Thirteen Years of the Online Journal for Distance Learning Administration: 1998 - 2011

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Abstract

As online and distance education have become increasingly mainstream methods of delivery in higher education, print-based and online journals have formed to provide forums for research and practice. The Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration (OJDLA), founded in 1998, is the focus of this study, which seeks to identify topical themes and patterns across 13 years of articles and connect these themes to broader contexts and events in higher education. While the early years of the journal focused on faculty-related topics such as adoption, training, and support, topics related to outcomes and students emerged in the mid-2000s and gain the attention of researchers and practitioners. The paper ends by offering an assessment of current events and issues in both online and distance education and the broader higher education contexts and suggesting that future research should focus on outcomes including the impact on student success and rising costs.

Keywords: online education, distance education, higher education, distance learning, online learning, administration, education research, digital learning

Online and distance education have claimed a solid footing within the American higher education landscape. Once considered to be novel activities relegated to the for-profit higher education sector, online and distance education have become increasingly prevalent among both public and private non-profit colleges and universities. Indeed, the community college sector has seen the largest expansion in online and distance education with a number of institutions offering at least one fully online degree program (Instructional Technology Council, 2012). The demand for online and distance education has continued unabated over the past decade. From 2000 to 2008, the percentage of undergraduates enrolled in at least one distance education class expanded from 8 percent to 20 percent and the percentage enrolled in a distance education degree program rose from two to four percent within the same period (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The most recent federal data on institutional participation reveals that during the 2000-2001 academic year, 56 percent or 2,320 of all 2-year and 4-year Title IV-eligible, degree-granting institutions offered distance education courses for any level or audience (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). While the vast majority of these institutions are colleges and universities with large enrollments, smaller and moderate sized institutions are steadily embracing online education as a viable option for meeting critical institutional priorities (Babson Survey Research Group, 2011).

Factors contributing to the growth in online and distance education are linked to changing social and economic structures as well as education policy mandates. In response to the widening gap in educational attainment between the United States and other developed countries, the College Board Commission on Access, Admissions, and Success issued a call for 55 percent of America's young adults to obtain a postsecondary education credential by 2025. This effort is intended to strengthen the position of the United States to be more competitive in a global economy. Considering the demographics of the K-12 pipeline, adult learners are a major target audience to create a more educated workforce, prompting colleges and universities to develop special outreach programs for adult and military students (Council on

Adult and Experiential Learning, 2008; Burns, 2011).   Because of the flexibility needed to balance the competing demands of career, family and educational responsibilities, online and distance education are preferred options to traditional instructional delivery for adult students.

In addition to responding to workforce development needs, scholars indicate that the persistent growth in online learning is attributed to institutional maturity with online delivery and technological advancements. As institutions gain experience in online and distance education, greater efficiencies are achieved in starting new online programs by using established programs as models (The Campus Computing Project, 2010). Additionally, technologies that support online education are more advanced and user-friendly than they were several years ago. Thus institutions that were previously reluctant to venture into online education find it less difficult to begin or expand online programs (The Campus Computing Project, 2010). Moreover, the continued depression of state funding for higher education coupled with the demand for promoting greater access is contributing to the need for higher education systems to explore how technology can be used to provide quality instruction for more students at less cost. Most notable among these solutions is the development of open-access courseware including the more popular Massive Online Open Course (MOOC). MOOCs are rapidly gaining credibility particularly among mainstream colleges and universities, and have the potential to offer a viable alternative to traditional online courses.

Paralleling the growth of online and distance education has been the establishment of traditional print-based and online journals devoted to research and practice in the field. The University of Wisconsin-Madison publishes a comprehensive list of distance and online education journals and magazines. These include *The Journal of Online Teaching and Learning, The American Journal of Distance Education, Journal of Distance Education, Journal of Educators Online, International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning and the Journal of Interactive Online Learning.* Articles that address the administrative aspects of managing online and distance education enterprises are published in these journals along with studies of course design and pedagogy.

The OJDLA*,* published by the University of West Georgia, is one of the few journals devoted primarily to the administration of distance and online education. The paucity of research on support for online and distance education faculty and students served as the impetus for starting a journal focused on the administrative aspects of distance learning (personal communications, Dr. Melanie Clay, September 20, 2012). Since the first issue was published in 1998, the OJDLA has evolved into one of the premier referred journals in the field of online and distance education, covering a broad range of administrative and management topics.

The purpose of this study is to examine the evolution of the OJDLA during its first 13 years. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What topical themes are most prominent in the journal, and (2) How did the journal topics change over the 13-year period under study?

Theoretical Framework

Despite the rapid proliferation in online and distance education courses and programs, there is a relative lack of research regarding how online and distance education have developed as fields of study and increasingly mainstream forms of educational delivery (Bowen, 2013). The purpose of this study is to better understand the evolution of themes and topics in the OJDLA and how they relate to broader concerns and trends in the broader context of higher education. By using the OJDLA as the lone source of data, the goal of this study is to, through constant comparative analysis, derive a theory regarding the development of online and distance education. This grounded theory research will provide greater insight into how the field has evolved by drawing conclusions and theory from the data source, thirteen years of articles from the OJDLA.

Methods

For the purposes of this study, 347 articles from the OJDLA, dating from 1998-2011, were examined. Because the OJDLA is open-access, permission was not required and access was easily gained to all of the necessary information. For this study, articles from the OJDLA served as the primary data source. The title and abstract for each article were collected and organized in chronological order. Once the article

abstracts had been collected and organized, they were read and coded through an inductive process by the overall theme or topic of the article. Initially, codes were not restricted and as many categories as needed were included. Once an initial coding was completed, a peer-review was conducted to ensure intercoder reliability. Each abstract was re-examined and each code was accepted or revised after discussion on the theme of the article. Following accepted procedure for qualitative research, the codes were subjected to repeated and continual review and revision, a process known as constant comparative analysis (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Throughout the process, a journal of notes was kept on the coding process as well as specific revisions that were made.

For each of the 347 identified articles, one code, out of 66 initial codes, was used to identify the overall theme and topic of the article. After an extensive peer-review, it was determined that 5 of the original 66 codes were never assigned to any articles. These codes were then eliminated and an enumerative analysis of codes was conducted to determine how many times each code had been used, as well as the percentage of total articles each code accounted for. After this initial analysis, articles were divided into five time periods. Each time period accounted for three years, except for the last time period which only accounted for two. The total of 13 years was divided this way because we believed three years was a sufficient amount of time for rapidly evolving technology and policy to create significant changes in themes in the literature. Articles from the year 2012 were not included in this analysis as the 2012 collection on the OJDLA was not complete. Once articles had been assigned to a time period, each period was analyzed in the same manner that the total time period was. Each time period was then assigned an individual code total and percentage of total.

Once analysis had been completed for the 13-year and individual time periods, a cross-sectional analysis was conducted to discover trends across time periods and codes with similar or related meanings. The results of this analysis helped inform the next coding revision in which codes with similar meanings were combined, resulting in 43 final codes. The amended codes were then used to revise each time period as well as the total time period. Consistent with strong and reliable qualitative research, another analysis and review was conducted within each time period, as well as across all time periods. This review helped inform knowledge regarding when certain themes and codes emerged in the literature. The following table includes the complete list of codes and their definitions.

Table 1	
Codes and Definitions	
Codes	Definition
Academic Honesty	Articles related to academic dishonesty in online and distance education.
Adjunct Faculty	Articles related to adjunct faculty teaching online or distance education courses.
Assessment and Learning Outcomes	Articles related to evaluation and assessment of learning outcomes of online and distance education courses.
Attitudes and Perceptions	Articles related to faculty and administrator attitudes toward and perceptions of online and distance education.
Capacity Planning	Articles related to planning and managing enrollment growth for online and distance education.
Comparisons with Face-to-Face Instruction	Articles comparing outcomes of online and distance education with face-to-face instruction.
Costs	Articles related to cost models, pricing of online and distance education courses, and return on investment strategies.
Course Design and Curriculum Development	Articles related to the design of online and distance education courses and the development and design of curriculum for such courses, including shareable content.
Electronic Mentoring	Articles related to mentoring students and instructors involved in online and distance education courses.
Emergency Responsiveness	Articles related to implementing strategies utilizing online and distance education to address instruction during man-made or natural disasters or emergencies.
Employer Perceptions	Articles related to employer perceptions towards students completing online and distance education programs.

Environmental Benefits	Articles related to the environmental benefits of online and distance education.
Evaluating Faculty	Articles related to evaluation of faculty teaching online and distance education courses.
Evaluation of Program Services	Articles related to the evaluation of online and distance education services.
Faculty Adoption	Articles related to faculty adoption of online and distance education; both motivational factors and deterrences.
Faculty Community Building	Articles related to fostering a community of faculty teaching online and distance education courses.
Faculty Recruitment	Articles related to obtaining faculty to teach online and distance education courses.
Faculty Training and Support	Articles related to the training and support of faculty involved in online and distance education.
Impact on Student Recruitment	Articles related to the role of online and distance educational opportunities in recruiting students.
Impact on Student Success	Articles related to the measurement of the impact of online and distance learning on student success.
Implementation of Course or Degree Program	Case studies on implementation of online and distance education courses or degree programs.
Institutional Adoption	Institutional motivations and practices for adopting and incorporating online and distance education.
Interactivity	Articles related to fostering community and interactivity between students in online and distance education courses.
Leadership	Articles related to leadership in online and distance education.
Learning Readiness	Articles related to assessing the readiness of students to enroll in online and distance education courses.
Legal Issues	Articles related to copyright and state regulation of online and distance education.
Marketing	Articles related to marketing techniques for online and distance education.
Organizational Administration	Articles related to staffing, planning, management, and organizational structure of online and distance education administrative departments.
Policy	Articles related to academic, fiscal, student, faculty policies for online and distance education including credit hour equivalencies, faculty compensation, and more.
Quality	Articles related to issues of quality and quality control in online and distance education courses and programs.
Research	Articles related to research on online and distance education topics, including literature review on the field of study.
Retention and Persistence	Articles related to the impact of online and distance education on student retention, persistence, and success.
Space Utilization	Articles related to the effective use of online and distance education to address classroom and building space.
Staff Development	Articles related to the use of online and distance education for professional development.
Strategic Planning	Articles related to strategic planning for online and distance education, or incorporating online and distance education into an institution's strategic plans.
Student Adoption	Articles related to student motivation to adopt online and distance education; also deterrences.
Student Characteristics	Articles profiling various characteristics of online and distance education students.
Student Perceptions and Experiences	Articles related to student perceptions and experiences in online and distance education learning environments.
Student Satisfaction	Articles related to student satisfaction with online and distance education courses.
Student Services and Support	Articles related to services and support for students enrolled in online and distance education courses and programs.

Teaching and Learning	Articles related to pedagogy and fostering learning in the online and distance education environments.
Technologies	Articles on the use of specific technologies to support teaching and learning in online and distance education environments.
Trends, Issues, and Future Directions	Articles related to current issues, trends, and the strategic direction of online and distance education.

Findings

Throughout the review process, clear and consistent topics emerged in the literature. Certain topics appeared regularly across the 13-year period, while others emerged and became more salient in later time frames.

Comprehensive Analysis: Articles Written - 1998-2011

Out of the final 43 codes, the 14 following codes appeared in every time period from 1998-2011: attitudes and perceptions; costs; course design and curriculum development; leadership; faculty adoption; faculty training and support; implementation of course or degree program; interactivity, learning readiness; quality; strategic planning; student perceptions and experiences; student services and support; and technologies. Although these topics appear consistently across the time period examined, not all of these codes account for the highest percentage of articles. In the total time period and in each individual time period, the codes which accounted for the top ten percent of articles were identified. The table below shows the codes which account for the top 10 percent of articles that were written in the 13 year time period.

Table 2		
Codes representing the top 10% of articles written 1998-2011		
Code Name	Percent of Total Articles	Number of Total Articles
Course Design and Curriculum Development	7%	23
Implementation of Course or Degree Program	6%	21
Faculty Training and Support	6%	20
Faculty Adoption	5%	19

Articles Written 1998-2000

The first time period begins in 1998, with the start of the OJDLA, and continues to 2000 for a total of three years. In this first time period there are a total of 60 articles. Two codes, capacity planning and impact on student recruitment, appear only in this time period and are never again used to code an article. The table below shows the codes which account for the top 10 percent of articles which were written in this three year time period. More than 10 percent of the articles focused on course design and curriculum development, aligning with the fledgling stage of online and distance education at that time. In addition to concern about how to structure online and distance education courses, more than half of the articles written about legal issues (62 percent) appeared in this first time period signaling a strong concern regarding the legitimacy in implementation of online and distance education. In the early years of the journal, researchers and practitioners were focused primarily on the mechanics and construction of online and distance education. Codes related to students and online and distance education do not feature prominently in the journal. Instead, focus is given to faculty, both their adoption of online and distance education, as well as their training and support. Together, these codes on faculty account for 14 percent of the articles written in this time period.

Table 3		
Codes representing the top 10% of articles written 1998-2000		
Code Name	Percent of Total Articles Written 1998-2000	Percent of Total Articles Using This Code

Course Design and Curriculum Development	12%	30%
Legal Issues	8%	62%
Technologies	8%	29%
Trends, Issues, and Future Directions	7%	50%
Faculty Adoption	7%	21%
Faculty Training and Support	7%	20%
Implementation of a Course or Degree Program	7%	19%

Articles Written 2001-2003

The second time period begins in 2001 and continues to 2003 for a total of three years. In this time period, there are a total of 74 articles. Although online and distance education have long been considered answers to problems of growing enrollments, shrinking budgets, and limited space, only one article across the 13-year time period addressed the issue of space utilization and it was written during this time period. While curriculum and legal issues were at the forefront in the early years of the journal, the early 2000s saw a shift to articles featuring quality as a theme. Almost half (43 percent) of all articles discussing issues of quality control in online and distance education were written in this time period, accounting for nine percent of all articles written during this time. As administrators strove to understand how to maintain quality in changing educational formats, issues of implementation and organizational administration played a key role in the journal from 2001 through 2003. Case studies which discussed the implementation of a course or degree program featuring online and distance education accounted for nine percent of all articles written in this time period. With more institutions considering adoption of new delivery methods, organizational administration, a code for articles related to the structure, staffing, and administration of online and distance education units, accounted for eight percent of the literature. Issues of interactivity in online and distance education and the use of other new technologies also feature prominently in the literature, each accounting for seven percent of the articles in the time period. The table below shows the codes which account for the top 10 percent of articles that were written in this three year time period.

Table 4		
Codes representing the top 10% of articles written 2001-2003		
Code Name	Percent of Total Articles Written 2000-2003	Percent of Total Articles Using This Code
Quality	9%	43%
Implementation of a Course or Degree Program	9%	33%
Organizational Administration	8%	42%
Interactivity	7%	45%
Technologies	7%	29%

Articles Written 2004-2006

The third time period begins in 2004 and continues to 2006 for a total of three years. In this time period, there are a total of 81 articles, the most of any time period. No codes are singular or unique to this time period. Articles relating to student services and support account for 10 percent of the total time period, and nearly half (47 percent) of all articles written on these topics appear in this time period. Faculty training and support (nine percent) and implementation of a course or degree program (five percent) continued to be prominent codes with quality dropping to only five percent of the total time period. Two-thirds of all articles written on teaching and learning appear in this time period and a new code of retention and persistence emerges, accounting for five percent of the total time period. The table below shows the codes which account for the top 10 percent of articles that were written in this three year time period.

Table 5		

Codes representing the top 10% of articles written 2004-2006		
Code Name	Percent of Total Articles Written 2004-2006	Percent of Total Articles Using This Code
Student Services and Support	10%	47%
Faculty Training and Support	9%	35%
Implementation of a Course or Degree Program	5%	19%
Teaching and Learning	5%	66%
Quality	5%	25%
Retention and Persistence	5%	25%

Articles Written 2007-2009

The fourth time period begins in 2007 and continues to 2009 for a total of three years. In this time period, there are a total of 74 articles. With the emergence of retention and persistence as a code in the previous time period, it gains a strong foothold in the latter part of the decade accounting for 12 percent of all articles in the time period. More than half (56 percent) of all articles written on the topic of retention and persistence are written from 2007-2009. Although retention and persistence only emerges as a code in the third time period examined, once it emerges it continues to have a strong presence in the literature. Institutional adoption, a code which only emerges in the second time period, also gains traction in this time period, accounting for seven percent of all articles in this three-year period. Course design and curriculum development (seven percent) and faculty adoption (five percent) continue to be significant in the literature. Attitudes and perceptions, a code which focused on faculty and administrator reactions to online and distance education, is present in every time period, but most salient in this time period, accounting for one quarter of all articles written on this topic (26 percent). Employer perceptions emerges as a code that is singular to this time period, with two articles appearing that relate to employer perceptions toward students completing online and distance education programs. The table below shows the codes which account for the top 10 percent of articles that were written in this three year time period.

Table 6		
Codes representing the top 10% of articles written 2007-2009		
Code Name	Percent of Total Articles Written 2007-2009	Percent of Total Articles Using This Code
Retention and Persistence	12%	56%
Institutional Adoption	7%	38%
Course Design and Curriculum Development	7%	30%
Attitudes and Perceptions	5%	26%
Faculty Adoption	5%	21%

Articles Written 2010-2011

The fifth and final time period begins in 2010 and concludes with 2011, the last year with complete articles available in the OJDLA. In contrast to the other time periods, this time period only covers two years and contains a total of 58 articles. Two codes emerged in this time period that had not previously been used in any other time period: environmental benefits, and the impact on student success. Despite the fact that these codes account for only one article each their emergence signals a desire to consider online and distance education in a new way. Codes relating to faculty continue to be prominent with faculty adoption and faculty training and support accounting for a combined 16 percent (nine percent and seven percent respectively) of all articles written in this last time period. Course design and curriculum development, a code which appears across all time periods, continues to be significant at nine percent. Student-related codes, retention and persistence, student perceptions and experiences, and student services and support, account for a combined 15 percent of all articles written in the latest two years of the journal. Quality, institutional adoption, and technologies all continue to be prominent themes in the

literature, each accounting for five percent of the total time period. The table below shows the codes which account for the top 10 percent of articles that were written in this two year time period.

Table 7		
Codes representing the top 10% of articles written 2010-2011		
Code Name	Percent of Total Articles Written 2010-2011	Percent of Total Articles Using This Code
Faculty Adoption	9%	26%
Course Design and Curriculum Development	9%	21%
Faculty Training and Support	7%	20%
Institutional Adoption	5%	20%
Quality	5%	18%
Retention and Persistence	5%	18%
Student Perceptions and Experiences	5%	33%
Student Services and Support	5%	17%
Technologies	5%	17%

Discussion

Online and distance learning, like other facets of higher education, are constantly evolving. As such, the literature surrounding a field is often shaped by the current event landscape and trends in higher education. In the current fiscally austere terrain, colleges and universities increasingly turn to online and distance education as solutions to curb costs, as well as to increase access and completion (Lewin, 2013). Despite a great desire by higher education stakeholders to understand how online and distance education both shape and are shaped by higher education as a whole, research on efficacy and quality often lag behind rapidly evolving technology and policy decisions (Fain, 2013). The purpose of this study was to discover the most prominent topical themes in the OJDLA and to better understand how they changed over the 13-year period by relating trends in the journal to larger trends in higher education, federal policy, and other external influences. Discussion of the findings will focus on the full time period, as well as each of the five time periods described in this study.

In the early years of the journal, researchers and practitioners were focused primarily on the mechanics and construction of online and distance education. This period is marked by early- adopter faculty testing the waters of technology-mediated instruction. These efforts were often isolated activities without a broader institutional connection to a strategic focus on the use of technology for teaching and learning. In many cases, the articles reflected the first-time experience of individual faculty teaching an online or distance education course. In the University System of Georgia, the late 1990's witnessed the transition from interactive video delivered courses to the Internet as advances in information technology made the web a more viable option for the delivery of interactive content. As the use of digital content delivery became more prominent, concerns regarding copyright and intellectual property rights began to emerge, particularly among faculty and publishers. Issues regarding the ownership of course content were forced to the forefront of distance and online education as institutions examined policies governing the development of online courses within the framework of Work for Hire policies. Electronic databases created broader access to copyrighted content sparking the debate over fair use that has persisted even until today.

While curriculum and legal issues were at the forefront in the early years of the journal, the beginning of the second millennium saw a shift to articles featuring quality as a theme. While advancements in information technology were beginning to make the Internet a viable mechanism through which to deliver highly interactive learning content, the quality of this new form of educational delivery came under increased scrutiny. As early as 1996, organizations dedicated to the support of educational technologies began to codify elements of online and distance education to define quality parameters. In 1996, the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications issued their *Principles of Good*

Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs. In 1998, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) published the original *Principles of Good Practice,* which accompanied the launch of the Electronic Campus, a marketplace of online education opportunities offered by colleges and universities in the SREB states. Consistent with the prevailing position of accrediting bodies, the SREB declared that the responsibility for quality control of online and distance education rests with the offering higher education institution and the designated state oversight agency (Principles of Good Practice, 2012).

The debate surrounding quality in online and distance education helped raised awareness of the need for faculty training. Within the University System of Georgia (USG), the first in a series of system-wide Faculty Development Workshops was held during the summer of 1995 aimed at enhancing the ability of faculty to effectively use technology in the teaching and learning process. These workshops were eventually incorporated into campus-based faculty development programs. Moreover, special legislative initiatives provided funding for USG colleges and universities to hire instructional technology support specialists. These efforts recognized quality in online and distance education is closely related to faculty training.

As administrators strove to understand how to maintain quality in changing educational formats, issues of implementation and organizational administration played a key role in the journal from 2001 through 2003. Online and distance education are closely aligned with various aspects of continuing higher education. Both programs tend to serve primarily adult learners and have traditionally assumed an entrepreneurial orientation within colleges and universities. In seeking to effectively negotiate power and interest, administrators of continuing higher education use a variety of strategies including networking among influential advocates and building mutually beneficial partnerships (Burnette, 2010; Watkins and Tisdell, 2006). As online and distance education moved from the margins to the mainstream of the academy, new administrative structures evolved that recognized the shared but unique needs and interests of electronic outreach. Ideal leadership in online and distance education exemplifies a "set of attitudes and behaviors that create conditions for innovative change" (Beaudoin, 2002, p. 132). Thus the organizational placement of online and distance education within the existing structures for continuing higher education ignores the specialized and diverse skill set that is needed to provide effective leadership within online and distance education programs.

Although topics related to organizational structure of online and distance education operations emerged several years into the journal's development, articles pertaining to students and student success did not gain significant attention from scholars until 2007, immediately preceding a national focus on college completion. While the United States ranks ninth in the world in the proportion of young adults enrolled in college, the percentage of adults, ages 25-34 earning a postsecondary education credential lags behind other developed countries. Among those earning a postsecondary credential, low-income adults are disproportionally represented. More than 50 percent of those who earn a post-secondary credential come from higher-income households, while low-income adults represent only nine percent of those earning a credential (Pennington, 2012). Although retention rates for online and distance education courses have historically lagged behind traditional educational offerings, the recent emphasis of federal education policy towards college completion has heightened the awareness of online providers. Such measures contribute to the need for faculty training to improve pedagogy and services to support online and distance learners.

Unlike topics related to student success, articles pertaining to faculty issues were prominent throughout the 13-year publication period reviewed in the study. These issues reflected a diversity of interest among practitioners, faculty, and researchers. Scholars included topics such as attitudes of faculty toward online and distance education, training and support needs, and intellectual property issues. Interestingly, the impact of online and distance education on space utilization appeared only once as a topic across the 13-year period, despite the growing use of hybrid courses as a strategy to reduce facilities cost. Similarly, marketing of online and distance education and the perceptions of employers towards hiring of online graduates did not share the same level of attention as faculty issues.

Conclusion and Future Implications

The prominence of faculty related articles in the OJDLA reflects the historical role of faculty governance

in higher education and curriculum development. Within the contemporary college and university, faculty members have "retained the privileges of selecting and promoting their colleagues, choosing curriculum, and sustaining their preferred instructional practices" (Cohen and Krisker, 2010, p. 519). In this model, faculty members operate as individual business units with the authority to determine the appropriate instructional delivery methods within the framework of academic freedom. Faculty resistance includes fears that they will be replaced by technology and a lack of familiarity with online instruction. In addition there are entrenched perceptions that online instruction will result in increased workloads that are either not rewarded or may take time away from responsibilities that are more recognized for tenure and promotion (Ithaka S+R, 2012; Bruner, 2007).

As institutions employ strategies to extend educational access to adult and nontraditional student populations, the development of online courses and programs becomes an increasingly key component of this approach. However, faculty resistance to the adoption of online and distance education provides barriers to widespread institutional adoption of online and distance education. A group of professors at San Jose State University wrote an open letter in which they publicly decried a move by their administration to include material from MOOC's originating from edX, a platform developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University, saying the initiative was a "push to" replace professors, dismantle departments, and provide a diminished education for students in public universities," (Kolowich, 2013). The move towards MOOCs has increased the strained governance relationships tensions among faculty, administrators and governing boards (Kolowich, 2013).

Although faculty acceptance and support for online education continues to be one of the major gatekeepers to the broader institutional adoption of online and distance education, it is increasingly becoming a much less onerous barrier than in previous years. Given the national priority for increasing college access and completion, state legislators often play an active role in institutional adoption of online and distance education. The State of Florida passed legislation in 2013 allowing external providers, such as edX, to submit courses for approval to be offered as credit-bearing at Florida public institutions (Rivard, 2013). Despite continued faculty backlash, online and distance education are no longer a fad or trend, but have assumed a strategic role in the educational mission of colleges and universities. State government officials, educational associations, and administrators are beginning to reach consensus about the need for increased and consistent adoption of online and distance education across institutions of higher learning. In their policy statement on digital learning, the National Education Association (2013) articulates

In the fast-paced, worldwide, competitive workplace we now live in, our traditional school models are not capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century student... appropriate use of technology in education will improve student learning, quality of instruction, and education employee effectiveness, and will provide opportunities to eradicate educational inequities.

As colleges and universities are challenged to deliver cost-effective educational opportunities to an increasingly diverse student population, the OJDLA will continue to serve as an important medium to disseminate not only scholarly research, but best practices in online and distance education administration. The journal serves as a site for the intersection of online and distance education practitioners and scholars across the educational arena. The 13 years of articles reviewed in this study focused primarily on topics related to faculty, curriculum development, quality, technologies and more recently, student success. With the shift towards greater accountability and cost control in postsecondary education, future issues might place greater focus on effective strategies for the administration of distance education within the changing milieu of higher education

While topics surrounding the interest and support for faculty teaching online should remain a central thrust of the journal, managing online and distance education has become a specialized discipline and thus deserves more scholarship related to effective leadership. Despite the fact that online and distance education have become increasingly mainstream platforms for educational delivery and attainment, administrators and faculty, and legislators continue to struggle with how to properly incorporate these platforms into the higher education experience. According to a recent Gallup survey, college presidents still express "skepticism" and "ambivalence" that "MOOCs are going to transform student learning, or reduce costs to students," (Jaschik, 2013). Although retention and persistence gained traction as a theme in the journal, topics related to faculty, including curriculum and course design, accounted for the largest

percentage of articles in the journal's first decade. As higher education administrators and stakeholders seek answers to whether or not online and distance education will be able to help meet the nation's goals of educational attainment and address other pressing issues in higher education, including rising costs, articles related to efficacy in student success, cost control, and quality should play a more prominent role in the journal.

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