



SUNY FACT² Examining Pedagogy and Learning in Online Domains (ExPLOD) Task Group Final Report – May 2020

Task Group Charge (Excerpt)

The SUNY FACT² Task Group (TG) on Examining Pedagogy and Learning in Online Domains (ExPLOD) was charged with documenting and analyzing current, well-researched pedagogies for online instruction. Online learning is moving towards its fourth decade of existence inside of SUNY. Over this time there have been significant changes in the delivery of online instruction as well as new methods of service delivery for online students. As SUNY moves forward with SUNY Online, it is imperative that we understand how to better serve our students with innovative instructional methods that not only effectively engage students with the content but also allow for scalability.

Goals

- Identify and explore next generation online pedagogies that fully embrace effective practices and supportive technologies.
- Identify instructional design and delivery models and strategies to enhance and support high-quality online course design, the online student learning experience, training, and support for online courses including online courses with large enrollments.
- Compare online pedagogies that work at scale with those that will work with traditional online and hybrid models.
- Provide strategies and recommendations to relevant parties for policies, procedures, and practices regarding the adoption of effective online learning pedagogies.
- Conduct a review of new tools and emerging technology solutions to enable scaling of online courses while maintaining quality standards for course design, student engagement, and achievement of student learning outcomes.

Long-Term Plans

- Produce a summary of future, emerging trends in online education.
- Provide a summary of institutional impediments to the growth of online learning.
- Recommend a set of strategies to combat student and faculty isolation, create a scalable presence, and to empower self-actualized learning.
- Report on emerging pedagogies that function at scale, as well as support models that ensure effective delivery.

- Plan and lead a FACT² Symposium on Next Generation Online Pedagogies.
- Present task group’s findings at CIT and encourage campuses engaging in effective practices to present at CIT.
- Host sessions at SUNY and other regional conferences.
- Recommend opportunities to fund further work in this area through IITG.
- Establish a process for identifying and vetting new tools and emerging technologies that support effective online pedagogies for scale that will be implemented and supported by SUNY Online.
- Prepare a report summarizing findings to present to the SUNY Provost and to SUNY Online for consideration.

2019-2020 Activities and Accomplishments

- Created spaces in Google Drive and SUNY Workplace for discussions and exchange of materials.
- Created three subgroups to investigate the different areas included in TG’s charge.
- Documented information on current pedagogies for online instruction.
- Documented tools currently used by SUNY campuses for online learning and how they are used.
- Worked on the first stages of a rubric for evaluation and recommendation of tools and technologies for online learning.
- Offered a “MOOC Shake with Coursera” webinar on enabling quality at scale.
- Started an annotated bibliography and glossary of terms related to scaling online learning.
- Submitted an abstract for a presentation at SUNY CIT 2020 (which was later cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Participated on the planning for the New York Summit on Adaptive Learning (scheduled for April 17, but postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic) in collaboration with FACT2 Adaptive Learning Task Group, SUNY OER Services, and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU).
- Obtained access to the new FACT2 website for Task Groups and started conceptualizing what should be in the TG’s space.

Short-Term Plans

- Collect strategies to combat student and faculty isolation, create a scalable presence, and to empower self-actualized learning.
- Develop a set of recommendations for engaging students online and scaling that are supported by the research conducted with the subgroups’ work.
- Finish an annotated bibliography and glossary of terms related to scaling online learning.
- Create a rubric for SUNY Faculty to evaluate tools and technologies for online learning.

- Adjust sub-group membership, where needed, to ensure we have the best possible membership knowledge spectrum for the tasks moving into the 2020-2021 academic year.
- Meet with sub-group Chairs during Summer 2020 to ensure expected outcomes are shared and timelines are established.

Brief Narrative on Activities

During 2019-2020 academic year, the first year of the TG, we met virtually thirteen times. The meetings were scheduled every two weeks on Thursday morning and the co-chairs also meet briefly on a regular basis to tie up loose ends in between meetings and draft the agenda. We created spaces in Google Drive and the SUNY Workplace to allow members to share resources and engage in discussions. Google Drive also serves as a repository for meeting's agendas and reports. Co-Chair Matias served as member of the New York Summit on Adaptive Learning planning group. The one-day event, which was postponed due to the current pandemic, will provide opportunities to explore adaptive courseware and how it brings applied learning into classrooms to support student learning and success. In addition, Co-Chair McCabe will present and discuss evolving models for online/remote learning as part of the FACT2 Online Symposium: Responding in Real-Time at SUNY to a Global Crisis. Members of the TG will attend the virtual symposium scheduled for May 28.

Below is more information regarding specific activities and accomplishments.

Discussion

As a starting point for the group's work, readings were assigned for discussion during the meetings that took place August-February. The conversations helped getting everyone on the same page by discussing how findings and data from the articles apply to the TG work. The readings included the SUNY Online Whitepaper, [EDUCAUSE Horizon Report 2019 Higher Education Edition](#), [Online College Students 2019: Comprehensive Data on Demand and Preference](#), Online penalty: The impact of online instructions on the Latino-White achievement gap (Kaupp, 2012), and Massive open online courses and underserved students in the United States (Stich & Reeves, 2017).

Subgroups

We formed three subgroups that are working on specific outcomes and deliverables: Tools; Instructional Design and Delivery Models; and Online Pedagogy and Scalability. Table 1 shows the members for each subgroup and their main tasks. To facilitate more inclusive subgroups and higher faculty involvement, their membership also includes faculty who are not part of the ExPLOD TG but are interested in the different areas.

Tools Subgroup

The subgroup spent 2019-2020 mainly researching and documenting tools for online instruction; what is being used and what campuses would like to investigate for future use. They are looking to expand this inquiry to recommend a set of strategies to combat faculty and

student isolation, a natural outgrowth of pivoting to remote teaching and learning without adequate preparation.

A survey asking campuses about current tools used for teaching in the online environment was sent in early January to the Directors of Online/Distance Learning (DOODLE) group, FACT2 Campus Representatives, and FACT2 Council Members. The survey focused on the areas of proctoring, video conferencing, adaptive learning tools, artificial intelligence-based tools, and early alert tools. Campuses also had the opportunity to share how they came about procuring these tools, how the tool integrates with other campus systems. Participants were also asked to identify tools that could be useful as they look to scale up their online offerings.

Additionally, the group started collecting information to develop a rubric to help faculty selecting tools for teaching online. The goal is to create a rubric and to establish a process for vetting new tools and emerging technologies that support effective online pedagogies for scale that could be implemented and supported by SUNY and the campuses.

Instructional Design & Delivery Models Subgroup

The subgroup focused on gathering information about instructional design models and delivery modes that are currently being used within the SUNY system as well as nationally. As part of the exploration, they also engage in discussions with Coursera and hosted a MOOCShake (webinar on February 3rd, 2020), which was open to the SUNY campuses. A preview of the Coursera platform and course module set up was shared. The group identified differences in what we traditionally see for course design compared to the Coursera modules.

In addition, the group collected effective practices in distance education to assist in determining what practices, assessments, activities, etc., encourage engagement, collaboration, and build presence in the classroom. After looking for course models across and beyond SUNY, the group noted that a template itself is not what makes a course engaging, collaborative, etc. The group has recognized there is not a one-size fits all approach to course design or engagement. No template or list is going to provide a guide for creating the perfect course. Each discipline has unique characteristics and goals.

In the 2020-2021 academic year, the sub-group will work to schedule a focus group with students. Questions targeting specific aspects of the online learning experience will help identifying aspects important for the creation of a scalable instructional model. Importantly, the group also plans to collect/curate stories about innovation that resulted from COVID-19 for faculty who may have been hesitant/resistant previously.

Online Pedagogy & Scalability Subgroup

The members of this subgroup determined that the most efficacious approach was to divide the broad topic into four manageable, interrelated areas of inquiry (deliverables). Three of these deliverables are establishing a baseline glossary of definitions relative to scaling online programs; describing pathways to scale (including MOOCs, large enrollment classes and master courses); and developing an annotated outline of barriers to scaling online education. The final

deliverable is offering a set of recommendations for each of the scaling pathways and will be reliant on the work described in the first three deliverables.

The subgroup’s work during this year has revealed the following key themes:

- Terms related to online teaching, large enrollment courses, and scale are not clearly defined and consistently used in the literature.
- There is likely no one-size-fits-all approach to scaling online education. Instead, there are potentials that may apply to different situations and/or specific aspects of instruction (e.g., course size, disciplinary tracks, content and pedagogical approach, learning activities selected, resources available (e.g., TAs, funding, tech licenses, professional development options available)
- Barriers to scaling online tend to be larger than the course level and will likely require institutional intervention and funding to address.

Table 1. Summary of the three subgroups. An asterisk indicates a sub-group member who is not part of the larger ExPLOD Task Group membership.

| Subgroup | Members | Task(s) |
|---|--|--|
| Tools <i>Co-Chairs:</i> Tamara Cupples (FIT) & Deborah Spiro (Nassau) | Judith Littlejohn (Genesee) Audi Matias (Empire) Ryan McCabe (Finger Lakes) Cherie van Putten (Binghamton) Dawn Hamlin* (Oneonta) Joanne Levine* (Empire) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at new available tools for teaching and student support for online courses. • What is out there/new? • What are the pros and cons of the tools? • Accessibility of the tools. • Process for identifying and evaluating tools moving forward |
| Instructional Design & Delivery Models <i>Co-Chairs:</i> Danyelle O’Brien (Alfred) & Lisa Melohusky (Fredonia) | John Locke (Plattsburgh) Chrisie Mitchell (Dutchess) Rob Piorkowski (Open SUNY) Jeffrey Riman (FIT) Logan Rath (Brockport) Ye Chen* (Empire) Lorena Harris* (Schenectady) Judy Rose* (Alfred) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at examples of innovative online design from SUNY and beyond. • What are new delivery models? |

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| <p>Online Pedagogy and Scalability</p> <p><i>Co-Chairs:</i> Diane Hamilton (Albany), Greg Ketcham (Oswego), & Michele Forte (Open SUNY)</p> | <p>Lenore Horowitz (Albany) Theresa Gilliard-Cook (Oswego) Ryan Hersha (Corning) Kim Scalzo (Open SUNY) Jamie Heron (SUNY CPD) Rachael Hagerman (Broome) Alexandra Pickett (Open SUNY) Keion M. Clinton* (Schenectady)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the issues, barriers, etc. of online education. • How we can minimize impediments and better support our students? • What are the new pedagogical models for online education? • How we can scale up online courses? |
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Challenges

The challenge of time and space is always present when working with a large group at a distance, but we have had great attendance at each meeting and the meetings have been productive. Additionally, this topic is held closely by many of the people on the task group, so ensuring that we stay on topic and within the scope of the charge can be challenging. This group also lost momentum with the rise of COVID-19. Almost every member of this task group is either a faculty member or someone involved in supporting faculty through technology. These specific roles had to focus on their own campuses and the pivot to remote instruction beginning in the middle of March. This led to less being accomplished by this task group over the last two months or so.

Events Planned for 2020-2021

- ✓New York Summit on Adaptive Learning (Virtually, Summer 2020)
- ✓Presentation at the Fall SUNY University Faculty Senate Plenary (October 2020).
- ✓SUNY CIT 2021 Task Group presentation and update.
- ✓Possible FACT² Symposium on Next Generation Online Pedagogies.

Membership

Table 2. ExPLOD's membership, which includes 28 individuals serving in a variety of roles from across SUNY.

| Member Name | Institution | Title |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Tamara Cupples | Fashion Institute of Technology | Executive Director, Online Learning and Academic Technologies |
| Michelle Currier | SUNY Canton | Instructor, Criminal Justice |
| Kirsty Digger | SUNY Delhi | Professor, Nursing |
| Michele Forte | Open SUNY & SUNY Empire | Assistant Professor |
| Theresa Gillard-Cook | SUNY Oswego | Senior Instructional Designer |
| Lee Graham | SUNY Oneonta | Assistant Professor |
| Rachel Hagerman | SUNY Broome | Associate Professor/Chairperson of Clinical Laboratory Technologies |
| Diane Hamilton | SUNY Albany | Instructional Designer |
| Jamie Heron | SUNY CPD | Open SUNY Program Manager |
| Ryan Hersha | Corning Community College | Associate Professor |
| Lenore Horowitz | SUNY Albany | Professor |
| Greg Ketcham | SUNY Oswego | Assistant Dean |
| Judith Littlejohn | Genesee Community College | Instructional Designer |
| John C Locke | SUNY Plattsburgh | Coordinator, Technology Enhanced Learning |
| Audi Matias (<i>Co-chair</i>) | SUNY Empire | Associate Professor |
| Keri McArdle | SUNY Ulster | Assistant Professor |
| Ryan McCabe (<i>Co-chair</i>) | Finger Lakes Community College | Associate Vice-President of Academic Technology and High Impact Practices |
| Lisa Melohusky | SUNY Fredonia | Online Learning Coordinator |

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| Chrisie Mitchell | Dutchess Community College | Associate Director, Teaching and Learning Center |
| Alexandra M. Pickett | Open SUNY | Director, Open SUNY COTE |
| Rob Piorkowski | Open SUNY | Assistant Director of Online Learning |
| Danyelle O'Brien | Alfred State College | Director of Online Learning |
| Logan Rath | SUNY Brockport | Associate Librarian |
| Jeffrey Riman | Fashion Institute of Technology | Assistant Professor, Instructional Designer |
| Kim Scalzo | Open SUNY | Executive Director |
| Deborah Spiro | Nassau Community College | Assistant Vice President of Distance Education |
| Frank Vander Valk | SUNY Empire | Interim Dean of SUNY Empire Online/Dean, School of Social and Behavioral Sciences |
| Cherie van Putten | Binghamton University | Instructional Designer |