty workload, and (4) access to appropriate technology and support staff to assist with design, development, and use.

When asked what factors influenced their job satisfaction in a *negative* way (Table 7), faculty responses revealed five key themes: (1) institutionally driven mandates, policies, and procedures including the push to use content and design styles that are not faculty-led, (2) lack of student engagement/apathy and/or limited technology skills or access, (3) stress that is related to workload (too many students, too little time, too little pay), (4) technology challenges (lack of support, lack of resources, poor interface, poor integration, poor bandwidth), and (5) isolation, lack of collaboration, and/or lack of professional development support.

Interestingly, there were shared influences that could lean positively or negatively depending on the situation as seen in Table 7. Faculty responded that positive influences surrounding their job satisfaction in online design had to do with institutional policies and practices, student engagement and feedback, work-life balance, and technology support. One participant shared that “creating and keeping online courses updated, innovative, and student-centered takes much time and resources. It is not easy and requires a team approach. Many institutions...are under-staffed in relation to the support staff needed to

do this work well.” Another participant echoed this, stating that online faculty need “proper and adequate time to prepare [a course] as well as financial incentives, rewards, and raises.” Many respondents shared comments like this one: “financial compensation should be increased due to all of the preparation time needed.” One participant expressed mixed feelings around online course design stating, “When I have the freedom to design, I am thrilled...employing new strategies and tech can be fun and satisfying, but our institutional policies around online courses make this very rare.” One participant was more direct in their response to institutional directives, stating job satisfaction comes through, “Academic freedom [and] the ability to teach my courses MY way, using content and lessons that work for me. Institution-based initiatives typically cause me more headaches than happiness.” Appreciating the remote aspect of online teaching and learning, one participant said, “I am very satisfied with the flexibility and freedom that teaching online provides [because] my schedule is my own to create.” Another agreed, stating that, “the work environment allows me to work at times that best fit my energy, family schedules, etc.”

Others said that student feedback and peer collaboration influenced their job satisfaction levels. For example, one participant shared, “I like feedback from students letting me know what works for them and what could be changed or improved.” Echoing this sentiment, one participant said, “I gain satisfaction knowing that students experience a level of learning that promotes a positive attitude to online learning.” Another shared, “I enjoy the collaboration of other design professionals. Their input, suggestions, and encouragement influence my job in a positive way.” Finally, faculty shared that “support from the online/ITD [instructional technology department] and instructional designers

hired by the university” along with access to technology, resources, and training are influential in creating positive job satisfaction levels.

Faculty said that institutional policies and practices, student engagement and feedback, work-life balance, and technical support may influence their job satisfaction negatively just as they can do so positively (Table 7). Yet again, faculty participants expressed dissatisfaction with course design mandates that limit faculty control. One participant shared their frustration, stating that what negatively impacts their job satisfaction are “top-down course design initiatives produced by people who are not qualified to make decisions about effective teaching in my field, and the use of canned course shells, with no ability to adapt or change a course mid-term to adapt to students’ need.” Another participant agreed, sharing their frustration of “working with an educational partner for course design – this relationship doesn’t allow [faculty] to change course content or design when the course is live. The educational partners control the course design, schedule, and any changes to online courses.” Another participant stated that “too many non-instructors want to overly influence course development by something they read. They do not have to deal with the students day-to-day.” Faculty expressed a desire to have flexibility in the design process to meet student needs. One participant explained their disappointment with the “inability to redesign assignments, modify instructions, or alter technologies used to assist students, particularly for those facing technology challenges.” Another participant said that “bureaucracy and mandates from administration...are designed for the administrators and not to enhance student learning or outcomes.” Many participants expressed similar institutional policy-related

concerns. One participant suggested that policy issues result in the “students’ lack of motivation and enthusiasm for online courses.”

Others offered up other stresses, as summed up by one participant who said there are “too many courses, limited design time, and not enough student feedback [built] into the course design [process].” Another faculty member agreed, stating, “the work of faculty keeps expanding, and we are required to do all this in less and less time, with fewer resources.” A new theme that emerged when participants were asked about the negative rather than the positive aspects of work was the toll that isolation can take on job satisfaction. One faculty member expressed that “life is very, very lonely.” Others shared that the lack of collaboration and opportunity for professional development emphasize the isolating nature of online course design. One participant summed this up by expressing their dissatisfaction with “not having enough support (e.g., access to technology programs), lack of training on how to be an effective online instructor, [and] a general lack of time to prepare.”

How Change Influences Satisfaction. When asked how changes, in the form of new trends and initiatives, influence job satisfaction, those who responded, said that change impacted their level of job satisfaction either: (1) positively (14%), (2) negatively (9%), or (3) it depends (11%). For example, one faculty member shared that “the learning curve with new trends involving online technology requires extra time and patience to master. If this occurs too rapidly it can decrease work/job satisfaction.” Another faculty member agreed, stating that new trends and initiatives generally improve their level of satisfaction “because they keep things interesting...as long as [there is] time to learn and apply new techniques.” One participant cautioned that “without training [change] creates

a highly stressful environment.” Yet another participant shared that they are “always open to implementing trends or initiatives that impact student learning in a positive manner.” Faculty were more positive toward trends and initiatives if there was a direct link to student learning. One participant said, “I love finding new ways to teach and design curriculum to reinforce and ensure the transfer of learning.” Another participant shared their strategy for dealing with new trends and initiatives stating, “I try to learn one new online strategy every semester and incorporate it into my teaching...this enhances my satisfaction.” Another participant shared this strategy, “I consider them [trends and initiatives] carefully, knowing that what really counts in learning is using research-based pedagogy. Tools that support good teaching are always welcome, but tools are not the first consideration.” Another participant agreed, sharing, “I’m receptive to new trends and initiatives. I like it best when I have the experts offering professional development on how to use or incorporate them.”

For the most part, faculty who were less enthusiastic about new trends and initiatives simply responded that such changes impact their job satisfaction “negatively.” Very few offered insights into why, but those who did shared sentiments such as “they make it worse” because there are a lot of “companies cashing in by selling universities the next big thing in technology.” One participant cautioned that sometimes new trends and initiatives “get in the way of improving actual content when we are focused on using the latest items.” One participant expressed a shared sentiment from those faculty who were less responsive to new trends and initiatives – “I feel like faculty are sometimes told instead of involved in decisions regarding online education.” One faculty participant shared this insight, “We now seem to have a lot of experts that have never taught an

online class, but they have read about faculty engagement and so now they want to set the standard for us, which is ridiculous.” Yet another participant shared that “as options become glitzier, the expectations from administration and students grow higher, but the level of equipment, training, and pay remains unchanged.” One participant summed up the general feel from faculty who responded, stating, “It’s complicated. It is hard to keep up with relevant developments, but sometimes a new trend or technology offers helpful steps forward.”

Online Design Strategy Preferences. Design strategies that were emphasized in the participants’ write-in responses included: (1) using engaging and innovative technology features and content including the use of video and real-world applications (11%), (2) using a model, template, or working with an instructional designer (10%), (3) using a collaborative and iterative process based on peer and student feedback (9%), and (4) using backward design focusing on desired outcomes (5%). One participant shared their method, which was echoed by many participants, “I prefer to work on my own to build portions of a course, then offer it to a larger team for feedback and improvement. A few repetitions of this cycle are both effective and rewarding.” Another participant said, “I enjoy brainstorming with my colleagues for additional strategies, tips, and tricks for online courses. I also use feedback from students in prior courses to help make corrections and changes to the format and structure of the course.” Some faculty participants shared their appreciation for working with instructional designers, but many highlighted the importance of faculty taking the lead when doing so. For example, one respondent said, “I want to retain control and work collaboratively with an ID who is knowledgeable and competent.” Another participant echoed this stating, “I like working

with a team of colleagues in my department, NOT having work in any way driven or directed by outside learning designers, etc. I like to use the learning designers and technologists as consultants and resources.” Many faculty participants shared their preference for working with colleagues in the same discipline/background. One participant said this is because “they are more in tune with students’ needs and wants in a course.” Other participants were much more adamant in their response to the working relationship between faculty and instructional designers. One such participant said, “Faculty should be able to design the course to meet the course needs and student needs, not the ‘experts’ in our online center’s needs. The ‘experts’ need to understand that different subjects have different needs in terms of the interaction between faculty and student...one size does not fit all.” To meet student needs and make course design engaging, one faculty member said that “being creative and innovative for content delivery is something I enjoy. Infographics, podcasts, case presentations, and group journal clubs are ways to make things interesting.” Other faculty suggested outcomes rather than engagement should be the primary design concern (i.e., backward design). One participant described backward design as “starting with the key assessments and thinking about what type of learning/experiences will need to happen to help students complete them with excellence.” In general, faculty indicated an appreciation for engaging student-centered technology, a peer-based collaborative process, a focus on desired learning outcomes, and using a template/model only if it is adaptable/flexible.

Additional Insights. Creswell and Creswell (2018) shared that sometimes surprises happen that the researcher cannot predict before the study, such as participants being triggered by a question to offer up unexpected insights. In the case of this study, the

final survey question asked participants to share their preferences toward design strategies. Respondents did offer up strategy perceptions, but they also used the final question as an opportunity to share additional insights as to those things they want more of concerning online course design. The three themes that emerged from those participants who took time to share additional (unprompted) insights were: (1) faculty want more control over online course content and design (8%), (2) faculty want more professional development/training especially on technology tools (7%), and (3) faculty want more design/development time and/or more pay (3%). One participant shared their thoughts on faculty control over online course content and design when working with online course designers, stating, “I value the assistance of second party online course designers. They add a level of assistance and sophistication of course delivery that alone would be difficult to replicate. However, more control for the timing of redesign and/or implementing changes would be less frustrating. As more institutions work with these second party course designers timing for revisions becomes longer and less flexible.” One faculty respondent said, “I cannot stress enough the importance of having a support group (faculty and/or instructional designer) who can help you brainstorm best practices in your classroom.” In terms of professional development and technical training, one participant highlighted the sentiments of many, stating that “hands-on training and real-life examples” are important. Also, one participant said, “I like to get basic training and then get the chance to play.”

The need for additional time was a common theme. One participant shared a simple sentiment echoed by many that faculty need “to be given the time to develop a course.” Another agreed by stating, “Time! We need much more time than given to

design high-quality online content. Much more time is needed than in a face-to-face course where adjustments are constantly made.” Finally, participants shared that, due to the time involved in designing an online course, pay incentives are important. One participant said, “The continual offering of incentives to improve online teaching is great. Every college should do it! Who isn't motivated by a little more money? This also shows that colleges VALUE quality online instruction.”

In summary, faculty job satisfaction in designing online courses appears to hinge on the following: (1) institutional policies that are supportive of faculty as the lead decision-makers when it comes to course design; (2) opportunities for faculty to engage in ongoing professional development and collaboration; (3) engaged students who are successful in achieving the learning outcomes; (4) benefits that support faculty work-life balance and appropriate financial compensations; and (5) technology access and support.

CHAPTER V – CONCLUSION

Tesar (2020) shared that when the COVID-19 pandemic forced postsecondary institutions to move from on-campus education to online education, the move “showcased how higher education lacks meaningful research into digital pedagogies and teaching and learning” (p. 557). Tesar said that researchers no longer have to debate “whether online teaching and learning [is] the future of education” because the answer arrived in the form of a global pandemic (p. 557). “COVID-19 has diminished the premise that online is just for some students and not for others” (Tesar, 2020, p. 558). Tesar suggested that as we move to a post-pandemic world, higher education is in for a “very long, unclear, and messy transformation” (p. 558). Tesar challenged education scholars to question online pedagogies and policies during this time of transformation by considering all those persons involved in online education.

Faculty are a substantial financial investment for postsecondary institutions (Webber, 2018). As such, “leaders of these institutions...need to better understand satisfaction of faculty members and associated dimensions of productivity” (Webber, 2018, p. 17). This is especially relevant considering the increased workload and stress being put on faculty as a result of the pandemic-driven shift to online education and the planning taking place to navigate education in a post-pandemic world. It is also relevant, Webber shared, because of the position faculty hold as “role models and mentors to students who will become future leaders in society” (p. 17). “It is especially important that we understand [faculty] work roles, how satisfaction affects attrition, and how faculty members can continue to contribute to student learning, community improvement, and a broader knowledge production” (p. 17). Hagedorn (2000) argued that “the study of

faculty (and staff) satisfaction is warranted, appropriate, and needed” (p. 6). According to Hagedorn, faculty work in an environment where “stress abounds” due to work that is “high-pressured, multifaceted, and without clear borders” (p. 6). A positive work environment produces “important positive outcomes for all players, including students” (Hagedorn, 2000, p. 6). Gaining a better understanding of the influence, both positive and negative, that postsecondary institutions, faculty, and students have on one another is a daunting task. This action research project chose to look at just one small piece of the much larger picture, by allowing online faculty to use their voice to share their insights into online course design factors/facets that lead to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

The purpose of this study was to examine faculty attitudes toward online instructional design that may affect job satisfaction levels. This study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What factors (i.e., demographics and aspects of work) influence faculty job satisfaction while engaging in online instructional design?
2. How do pedagogical and technological changes (i.e., trends and initiatives) influence the degree of job satisfaction for faculty?
3. What are faculty-preferred strategies related to online course creation? And, what online design strategies do faculty indicate provide greater satisfaction?

This study sought to contribute to the relatively sparse amount of research connected to faculty job satisfaction related to online course design. Stickney, Bento, Aggarwal, and Adlakha (2019) said “despite the rapid growth in scholarship of online education, there has been an omission in this domain [faculty job satisfaction]” (p. 510). As with this study, Stickney et al. found that “compared with the literature on students,

the literature on faculty attitudes toward online higher education is still in a relatively early stage” (Stickney et al., 2019, p. 510). The research that has been done has tended to be institution-specific and should be explored more broadly (Stickney et al., 2019; Wasilik & Bolliger, 2009; Hixon et al., 2011). This study took a broad approach by surveying faculty nationwide. With the approval of The University of Southern Mississippi’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), this action research project canvassed full- and part-time online higher education faculty throughout the United States through an online questionnaire delivered through Qualtrics during the fall 2020 academic semester. Faculty participants were invited to participate through email and social media canvassing and snowball-networking opportunities (i.e., sharing of the questionnaire link with peers). The entire sample population ($N = 450$) consisted of faculty who only completed basic demographic data ($N = 88$) and those who completed both the demographic data and answered questions related to satisfaction levels ($N = 362$). Statistical software (SPSS) was used to import responses to: (1) run *t*-tests, (2) conduct an *analysis of variance* (ANOVA), and (3) determine means and percentages. Primarily faculty participants identified themselves as: (1) having taught at least one fully online course, (2) teaching some (rather than all) of their courses online, (3) being on the tenure track, (4) working at a baccalaureate, master’s or doctorate-granting college or university, and (5) having begun teaching online between 2009 and 2019. Comparisons were made between demographic identifiers, which led to key findings regarding online faculty’s insights into online course design facets/factors that lead to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Discussion of Findings

This action research project resulted in three key findings that describe faculty satisfaction related to online course design. The findings and recommendations presented here offer insights for higher education administrators, faculty and staff, and future researchers in the area of job satisfaction in online course design.

First Finding

The survey results found that online faculty job satisfaction varied depending on faculty's work experience or situation (i.e., demographics) and their day-to-day work related to online design tasks (T), initiatives (I), and strategies (S). Results from the survey indicated significant differences in satisfaction levels between faculty groups when considering the various aspects of their work related to online course design. In general, those with more experience and/or those working in a baccalaureate or higher institution indicated they were "somewhat" to "very" satisfied with their work with online course design tasks and strategies (Table 8). The only exception was tenure-track faculty, who were only "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfied with online design strategies compared to online design tasks for which they responded that they were "somewhat" to "very" satisfied. In all demographic instances, however, faculty rated online design initiatives as providing lower levels of satisfaction than online design tasks and strategies.

Table 8

Faculty Demographics and Related Overall Satisfaction Levels

Demographics	Overall Satisfaction Levels			
	Not at all to slightly satisfied	Slightly to somewhat satisfied	Somewhat to very satisfied	Very to completely satisfied
Online teaching experience				
Taught at least one fully online course		I	T, S	
Not taught at least one fully online course	I	T, S		
Work as an online faculty member				
Teach all courses online		I	T, S	
Teach some courses online	I	T, S		
Primary academic occupational status				
Tenure-track	I	S	T	
Non-tenure track		I	T, S	
Primary workplace				
Associate's college	I	T, S		
Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctorate-granting college or university		I	T, S	
Period started teaching online				
Pre-Recession (1965-2008)		I	T, S	
Post-Recession (2009-2019)	I	S	T	
Post-Pandemic (2020)	I	T, S		

Note: The various aspects of work related to online course design are identified throughout the table as tasks (T), initiatives (I), and strategies (S) based on mean rating.

Table 9

Faculty Satisfaction Levels on Aspects of Work by Percent and Mean

Aspects of work	Overall Satisfaction Levels					
	Not at all satisfied (1)	Slightly satisfied (2)	Somewhat satisfied (3)	Very satisfied (4)	Completely satisfied (5)	
	<i>M</i>	%	%	%	%	%
Tasks (T)						
T1	3.6	3%	7%	25%	42%	20%
T2	3.1	12%	15%	31%	27%	15%
T3	3.0	10%	20%	31%	27%	11%
T4	3.2	9%	14%	31%	29%	16%
T5	2.6	15%	16%	26%	22%	12%
T6	2.8	12%	17%	25%	26%	12%
Initiatives (I)						
I1	1.6	12%	9%	21%	12%	6%
I2	2.4	10%	13%	27%	23%	10%
I3	1.8	10%	19%	21%	12%	5%
I4	1.4	14%	15%	14%	9%	5%
I5	2.0	14%	13%	19%	17%	9%
I6	2.1	11%	14%	19%	18%	10%
Strategies (S)						
S1	3.4	4%	13%	19%	37%	24%
S2	3.3	7%	14%	24%	29%	23%
S3	3.5	5%	9%	26%	34%	24%
S4	2.2	12%	11%	17%	20%	14%
S5	2.4	11%	13%	17%	18%	19%
S6	2.6	8%	16%	20%	22%	15%

Note: Highlighted are the highest percent and mean ratings for each aspect of work (tasks, initiatives, and strategies).

Second Finding

The survey found that faculty's job satisfaction levels were dependent upon the amount of support and resources given to them, particularly when it came to pedagogical and technological changes/initiatives. Faculty indicated that their degree of job satisfaction related to online design initiatives (I) was lower than their degree of job satisfaction with online design tasks (T) and strategies (S) (Table 9). Faculty, regardless of their identified work experience or situation (i.e., demographics), rated satisfaction related to online design initiatives overall as being "not at all" ($M = 1.4$) to only "slightly" ($M = 2.4$). However, when considering specific online design initiatives by percent rating, faculty rated these as being "slightly" to "somewhat" satisfactory.

When asked how online trends/initiatives influence their job satisfaction levels, faculty who responded generally responded positively (14% positive ($N = 50$); 9% negative ($N = 32$); 11% it depends ($N = 41$)). However, faculty shared that the scales can easily tilt negatively or positively depending upon factors such as institutional support, student successes, personal benefits, and technology access and support. Figure 12 illustrates both the positive and negative influences that can tilt the scales on faculty job satisfaction toward pedagogical and technological changes as indicated by the participants' write-in responses.

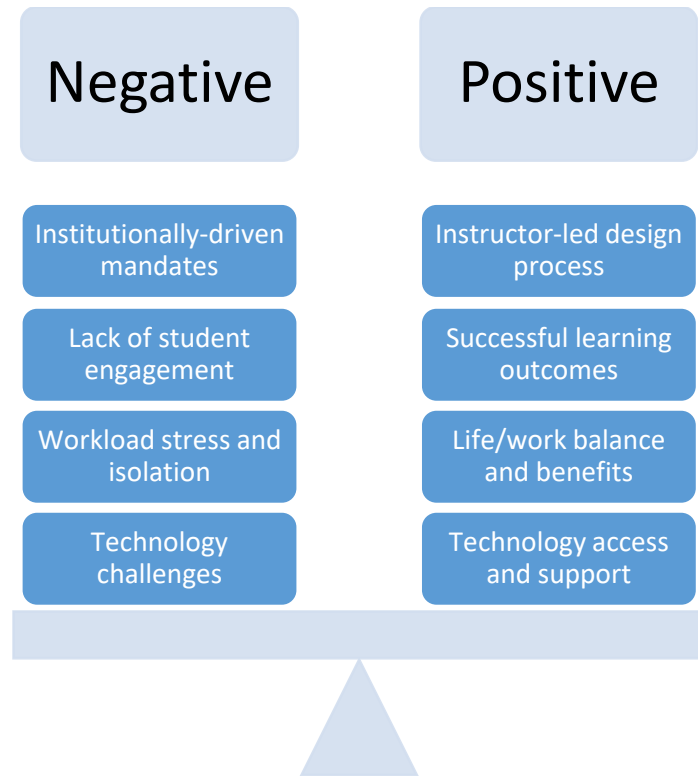


Figure 12. Influences on Faculty Job Satisfaction.

Faculty indicated through their write-in responses that both positive and negative influences can tilt the scales on their attitudes and job satisfaction levels related to pedagogical and technological initiatives.

Third Finding

The survey found faculty to have a higher degree of satisfaction when engaging in online design strategies (S) than when engaging in online design initiatives (I). Nearly a quarter or more of the faculty participants indicated that they were “very” to “completely” satisfied when working on specific online design strategies (Table 9).

Four strategies stood out in the respondents’ write-in responses, including: (1) using engaging and innovative technology features and content, including the use of video and real-world applications (11%); (2) using a model, template, or working with an instructional designer (10%); (3) using a collaborative and iterative process based on peer and student feedback (9%); and (4) using backward design focusing on desired outcomes

(5%). In general, faculty were in favor of technology and processes that were faculty-led, student-centered, collaborative, and adaptable/flexible.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the study's limitations which include potential biases and risks to the reliability and validity of the study. As for bias, the study was filtered through an insider's perspective surrounding the design/development of online courses as the researcher was employed as an instructional designer for a university during the duration of the study. Another potential bias relates to the study participants, who were strictly volunteers who came from a vast and fully unknown population size. According to Marczyk, DeMatteo, and Festinger (2005), bias can result from volunteer participants because the "conclusions drawn from the study might be limited to this specific [volunteer] population" (p. 78). To mitigate the effects of volunteer bias, the researcher offered no incentive to participants to take the survey beyond adding to the body of knowledge; they were not a captive group; they were informed of their risks (minimal); and they were given the freedom to decline at any point. Gorard (2001) suggested that, in studies such as this one where the population was very large, it is appropriate to start with a convenience sample and encourage others to share out the survey with their network (i.e., snowballing).

Risks to reliability and validity should be considered a potential limitation because the study's instrument was not established through multiple uses over time to confirm consistency, repeatability, and predictability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The instrument used in this study was designed by the researcher independently and was based on concepts derived from the literature review – in particular, the work of Bolliger

and Wasilik (2009) and their study of online faculty job satisfaction. To counteract potential risks and strengthen the survey results overall, several people with a background in online education provided feedback on the questionnaire, ensuring that the questions matched the constructs being studied and that correlation existed between what was intended to be measured and what was being measured. Hagedorn (2000) said that “although no appropriate metric capable of precisely categorizing or gauging levels of job satisfaction exists, any worker can attest that its presence can be felt, and its consequences observed” (p. 9), which is what this study set out to do (i.e., examine faculty attitudes toward online instructional design that may affect job satisfaction levels).

Despite the limitations of this study, future researchers and higher education institutions should be encouraged to pursue the topic of online faculty job satisfaction further for the benefit of not only the faculty but also the institution and ultimately the students. Anderson et al. (2010) warned that the success of online education hinges on the faculty member and urged postsecondary leaders to remember that technology is merely a tool. “[Technology] alone does not make the course work” (Anderson et al., 2010, p. 321). Northouse (2019) shared that rethinking the role of faculty in online course creation will require “transformational leaders” who “set out to empower followers and nurture them in change” (p. 177). Northouse said that transformational leaders foster a culture of innovation by empowering and encouraging employees to “freely discuss and try new things” (p. 177). Northouse challenged institutions/leaders to empower employees “by allowing them to have control...[and] the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way they feel is best” (p. 236). Northouse suggested that empowerment may impact “job

outcomes such as job satisfaction, turnover, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors” (p. 143). Northouse shared a large-scale study by Nemanich and Keller (2007) that examined employee empowerment and transformational leadership and found that “transformational leadership behaviors such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation were positively related to acquisitional acceptance, job satisfaction, and performance” (p. 172). Northouse reviewed several other studies that suggested that transformational leadership is most effective in learning and development environments.

Implications of Findings

Faculty respondents used the final survey question to disclose additional thoughts on what they would like to see “more of” regarding online course design, including: (1) more faculty control over content and design, (2) more professional development/training especially on technology tools, and (3) more development time and/or more pay. Their insights and willingness to share brought to light key recommendations for improving faculty job satisfaction levels related to online course design. Participants’ recommendations are especially important for institutions that are looking for quality, growth, and innovation. Through their responses, faculty indicated that innovation through pedagogical and technological initiatives is at risk – reporting that they were less satisfied with undertaking online initiatives than with completing their daily online work tasks or using various online design strategies. This noteworthy insight may prompt institutional leaders to examine ways to increase faculty job satisfaction.

In their article titled, “*Online course development, by accident or by design,*” Hale and Wood (2017) touched on many of the concerns that faculty expressed through this

action research project, stating that the “shifting pedagogical paradigm” of increased use of online education even before the COVID-19 pandemic “is having a major impact on those at the heart of postsecondary education: faculty members” (para. 2). Hale and Wood shared that faculty members are often not given the much-needed resources, training, and time needed to design engaging online courses. And, “the introduction of instructional designers often does not erase faculty concerns and may even present a political quagmire” whereby faculty view working with an instructional designer as “an unsettling imposition at best and threatening at worst” (Hale & Wood, 2017, para. 6). Results from this study supported Hale and Wood’s statement by revealing that 41% of the faculty respondents indicated they are “not at all” to “somewhat” satisfied when working with an instructional designer, whereas 37% are “very” to “completely” satisfied when working with an instructional designer (Table 9). Hale and Wood said that faculty wish to hold onto their autonomy and not have their “expertise and authority in the classroom undermined by the imposition of structural standards and methods” (para. 6). According to the results of this study, in every demographic identifier except for one, faculty reported the lowest job satisfaction levels for those daily online design tasks that require them to use an institutionally driven/approved systems approach to course design and development (T5). Hale and Wood credited the resistance by faculty to the constantly changing landscape of education as a matter of professional survival in an environment that seeks to both diminish their role and to adopt the latest/greatest trend and/or innovation without addressing its merit or inviting faculty input.

The write-in responses from this survey supported the notion of a changed landscape in online education and, in particular, in the online education team as originally

designed in the 1970s. Grossman and Walter (1978) established the concept of the online design team with their work in the 1970s on the PLATO system (the first student-based computer system). Grossman and Walter concluded that the key players (i.e., the interactive computer-based team) included: students, instructors, educational specialists/instructional designers, and the computer, where each played an equally important role. And, among the many goals were improved institutional “effectiveness, efficiency, and quality” (Grossman & Walter, 1978, p. 1308). According to faculty participants and the literature, institutions are now not only a key player in the online team, but also a dominant one as income generation is a key consideration for sustaining/maintaining a university (Anderson et al., 2010; Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011; Buchanan et al., 2013; Manning, 2018). Bawa and Watson (2017) said that both learners and institutions see online learning today as a convenient and worthwhile teaching/learning solution, a view which increases the demand for it. Faculty respondents and Hale and Wood (2017) suggested that this has brought about an increase in institutionally driven mandates and a decrease in the role of the faculty as a contributor to online course design.

Hale and Wood (2017) and the results of this survey suggested that it is time to rethink the current online design team dynamics. “So, we are now tasked with building a thoughtful instructional design method that not only creates a positive environment for developing quality, scalable, customizable online courses but also places the vision of the faculty member at the front of the process” (Hale and Wood, 2017, para. 8). van Rooij and Zirkle (2015) agreed, suggesting that online design/teaching be “operationalized via faculty incentives...as well as clear, visible process for [faculty] partnering with

instructional support services” (p. 6). Faculty respondents, along with Hale and Wood (2017), recommended that faculty be at the forefront of the online course design process. Without this change, faculty will continue to experience job dissatisfaction related to online design initiatives; whereas, putting faculty in the lead creates a supportive environment for future pedagogical and technological innovation and change (Hale and Wood, 2017). Hale and Wood suggested the following strategies to “support and empower faculty members in such a way that they can feel as though they can confidently invest their time and expertise” (para. 8) in quality online course design: (1) reimagine the online design team with faculty at the head, including an instructional designer and a curriculum coordinator to represent the needs of both the students and the institution; (2) provide the team with a reasonable amount of time to design and build a quality course (e.g., two months minimum for course design and an additional two weeks minimum for the actual course build); (3) acknowledge that there are fixed elements within a design platform and work to build space around these elements that allow faculty to bring their authentic, unique perspective and knowledge/expertise into the design process and the course itself; and (4) allow the design process to “enhance and showcase the offerings of a faculty member, not hinder it...[to] create a course that will allow [faculty] to focus on what they love teaching” (para. 9). Hale and Wood argued that when faculty have security in their role, collaborative support, and the knowledge that their expertise matters throughout the online course design process, the institution benefits in their “ability to drive innovation and change” (para. 11).

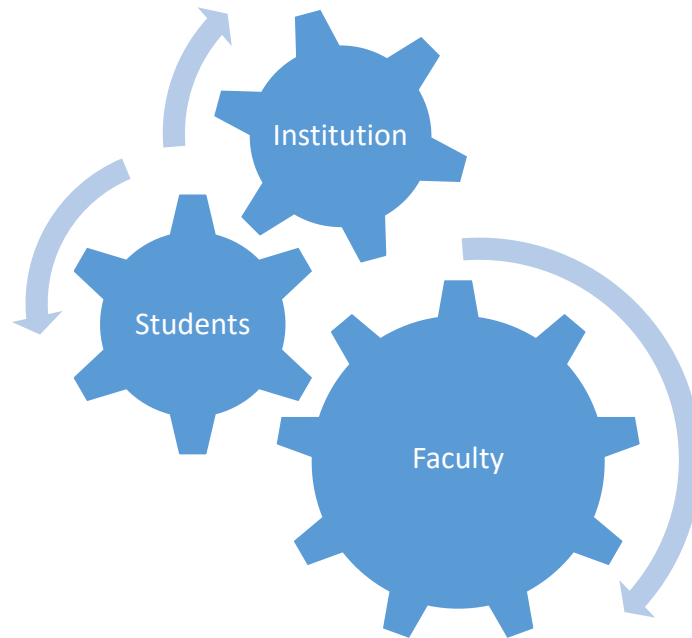


Figure 13. Relationships of Influence.

Faculty both influence and are influenced by the institution and the students and job satisfaction play a role in that influence being either positive or negative.

Rethinking the dynamics of the online design team has the potential to lead to greater job satisfaction for faculty, a myriad of benefits for the institution, and better learning outcomes for the students (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011; Hoekstra, 2014; Kleim & Takeda-Tinker, 2009; Stickney et al., 2019). In addition to rethinking the team dynamics, Bawa and Watson (2017) recommended that postsecondary institutions work to build cultures of collaboration. This work would include providing ongoing professional development opportunities, defining processes, roles, and responsibilities, building trust among the team members by providing positive feedback and reassurance, and treating each member with care/compassion (Bawa & Watson, 2017). van Rooij and Zirkle (2015) agreed, stating that institutions must find ways to “foster a culture of support” (p. 6). Spector (1997) said that institutions should be concerned with job

satisfaction because: (1) it reflects compassionate/fair treatment of their employees, and (2) it serves a practical purpose by creating a more efficient, effective, and quality organization.

The findings from this study, along with a review of the literature, suggested that quality online learning is, in large part, made up of satisfied faculty, engaged learners, and institutions that are both innovative and compassionate. To this end, Rana and Soodan (2019) recommended that institutions work to reduce personal and occupational stress by building a “better organizational climate and work culture” because “healthy [and satisfied] individuals can make better contributions toward the well-being of the organization” (p. 137). And, by promoting the well-being of faculty and working to close the job satisfaction gap, learner achievement gaps may, in turn, narrow (Perrachione et al., 2008). Strikwerda (2019) said that faculty provide the most direct support for student success. McLawhon and Cutright (2012) agreed, stating that the most important stakeholders in a postsecondary institution are its students and that they are the ones most affected by the faculty. Young (2006) stressed that online faculty must be highly involved in the course design because, ultimately, it is through the faculty that students connect with the content and learning can be achieved. Manning (2018), however, said that there is a disconnect between faculty and postsecondary institutions, and it is this disconnect that may drive future researchers to determine if institutions can reframe their thinking to empower faculty in order to improve job satisfaction.

Recommendations for Future Research

“Income generation through auxiliary services, online and distance learning, and fee-for-service programs has become a required means to keep [higher education]

institutions solvent” (Manning, 2018, p. 26). Manning suggested that an institution’s revenue-generating mindset is a “significant threat to traditional collegial values” (p. 51). Manning termed this mindset “academic capitalism,” in which postsecondary institutions seek to manage “the curriculum, long the purview of the faculty” using nonfaculty professionals (i.e., administrators and/or instructional designers) (p. 52). Manning suggested that online education is currently experiencing a “clash of cultures” whereby:

“The collegium/ [the faculty] values the life of the mind; academic capitalism/ [the institution] values the generation of capital. Where the collegium emphasizes the acquisition of social and cultural capital, academic capitalism stresses the acquisition of wealth. Academia has a long history of skilled, intelligent people rejecting the goals of capitalism for altruistic goals and a different way of life. Academic capitalism thwarts those goals” (p. 52).

A study by Elnaga and Imran (2014), suggested that the potential exists for both sets of values to co-exist. Elnaga and Imran reviewed many studies, journals, and books related to employee empowerment and job satisfaction and determined a relationship between the two in the business environment that, when coupled with the results of this study, suggested that by empowering faculty in the online course design process, positive outcomes will result including: (1) greater job satisfaction for faculty, (2) better learning outcomes for students, and (3) more dynamic, innovative, and collaborative institutions. Elnaga and Imran said that four different factors together empower employees to accomplish their work more successfully and satisfactorily, including: (1) information, (2) knowledge, (3) power, and (4) rewards. These align with what the faculty participants in this study stated would positively influence their job satisfaction related to online course design, specifically: (1) upfront information about trends and initiatives where faculty have a voice in the decision-making process; (2) knowledge, skills, and access

related to online pedagogy and technology gained through ongoing professional development and collaboration; (3) power to make decisions that impact the course design (i.e., flexibility/adaptability) to ensure student learning and engagement as determined by the faculty, and; (4) rewards in the form of benefits (i.e., appropriate time, workload, and compensation) and recognition for quality course design and successful outcomes.

The alignment of faculty responses in this study with the findings of employee empowerment in the corporate world, through the Elnaga and Imran study (2014), and the supposition by Manning (2018) of a “culture clash” in higher education institutions today, sets the stage for future research in the area of faculty satisfaction and empowerment in online course design. Researchers may want to consider comparing faculty satisfaction levels at an organization that supports the faculty as the lead in the course design process versus an organization where a nonfaculty member takes the lead. In addition, a comparison can be made between the organizations to determine how a faculty-led design team impacts student satisfaction and learning outcomes compared to an organization in which faculty are less involved in the course design process. Further research can also be done to determine if a balance can be found between the goals of the institution and the goals of the faculty when faculty are empowered in the course design process and how best to bring this about. In other words, future researchers can seek to find answers on how best to eliminate the “culture clash” and replace it with a culture of collaboration and harmony.

Future researchers should seek to examine postsecondary institutions that have transformational leaders willing to empower faculty in online design and give them a

voice in pedagogical and/or technological initiatives to see if faculty have a greater level of job satisfaction and if, in turn, this creates a higher level of student satisfaction and learning outcomes. The challenge in such an environment will be for faculty to create a collaborative environment with instructional support staff so that they, too, are empowered and satisfied in their work knowing that, together with the faculty, they have contributed to quality learning for students.

Future researchers may also want to look for correlations in faculty job satisfaction related to benefits that support faculty work-life balance and appropriate financial compensation and satisfaction related to proper technology access and support. Bauer (2002) shared that many outstanding companies are paying attention to factors such as work-life balance, financial compensation, training, and other benefits and that many higher education institutions are begging to follow their lead by “addressing these issues for faculty” (p. 89). Bauer encouraged all postsecondary institutions to key in on “frontline” (i.e., faculty and staff) job satisfaction as a critical component to student success. Bauer suggested that faculty and staff “who feel valued by their institution will most likely be more satisfied and may also be more loyal and productive” (p. 95). Voogt et al. (2016) shared that instructors are the “main link in the chain” and, as such, discussions around curriculum innovation/change must consider “promoting or hindering conditions that affect collaborative design teams” such as job satisfaction (p. 122). Bozeman and Gaughan (2011) said that “with knowledge of the determinants of university professors’ job satisfaction” both postsecondary administrators and “public policy-makers” can work toward the betterment and sustainment of higher education for the long-term (p. 154). Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) found that “faculty behaviors

and attitudes affect students profoundly, which suggests that faculty members may play the single-most-important role in student learning (p. 176). To that end, this study, combined with future research and foundational research, has the potential to positively influence post-secondary institutions, their faculty, staff, and students.

Summary

Findings from this study suggested that satisfaction is related to faculty's experience in the field, the type of work in which they are engaging (i.e., tasks, initiatives, or strategies), the amount of support and resources provided to them, and their relationships with the institution and the students. As with Stickney et al.'s (2019) broad exploratory study, write-in responses from faculty in this study suggested that, in part, job satisfaction is related to "institutional support and organizational policies [that] uphold online teaching [and design] efforts" that are faculty-centric (p. 509).

Overall, the survey revealed that institutional policies, practices, and procedures are likely to yield a higher degree of job satisfaction related to online course design if those policies, practices, and procedures: (1) support faculty as the lead decision-makers for online course content and design; (2) offer faculty timely and abundant opportunities to engage in professional development and collaboration; (3) include faculty in decisions regarding pedagogical and/or technological initiatives and are selective in the number of initiatives implemented; (4) provide benefits that support faculty work-life balance and appropriate financial compensation; and (5) ensure proper technology access and support.

APPENDIX A - Questionnaire

FACULTY JOB SATISFACTION RELATED TO ONLINE COURSE DESIGN

Your time in providing the following information is greatly appreciated. Please note that your responses are completely anonymous. Responses will in no way be matched to specific participants.

PART A: *Please provide the following demographic information.*

1. Have you taught at least one fully online course?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Which statement best describes your work as an online faculty member?
 - I teach **all** my courses online.
 - I teach **some** of my courses online.
3. What is your primary academic occupational status?
 - Tenure-track (assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, etc.)
 - Non-tenure track (adjunct, lecturer, instructor, visiting professor, etc.)
4. Which category best describes your primary workplace?
 - Associate's college
 - Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctorate-granting college or university
5. When did you first begin designing and teaching online courses?
 - 1965-1975
 - 1976-1986
 - 1987-1997
 - 1998-2008
 - 2009-2019
 - Within the last year (2020)
 - Within the last year (2020), as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

PART B: Please select the number corresponding to the description that most closely matches your feelings in each of the following. Consider **satisfaction** to be your confidence-level in your work, your enjoyment of your work, and/or your ability to make a difference in your work.

6. How satisfied do you feel when completing these online design tasks?

Tasks	Not Applicable	Not at All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
Mapping out course content for logic/flow and alignment to learning outcomes	0	1	2	3	4	5
Creating an authentic and human experience in an online environment	0	1	2	3	4	5
Planning for diverse learner needs, access, and expectations	0	1	2	3	4	5
Building opportunities for multiple means of learner interaction and engagement	0	1	2	3	4	5
Using an institutionally driven/approved systems approach to course design and development	0	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in institutionally driven/provided professional development related to emerging technologies	0	1	2	3	4	5

7. How satisfied do you feel when implementing these online design *initiatives*?

Initiatives	Not Applicable	Not at All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
Reflective teaching and learning using e-portfolios	0	1	2	3	4	5
Power-sharing – enhanced collaboration and communication between learners and instructors	0	1	2	3	4	5
Interactive mobile app innovations (touch-type learning) and multimedia usage	0	1	2	3	4	5
E-learning scenarios (i.e., gamification)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Competency-based, self-directed, adaptive, and personalized learning (learning analytics and visualization software)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Anywhere, anytime, any size, any need learning such as: project-based, just-in-time, blended, open educational resources (OER), MOOCs, and micro-learning	0	1	2	3	4	5

8. *How satisfied do you feel when using these online design strategies?*

Strategies	Not Applicable	Not at All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
Working independently to design content using a model, template, or rubric	0	1	2	3	4	5
Working independently to explore innovative applications of technology for teaching and learning	0	1	2	3	4	5
Incorporating student feedback into the course design	0	1	2	3	4	5
Piloting different versions of the course to determine student learning outcomes and satisfaction levels	0	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborating with an instructional designer or instructional design team	0	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborating with a peer-based professional learning community	0	1	2	3	4	5

PART C: *Please offer your comments to the following 4 questions.*

9. What additional factors outside of the tasks, initiatives, and strategies discussed in this survey influence your job satisfaction level in a **positive** way?

10. What additional factors outside of the tasks, initiatives, and strategies discussed in this survey influence your job satisfaction level in a **negative** way?

11. How do new trends and initiatives in online education generally affect your level of job satisfaction?

12. What strategies for designing online courses (outside of those discussed in this survey) are ideal/preferred by you?

APPENDIX B –IRB Approval Letter

Office of
Research Integrity



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NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.
- FACE-TO-FACE DATA COLLECTION WILL NOT COMMENCE UNTIL USM'S IRB MODIFIES THE DIRECTIVE TO HALT NON-ESSENTIAL (NO DIRECT BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS) RESEARCH.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-20-179

PROJECT TITLE: Faculty Job Satisfaction Related to Online Course Design

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: Users loaded with unmatched Organization affiliation., School of Education

RESEARCHER(S): April Hixson, Emily Johnson

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved

CATEGORY: Expedited

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: April 30, 2020

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald Sacco".

Donald Sacco, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

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