

Planning and Implementing Online Instruction: Faculty Perceptions of One University

by

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Introduction

To maintain a **competitive advantage**, colleges and universities are expanding their online course offerings and view online learning as essential to their viability (Allen & Seaman, 2007)

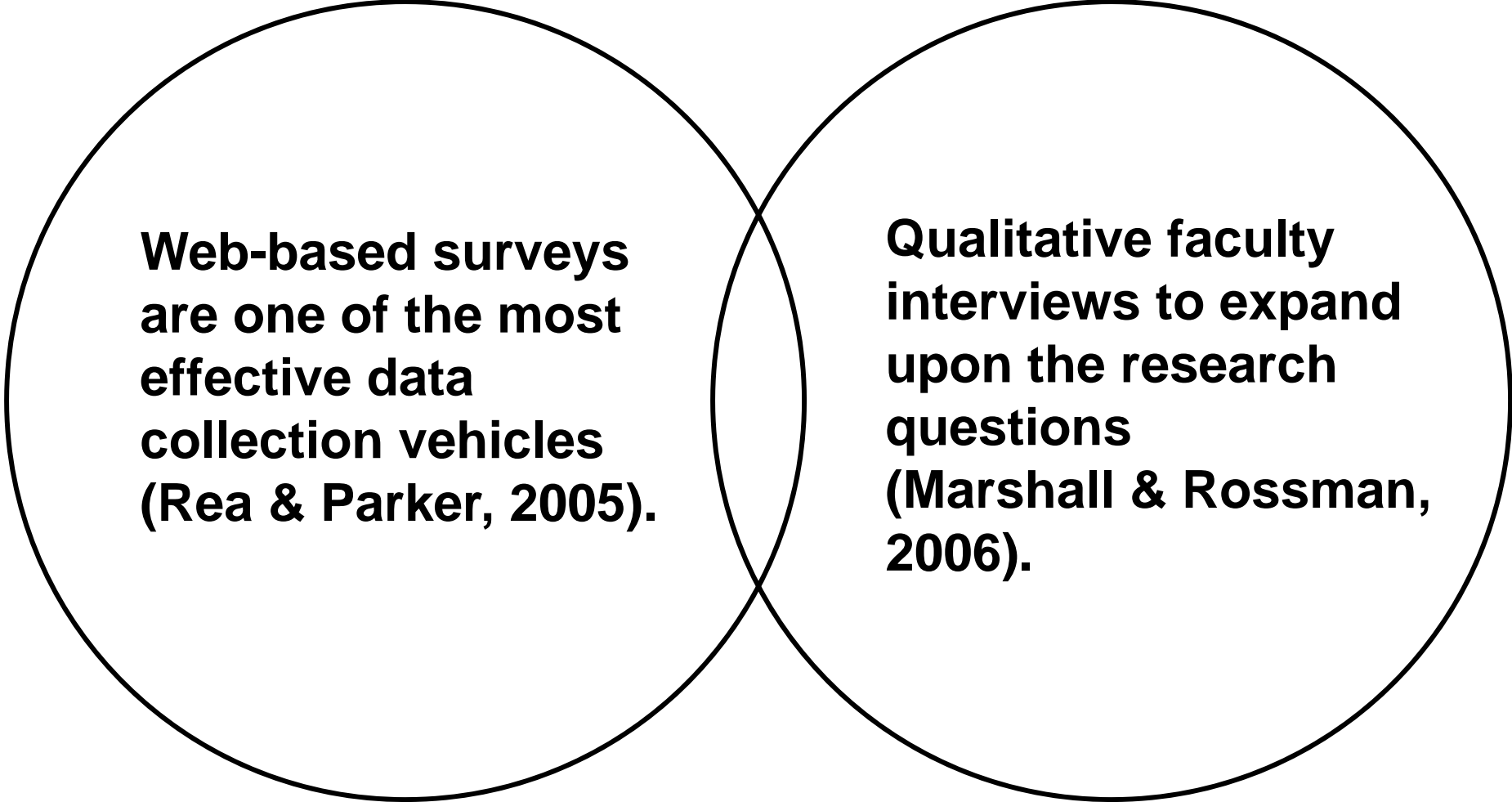
“Faculty are a critical and core resource to the success of any distance education initiative and facilitating understanding of university educators and policy makers as to the conditions that encourage or discourage faculty participation may assist in sustaining academic quality”
(Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008, p. 626)

Problem: Some faculty are resistance to change

- Natriello (2005) argued that “**distance learning initiatives threaten core values**” (p. 1889)
- Therefore, it is important to understand why some faculty members adopt online instruction, while others do not



Mixed Methodology



Web-based surveys are one of the most effective data collection vehicles (Rea & Parker, 2005).

Qualitative faculty interviews to expand upon the research questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).



Why do people adopt something?

1. There is a relative advantage
2. It is compatible with their lives
3. It is not too complex
4. They can try it
5. They have seen other people use it

Rogers (2003)

Conceptual Framework



Research Questions

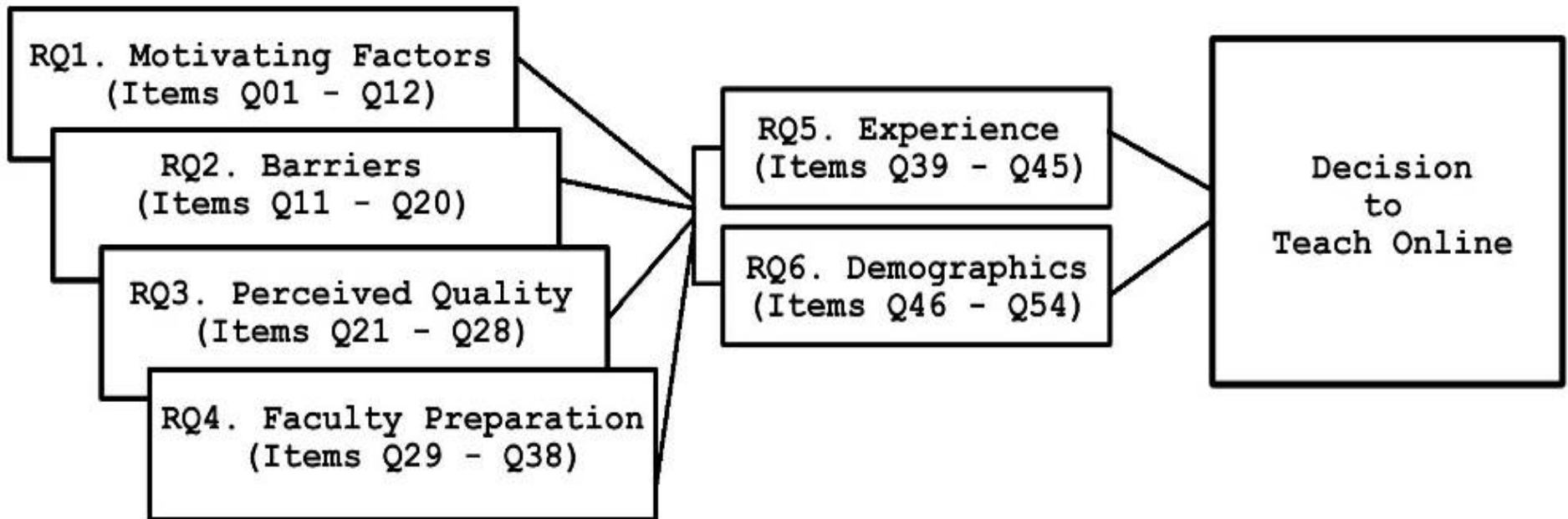
- RQ1. What **factors motivate** faculty adoption of online instruction?
- RQ2. What **barriers inhibit** faculty adoption of online instruction?
- RQ3. How do faculty members **perceive the quality** of online instruction?
- RQ4. How do faculty members **prepare themselves** to teach online?

Why do faculty adopt teaching online?

Zhen, Garthwait, and Pratt (2008) identified six themes that provide a foundation for this study:

1. experience
2. time
3. peer-pressure
4. self-efficacy
5. philosophy
6. pedagogical style

Research Model for this Study



(Wright, 2012)

Participants

At a large suburban university in the
Southeastern United States

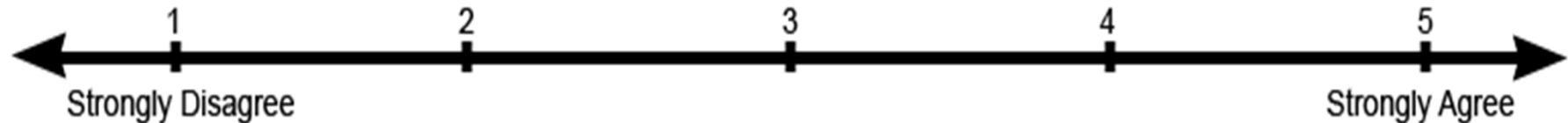


363 faculty members completed
a web-based survey
(41% of full-time faculty members)



Two representatives from each
college were interviewed
(14 total)

The Quantitative Instrument



- Self-developed 54 item instrument was broken down into **six sections** aligned to the research questions
- Scale was a **continuum from 1 – 5**
- **Reliability:** The final administration ($N=363$) of the survey was highly reliable (38 items; $\alpha = .91$).

Interview Procedures

- Participants random selected from a pool
- The interviews followed a precise protocol and were audio recorded (Marshall & Rossman, 2006)
- The same questions in the same format and method were asked of all the interview subjects
- Spiral method of analysis was used to reduce the nodes to themes, and then group the themes that informed the findings (Creswell, 2008)

Findings

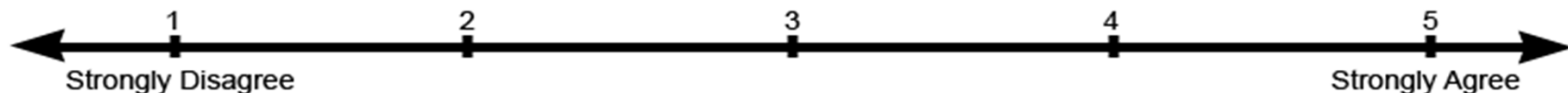


Motivating Factors

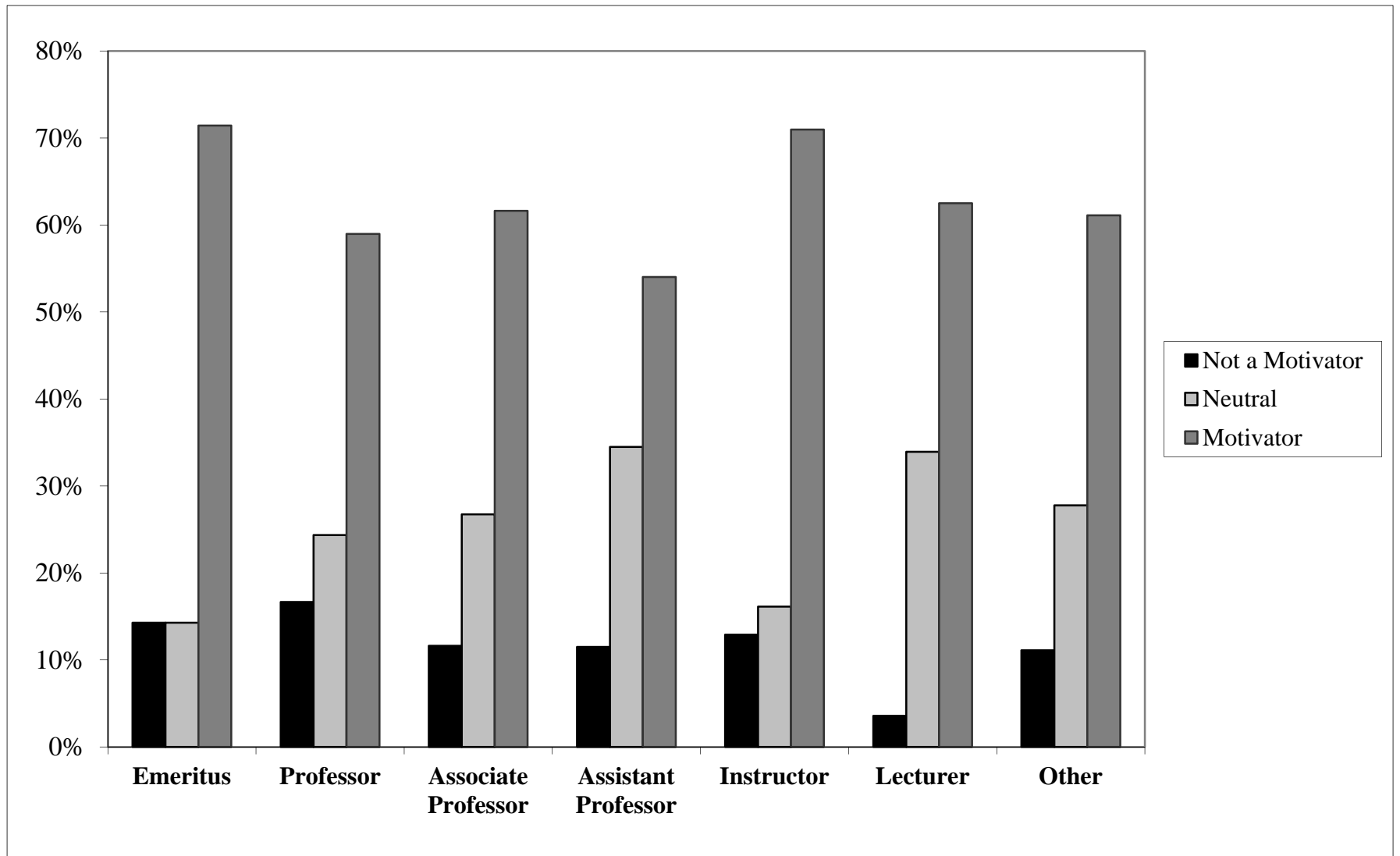
1. Flexibility and convenience for the student and instructor

Descriptive Statistics for Motivating Factors (N=363)

Questions		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q1	Teaching online courses provides my students with more flexible learning opportunities.	4.07	1.02
Q8	Teaching online is my own personal decision (as opposed to being required by my department).	4.03	1.22
Q2	Teaching online courses provides me with more flexible working conditions.	3.89	1.17
Q3	Teaching online courses provides opportunities for extra financial compensation.	3.77	1.14



Motivated by Extra Money

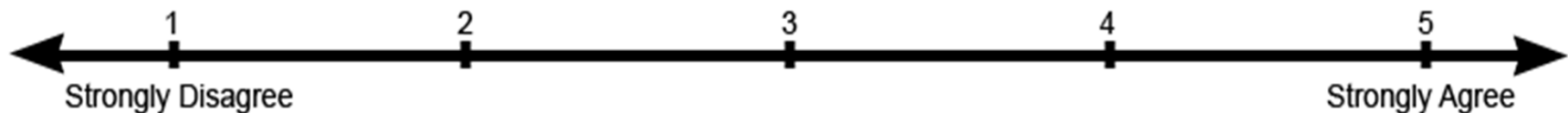


Pressure, What Pressure?

Front line faculty often feel detached from the decisions made higher up and less likely to buy into these ideas (Maguire, 2005; Wilson, 2001).

Descriptive Statistics for Motivating Factors (N=363)

Questions		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q4	I feel pressured by competitors (e.g., other universities, programs) to teach online courses.	2.52	1.41
Q5	I feel pressured by my department chair, dean, or other administrators to teach online courses.	2.23	1.34
Q6	I feel pressured by my colleagues to teach online courses.	1.78	1.04
Q7	I feel pressured by my students to teach online courses.	1.76	1.01



Nobody Feels Pressure

- “I would not say like it is an overt pressure. More like this is where the university is heading. The college is certainly emphasizing distance learning and so there is a subtle encouragement.”
- “I feel the universal pressure from the Board of Regents saying we need to do more. I have never felt direct pressure.”

Adoption Barriers

1. Too much work, too much time

<i>Descriptive Statistics for Adoption Barriers (N=363)</i>			
Questions		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q14	Teaching online courses takes more work than teaching traditional face-to-face courses.	2.20	1.14
Q15	Teaching online courses takes more time than teaching traditional face-to-face courses.	2.25	1.17
Q13	Teaching online courses is more frustrating than teaching traditional face-to-face courses.	2.85	1.24
Q20	Teaching online courses is not rewarded in the tenure and promotion process.	2.91	1.21

* Note: Items are Negatively Worded

Tech support is not a barrier

Technical support is cited as a barrier to adoption of online instruction (Berge, 1998; Bonk, 2001; Jones, Lindner, Murphy, & Dooley, 2002; Seaman, 2009).

The findings showed tech support **was not an issue** ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.97$)



Perceptions of Quality

<i>Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of Quality (N=363)</i>			
Questions		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q23	I am able to create deeper comprehension and understanding of the content when I teach online.	2.44	1.16
Q24	I feel the quality of instruction in an online course is at least as good as a traditional face-to-face course.	2.83	1.34
Q28	The advantages of teaching online far outweigh the disadvantages.	2.84	1.38
Q21	There are pedagogical advantages to teaching online.	2.92	1.21
Q22	I feel the quality of online course content is at least as good as a traditional face-to-face course.	2.93	1.38
Q25	I feel the quality of learning outcomes in an online course is at least as good as a traditional face-to-face course.	2.99	1.35
Q26	I feel the quality of student's work in an online course is at least as good as a traditional face-to-face course.	2.99	1.33

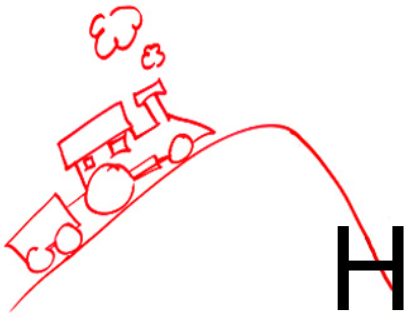
This is not teaching

“distance learning seems rather distance”

– Professor of Humanities

“This is not teaching! They do it because they can teach from Bermuda. And they say, ‘wow, what a deal’, I can teach from Bermuda. Well, I don't think that's teaching.”

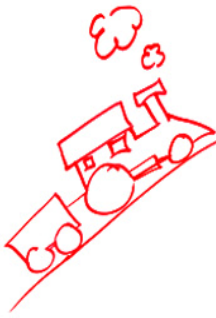
– a very distinguished faculty member



Faculty Preparation High Level of Self-efficacy

Descriptive Statistics for Faculty Preparation (N=363)

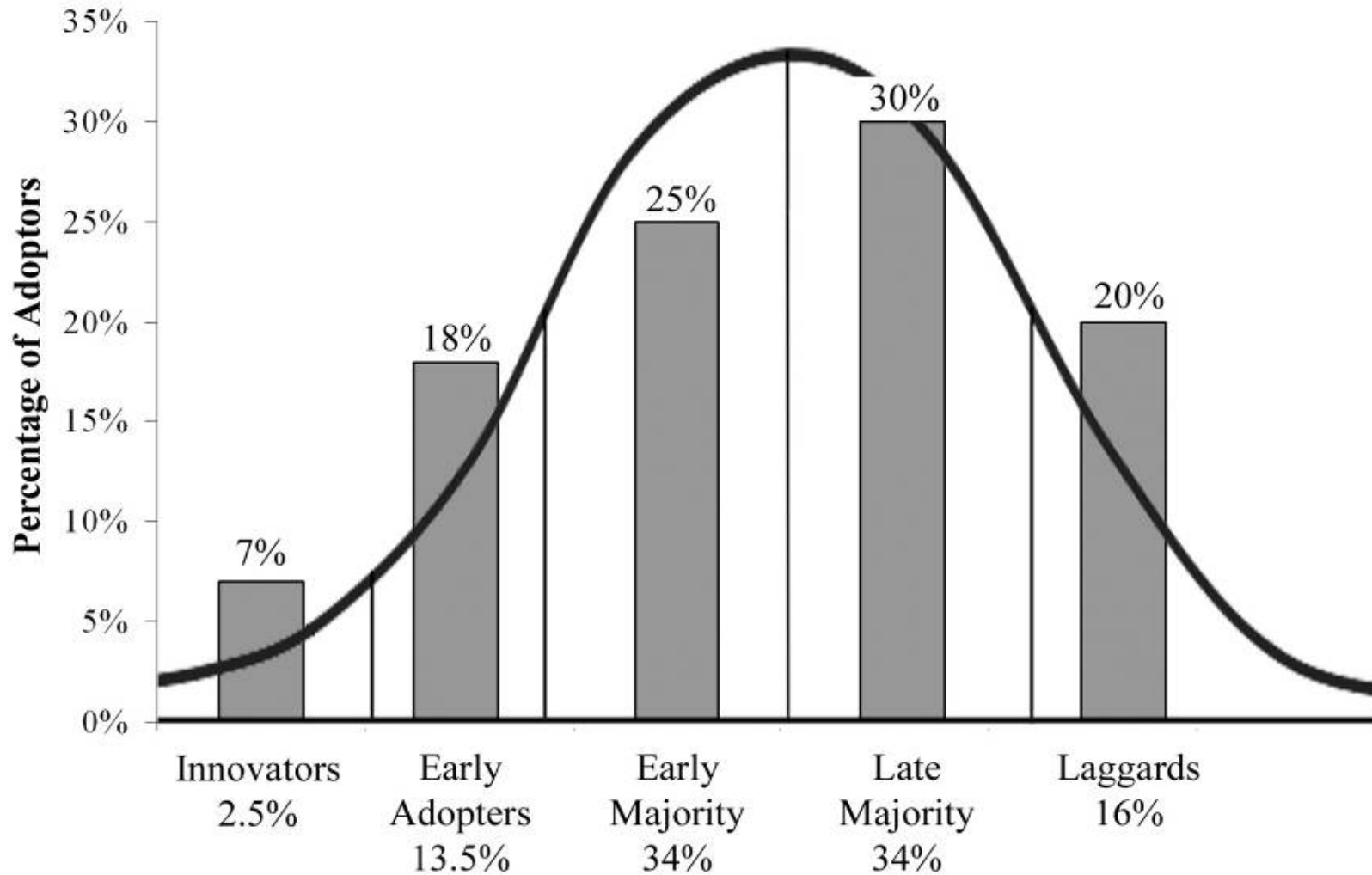
Questions		<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q32	I have the necessary technical (computer) skills to teach online courses.	4.11	1.03
Q33	I have had opportunities to learn how to develop the technical (computer) skills for teaching online courses.	4.02	1.03
Q34	I have the necessary pedagogical skills needed to teach online courses.	3.98	1.01
Q35	I have had opportunities to learn how to develop the pedagogical skills for teaching online courses.	3.85	1.11
Q36	I have the necessary knowledge to develop instructional materials for online courses.	3.95	1.07



Faculty Preparation High Level of Self-efficacy

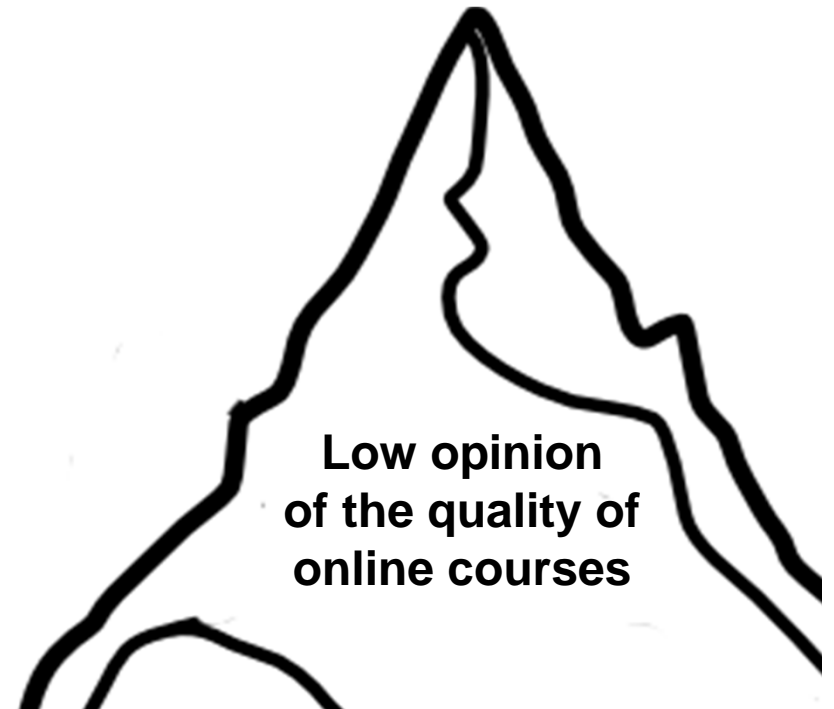
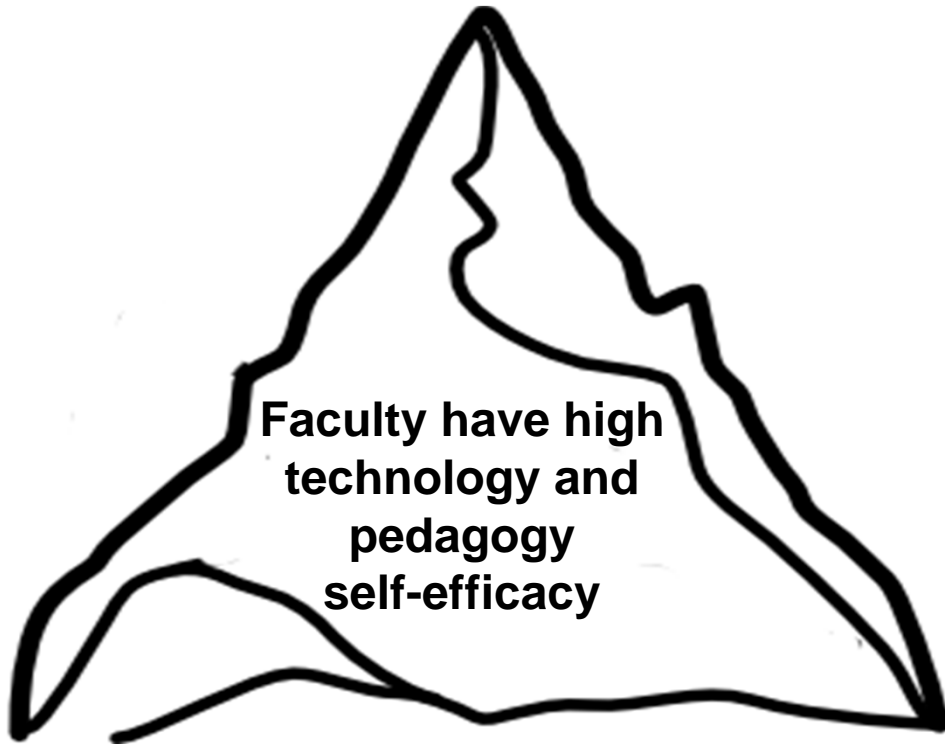
- Overall, the high self-efficacy does not translate into more online instruction?
Why?
- Interesting question for the future?
- But, faculty are not looking at each others' work.

Level of Faculty Experience



Stages of Innovation and Adoption Curve (Rogers, 2003)

Gap between skills and perception of quality



Recommendations

1. Reward teaching online in the T & P process
2. Implement a professional learning credit system to track progress
3. Reassess our assessments as a way to reduce cheating concerns
4. Designate and fund an instructional designer for each college. This person can provide one-on-one support to the individual faculty member.

Facilitate Opportunities to Observe

- When asked if faculty had opportunities to observe other faculty members teaching online, this item produced the lowest mean score in the section ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.36$)
- Solution: The formation of situated learning with **communities of practice (CoP)** (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Set up co-teaching model for online teaching



Questions?
Thank you for your attention

