
This article focused on two research questions: The first, “Are there distinguishable differences between the learning style preferences of students enrolled in an online course and those of students enrolled in an equivalent face-to-face course?” and the second, “To what extent do learning style preferences influence student successes in online versus face-to-face learning environments” (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 228). It points out the “major limitation[s] of existing learning style theories and models,” writing how they focus on “information processing or cognitive habits” (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 228). The study done in this article will focus on “learner success in any teaching and learning situation” and the requirement of “positive motivation on the part of the learner, which will then lead to an appropriate degree of task engagement” (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 228). The participants of this study consisted of nineteen full-time face-to-face students “pursuing a graduate degree in human resource development” as well as nineteen full-time online students pursuing the same degree (Aragon et al., 2010, pp. 231-232). These students varied slightly “according to age, year of baccalaureate graduation, GPA, or experience” (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 242).

To measure motivation, task engagement, and cognitive control functions, three instruments were selected for each learning construct (p. 232). The first used “Reichmann and Grasha’s (1974) Student Learning Style Scale (SLSS)” to measure motivation maintenance (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 232); the second used “the Weinstein, Palmer, and Schulte (1987)
Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI)” to measure task engagement (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 232); the third and final instrument was “the Kolb (1985) Learning Style Inventory (LSI)” to measure cognitive control functions (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 234).

When looking at the online vs. face-to-face students’ measurements, it is important to note that, on the LASSI scale, they varied significantly at task engagement levels with study aids, and on the LSI scale, they also varied significantly at cognitive control levels with “reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation” (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 242). One of the key factors with the cognitive control functions is not just a student’s personality, but also the environment they are in as well. Most online environments have students working at any time, any place, and any pace method, which can lead to a higher process of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, though a lack of active experimentation can be noted.

Another important note is that students most likely regard online classes with “the mind-set that online courses are often self-contained or programmed, meaning that all of the materials needed for success have been included in the course materials and content” whereas face-to-face learners understand they most likely need to seek outside resources to be successful (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 243).

The study concludes that “online learning can be as effective as face-to-face learning in many aspects, even though students have different learning style preferences… Quality and thoroughness of the design and delivery must be the catalyst for ensuring positive online learning experiences” (Aragon et al., 2010, p. 243).

This article is beneficial because it talks about incorporating the different learning styles in online learning.

Burke and Fedorek investigate students’ perceptions of engagement in a traditional, flipped, and online classroom in a higher division undergraduate course in the criminal justice field at one university. They hypothesized that a flipped classroom, or a course whereby the lecture is administered online and hands-on, applied knowledge is utilized in class, would have higher levels of engagement than the other two class formats. Their hypothesis was based on previous literature that claims flipped classrooms are more beneficial for class engagement because it is a form of active and cooperative learning. However, their results did not match their assumptions nor past literature. Only 42 percent of students said they were engaged and 52 percent said they were sometimes engaged in the flipped classroom. Six percent of students said they were not engaged. Compared to the online and traditional classroom formats, these percentages showed lower engagement in the flipped classroom.

Burke and Fedorek believe there are many reasons for the lack of engagement in a flipped classroom. First, although students liked the flipped classroom, they may not have been prepared for the transition from a lecture-format to an inverted classroom. Secondly, students do not study as much outside of the classroom as they once did, so a majority of the students were not watching the lectures online. Thirdly, it might be too late for upper division students to make the transition to a new class format so late in their college career. Fourthly, educators using this flipped format may not be prepared to teach it. Burke and Fedorek note other important
disclaimers about their study, including its lack of generalizability across disciplines, universities, regions, and students’ education level.

This article will be helpful for our Scholarly Teacher manuscript because it offers great tips for class layouts and those that will engage students the most. I anticipate Katie and I will pull from this article to try to describe under-engagement and finding a middle ground for university teachers. The article is fairly new and offers insight for teachers who intend to pursue a flipped classroom to garner student engagement.


This study looked to draw on what “learners’ perceptions about how the first ‘class’ in an online course *should* be and to further understand how learners’ experiences in the first class contribute to their sense of well-being and engagement in online courses” (Conrad, 2010, p. 205). The article that surrounds the study begins by stating its purpose: “to increase our knowledge of how learners understand what the first class should be and to further understand how learners’ experiences with the first class contribute to their sense of engagement in online courses” (Conrad, 2010, p. 205). A survey sent to 45 students taking courses in a fully online graduate program, where 28 “responded to the survey’s yes/no questions, ranking questions, open-ended questions, and questions delivered on a Likert-type scale” (Conrad, 2010, p. 206). This survey was based on the learners’ first class experiences, which was described as “the occasion on entry into a course Web site for the first time” (Conrad, 2010, p. 206).

The article is broken down into different sections separated by subheadings; these categories also have subcategories to make for an easier time processing and reading the
information. It follows a logical flow, looking at the different pieces of information, the participants’ responses, and an analysis of those responses.

“Adult educators depend on engagement… Being able to see, hear, and interpret levels of learner engagement on a continuous and immediate basis allows skilled instructors to manipulate and improve their presentation stances” (Conrad, 2010, pp. 209-210). Not being able to see, hear, and interpret those levels puts instructors at a severe disadvantage, especially when the clues to the level of engagement are harder to see. Learners’ absence or nonpresence in these online classes could be due to many factors, such as “technical glitches, physical absence from the learning venue, boredom, cognitive difficulties, illness, dissatisfaction with course material or instruction, and impatience with fellow learners” (Conrad, 2010, p. 210). Community by engagement is a very necessary first step to take when looking for successful online learning (p. 210).

Early access to the course site is paramount to reduce anxiety and for the satisfaction of most online learners. Half of learners in this study prefer access at least two weeks prior to the official start date, 36% are satisfied with one week, and only 14% are satisfied waiting until the day the course starts (Conrad, p. 210). This helps them find “comfort and familiarity” with the course, as well as being allowed to check for completeness, and being able to “[prepare] and [integrate] learning into life” (Conrad, 2010, p. 211).

This study is a good example of Uncertainty Reduction Theory, though it is not explicitly stated. One of the students commented on the beginnings of class by writing “As I am becoming more familiar with the course style, I am becoming more relaxed” (Conrad, 2010, p. 215). Ways to become familiar with the course were dependent on the instructor, course organization, and
social ambience (pp. 215-216). The biggest cause of bad beginnings to a course include the learner being “[confused] around when they could actually access the course site. As a result of online confusion, ‘a frenzy of [emails], a monster avalanche of personal, off topic postings’ also had distressed them” (Conrad, 2010, p. 217).

It is important to note that this study was done ten years ago, and many things have changed since then. What has not changed is the anxiety surrounding online classes on both sides of the classroom, and the student opinions that are represented in the paper, I feel, are still quite accurate to those opinions today.


In chapter five of Dannels’ book, she explains general and specific ways to engage students. Dannels states that engagement goes both ways, and it is not entirely up to the teacher or the student to be engaged. There are many reasons a student does not want to engage in a class, including a large class size, logistics of the classroom such as seating arrangements, frequency of class meetings, lack of confidence, maturity, and experience, language barriers, and apprehension or feeling intimidated. A few ways to produce engagement include constructing structured disagreement in a classroom, using out-of-class, collaborative student groups, and increasing students' intellectual challenges through writing and conversation. There should be a mix of activities to engage students. In addition, teachers need to create an environment that encourages engagement by providing a space where students are free to express opinions and disagreements, creating a place of mutual respect, demonstrating inclusivity, showing enthusiasm for discussion, and using students’ names to build personal connections. Other
behaviors are important for instructors to use as well, including immediacy behaviors, use of technology, and related humor. Dannels also reminds readers that it is important to know instructors will never be able to reach every student. Not every student will be engaged, and not all of the time.

Instructors should remember to begin engaging students on the first day of class. Students should know why the class material is important and how it will help them in the future. Dannels uses this part of the chapter to list ways to engage students, such as giving a “top ten list” of reasons people should be interested in this class, creating a list with alumni answering how best to be successful in class or what they learned, and having students create a community through word collages. Throughout the semester, Dannels said having students write one-minute papers, where they use information they learned in class keeps them engaged, along with other exercises.

Dannels offers great engaging activities for instructors to use and ways to improve a classroom environment to make it more inviting and inclusive for students. The article explains what to do when students are under engaging with material as well as students being enabled by technology use in the classroom.


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O’Shea, Stone, and Delahunty explore students' perceptions of engagement in an online learning environment. The article used interviews and surveys to ask questions of Australian students who were currently enrolled in an online program. The authors define engagement from different scholars. First, they review engagement theory by Kearsley and Shneiderman and its three basic
principles of relate, create, and donate. The authors then review Pittaway’s engagement framework, which involves four key principles and highlights five distinct and intersecting elements of engagement: personal, academic, intellectual, social, and professional engagement. O’Shea, Stone, and Delahunty use Pittaway’s elements of engagement to understand students’ perceptions of engagement in online learning. Participants were asked to tell their experiences of being an online learner as well as milestones or surprises they experienced during their online studies.

In the findings portion of the article, the authors center on social, academic, intellectual, and personal engagement. Social engagement received a mixed response. Some of the respondents were interested in connecting with their peers and viewed this as an essential part of learning. Other students thought social connection was an extraneous part of online learning and it did not improve their learning experience. There were many negatives highlighted and some positives for academic and intellectual engagement for online education. Some enjoyed online forums because they allowed students to hear from their peers from different backgrounds, while other students believed there was one-way communication while using the forums and it was not a safe place to share ideas. Some of the students felt no connection to the university they were enrolled in. Lastly, for personal engagement, participants said the online technology and the presentation of learning materials made them disinterested. They felt similar to “second-class citizens” in the online learning environment because they did not attend class on campus. After reviewing participants’ answers, the authors came to the conclusion that online students want high quality courses, specifically designed for online learning; treatment similar to face-to-face learners; communication on a regular basis, with professors accessible to their needs; well
moderated online forums where students are learning from them; and more assistance with technology.

This is an interesting article because it is from students’ perspectives about engagement. It also offers great tips and reminders for teachers to use when offering online classes, especially since most classes are online at this time due to the pandemic. However, there are a few drawbacks, or points to keep in mind when reading or using this article. First, although the article was published in 2015, the authors note that the interviews and surveys were conducted in 2012, which is eight years old. Much has changed since these interviews were completed. Many of the students interviewed or surveyed are those going back to college, so their ages range drastically.


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The article starts out by acknowledging that evidence is emerging which suggests that emotions are a discrete factor in the online learning contexts and that it significantly contributes to student engagement (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 1). Pentaraki and Burkholder (2017) claims “Student engagement involves cognitive, behavioural, and emotional dimensions that contribute to higher-order thinking and motivate students’ learning (Trowler, 2010)” (p. 3). These dimensions “involve feelings, sense making, and action” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 3). The COI model is “important to clarify some misconceptions that seem to characterize the field and that these things need to be taken into consideration in the design of future studies on emotions and online learning. Overall, it is essential to distinguish the study of emotion as a
distinct factor in online learning (e.g., [whether or not you’re] helping students… to increase higher order thinking) from the study of emotion as increasing student engagement with online learning” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 4).

The Uncertainty Reduction Theory comes into play in this article, explaining that students’ anxiety was high at the beginning of the course due to the unfamiliarity, but decreased as time went on (p. 5). Frustration, however, appears to be the most frequent and strongest emotion “associated with having to work and study at the same time, a lack of clear instructions for locating the required course links, and the nature or structure of the online material” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 5). It is important to note that intrinsic motivation leads to a feeling (or emotion) of satisfaction which corresponds to high student engagement and academic achievement (p. 8). It can also be noted that self-efficacy, intrinsic goal orientation, task value beliefs, personality characteristics, and emotional intelligence and personality traits follow this pattern, where they all lead to emotions, which corresponds with, in the case of self-efficacy, intrinsic goal orientation, and emotional intelligence and personality traits, academic success; task value beliefs’ emotion of satisfaction leads to students’ learning and engagement, while personality characteristics’ emotions lead to students’ engagement (p. 8).

The multiple strategies, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive, “can facilitate a positive attitude and engagement in an online learning context (Lee, 2011)” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 8). The emotional strategies and techniques such as emoticons, humor, and audio, have a positive effect in the online classroom; this can include self-deprecating humor used appropriately, pedagogical humor, emoticons in messages both from students and teachers, as well as one- and two-way audio (p. 9). The cognitive strategies and actions can include “self-reflection and correct attribution of successes and failures [which] help students to develop
self-efficacy” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 12). Finally, behavioural strategies “involve understanding individual characteristics of students and the application of appropriate instructional interventions” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 12). To put this into practice, “Chen and Caropresso (2004) suggested that mixing introverts and extroverts in the same group [creates] a more effective communication and task engagement” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, p. 12).

In conclusion, “discrete emotions influence self-regulated learning, intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy for collaborative learning activities, and beliefs of high task value in online learning. The effective management of negative emotions such as anxiety and frustration, and the facilitation of positive emotions such as satisfaction, are essential for increased engagement and academic success. [The three strategies] increase engagement in online learning… [and] it is critical to establish the discrete effect of emotions on students’ engagement and online learning” (Pentaraki and Burkholder, 2017, pp. 16-17).

This article is helpful because it describes how the different emotional, behavioural, and cognitive aspects are seen in the classroom.


This article starts off by stating the most common line of thinking when it comes to engagement; professors and teachers often focus on the students that don’t engage, celebrating those that do. But what about the student that engages too much? This is the student who always talks, is the first one to have their hand up, and wants to answer every question regardless of
correctness. They might be considered a “good student” or an example for the rest of the class to follow, but they tend to be the one “to take all of the space in the room” (Whitmarsh, 2017). This student might not be a huge problem in some classrooms, but over-engagement of one student leads the rest to quiet down.

Cornelius Minor talks to Whitmarsh on the power of teaching to engage students at different levels. Getting the student who might be over-enthusiastic to calm down takes a special kind of trained hand, a hand that can “turn the volume down,” or disengage students in the right way (Whitmarsh, 2017). It is a difficult balance to keep, and disengage does not mean the same thing as unengage. Minor talks about not wanting to silence kids, and one way he found how to do that is to give the kid that participates the most (and does not leave a lot of room for others to speak) a role in the classroom. His student who was one monopolizing voice became the voice for every student in the classroom through the job of “president.”

This article is great as it talks about the advantages and disadvantages there are from having a student that becomes the sole voice of the classroom, and it talks about the way to redirect that energy. Minor also goes into what teachers should do if they have a kid they see as disruptive. He talks about critical thinking as a weapon, and how when we give that weapon to students, they need to be taught how to properly yield it. Minor goes on to talk about why kids act out and how to properly talk to kids and get them to talk to you.