

## Chapter 27

# Online Learning: Demotivators and Motivators of Faculty Online Teaching Participation

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### ABSTRACT

*Online education continues to grow appreciably to meet both institutional needs for short- and long-term viability and student personal and professional needs for flexible delivery of course offerings. Faculty remains decidedly ambivalent, however, about the legitimacy of online course offerings. This doubt emerges from perceptions of: increased workloads as compared to face-to-face courses, inadequate compensation, lack of a fair reward system for promotion and tenure, and online course inferiority as a means of fostering optimal learning. After being identified through a structured review of recent empirical research, demotivators (e.g., questionable learning outcomes) and motivators (e.g., opportunity for personal growth) of faculty online teaching participation are examined through the lens of self-determination theory. Recommendations such as providing increased support are put forward to increase the likelihood of faculty online teaching.*

### INTRODUCTION

Distance education encompasses planned learning in which teacher and student are separated by location at least the majority of the time. The learning may be synchronous, but is most often asynchronous, which necessitates special course design and instructional techniques and communication through various technologies. Distance education also entails making special organiza-

tional and administrative arrangements to deliver learning materials (Moore & Kearsley, 2005).

Distance education programs are increasingly becoming a part of mainstream education (Chapman, 2011; Mitchell & Geva-May, 2009). In the most recent annual Going the Distance survey of online education (sponsored by The Sloan Consortium), 65.5% of responding university's chief academic officers indicated that online education was of strategic importance to the long-term standing and viability of the institution (Allen & Seaman, 2011). However, only 32% of

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the faculty at the institutions accepted the value and legitimacy of online education (56.5% were neutral, and 11.4% disagreed; Allen & Seaman, 2011). Because of the apparent disconnect between what university administrators perceive to be the importance of distance education as a strategic imperative versus faculty ambivalence about its legitimacy as a means of teaching and learning, educators must find a way to narrow this disconnect. Online enrollments continue to grow 10% annually in higher education (2% for overall student population growth); clearly, ways must be found to balance student demand for online education and faculty's willingness to teach online more completely (Allen & Seaman, 2011). Thus, we ask, "How can we make online teaching more appealing to faculty to promote the value and acceptance of online education?"

As a productive start, we should first understand the reasons why faculty remains unconvinced about the viability of teaching online (Black, 2012; Rockwell, Schauer, Fritz, & Marx, 1999). The most salient reasons include: the perception that the workload of online courses tends to be higher than that of traditional courses (e.g., Haber & Mills, 2008; Shea, 2007), compensation for teaching online is inadequate (e.g., Haber & Mills, 2008; Hiltz, Kim, & Shea, 2007), the reward system as it relates to faculty promotion and tenure is unfair (e.g., Shea, 2007), and that online learning is inferior to face-to-face learning (e.g., Mitchell & Geva-May, 2009). Identifying and better understanding these faculty demotivators for teaching online can lead us to finding solutions to the vexing divide between administrator demands for teaching online (e.g., ostensibly to meet market needs) vs. faculty willingness to do so.

The purpose of this chapter was to explore addressing the demotivators identified by faculty to initiate gaining acceptance of online education. First, we will provide a brief history of, and definitions for, distance and online education. Second, we present self-determination theory as a lens to understand faculty motivation to teach

online. Third, we identify the most significant demotivators for embracing online education, followed by presenting promising motivators and their respective values through a motivational lens, along with possible solutions to the demotivating factors. Last, we provide a forecast for faculty acceptance of online education.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Self-Determination Theory

Most motivational theory tends to focus on the amount of motivation people have for certain behaviors or activities. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), on the other hand, focuses on distinguishing type of motivation, not the amount. SDT postulates that it is the type of motivation which is important in predicting the outcome of a situation (Deci & Ryan, 2008b). In SDT, an individual's inherent growth propensities and psychological needs interact with varying sociocultural contexts that foster or impair the individual's motivational processes, ending in varying levels of psychologically healthy functioning and well-being (Reeve, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). Motivation, then, derived from one's sense of self, exists along a continuum organized by types of motivation that extends from amotivation, through four types of extrinsic motivation, to intrinsic motivation.

The theory begins with the understanding that three basic psychological needs must be met for any level of self-determination to occur. A person must feel capable, connected to others and able to make his or her own decisions. When these three basic needs are met – competence, relatedness and autonomy – a person has self-determination. Self-determination can be measured by two different types of motivation – autonomous and controlled (Deci & Ryan, 2008a). Autonomy is having a choice in the decisions you make and "endorsing one's actions at the highest level of reflection" (Gagne & Deci, 2005, p. 334). By

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