6-30-2017

Assessing the Needs of Online Pedagogical Skill Development in Higher Education

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Assessing the Needs of Online Pedagogical Skill Development in Higher Education

by
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An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University
2017

This applied dissertation was submitted by Michelle Horton under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Abstract

Assessing the Needs of Online Pedagogical Skill Development in Higher Education. Michelle Horton, 2017: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education. Keywords: online courses, professional development, nontraditional education, higher education

The increasing demand of online education is a driving factor for development of training for online pedagogy as a separate entity of traditional pedagogical practices. Literature relating to online teaching suggests that continued research is needed to understand the development of online pedagogy, in order for higher education institutions to provide relevant training and support for online instructors. The problem examined in this study is understanding professional development and support needs of online instructors to enhance the continuous development of pedagogical skills in an online learning environment.

The purpose of the study was to identify online instructor support needs by investigating perceptions, successes, and challenges of online instructors at a multicampus state college in the southeast. The study explored the experiences of online instructors, in order to form an understanding of the types of professional development strategies that are needed to guide the transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction. Using case-study techniques, this qualitative study assessed the perspectives of five faculty participants from academic disciplines representing computer science, mathematics, nursing, psychology, and sociology. Data were collected from interviews and resource documents and analyzed to reveal several findings relating to the practice of online instruction.

Three key themes emerged from the findings: reflection of practice, connection to students, and process of work. Reflecting on personal experiences and learning from the experiences of other online instructors is influential to the development of online pedagogical skills. Connecting to students using multiple methods of delivery and developing an organized course structure is critical to successful online instruction. Navigating student communication, developing engaging course content, and identifying when students need help are challenges associated with managing the work of online instruction.

Results of this study indicate the need for professional development programs that provide a structured emphasis on the development of online pedagogical skills. To address the evolving nature of online instruction, professional development programs should provide the opportunity to reflect on the practice of online teaching, assess individual training needs for online instructors, and guide the development of relevant online course content. As the demand for online education continues to grow along with emerging technologies associated with online learning, future research should be conducted on the length of time required to develop effective online pedagogical practices.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The annual report of Allen and Seaman (2015) regarding online learning in U.S. higher education indicated a trend of online course enrollments surpassing overall course enrollments in higher education. The report gathered data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System to determine that "70.7% of all currently active, degree-granting institutions that are open to the public have some distance offerings" (Allen & Seaman, 2015, p. 9). According to the report, data indicated that the type of institutions reporting the highest number of distance offerings were 4-year and 2-year public institutions (Allen & Seaman, 2015). With the growing demand of online education, higher education institutions must address the development of quality online instruction (Davis & Dykman, 2008). Many efforts to improve online education have focused on utilizing teaching strategies that mimic lecture style instruction, rather than creating new instruction methods specific to the online environment (Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012). Online instruction requires specific planning that is different from preparing for traditional classroom instruction (Davis & Dykman, 2008). The consequences of poor online instruction could result in hesitation from students and faculty to participate in online course work (Davis & Dykman, 2008).

The problem examined was understanding professional development and support needs of online instructors to enhance the continuous development of pedagogical skills in an online learning environment. Faculty resources for acquiring appropriate technical and pedagogical skills are crucial to meet the requirements of online teaching and learning (Fish & Wickersham, 2009). Pedagogical development specific to online instruction is often lacking in training experiences of college instructors (Crawford-Ferre

& Wiest, 2012; Fish & Wickersham, 2009). Support and professional development programs are needed to influence continuous enhancement of pedagogical skills in an online learning environment (Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2011).

Online instruction requires more than an understanding of technology because pedagogical practices and teaching roles for online instruction are different from traditional face-to-face instruction (Ching, Hsu, & Rice, 2015; Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008). Course design and instructor support should be approached in a manner that support the context of instruction. Online instructors should be presented with transformative learning experiences that allow for critical reflection of their teaching practices (Baran et al., 2011). The development of effective pedagogy in an online learning environment is a growing concern for higher education institutions as online course enrollments continue to show enrollment growth beyond traditional face-to-face course enrollments (Allen & Seaman, 2011, 2015; Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012).

The site used for this study is a large multicampus state college in the southeastern United States. The college supports a two-county service district with three campuses and three centers. One of 28 colleges of the state's college system, this college opened in 1948 as a junior college and transitioned to state college status with the addition of baccalaureate degrees in 2010. Traditional face-to-face courses, hybrid courses, and online courses are offered in college credit academic programs leading to associate and baccalaureate degrees. The support for online instruction at this college includes assistance for faculty and adjunct instructors with online course set up and use of technology within the online learning platform. Training for online faculty is developed and managed by the department of distance learning. Course development and peer review for online courses is managed in the department of distance learning.

Phenomenon of interest. An exploration of online instructional development in higher education is of particular interest as the demand for online education continues to grow. According to a survey conducted by the Babson Survey Research Group, online course enrollments are growing at a much higher rate than overall lecture course enrollments in higher education (Allen & Seaman, 2011). The survey reports that more than 6.1 million students or 31% of the overall population of students are choosing online course delivery (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

Background and justification. Growth in online education has resulted in many studies regarding online teaching best practices (Fish & Wickersham, 2009). More research is available on online learning, but research focusing on the influence of professional development on online instruction is lacking (Ray, 2009; Storandt, Dossin, & Lacher, 2012). Many online instructors lack experiences with online education from both student and teacher perspectives which can present challenges in transitioning to an online teaching environment (McQuiggan, 2012). Professional development delivered in online formats provides opportunities for faculty to gain experience working and collaborating with others in an online environment (Henning, 2012; Lane, 2013). Trends indicate that the demand for online education will continue to exist resulting in a need for continuous development of effective online teaching and learning support strategies (Fish & Wickersham, 2009; Meyer & Murrell, 2014; Smith, 2005). The researcher has observed this need as instructors at a multicampus state college in the southeastern United States embrace technology and online teaching at different levels of ability and acceptance. The subject college has an enrollment of over 25,000 students and operates in six different locations in a two-county service district. The college employs 200 full-time faculty and 445 adjunct faculty (Pensacola State College, 2013). College-credit degrees

include associate in arts, associate in science, and bachelor of applied science programs and courses that are delivered in face-to-face, hybrid, and online delivery formats.

Deficiencies in the evidence. The transformation of teaching roles from face-to-face format to online instruction is a growing topic of research. With increased accessibility to technology and the need to accommodate flexible schedules, higher education institutions are faced with addressing the needs of instructors in effectively adjusting their traditional teaching practices (McQuiggan, 2012). McQuiggan (2012) conducted an action research study that reviews online teaching development as a factor in the use of technology in the classroom. The study indicated that online instructor training, as faculty development, led instructors to review their teaching practices and resulted in a greater incorporation of technology within their face-to-face classes (McQuiggan, 2012). Marek (2009) examined the levels of support available to online instructors in graduate-level library and information science programs. The study included quantitative and qualitative survey questions submitted to faculty of these graduate-level programs. The results indicated that support for online teaching should be modeled around institutional policies that promote "faculty course release, program-level training and support, and structured mentoring" (Marek, 2009, p. 275).

The studies mentioned are examples of research regarding the impact of online instructor training within the classroom and research regarding an effective support model for program specific online instructors. Online education is not static, and new technology is a constant. Addressing the development of relevant training programs for online instruction should be an evolving process that considers the specific needs of faculty and the institution (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). The academic gap in research of online education is the study of successes and challenges of online instructors who teach

at state colleges with multiple campuses. Understanding the instructional needs for the development of online pedagogical skills is needed to address an ever changing online learning environment.

   Audience. Researching the support and training needs of online faculty provides a framework of reference for instructors, college administrators, and distance learning departments. Instructors can learn of the importance of consistent evaluation of effective pedagogical skills. College administrators and distance learning departments can learn of the importance of consistent evaluation of effective resources, tools, and guidance to support online instruction.

Definition of Terms

   For the purpose of this applied dissertation, the following terms are defined.

   Department head. This term refers to the administrator of specific academic programs at the study site.

   Distance education. This term refers to course offerings that are presented in a format that is delivered to students.

   E-learning platform. This term refers to the web-based program used to administer online courses.

   Faculty. This term refers to full-time instructors at the study site.

   Online courses. This term refers to courses that are not taught in a face-to-face environment. Online course instruction is provided in a web-based format (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

   Online learning. This term refers to learning that takes place with the use of the Internet and web-based programs.

   Online pedagogy. This term refers to the teaching methods used for online

instruction.

Professional development. This term refers to employee training for continued development of job skills.

Traditional courses. This term refers to courses that meet in a face-to-face setting with little to no course content or instruction provided online (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

Transformative learning theory. Transformative learning occurs when adult learners conduct critical, self-reflection of their current attitudes and beliefs, in order to associate new meaning or context of a previously learned experience (Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study was to understand online instructional support needs at a multicampus state college in the southeastern United States by investigating successes and challenges of online instructors. The central concept of this study was instructional training needs of online instructors.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Online instruction presents a different platform for teaching and learning compared to face-to-face instruction. Using the transformative learning theory as a lens helped to establish major categories of the review of literature on personal development and professional development of online pedagogy. Reviewing the historical context of distance education pedagogy helped to understand the evolving nature of pedagogy with the presence of enhanced technology. Within this framework, major categories are hierarchically delineated, such as teaching paradigm shift and faculty perceptions, along with, identification of support needs, instructor collaboration and peer mentoring, and evaluation and critical reflection.

Theoretical Perspective

The theory based on the problem of online pedagogical skill development is grounded in the transformative learning theory. This theory was originally developed by Mezirow (1991) and was primarily used to study the transformative process of adult learning (Hodge, 2010; Kumi-Yeboah & James, 2012; Mezirow, 1991; Snyder, 2012). The theory of transformative learning indicates that adult learning is transformed when attitudes and beliefs are critically reflected upon and self-reflection occurs. In other words, past experiences dictate current perceptions and interpretations (Mezirow, 1991). Without reflection on current experiences and situations to establish new meaning, an understanding of what is learned may be flawed (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow described transformation of learning as the ability to place new context on a previously learned experience.

Many online instructors have perceptions of teaching methods that were formed from past experiences of instruction received in a classroom setting and lack experiences

as an online student (Kreber & Kanuka, 2006; McQuiggan, 2012; Rovai & Downey, 2010; Shelton & Saltsman, 2003). Consideration of adult learning theories throughout the development of faculty professional development programs is important to ensure that faculty are presented with experiences that lead to learning that addresses individual perspectives (Henning, 2012). The transformative learning theory sets an appropriate framework for reviewing preparation strategies for online instruction. This theory provides the opportunity for instructors to critically reflect on previously learned experiences in which they have established attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching methods in order to establish a new meaning or understanding of current teaching contexts.

Historical Context

Distance education has a significant influence on the changing roles and pedagogical approaches for teachers (Albee, 2015). Technology has influenced the delivery of distance education. Describing the generations of distance education pedagogies, Allen and Seaman (2011) noted that each generation has built upon one another by expanding options available for learner and teacher interactions. Advances in technology should support increased accessibility and interactions between the learner and teacher, rather than inhibit or limit learning opportunities. Based on increased technology, the authors categorized distance education pedagogy into three generations.

The evolving pedagogies of distance education include cognitive-behaviorist, social-constructivist, and connectivist and were influenced by the availability of technology. The cognitive-behaviorist models are teacher-centered and were most appropriate when technology was limited. As technology for two-way communication became available, social-constructivist models presented the opportunity for

incorporating synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences allowing for increased student control of learning. Connectivist models utilize technology that allows for making meaning through the learners' experience of establishing networks that lead to knowledge. Researchers have addressed the changing evolution of pedagogy by associating teaching models of distance education with levels of technology.

Cognitive-behaviorist models are associated with the least amount of technology and were prominent during times when the postal system was the best way to provide the delivery of distance education. With the introduction of conferencing technology, social constructivism models presented the opportunity for group discussion and began the shift from teacher driven to student driven learning. The Internet has expanded the platform for online engagement and interaction leading to connectivism models that allow for exploration and creativity to guide the learning process. Researchers have stressed the importance of understanding each model and applying the strengths of each model to effectively address the needs of the learner and enhance the learning experience.

Statement of Knowledge Summary

The increased focus on online teaching and pedagogy is a result of the growing demand for online courses and programs in higher education. To effectively address needed pedagogy for 21st-century learners, all generations of distance education pedagogies should be used to complement each other (Allen & Seaman, 2011). As pedagogy continues to evolve due to new and emerging technology, the need for understanding teacher transitions from one type of pedagogy to another becomes greater. Furthermore, the need for educators and administrators to understand how to support the transition and evolving development of relevant pedagogical skills is equally important. The development of online courses requires a collaborative effort among the people who

teach the courses and the people who design the courses, in order to avoid limited or one-sided pedagogical practices (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008; Stephenson, 2001). The rapid growth in online education puts the focus of enhanced pedagogical practice at risk due to the urgency of keeping up with the demand for online access to education (Alexander & Boud, 2001).

As the demand for online course enrollment is expected to increase, higher education institutions must be prepared to support the continual development of online pedagogical skills of online instructors (Albee, 2015). Allen and Seaman (2015) reported, "The proportion of academic leaders who report that online learning is critical to their institution's long term strategy has grown from 48.8% in 2002 to 70.8% this year" (p. 4). In addition, the report documents growth in online course enrollments to be lower than in past years, yet the growth in online course enrollments remains greater than total enrollments in higher education (Allen & Seaman, 2015).

The evidence of the growing focus of online education, as compared to traditional approaches to the delivery of higher education courses, is consistent in the literature. Pedagogical practices for online learning need to be developed specific to the online environment, rather than adapting traditional methods of teaching to online formats (Haggerty, 2015; Palloff & Pratt, 2002). The practice of providing specific training geared toward online pedagogy is often neglected supporting the tendency for faculty to utilize technology in a manner that simply distributes information and documents designed for a traditional face-to-face course to an online course (Palloff & Pratt, 2002).

This review approaches the understanding of the development of online pedagogical skills, for online instructors, through the context of personal development and professional development considerations. Important considerations regarding

personal development of online instructors include the teaching paradigm shift, faculty

perceptions and technology acceptance, and roles and competencies for online

instruction. Considerations regarding the professional development of online instructors

include identification of support needs for online instructors, collaboration and peer

mentoring, and evaluation and critical reflection of online instruction. The literature

reveals that online teaching is multifaceted and requires the development of pedagogical

skills that are unique and different in regard to the traditional teaching practices

developed in a face-to-face classroom setting (Albee, 2015; Baran et al., 2013; Bigatel,

Ragen, Kennan, May, & Redmond, 2012; Davis & Dykman, 2008; Tomei, 2011).

Personal Development

As faculty members transition from teaching face-to-face courses to teaching

online courses, their mode of instruction shifts from teacher centered to learner centered

(Palloff & Pratt, 2002). Many faculty members are lacking the experience of learning in

an online environment, which challenges the ability to draw from past experiences to

develop relevant pedagogical skills for the online environment (McQuiggan, 2012;

Shelton & Saltsman, 2003). Reviewing research on teaching paradigm, faculty

perceptions and technology acceptance, and roles and competencies for online instruction

help to form an understanding of the path of personal development for online instructors.

Shift in teaching paradigm. McQuiggan (2012) addressed the problem of

preparing teachers to teach in an online format. A faculty professional-development

model based on research of other professional development models and applications of

the transformative learning theory was created by McQuiggan. Action research was used

to plan, act and observe, and reflect on the changes and transformation of teaching during

the faculty participation of a professional development program. The faculty-

development program consisted of a 6-week training program and included face-to-face training sessions, along with an accompanying online course. McQuiggan's study included a sample of participants from a large research university. Six full-time faculty and one adjunct faculty represented the departments of education, engineering, and public affairs. The participants were faculty members who taught undergraduate or graduate-level courses and were interested in pursuing online instruction. The participants were new to online teaching or preparing to teach online for the first time.

Using the university's course-management system, a course was developed that allowed trainees of the faculty development program to take the role of a student. Upon completion of a faculty development course that was created with the theoretical lens of adult learning theory and transformative learning theory, McQuiggan (2012) interviewed the participants of the study. The findings revealed that collaboration and reflection regarding online learning can influence change in teaching beliefs and practice for both online and face-to-face courses (McQuiggan, 2012). The intent of the study was to analyze the influence of professional development for online instruction as a change agent for the use of technology in face-to-face instruction (McQuiggan, 2012). As McQuiggan discovered, evaluation of attitudes and beliefs can influence changes in teaching methods, which supports the need for training programs developed with a framework utilizing adult learning theory and transformative learning theory.

Ray (2009) conducted a study that assessed faculty perceptions of professional development of online instruction. Through a survey completed by 111 online instructors, the author addressed the level of difficulty of moving a face-to-face course to an online course and the level of interest in professional development specific to online instruction. The survey also assessed the type of training that currently exists for online instruction

and the perception of the need for training relating to technology and pedagogy (Ray, 2009). The participants in the study included instructors with online teaching experience ranging from none to more than 12 years and represented both public and private postsecondary institutions in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.

Based on the results of the survey, Ray (2009) noted that the majority of the participants perceived course development from face-to-face format to online as difficult and that training relating to technology and pedagogy was wanted. The survey results also revealed that many instructors are not provided formal training to prepare for online instruction and the majority of the participants indicated that training specific to online instruction should be required before assignments to online courses (Ray, 2009). The results of the study support the notion of needed research in the area of professional development of online instructors. Ray addressed that little research has been conducted on the training requirements that lead to quality online instruction and indicated that particular focus is needed for faculty approaching the online environment for the first time.

Faculty perceptions and technology acceptance. Finnegan, Morris, and Xu (2005) also researched the perceptions held by faculty. The intent of their research was to understand perceived roles compared to actual teaching practices of online faculty (Finnegan et al., 2005). Data for the study were collected through interviews of 13 instructors and analysis of prior online instruction of courses taught by the participants (Finnegan et al., 2005). The faculty participants were among multiple institutions and taught courses within the humanities and social sciences discipline. Finnegan et al. used Berge's (1995) four roles of online instruction or facilitation as a framework to analyze the data collected from the interviews and prior course instruction review.

Berge (1995) identified four roles of online instruction or facilitation as pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical. The findings revealed the experience of instructors influenced their level of participation in the interaction with students in an online course. More experienced online instructors spent more time preplanning for the course activities by customizing the content of predeveloped courses (Finnegan et al., 2005). Instructors new to online instruction enacted more in managerial and social roles, whereas experienced online instructors were more successful in incorporating pedagogical roles as a facilitator of the course. Like McQuiggan's (2012) study, the Finnegan et al. (2005) study revealed that experience in the online environment led to changes in pedagogical practices.

Faculty experience has also been associated with acceptance of technology associated with online education (Colaric, Gibson, & Harris, 2008). Many of the instructors interviewed indicated that more time was spent in a managerial role of grading course work rather than the pedagogical role of engagement through online course activities (Finnegan et al., 2005). The instructors indicated an understanding of the importance of the pedagogical role, but felt pressured to keep up with the managerial role of grading requirements of the course assignments. The managerial roles were described very specifically and with more ease than the pedagogical roles implemented by the interviewed instructors.

Perceptions of faculty roles did not match actual teaching practice in the online environment within this study (Finnegan et al., 2005). The study implied that faculty-development programs need to be formed around the understanding of instructor perceptions of their roles compared to actual facilitation of their online courses (Finnegan et al., 2005). The results of the study support other research on the value faculty training

in an online environment. Providing professional development in an online environment that provides an opportunity to gain experience enacting the roles utilized for online instruction and facilitation is a good practice to address lack of experience with online engagement (Lane, 2013).

Faculty perceptions can also be influenced by attitudes toward technology. Colaric et al. (2008) addressed the need for faculty acceptance of technology to support the demand of online education. Instructors were surveyed using Davis' (1989) technology-acceptance model to relate their perceptions of online education to their acceptance of technology. Davis' model measures perceived usefulness of technology and perceived ease of use of technology to determine the likelihood of technology acceptance. Colaric et al. used the technology-acceptance model to develop survey questions with the context of measuring acceptance of online education. The participants of the study included 110 faculty teaching both undergraduate and graduate-level courses for two different colleges within a regional university.

The faculty members participating in the study were not first-time online instructors but were experienced faculty with more than 12 years of postsecondary teaching experience and more than 2 years of online teaching experience. The results of the survey revealed that faculty perception of the usefulness of technology for online education was the most influential on whether or not it was accepted and the perception of ease of use was not a significant indicator of technology acceptance (Colaric et al., 2008). Colaric et al. (2008) noted the significance of experienced professionals as a factor of acceptance. Experienced faculty members may be more inclined to accept technology based on the perceived usefulness of the technology because they may already have a familiarity with technology but need to understand why they should adjust their practice

to use the technology. This exploratory study implied that introduction of technology should address perceptions and accurately relate the use of technology to the user's specific role and work tasks (Colaric et al., 2008).

Self-efficacy and high technology use was the topic of a study conducted by Albee (2015). The study addressed the challenges presented with online instruction in understanding the types of technology available and the effective use of technology for student engagement. The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of technology and best practices in online instruction among instructors with high self-efficacy. The Sense of Efficacy for Online Teaching scale was distributed to online instructors at three colleges of a research university to identify participants for the study (Albee, 2015). Four participants scored at high levels of self-efficacy on the scale and were selected for participation in the study.

With a qualitative approach to investigating the use of technology by instructors with high self-efficacy, Albee (2015) revealed that acceptance of technology played a key role in adopting best practices of online instruction. Interviews were conducted with participants to identify the ways in which technology was used in their online teaching practices. Observations of online courses of the participants were conducted to verify the online teaching practices of the participants (Albee, 2015). The findings of this study complement the findings from the Colaric et al. (2008) study emphasizing the important factor that technology acceptance plays in successful online instruction. The participants of Albee's study had experience with online course development which could explain their high self-efficacy of technology use and the influence that experience plays in the acceptance of online education among faculty (Colaric et al., 2008).

Understanding online teacher roles and competencies. Linking teacher

attitudes, beliefs and perceptions to an understanding of roles and competencies can help

form professional development for online instruction. Baran et al. (2011) conducted a

critical review and analysis of literature that led to an understanding of roles and

competencies related to online teaching. The study included a critical review of literature

on the topic of online roles and competencies. The three phases of the study included

article selection, synthesis of themes from the selected studies, and analysis of the

identified themes through the theoretical framework of Mezirow's (1991) transformative

learning theory. The findings of the study revealed that the understood definition of

online instructor roles set the context for the type of competency needed to perform the

role (Baran et al., 2011). Baran et al. identified in the literature various defined roles of

online instructors, including managerial, instructional designer, pedagogical, technical,

facilitator, and social, along with associated competencies.

The study implied that the defined roles and competencies of online instruction

provided a starting point for the development of training, but did not include a means for

transformative learning. Analyzing the literature of online teaching roles and

competencies through the lens of the transformative learning theory revealed that

professional development for online instruction should empower instructors to engage in

a practice of continuous learning, promote critical reflection of practice, and incorporate a

practice of pedagogical inquiry through the use of technology. Baran et al. (2011)

suggested that the inclusion of collaboration in professional-development models for

online instructors will present the opportunity for instructors to critically reflect on their

past to effectively form their current teaching practice.

Exploring competencies of online instruction based on attitudes, beliefs, and

behaviors of successful online instructors was also a focus in an exploratory study

conducted by Bigatel et al. (2012), who discussed the need for relevant professional-development programs offered in a way that addresses the growing enrollments in online education. The purpose of the study was to prioritize online teaching competencies as believed to be important to successful professionals in online education. Using a 7-point Likert-scale survey, online faculty and professional support staff for online education rated competencies that had been associated with successful online instruction (Bigatel et al., 2012).

Participants were recruited from professional listservs and resulted in the submission of 197 surveys. The demographics of the participants were varied with representation from several job types, academic disciplines, and years of online teaching experience. The survey included 64 items for participants to rate in regard to importance in online teaching. Bigatel et al. (2012) noted that all 64 items were rated by participants with a significant rating of importance which is supporting evidence noted by other research of the multi-faceted skill set required for online instruction (Haggerty, 2015; Palloff & Pratt, 2002). Professional development that addresses such a wide range of teaching behaviors presents a level of complexity in regard to online instruction preparation and support (Bigatel et al., 2012).

Bigatel et al. (2012) noted the importance of evaluating the needs of the target audience for development of relevant training and support. For example, data from the study revealed other types of teaching skills necessary for effective online instruction to include administrative, policy, and technical skills. The level of experience instructors have in the management of online course instruction should be an indicator of the types of professional development needed (Baran & Correia, 2014; Bigatel et al., 2012; Marek, 2009; Ray, 2009). Another theme important to note was the consistency in ratings by

participants for teaching behaviors believed to be important to successful online instruction (Bigatel et al., 2012).

Because most participants indicated they had more than 1 year of teaching experience, the data could support the notion that prior experience in online education has an influence on teaching practices (Bigatel et al., 2012; Koepke & O'Brien, 2012; McQuiggan, 2012). The results of the survey were analyzed and categorized into the top seven competencies rated by participants (Bigatel et al., 2012). The competencies in order of highest to lowest ratings included active learning, administration or leadership, active teaching or responsiveness, multimedia technology, classroom decorum, technical competence, and policy enforcement. Bigatel et al. (2012) suggested that the categorization of tasks to related competencies will help institutions develop relevant content for training to prepare faculty for online instructors. Further recommendations for the development of relevant training for online teaching competencies included measuring individual online instructor preparedness through a set of metrics that would be used to understand individual needs for training.

Professional Development

Faculty training specific to the transition from face-to-face classroom instruction to online instruction is important because of the nature of the teaching environment in different modes of course delivery (Bigatel et al., 2012; Haggerty, 2015; Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Ray, 2009). Instructors who excel in the face-to-face teaching environment should not be expected to know how to deliver the same level of instruction in the online teaching environment without specific training and support (Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Smith, 2005). A review of studies that explore training programs, support needs, collaboration and peer mentoring, and evaluation and critical reflection for online instruction is

important to gain perspective on themes for professional development of online instructors.

Training programs for online faculty development. Meyer and Murrell (2014) analyzed data on current training and content for professional development programs of 39 higher education institutions. The study focused on professional development designed for online instruction. The purpose of the study was to understand existing professional development practices geared toward the development of online instruction skills and to set a baseline that documents these practices within the 2011-2012 academic year. This descriptive study surveyed 39 higher education institutions to determine what content and activities were in place for the development of faculty for online teaching. Meyer and Murrell categorized the most common training practices by content and delivery formats. The participants included various types of higher education institutions classified by the Carnegie institution classification types. The types of institutions represented in the study included doctoral or research, master's, baccalaureate, and associate (Meyer & Murrell, 2014).

The findings were sorted by training content and activity. The most common topics of training content included assessment of student learning, creating community, course management system training, student learning styles, and instructional design models. The most common training activities included workshops, one-on-one training, hands-on training, creation of an online course, and one-time sessions. Meyer and Murrell (2014) noted that most institutions are primarily utilizing face-to-face training delivery methods for the development of teaching skills geared toward an online environment. This is an important note as other research has identified the value of utilizing the online environment to prepare instructors for online instruction (Henning,

2012; Lane, 2013). The data of the study were also categorized in regard to the type of Carnegie classification of the institution (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). Research or doctoral and associate-level institutions included in the study were noted to place a greater emphasis on pedagogical training more often than training related to utilization of technology tools.

These data support the importance noted in other research of the need to understand the faculty and institutional needs, in order to develop relevant content for training programs designed to prepare faculty for online instruction (Bigatel et al., 2012). The last categorization of data in the study included a rating of value that each participant institution placed on the content and training activities for online instruction (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). One finding that led to a suggestion of future research was the value placed on two similar types of delivery formats for training activities of webinars and online modules. Webinars were rated lower in value than online modules, which could be an indication that faculty prefer more interaction and engagement, similar to the most common and preferable types of training delivered in face-to-face formats (Meyer & Murrell, 2014). Meyer and Murrell (2014) addressed the need to view professional-development programs for online instruction as an evolving process and that data from this study is a benchmark or snapshot of existing programs for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Haggerty (2015) studied the additional workloads associated with online teaching to gain an understanding of the influence of professional development on the management of academic workloads. Many academic programs, such as nursing and health programs, rely on professional experts to support course instruction, rather than instructors who began their careers in education (Haggerty, 2015). Understanding the

lack of educator preparedness in these type of specialized fields, Haggerty sought to explore the work associated with online instruction of academic programs in four programs of applied health.

Using a mixed-method approach, Haggarty (2015) collected quantitative data from a survey and qualitative data from discussion groups and interviews. The participants of the study included academic staff from nursing, social work, paramedicine, and postgraduate health programs. To address the influence of professional development in the area of pedagogy, Haggerty developed an intervention and assessed it by analyzing the results of a preintervention and postintervention surveys. To further understand the academic workloads associated with online instruction, Haggerty gathered qualitative data through discussion groups and interviews, which revealed common themes associated with academic workloads and online instruction.

The common themes revealed from the discussion groups and individual interviews were categorized into two primary categories of professional development and organizational support. The results of the surveys support the focus of pedagogy-related professional development programs and indicate a positive influence of developing skillsets needed for online instruction. Haggerty (2015) noted that data analysis of this study highlighted the need for pedagogy-focused professional development that associated technology use with teaching strategies. Timing of professional development was also noted as an important factor, in that participants of the study indicated that training for skills that were not practiced right away would require additional training in the future.

For specialized fields, such as academic health programs that rely on professionals rather than trained educators, Haggerty (2015) noted the compounded need

for professional development to address teaching and learning strategies. Instructors who have field experience over teaching experience may have a tendency to model teaching practices after experiences as a student (Haggerty, 2015). As indicated in other studies, modeling teaching practices in this way may not be relevant to the context of the current teaching environment (Marek, 2009). It is important to understand the needs of instructors and institutions, in regard to the level of online teaching experience and types of academic programs available to develop relevant and timely training programs (Bigatel et al., 2012; Haggerty, 2015; Marek, 2009). Haggerty suggested one such way to incorporate the application of sound pedagogy to teaching is through the use of common frameworks that lead to quality instruction no matter the context. By addressing the specific needs of instructors based on the level and type of teaching experience, professional development programs can have a positive influence on the management of academic workloads (Haggerty, 2015).

Baran and Correia (2014) proposed a framework for professional development that approaches training for online instruction from a holistic perspective. As noted in previous research, it is important that professional development for online instruction addresses the specific needs of instructors, in order to positively influence quality online instruction (Baren & Correia, 2014; Bigatel et al., 2012; Marek, 2009; Ray, 2009). Research of critical components of online teaching led to the development of a professional development framework specific to online education (Baren & Correia, 2014). Baran and Correia's framework for online teaching is built around three components of teaching, community, and organization.

Each component addresses the needs of online instructors through relevant training, peer and mentoring programming, and a positive reinforcement supporting

online education. The teaching component of the framework focuses on technology support, pedagogical support, and design and development support. The community component of the framework focuses on the establishment of communities of practice and peer support. The final component, organization support, focuses on the development of a culture supportive of the transition to online instruction (Baran & Correia, 2014). Baran and Correia (2014) stressed the importance of identifying the interconnectedness of various levels of support for online teaching within the institution.

Identification of support needs for online instructors. Marek (2009) conducted a study to explore the types of training and professional development available for online instructors of library information science graduate programs. The author surveyed 296 faculty members using both quantitative and qualitative questions to inquire about the types of training that was available and what was needed to prepare for online instruction. The purpose of the exploratory study was to identify existing efforts to prepare instructors in these graduate programs for online instruction including the development of online courses. The findings revealed a variety of levels of support available ranging from informal, formal, or little to none. An analysis of the survey results helped form a model of support for faculty that included course release or a learning stipend, discipline-specific instructional design and online pedagogical skills, and structured mentoring (Marek, 2009). Marek's research implied that universities should foster improvements in online instruction by considering instructor needs along with best practices. Marek suggested future research to include the application of findings and implications, from this study, to other graduate and undergraduate faculty to determine if needs are the same across disciplines or sites.

Further investigation of professional-development support needs for online

instructors was conducted in a study by Storandt et al. (2012). Like Marek (2009), Storandt et al. explored the support needs required for enhancement of online instruction. Online instruction is distinctly different from face-to-face instruction; therefore, professional-development strategies for online instruction should be different as well (Storandt et al., 2012). Understanding the need for a different approach to prepare and support online instructors, Storandt et al. conducted a study that focused on defining effective professional development for online instruction and determining successful strategies for implementing professional development for online instruction.

Using formative-summative research, Storandt et al. analyzed results from a study of the PBS Teacherline's professional-development model. The PBS Teacherline professional-development model prepares online instructors to teach asynchronous online courses by developing training that incorporates professional standards for online instruction outlined by the Southern Regional Education Board and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning. The purpose of the study was to gather and analyze experiential evidence of an effective professional development program relating to online instructor preparation and support. The findings were consistent with other research regarding the importance of structured support to foster the development of online pedagogical skills (Storandt et al., 2012).

The PBS Teacherline's professional-development model provides instructors the opportunity to take the perspective of an online student with means for mentoring, feedback, and engagement (Storandt et al., 2012). The professional-development model focuses on training for new instructors that includes enrollment in two online courses. Participation in these courses facilitates mentored support, self-reflection, and an engaging professional learning community (Storandt et al., 2012). The participants of the

study included 110 PBS Teacherline online course instructors.

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected that led to the identification of trends, an understanding of student outcomes compared to level of instructor support and revealed common themes of instructor experiences. Storandt et al. (2012) implied that the professional development of online instructors should be continuous and results from this study can be utilized to form appropriate professional development strategies. As with Marek's (2009) study, Storandt et al. suggested further research of professional-development practices and models that were included in their studies in other settings. Suggestions included using the PBS Teacherline's professional-development model as a point of reference when forming models appropriate to other settings (Storandt et al., 2012).

Instructor collaboration and peer mentoring. Lane (2013) addressed the need for professional development for online instruction that focused on the development of pedagogy rather than the use of a learning management system (LMS) alone. Noting the limitations of most professional development for new online instructors to be in a face-to-face setting that focused on the use of the college's LMS and lacked the presence of an online learning environment, Lane sought to explore the outcome of professional development in an open, online course that focused on exploration of pedagogy and development of communities of support. Participants in an open, online course called the Program for Online Teaching Certificate Class included four facilitators, 17 mentors, and 79 regular participants (Lane, 2013). The enrolled participants were mostly faculty members from the college in southern California that developed the program, but faculty members from numerous other colleges located in the United States and abroad were included.

By analyzing the results of a survey of participants in the Program for Online Teaching Certificate Class, Lane (2013) sought to understand the implications of professional development for online instructors that provided instructor collaboration and peer support in an online learning environment which offered a broader sense of pedagogical development. The results of the quantitative survey indicated that most participants viewed the course as valuable by providing the opportunity to experience learning in an online environment and to gain knowledge from other experienced online instructors (Lane, 2013). Implications of the study indicate that open, online courses may have a positive impact on the professional development of online instructors especially in the areas of collaboration with other learners, exposure to an online environment, and development of online pedagogical skills (Lane, 2013).

Palloff and Pratt (2002) also addressed that professional development for online instruction needs to focus on the experience of learning online more than the use of the technical components. The development of a collaborative learning community is an important component for preparing instructors new to online teaching (Palloff & Pratt, 2002). Palloff and Pratt discussed feedback received from 35 participants of a professional-development course that included faculty, course designers, and student affairs staff. The feedback from participants indicated that the experience of online learning through participation in an online professional-development course helped them understand the holistic process of learning online from the perspective of both a student and educator. Much of the participant feedback described the value of gaining insight to online learning through the experience of an online student. Also noted as valuable was the influence that understanding the online student experience has on decision making for faculty and administrators who support online learning programs. The 4-week

professional-development course provided engagement and reflection opportunities among peers and provided the opportunity for sharing experiences relevant to the curriculum of the course.

Evaluation and critical reflection. Reushle (2008) utilized action research to study the influence of transformative learning on the professional development of online instructors. Using the transformative learning theory as the framework to the study, Reushle analyzed the transformation of faculty perceptions and practice. The three phases of Reushle's study included designing a professional-development course for online instructors at a polytechnic in Singapore, analysis and refinement of the course design, and implementation of the course. Reushle was the primary facilitator of the course and used reflective journals to analyze the transformative learning that took place during facilitation and among the participants of the course. Three courses were designed and feedback from each course was collected through various means within the online course such as discussion forums, chats, and questionnaires, as well as reflective journals, input, and interview responses from the participants.

The process of review and adjustment of each course design allowed for an understanding of common themes that led to improved course designs and the creation of relevant and transformative learning experiences for the course participants. The findings of the study revealed the importance of learning through people and actions within an online environment (Reushle, 2008). Reushle's (2008) use of reflective journals gave participants the opportunity to apply principles of transformative learning through critical reflection of their attitudes about teaching. The value of reflection and engagement were implied as instrumental in teaching and learning (Reushle, 2008). Another important outcome of the study was the value of using the reflection of practice among others to

reveal emerging trends and gain a holistic understanding of learning that extends beyond the content to the process. Reflecting upon pedagogical practice of online courses is particularly important as the use of technology does not ensure student learning (Hacker & Niederhauser, 2000; Mayes, 2001).

Koepke and O'Brien (2012) also studied the use of online training to enhance the professional development of online faculty. Using a three-phase approach to evaluate an online instructor training program at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, the authors assessed perceptions, influence on pedagogical skills, and new learning outcomes of faculty who participated in the 3-week asynchronous training. Phase I of the study consisted of a pretest survey and posttest survey of 20 participants in the program. The Phase I survey assessed participants' beliefs of online education before and after training. The findings in Phase I indicated that the training had an influence on transforming common beliefs and attitudes regarding online education. Koepke and O'Brien contributed this shift in beliefs and attitudes as a result of the experience of taking the role of both student and instructor in the program. Phase II of the study consisted of a survey of 20 participants of the program after they had taught at least one online class after completing all components of the training.

The survey addressed the primary curriculum of the online instructor training program, which included technology, course design, and course delivery. The findings in Phase II indicated that the program was a driver of pedagogical changes in both online and face-to-face instruction in regard to the use of technology, course design, and course delivery. Phase III of the study consisted of interviews of eight participants of the program. The interviews included the opportunity for participants to further elaborate on pedagogical changes as a result of the program.

The findings of the study, like other studies on professional-development programs for online instruction, revealed that online instructor training had an influence on transforming beliefs and pedagogy of faculty in both online and face to face settings (Koepke & O'Brien, 2012; McQuiggan, 2012). Professional-development programs for online instruction give the opportunity for participants to experience online education as both a student and an instructor resulting in a reflection of commonly held beliefs and attitudes about online instruction (Koepke & O'Brien, 2012; McQuiggan, 2012). Koepke and O'Brien (2012) suggested future research to include student responses to online courses based on the type of training the instructor received.

Henning's (2012) study of personal experience of professional development through online learning is consistent with the findings in the Reushle (2008) study and the Koepke and O'Brien (2012) study. The study addresses the need to use adult learning theories to form professional development of online instruction (Henning, 2012). Henning outlined personal experience by using autoethnography methods to reflect on the learning transformation throughout a 6-week online course. The results of the study revealed important aspects that should be included in strategies for providing professional development of online instructors. These aspects include an understanding of faculty motivation for professional development, opportunities for transformative learning that support a shift in teaching paradigm, support for self-directed learning, and inclusion of peer interaction (Henning, 2012).

Henning (2012) described personal motivation for taking an asynchronous professional-development course was the flexibility of taking the course without constraints of other commitments. Taking the course over the summer and during a time when Henning was not scheduled for teaching other courses was appealing because of the

opportunity to fully engage in the learning experience without having the add work to a normal teaching workload. The study noted the importance of addressing obstacles that may interfere with the ability for faculty to participate in professional-development programs.

The adult learning preferences of faculty as they approach the paradigm shift of teaching online were revealed as important to the transformation of learning. Henning (2012) addressed personal preference for classroom learning over discussion postings in an online class was influenced by a drive to be in control of the learning process. The author suggested that critical inquiry be used as a strategy to address the need for faculty to control learning and further promote transformative learning experiences. Self-directed learning within faculty development programs is an effective way to ease frustration with the online learning environment (Henning, 2012). The study suggested that self-directed learning opportunities such as a central location to present questions and answers with timely feedback provided a sense of security and encouragement because there was a common place within the online learning environment to get clarification or assistance when needed.

Peer interaction within the online learning environment reduces the feeling of isolation and provides an avenue for peers to share their personal and professional experiences with each other (Henning, 2012). Henning (2012) noted that peer learning was a valuable aspect of the online faculty development program completed for this study. The incorporation of peer interaction to support adult learning is an important strategy for faculty development, but limitations should also be understood such as the varying levels of experience among participants (Henning, 2012). Henning's autoethnography study highlighted the value of addressing the development of online

pedagogical skills through adult learning strategies which support transformative learning. Autoethnography research is also noted as a strategy that supports critical reflection during the development on online pedagogical skills (Henning, 2012).

Summary

The review of literature regarding development of pedagogical skills for online instruction revealed several major themes. Attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions have a significant impact on how pedagogical skills are established (Albee, 2015; Colaric et al., 2008; Finnegan et al., 2005; McQuiggan, 2012). Online teaching is multi-faceted and requires a different skillset than face-to-face teaching (Albee, 2015; Baren et al., 2011; Bigatel et al., 2012; Davis & Dykman, 2008; Haggerty, 2015; Palloff & Pratt, 2002). Professional-development programs are needed to guide the transformation of pedagogical skills in the online learning environment (Baran et al., 2011; Davis & Dykman, 2008; Marek, 2009; Meyer & Murrell, 2014; Ray, 2009; Storandt et al., 2012). Training administered in an online format provides online learning experiences for instructors (Henning, 2012; Lane, 2013; Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Reushle, 2008; Storandt et al., 2012). Collaboration with other online instructors establishes opportunities for reflection of teaching practices (Baran et al., 2011; Henning, 2012; Koepke & O'Brien, 2012; McQuiggan, 2012; Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Reushle, 2008).

Development of a community of learning allows for mentoring and reflection and has the potential to address the challenge of isolation experienced by many online instructors (Baran & Correia, 2014; Bigatel et al., 2012; Henning, 2012; Marek, 2009; Storandt et al., 2012). Professional-development programs that address the level of teaching experience and needs of the institution are important to address timeliness and relevancy of training for online instruction (Bigatel et al., 2012; Haggerty, 2015; Marek,

2009). As the demand for online education continues to grow, the need for professional development should be assessed and revised to address the evolving nature of the development of online teaching skills (Meyer & Murrell, 2014; Smith, 2005). More research is needed to explore online education from the perspective of the development of online teaching skills, rather than the student outcomes of online learning alone (Ray, 2009; Storandt et al., 2012).

The studies reviewed offer significant insight for development of training programs for online instructors, but do not address the successes and challenges from the perspectives of online instructors within a dedicated department of a state or community college. The gap in research exists in the evaluation of instructor perspectives of online pedagogical skill development at a site that has multiple campuses and centers. To further existing studies, the researcher conducted a qualitative study at a multicampus state college in the southeastern United States to gather information on instructor perceptions and support needs for online instruction.

Research Questions

Research questions for this study guided the understanding of specific training and support needs for online instructors who teach at a multicampus state college in the southeastern United States:

1. What experiences are perceived by online instructors of a multicampus state college as significant to the development of online pedagogical skills as indicated by the interview protocol questionnaire?

2. What are some of the successes, challenges, and needs perceived by online instructors at a multicampus state college in regard to the development of online pedagogical skills as indicated by the interview protocol questionnaire?

3. What tools or resources are utilized by online instructors at a multicampus state college to support successful online instruction as indicated by resource documents collected from study participants?

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore instructor perceptions of the transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to online teaching. An investigation of instructor perceptions led to an understanding of successes and challenges of developing online pedagogical skills. The intent of the study was to identify themes relating to the type of support and training that is needed to foster continuous development of online pedagogical skills. The purpose of this qualitative dissertation study was to investigate online instructors' successes and challenges in teaching online and instructional needs that could better support online instructors at a multicampus state college in the southeastern United States. The instruments used for this study were qualitative interviews, along with resource documents that led to an understanding of the development of online pedagogical skills of the participants selected for the study.

Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative method of research allows for an exploration of experiences that lead to behaviors, in order to gain a better understanding of the topic being studied (Creswell, 2012, 2013; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). Using a case-study design, interviews with department heads were conducted to understand perspectives of successful online instruction and to request recommendations of faculty participants. Online instructors were interviewed to collect data regarding perceptions of instructors teaching online courses at the selected site. Each faculty participant provided documents of resources used for online instruction. The case-study design was appropriate for this study because of the focus on gaining an understanding of a specific case or cases (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013).

Perceptions of online instructors were revealed through interviews and common themes were identified from individual experiences of instructors teaching at the selected site. The narrative generated through interviews with participants was used to identify common themes of perception of successful online instruction and experiences of successful online instructors. Creswell (2013) defined case-study research as follows:

> Qualitative research in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes. (p. 97)

The case-study design was used in this study to examine perspectives of multiple participants at a multicampus state college to answer the research questions of the study and to gain an understanding of instructional support needs for online instructors.

Participants

Department heads and full-time faculty at a multicampus state college were the participants for this study. Maximum variation sampling was the type of purposeful sampling used to select participants. Creswell (2013) stated that maximum variation allows for the selection of diversity among the participants. The study included nine participants. The first set of participants involved department heads of different academic programs that offer online courses at the selected site. The department heads were interviewed regarding their perception of online education and successful online instruction. This set of participants provided their recommendation of successful online instructors within their program to participate in the study.

The second set of participants involved individuals selected from the

recommendations submitted by the department heads and were full-time faculty

members with at least two semesters of online teaching experience within the last 2

years beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year. These participants were

interviewed regarding their experience of personal development of online pedagogical

skills. Faculty member participants also provided documentation of resources they use

for online instruction which provided another instrument used with the analysis of

data.

Data-Collection Tools

One-on-one semistructured interviews with open ended questions were conducted

to gain perspectives from the participants. Interviews were recorded and data were

analyzed. Using an interview protocol questionnaire (Baran et al., 2013), demographic

information, such as gender, age, and employment background, was collected in the first

part of the interview (see Appendix A). The second part of the interview collected

information specific to the participant experiences relating to online instruction. The

department head interview protocol collected information about department head

experiences with working with faculty who teach online (see Appendix B). The online

instructor interview protocol collected background information such as online instructor

experiences relating to online instruction (see Appendix C). Resource documents were

used to gather information regarding resources used by online instructors at the research

site. Permission from the administrators overseeing the departments selected for the study

was obtained.

Procedures

After university approval was received, the following steps were implemented.

Department heads were contacted to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted

with four department heads representing a different academic discipline. The interviews were conducted within a 3-week period of time at the study site. Each interview was conducted in a semistructured manner as indicated by the department head interview protocol. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. Each department head provided names of two to three faculty members in their academic departments to invite to participate in the study. Once the department head interviews were completed, faculty member participants based on the recommendations received from the department head interview responses were invited to participate in the study.

Invitations were sent to seven faculty members, and five faculty members agreed to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted with five faculty members representing the academic departments of computer science, mathematics, nursing, psychology, and sociology. Interviews were completed within 3 weeks at the study site. Each interview was conducted in a semistructured manner as indicated by the online instructor interview protocol. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. After each interview with faculty participants, the researcher retrieved documentation from the participant regarding any resources they use for online teaching. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify themes and associate meaning of the responses. The findings were reported and summarized, and implications, limitations, and recommendations were presented.

Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data for this study began with transcription of audio recordings of department head and faculty member interviews. After the data were collected and transcribed, analysis techniques specific to qualitative research were used for interpretation and meaning making. These techniques included transcription of audio

recordings from interviews, review of transcription, and coding to establish description and themes of data (Creswell, 2012). Cross analysis of interviews among participants, along with resource documents utilized by participants, were conducted to identify themes of the interview responses and resources utilized with online instruction. Creswell (2013) described this type of analysis as within-case analysis to understand each case, then a cross-case analysis was conducted to identify themes associated with the findings of the study. Data analysis of the one-on-one interviews was used to answer research questions one and two. Data analysis of resource documents was used to answer research question three.

Ethical Considerations

Anonymity was important for this study in order to gain trust from participants that information would not be used against them or used for any type of performance evaluation (Creswell, 2012). Participant names were removed from data and replaced with a numbering system to maintain anonymity. Data were kept in a secure location only accessible to the researcher.

Trustworthiness

Triangulation of data collected and member checking from one or more participants was used to validate the accuracy of the study. Creswell (2012) described the importance of validating the accuracy and interpretation of the findings of a study. The triangulation of data collected from department head interviews, faculty interviews, and documentation of resources provided validation of the study through corroborating evidence from multiple data sources (Creswell, 2012). Member checking led to the assurance that data had been accurately transcribed after the data were collected (Creswell, 2012).

Potential Research Bias

The researcher's experience as an online student and instructor presented the opportunity for bias. The researcher's view of online education and teaching was taken into consideration and recognized as potential bias. Recommendations from department heads of faculty participants for the study provided an unbiased selection of participants.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to identify online instructional support needs by investigating perceptions, successes, and challenges of online instructors. In this qualitative research case study, participants were department heads and faculty members of a multicampus state college. Interviews conducted with department heads were intended to gain an understanding of perceptions of successful online instruction and to identify faculty members who had demonstrated success in online instruction. Interviews conducted with faculty members were intended to gain an understanding of perceptions of successes and challenges experienced by online instructors in order to answer Research Questions 1 and 2. Documents listing tools and resources used by faculty member participants in the study were analyzed to identify common applications of teaching tools used in online instruction, in order to answer Research Question 3.

The results of the study are documented in this chapter. The following research questions were established to guide this applied dissertation:

1. What experiences are perceived by online instructors of a multicampus state college as significant to the development of online pedagogical skills as indicated by the interview protocol questionnaire?

2. What are some of the successes, challenges, and needs perceived by online instructors at a multicampus state college in regard to the development of online pedagogical skills as indicated by the interview protocol questionnaire?

3. What tools or resources are utilized by online instructors at a multicampus state college to support successful online instruction as indicated by resource documents collected from study participants?

Two sets of participants were interviewed to address the research questions in this

study. The first set of participants included department heads. The purpose of interviewing department heads was to identify the context of successful online instruction based on the perspective of specific academic departments, identify successful online instructors within multiple academic disciplines, and to triangulate data collected for the study. The second set of participants are online instructors that were identified by the department head as successful in the transition of face-to-face to online instruction. The purpose of the interviews with online instructors was to identify perspectives regarding experiences, successes, and challenges relating to the transition from face-to-face to online instruction in order to address Research Questions 1 and 2 of the study. Online instructor participants also provided a list of resources and tools they utilize in online instruction. This data set was used to identify necessary support in regard to instructional resources and tools to support online instruction and answer Research Question 3. Within-case analysis was first used to review each case individually and then a cross-case analysis was conducted to identify common themes among all of the cases (Creswell, 2012).

First- and second-cycle initial coding was conducted to determine findings (Saldana, 2016). Faculty participants included four females and one male in the age range of 32 to 59 with experience teaching in both face-to-face and online formats. Years of experience teaching through face-to-face format ranged from 3 years to 29 years, and online experience ranged from 5 years to 15 years. Faculty participants represented five different academic disciplines of computer science, mathematics, nursing, sociology, and psychology. The range of teaching experience of faculty participants, in both face-to-face and online formats, and the context of different academic disciplines led to a rich narrative of perspectives regarding the online instructional practice.

Research Question 1

The first research question addressed the experiences perceived by online instructors that influenced the development of online pedagogical skills. Faculty participants consistently expressed in responses to interview questions that peer engagement, student feedback, and continuous practice in the online teaching environment were experiences that improved practice or provided insight to effective online instructional practice.

Finding 1: Conversations with peers about online instruction reveals new ideas for effective online instruction. Faculty participants referred to the value of or need for peer engagement regarding online instructional practice. The opportunity to learn from peers often revealed new ideas, as well as the forum for critical reflection of their own practice. Peer review was mentioned in responses to interview questions, as a process for evaluating courses that had been newly designed or redesigned. Most faculty participants had discussed their participation in the peer review process either by submitting a course for review or reviewing a course in a different discipline. Through a structured peer review process, faculty and staff provide input and feedback on online courses. Faculty participant 3 noted peer review as an experience that revealed new online instructional practices from the perspective of multiple academic disciplines. Another experience mentioned was an informal opportunity for discussion with colleagues. Faculty Participant 3 stated, "And also that department has been holding Wednesday Canvas conversations where people just kind of show up with their lunch. You look and you say, 'I can't believe I never thought of that. That is just beyond brilliant.'"

The opportunity for discussion and collaboration with online faculty provides an

opportunity of support from a relatable perspective, from those who have encountered the same or similar experiences. Faculty Participant 1 also noted the value of mentorship for new instructors but stressed the need for the mentor to be experienced in online instruction of the same academic discipline. Collaboration with instructors from the same discipline was also mentioned as important by Faculty Participant 2 because of the differences in academic content and context of instruction. Faculty Participant 3 noted the value of peer engagement in regard to teaching by providing the following response to the question regarding experiences that have been valuable for online teaching:

> Anytime you can get with other teachers, that's really probably the best resource you will ever, ever, ever have. Teachers teach teachers. If you can get in the room with other people, and this hallway is wonderful. We've got philosophy, political science, history, sociology and education all in this one hallway. And we have the door closed today because we're recording but usually it's open and we'll yell, "What does somebody know about?"

Finding 2: Course design and online instruction continues to evolve each semester. Faculty participants noted that courses continued to evolve and improve as they gained experience with teaching in the online environment. Assessing student feedback and success, along with reviewing content and engagement approaches led to improvements in online instruction and course design each semester. Faculty Participant 4 addressed the evolution of her course design from a platform for posting content to adding resources that offered more engagement:

> At the beginning, teaching online to me was just get the material there so that students could do it. It was just very cut and dry, black and white, here are the quizzes, here's the stuff. So, my online classes have evolved where I am trying to

be more personal and I am trying to give them more resources to make them

successful in the class for things that we just discussed. Other than just discussion

forum, chapter review and quizzes, now I'm trying to give them more.

Course auditing to assess content relevancy and effectiveness was a common

practice among the participants. The use of supplemental materials and current real-world

content was mentioned as a strategy to replicate the type of experience often received in

face-to-face courses, but missing in the online environment. Faculty Participant 1 noted

the importance of keeping course content relevant and timely:

One of the things that I do, even though we have the same books, the same

chapters, the same course work, week by week by week, when you get to a new

semester you go back and look at your material, and sometimes you see if it's still

current enough. If you think, okay, these journal article is from 2012, maybe just

go find something that might be more current, more updated, that's still relevant

to the topic that you would like students to know.

In addition, student performance was also viewed as an important part of

improving course design and communication of instructions. The outcomes of student

work or responses to assignments were used to indicate the effectiveness of the

presentation of instruction in the online format. Faculty Participant 5 addressed student

performance as an indicator for needed improvements to future courses. Faculty

Participant 1 addressed the need to revise instructions or rubrics when multiple students

submitted work that did not meet the expectations or outcomes of the assignment. She

explained how she identifies a need for improvement in the design of course materials or

assignments:

And when you grade the assignments you start seeing some issue. Okay. This is

not what I want. This is not exactly what I want. So I'm going to have to add this

in the instruction. I'm going to have to add this in the rubric. So if you were my

student and if you look at my instructions, if you're paying attention I think you

should do well.

Research Question 2

The second research question addressed faculty perceptions of their successes,

challenges, and needs associated with the transition from face-to-face instruction to

online instruction. This section reveals the findings from responses to interview questions

from faculty participants relating to perceptions of successes, challenges, and support

needs for online instruction.

Successes. Success in online instruction from the perspective of faculty

participants in this study related to communication and responsiveness, organization of

course materials and structure, and development of personas and instructor presence.

These strategies were identified as critical to success as an online instructor.

Finding 1: Consistent communication and quick response to student inquiries

is critical to success in online instruction. Faculty participants identified communication

and responsiveness to students as being critical to success in online instruction. Email

was noted as the primary means of communication to disseminate reminders and

important information to the class as a whole and to reach out to students individually

who required specific assistance. Faculty participants reiterated that responding to student

emails quickly was particularly important to give assurance that help was available.

Communication and responsiveness were identified as ways that helped faculty

participants connect with students and be more approachable. All of the faculty

participants indicated that students had often positively commented on receiving quick

responses to emails. Faculty Participant 2 shared that his experience as an online student helped form his philosophy for online teaching and being available to help students when they needed it:

I've taken online classes as a student and I've had bad experiences as an online student. So my philosophy for online teaching is based on I don't want to repeat those mistakes. I would never want a student to say, "I didn't like this online class because the teacher never responded or they weren't there to help me learn" or anything like that. I feel like that's where my teaching philosophy comes from or that's where I pull that from.

Communication with online students is often necessary outside of traditional business hours. Faculty participants understood that online students most often needed assistance during the evening and on weekends. Responding to student emails as soon as possible, even when emails come in outside of work hours, was repeatedly mentioned as a practice critical for successful online instruction. Many faculty participants described using their smart phones to respond to emails quickly, as noted below by Faculty Participant 3:

I keep my phone home with me. It comes right to me even if it's 10:30 at night. I know some instructors don't want to do that but I feel like it's really necessary for the online students to hear from me as soon as I possibly can.

Faculty Participant 5 further addressed that even though college policy does not specifically require email responses on weekends, it is vital that online students receive the assistance they need during the time they have allotted to study and complete assignments:

Email is hyper important. And you've got to be responsive. I understand the

college policy is if it comes in basically when the college closes on Friday at 4:00,

they expect you to respond by Monday. I understand that. But unfortunately all

the online students take the weekends when they're going to actually do their

work. If you're not communicating with them over the weekend they're getting

stuck.

Finding 2: Organization of the course and establishment of expectations

reduces student confusion about course navigation, assignments, and due dates.

Faculty participants identified the organization of course content and explanations of

course expectations as critical to successful online instruction. Organizing the layout of

content and establishing a clear path to information were practices identified as ways to

help students navigate the course and stay on track with assignments. Faculty Participant

2 noted that students often commented on the ease of finding information and stated, "I

am organized. Thinking back, that's something that students often comment on. They like

how organized the course is. They like that they know where they can find the

information. So I think that's something that helps."

Utilization of modules was noted as a way to establish consistent routines and set

clear expectations of assignments and due dates. Faculty participants addressed the need

for students to understand what to expect throughout the course. Faculty Participant 4

explained that following a routine prepares students for success in the course:

We follow a set order every week with the same due dates every week. It has a

flow to it. I think just to have the consistency of the flow of the class when due

dates are. That's the gist of it. I think that's important for students to be successful

so there are no surprises and it's the same thing every time.

Setting clear expectations at the beginning of the course helps students plan and manage

the time commitment required for the course. Faculty Participant 3 noted that the first

unit of her course is an orientation unit followed by a quiz of the syllabus:

> First of all is clear expectations. They begin with an orientation unit which
>
> includes the syllabus, the schedule, introductions, replies to each other and
>
> introduction for me, and then a syllabus quiz so that before they can even start the
>
> course they know what's going to be expected and they have to take a little test on
>
> it. And they can take it several times until they get it right. Hopefully they've read
>
> the syllabus first but they may just pull it out and try to answer the questions. But
>
> when they finally get that done and that's over, then we start.

Faculty Participant 5 also noted the importance of setting clear expectations and

bringing awareness to the time commitment of the online course:

> I'm trying to get them to think about what are the demands on your time. I'm
>
> trying to get them to be aware of just because it's online doesn't mean free for all,
>
> get to it when I feel like it. To be successful in online class you need to treat going
>
> to class just like a face-to-face situation. Monday and Wednesday, Friday from
>
> 9:00 to 10:00 I'm setting aside to do class X. Make it that way.

Finding 3: Online instructor presence and engagement in the course. Faculty

participants identified online instructor presence and engagement in the course as critical

to successful online instruction. The development of personas within the course was

mentioned as challenging, but necessary. Faculty Participant 4 expressed the importance

of being personable:

> I think also being a real person. The part of the orientation that they have to go
>
> through I include a picture of myself, a picture of Clint and my family, give them
>
> a background of where I came from, and I link my hometown just to let them

know that I'm an actual real person and I think as an encourager. On every email that I send at the very end I put let me know if you have any questions. So always throwing that out there for them to know that I'm here to help but you got to ask me.

Several strategies were mentioned that related to instructional presence, such as actively engaging in discussions, sending out notifications of encouragement, and providing individualized feedback. Faculty Participant 2 noted that being present means more than getting grades posted:

And as an instructor, having a presence, making sure they know that you're logging in and you're there and you're reading these things and you're not just logging in once a week on Sunday night or Monday morning and putting a grade next to everything and then that's it.

Challenges. Challenges were identified as time constraints and workload, content development and incorporating the use of technology, and identifying students who need help. Faculty participants repeatedly addressed the time commitment of online instruction as being greater than face-to-face instruction. Not only does online instruction take more time than face-to-face instruction, but participants noted that there are more students choosing online courses over face-to-face courses. Content designed to replicate the experience of face-to-face instruction was mentioned as challenge in regard to time to learn the technology and create the content. Knowing when students were struggling in online courses was noted as an additional challenge because the instructors lacked the ability to interact with students as they would with face-to-face courses.

Finding 1: Online instruction requires more time in regard to course development and communication of instruction. Faculty participants identified

increased time commitments and workload associated with online instruction as a
challenge. Communication with online students was one of the practices mentioned as
critical to success in online instruction by the faculty participants. Communication
designed for online instruction was also noted as more time consuming than
communication associated with face-to face instruction. Students in online courses do not
get the same experience of listening to questions posed by classmates in face-to-face
courses. Online students often need assistance on weeknights and weekends. Class
materials must be prepared ahead of time with thorough instructions that clearly outline
expectations. Faculty Participant 5 reiterated the need to prepare for online instruction in
advance and the need for online instructors to be available to respond to student emails
outside of office hours:

> You've got to be willing to give time of yourself both in preparing for the class,
> doing things ahead of time, and in dealing with those emails. You've got to be
> willing to spend time communicating with them. Again, it cannot be limited to
> that block of hours that say office hours or OPA (Other Professional Activities)
> time of your schedule. You cannot be willing to limit yourself.

In regard to preparing the content for an online course for the first time, creating
chapter summaries and making sure all the material covered on the tests was included in
the course content were identified as time constraints. Faculty Participant 1 referenced
the need to compare test questions with the content available in the course especially
when new textbooks are selected for the course:

> So it took me a lot of time to go over the question and flip all the textbooks and
> look at the material that's available to students to make sure that the questions are
> legitimate and students cannot come back to me and say, "Hey, we don't have a

material regarding the question that you asked in the test."

Responding to individual questions for online students is an added time constraint for online instruction. When online students have questions regarding the online course, there is only one-on-one student to instructor interaction. In contrast, in a face-to-face course the entire class has the opportunity to hear the instructor response to student questions. Faculty Participant 3 reiterated the time constraint associated with having to utilize written correspondence for all communication in the online environment by stating, "It's definitely not easier. I definitely think it's harder in a lot of ways. It is very time-consuming because every single thing you're going to say to them you're typing it out."

Managing increased enrollments in online courses was noted as a challenge in interview responses from faculty participants. Completing grading assignments like discussion posts and papers often results in work outside of business hours. Faculty Participant 3 discussed the availability of resources for online instructors, but the lack of time outside of the online teaching obligations to utilize the resources:

I feel like the resources are there. I feel like I am just so slammed with so much to do. The seat count on my online courses used to be 25. It's 40. Now, one thing has changed about the courses. They're not called writing emphasis anymore. But other people, there's writing emphasis and they still have 40 people in them. That is unbelievable. You can grade all those papers -- that's what I'm grading every weekend. I'm sitting down grading their discussions.

Understanding how to manage the work flow of an online course, such as keeping up with submitted discussion posts and holding students accountable for deadlines, was mentioned as an added challenge for online instruction. Additional workload associated

with online course work includes grading discussion post assignments. Discussion

postassignments are often utilized as a way to attempt to replicate student interaction of a

face-to-face class, so grading this type of assignment can be complicated. Faculty

Participant 1 discussed the need for a system to organize the various work assignments

and grading requirements of online course work:

> And how am I going to organize my things? Because we grade the initial post
>
> differently than the responses, I have to develop my own system so that it will
>
> help me do my work a little better and easier and faster. So I think that's a
>
> challenge.

Finding 2: Developing content for online instruction that matches the

experience students receive in face-to-face instruction is complicated. Faculty

participants discussed the challenge of replicating the classroom experience in the online

environment. Developing content that meets the same outcome without the opportunity

for verbal discussion and collaboration was repeatedly mentioned as complicated. Faculty

Participant 2 discussed how classroom instruction was used for the framework to develop

content for an online course:

> I've taught in the classroom before so I'm trying to figure out how do I translate
>
> what I've done in the classroom to online. Sometimes it's a brand new course that
>
> we haven't taught at all. And so I have to try to figure out how do I think I would
>
> teach this in a classroom and how will that translate to online. And that's the most
>
> challenging because even when you're preparing to teach something in the
>
> classroom there's a lot of question marks. And then to try to take that unknown
>
> and convert it online, you've just increased the question marks of how is this
>
> going to work.

Faculty Participant 2 also noted that developing online courses without the experience of teaching the same class face-to-face was more difficult. Learning how to teach in two modes of delivery at the same time, was noted as an added challenge for instructors new to the college and teaching. Online instructors understand the value of technology but often struggle with finding the time to learn how to use the resources or apply the resources. Faculty Participant 3 addressed the learning curve associated with new technology by stating, "And at my age I am a digital immigrant, not a digital native. So this has been and continues to be a learning curve for me."

Faculty participants were aware of technology that could help with course content development and had indicated that they had attended training workshops to learn about new technology. The problems associated with the use of new technology included the additional tasks associated with using it. Faculty Participant 3 addressed the attempt to record face-to-face course lectures to add to online courses, but it would require release forms from all of the students in the face-to-face course:

A lot of it is the time, the time to create as robust a course as possible. I know for a fact there are other things I could be using, other technologies that are out there. I see the workshops pop up like you could do Panopto. So I had my Panopto training. And I guess you're familiar with that. You can record your face-to-face class and they can look at it later. I'm going to start this next week. I'm thinking why couldn't I just pop up my face-to-face class lecture into my distance learning. I have to get, I guess, a release form from the other students if they would do that. So then at least they could see me.

Faculty Participant 4 explained that recording lectures was complicated because the software license was not loaded on computers in every classroom. If classes were

taught in a classroom without the software, then recording the lecture was not an option. If the lecture was recorded, the same computer would need to be used to upload the recorded lecture to the online course, but sometimes there was not enough time between classes scheduled in the room to upload the lecture right away. Faculty Participant 4 noted the challenge of using the recording software Panopto to record lectures:

> And I want to start using Panopto and just plugging it into the online so that they still can feel like they're in a classroom because I'm right there lecturing but, obviously, have the flexibility of an online. It's more complicated than I thought it was going to be to actually implement it. So I'm still trying to figure it out.

Finding 3: Online instructors are challenged with identifying when students need help. Faculty participants perceived their role in online instruction as being a facilitator. The challenge associated with facilitation of instruction was the delay in knowing when a student needed help. If the student fails to respond to emails or submit work, they may get too far behind to catch up. Online instructors do not have the opportunity to observe learning in the same way as they do in face-to-face classes. Faculty Participant 4 explained the difficulty of know when a student is struggling:

> Obviously with face-to-face you get the connection and I get to see the a-ha moment from the student. The problem with online is unless the student reaches out to me I don't know if they're having problems. I can see it in face-to-face instruction. In face-to-face format, when I ask a question and I don't get feedback or they look at me like a bump on a log, I know that I haven't done a good job face-to-face teaching that concept. And online I don't really know until either they reach out or they do poorly on a test. So that is the difficult part of being an online instructor is that you don't know if they ever really get it. So my role as an

online instructor is a little bit more removed. And I'm just a little clueless

sometimes, in the dark.

Support needs. Support needs identified by faculty participants included time for

training on the use and application of technology tools, creation of video lectures

covering complicated subjects, and opportunities to share best practices with peers within

and across disciplines. Release time to learn the applications of technology for online

instruction was identified as a need for faculty to fully understand the capability of the

resources and tools that enhanced online instruction. Development of recorded videos to

increase instructor presence was also identified as a support need. The opportunity to

engage with peers across disciplines and institutions was addressed by faculty

participants as an effective way to learn about best practices and to reflect on

experiences.

Finding 1: Online instructors need release time to develop engaging online

course content. Course design and materials are different for online instruction. Faculty

participants expressed that replicating the engagement of face-to-face courses in the

online learning environment was a significant challenge associated with online

instruction. Training of resources was noted as consistently provided by the college's

Distance Learning department. Faculty participants indicated satisfaction with the

training and resources available, but indicated a need for release time to develop content

using new tools available for enhancing online course experiences and assignments.

Faculty Participant 3 noted that time to learn how to apply resources and tools to specific

courses was an added need:

And then figuring out how to apply it. I love course development like creation of

assignments and how to make things happen. I just end up doing some of the

same things over and over again because they work but also because I don't have time to create something else.

During the transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction, assessing teaching success in the classroom can help form the framework for teaching success in the online environment. Release time to develop the online instructional practice that correlates to successful practices in the classroom is a need for instructors approaching online instruction for the first time. Faculty Participant 2 added the need to match instructor teaching strengths in the classroom to the online environment by stating, "If a teacher hasn't taught online before they would need to identify what other strengths and how do you translate that into the online course because that's what's going to make them successful."

Finding 2: Online instructors need assistance with the development of content that increases faculty presence such as videos of instructor lectures or demonstrations. Faculty participants identified that more content that increased instructor presence was needed for online courses. In response to questions relating to improving online instruction skills, many faculty referred to the need for content such as videos that offered another way for students connect with their instructors. Faculty Participant 3 noted that increased instructor presence is a goal for improvements to online instruction and stated, "So I could definitely do more so that they could see me or at least hear me rather than it being so dependent on them reading themselves. I think that is my goal to improve the course."

Faculty Participant 2 identified that collaboration among instructors within the same discipline could present a greater offering of perspectives on the content. Noting that many students responded positively to video demonstrations, Faculty Participant 2

suggested support from other faculty on collaborative efforts to develop and expand the offerings of video content for courses taught in each department:

> And so in both of those cases I don't really know how the support would look or where that would come from. I guess ideally there would be other instructors who wanted to help with that and were willing to put in some time toward doing that. In the face-to-face classes I've told students who've taken four or five classes with me, "I'm glad you like me as a teacher but at some point you need a different opinion. I would like to think that I have a good opinion and giving you good advice but it's good to get other opinions to and get other feedbacks." I guess the point being is it only helps them so much if every single video and every single document is created by me. While I would like to think I'm teaching them what they need to know, they need to get a diversity of opinions and styles and things like that. And that's something that in the online format right now we don't have that. So that would be something we would need.

Finding 3: Online instructors need to reflect and share best practices with peers both in the same and different disciplines. Faculty participants consistently reflected on the value of peer engagement to support online instruction. Faculty mentors are often assigned to new faculty. Faculty Participant 1 noted the importance of having a mentor who was experienced in online instruction within the same discipline:

> Your mentor should be the faculty in the exact same department that you start your work preferably doing the same thing on how the experience or knowledge about what you're doing. If my mentor was somebody who's never taught online, that wouldn't be helpful.

Faculty Participant 1 also discussed that new online instructors could gain experience

through observation of online instruction prior to teaching an online class:

> You may not have a good, accurate picture of exactly what it's like when you actually step your foot in there teaching. So maybe I just think right about now that it may be a good idea to kind of have you, let's put it simply, being a teaching assistant to a seasoned online instructor to see how things go, to see how things are managed and what kind of problem you might experience yourself when you're the only one in there.

Faculty participants addressed the need for departmental support, in addition to the support provided by the distance learning department, to assist with learning and navigating the LMS. Having someone within the department who could relate to the needs of the instructor based on the academic discipline promoted collaboration and sharing of best practices. Faculty Participant 3 noted experiences with faculty members within the department in an informal manner as a positive experience that helped form online instructional practice. Faculty Participant 5 addressed the support of an instructor within the department who learned the new LMS and provided assistance to other faculty in the department:

> She's the one who really dove in when Canvas first came aboard. I think she was actually one of the teachers on the committee that met when they were looking at all the different LMSs out there. So she's very familiar with Canvas and coming into it.

Faculty Participant 4 referred to a training course that was in the pilot stage at the college. The course provides an opportunity for faculty to learn about best practices in online instruction. Faculty Participant 4 noted that this type of training reinforced current practice and offered new ideas for improved online instructional strategies. Including

online instructional training prior to teaching online was noted as beneficial:

> There are some things obviously that I do but seeing things like how to encourage cooperation among students, obviously just good practices in general of online teaching, I'm always open to. So having this or having the training available for me and other instructors would have been nice on the front end.

Research Question 3

The third research question addressed resources and tools utilized for online instruction. Resources identified by documents submitted by faculty participants revealed that most faculty participants used a combination of LMS tools and supplemental materials to support online instruction. These tools were used to manage tasks and communicate with students. Supplemental course materials allowed for practice of learning the content of the course and served as a way to compensate for the lack of engagement in online courses as compared to face-to-face courses.

Finding 1: LMS tools used to manage tasks and communicate with students. Grading tools, discussion boards, and email were listed as tools within the LMS to manage tasks and communicate with students. Speedgrader was noted as an application within the LMS to manage grading assignments and to post comments to students about their work. Three of the five faculty participants listed the use of discussion boards. Faculty Participants 1, 3, and 4 discussed in interviews that discussion boards promoted engagement among students and assisted with providing content for promoting conversation about current and real-world concepts relating to the course work. All faculty participants noted email as the primary form of communication with students.

Finding 2: Supplemental materials used to reinforce complicated and real-world concepts. Publisher content, videos of lectures and demonstrations, websites and

current journal articles and instructor-designed resources were identified as supplemental materials that supported instruction of online courses. Identification of already developed supplemental materials that supported the learning objectives of the online course were noted as a valuable time-saver for faculty participants. All faculty participants listed the use of publisher content. Publisher content was described as interactive web lessons, PowerPoint presentations, test banks, or course companion sites. Faculty Participants 2 and 4 noted in interview responses that they would look for resources from the textbook publisher, websites, and journals before creating their own resources, so they would not have to spend time on recreating resources that may already be available.

Two of the five faculty participants listed personal videos of lectures or demonstrations as a resource for online instruction. Faculty Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5 noted in interview responses that they believed personalized video content for online courses would enhance instructor presence, but lacked the time to develop the videos or found the technology did not work the way they expected. Three of the faculty participants listed instructor-designed resources were used for online instruction. Instructor-designed resources were described as grading rubrics, how-to instructions, chapter reviews, flashcards, and companion websites.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify online instructional support needs by investigating perceptions, successes, and challenges of online instructors. Data were collected and analyzed from interviews and resource documents to reveal several findings relating to the practice of online instruction. The research questions addressed in this study assessed the experiences, successes, challenges, and needs of successful online instructors and identified the primary resources and tools utilized for successful online

instruction. Several key themes emerged from the findings of the study. The themes

associated with the findings of this study are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study describe the experiences, successes, challenges, and needs of successful online instructors and identify the primary resources and tools utilized for successful online instruction by faculty at a multicampus state college in the Southeast. Several key themes emerged from the findings of the study. The themes associated with the findings of this study are (a) reflection of practice, (b) connection to students, and (c) process of work.

Reflection of practice. Experiences leading to successful online instruction involve reflection of practice (Baran, 2016; Lane, 2013; Reushle, 2008). Faculty participants consistently referred to learning from other faculty members and from student feedback. Online course development was noted as an evolving process focused on replicating the face-to-face course experience in the online environment. Faculty participants sought support from their peers and assessed student feedback and performance to learn how to improve their online pedagogical skills. Student feedback and sharing of best practices with peers was referenced, by faculty participants, as important to improving instructional techniques in the online environment.

The value of reflecting on instructional practice is documented in prior research (Baran et al., 2011; Koepke & O'Brien, 2012; Lane, 2013). Teaching practices for many instructors are formed based on prior experiences as a student in the classroom (Baran et al., 2011; McQuiggan, 2012; Shelton & Saltsman, 2003). As the context of teaching and learning continues to change, the opportunity to gain relevant perspectives and experiences of teaching practices is needed. Transformative experiences leading to the development of online pedagogical skills are an important consideration of professional

development programs (Baran et al., 2011; Davis & Dykman, 2008; Marek, 2009; Meyer & Murrell, 2014; Ray, 2009; Storandt et al., 2012). The reflection of teaching practices are often experienced through collaboration with peers and other online instructors (Baran et al., 2011; Henning, 2012; Koepke & O'Brien, 2012; McQuiggan 2012; Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Reushle, 2008). Faculty participants in this study indicated that both formal and informal opportunities of reflecting on personal experiences and learning from the experiences of other online instructors had a significant influence on the development of online pedagogical skills.

Connection to students. Successful online instructional practices revolve around connection to students through communication and guiding student learning (Bailey & Card, 2009). Baran et al. (2011) stated, "The online environment changes the fundamental nature of the interaction between the teacher, student, and content, requiring a reexamination of the roles teachers take in enhancing students' learning" (p. 429). Faculty participants reiterated throughout the interviews that communication with students and organized structure of online courses were critical to successful online instruction. Communicating expectations was a common practice noted from faculty participants. Weekly emails and notification of upcoming due dates were discussed in interviews as necessary within the online instruction practice and were a way to provide motivation and support for student persistence.

Faculty participants noted in resource documents the use of email and videos to communicate or enhance instructor presence. Responding to emails was mentioned in interviews as particularly important because of the window of time most online students had to study and complete online assignments. A delayed email response to an important student question about course work could put the student behind significantly, resulting

in the inability to catch up. Videos of lectures and demonstrations were noted as a way to enhance instructor presence, but faculty participants noted time and technology challenges associated with video production. Course organization was also a key factor in keeping students progressing throughout the course with a clear understanding of expectations. Faculty participants referred to the need for a clear path that guided students to the materials they needed, along with clear instructions to facilitate course work.

Prior research documents that different skill sets are required for online instruction as compared to face-to-face instruction (Albee, 2015; Baran et al., 2011; Bigatel et al., 2012; Davis & Dykman, 2008; Haggerty, 2015; Palloff & Pratt, 2002; Storandt et al., 2012). These skill sets indicate a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instructional practices (Bailey & Card, 2009; Baran et al., 2011; Palloff & Pratt, 2002). Understanding and assessing the specific training needs based on the experience and skill set of individual instructors is an important consideration for professional-development programs that enhance the development of online pedagogical skills (Aust et al., 2016; Baran, 2016; Baran & Correia, 2014; Bigatel et al., 2012; Haggerty, 2015). Faculty participants in this study indicated that online instruction requires multiple modes of delivery of communication and consistent guidance with navigating the course content and assignments, than required for face-to-face instruction. Faculty participants also noted that they took the opportunity to assess their online course after each semester to determine needed areas of improvement.

Process of work. Challenges associated with online instructional practice are related to time and workload (Crawford-Ferre & Weist, 2012; Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Faculty participants noted the process of work for online instruction as particularly challenging. Navigating student communication, developing engaging course content,

and identifying when students needed help were noted as more time consuming than face-to-face courses. Resources utilized by faculty participants in this study for successful online instruction helped manage tasks and supplement course content. Faculty participants documented the use of LMS tools such as grading applications, discussion posts, and email to manage tasks associated with online instruction.

Supplemental course work was documented as publisher content, instructor designed content, websites, and videos. Resources and tools documented by faculty participants were utilized to overcome the challenges and manage the process of work associated with online instruction. The LMS tools were identified as management of online instruction. Supplemental materials were identified as important for enhancing online instruction by reinforcing course content through engaging and real world examples.

Research documents that more time is required for online instruction compared to face-to-face instruction (Haggerty, 2015; Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Faculty participants in this study addressed the need for the use of technology to enhance online instruction practice, but the time commitment required to understand the application of available tools relevant to their online instructional needs was limited. Noting that training opportunities existed to learn about tools available for online instructors, faculty participants addressed the challenge of finding the time to incorporate the training into their instructional practice.

Interpretation of Findings

The themes that emerged from this study lead to two significant interpretations of findings. First, professional development and support for online instruction need to be relevant to delivery of online instruction. Second, time for online instruction preparation

and content development should be a factor in work schedule and course load for online
instructors.

   Professional development and support relevant to online instruction. Findings
of this study relating to the theme of reflection of practice indicate that online instructors
are consistently seeking to improve their practice of instruction in the online
environment. Faculty participants understand that a better approach to the delivery of
online instruction exists and often reach out to peers to learn about their experiences or
assess student feedback and performance to identify needed improvements. Faculty
participants in this study consistently discussed the value of working with peers in both a
formal and informal setting as they further developed their personal practice of online
instruction. These findings support evidence in existing literature that identifies the need
for professional development and support that incorporates the reflection of practice with
other instructors (Baran, 2016; Lane, 2013; Reushle, 2008). The findings also indicate the
need for assessment of student feedback and performance, on an ongoing basis, to
support the evolving nature of the development of online pedagogical skills (Storandt et
al., 2012).

   Findings of this study relating to the theme of connection to students indicate that
online instructors must shift their instructional practice to facilitation of learning and
guidance within the online learning environment. Communication and engagement
techniques specific for online learning are necessary to help students navigate the online
course requirements, course content, and assignments (Bailey & Card, 2009; Baran et al.,
2011). Faculty participants in this study consistently addressed the need to communicate
expectations and reiterate course concepts in multiple forms of delivery with both
consistent scheduled communication along with reminders and prompts with timely

messages. Faculty participants indicated that development of communication and instruction for online course work that replicates the face-to-face classroom experience and ensures student learning requires both instructor designed approaches and supplemental materials. These findings support existing research that reveals the need for professional development and support that guides online instructors beyond learning of best practices and technology to content development specific to their online course needs (Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015).

Preparing for online instruction and content development. Findings of this study relating to the theme of process of work indicate that online instructors are spending more time managing and developing online course instruction than the time required for face-to-face instruction. Understanding the process of work for online instruction is an important consideration when approaching online instruction for the first time, as online instruction requires a different skill set compared to face-to-face instruction (Aust et al., 2015; Bigatel et al., 2012; Davis & Dykman, 2008; Hansch et al., 2015). Faculty participants in this study addressed the need to assess face-to-face instruction practices in order to determine what specific instruction practices needed to be developed for online instruction. Creating the same learning outcomes with online instruction requires approaches that are specific to online learning. Success in making the transition from face-to-face to online teaching is dependent upon the availability of opportunities for learning how to teach online, but those approaches must actually be helpful to the online instructor.

Faculty participants indicated a clear understanding that what works in the classroom most likely would not work in an online course. The participants noted that time to prepare for online instruction required consideration of tasks that needed to be

completed, development of course content, and documentation of instruction. The participants in this study taught both face-to-face and online courses within the same semester. As existing research supports the additional time and workload commitment of online instruction (Haggerty, 2015; Keengwe & Kidd, 2010), the findings of this study indicate that types of course delivery should be a consideration when determining course load and hours assigned for course instruction. Scheduling of work hours is another important consideration as all faculty participants discussed working in the evenings and on weekends to respond to student inquiries in a timely manner, so that students could get assistance when they needed it and stay on track with course assignments.

Context of Findings

The findings of this study add to the literature associated with online pedagogy. Using a qualitative approach to investigate online instructor experiences in the transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction provided an in-depth narrative that led to important findings and themes associated with the development of online pedagogical skills (Creswell, 2012). The themes that emerged from the findings of this study correlate to the literature that exists on the topic of online pedagogy. Professional development and support for development and improvements of online pedagogy should allow for critical reflection of practice through transformative learning experiences (Baran et al., 2011). Reflection of practice was a theme that emerged from the findings of this study. Faculty participants discussed the value in learning from peers and the ability to relate to the challenges presented within online instruction as compared to face-to-face instruction.

Understanding the differences of pedagogical practices of face-to-face instruction and online instruction requires more than learning about the technology associated with online learning (Ching et al., 2015; Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012; Puzziferro & Shelton,

2008; Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015). Connection to students was a theme that emerged from the findings of this study. Faculty participants indicated a need for support with development of engaging practices and course content such as videos, rather than training on technology alone. Communicating to students utilizing multiple modes of delivery was noted, by faculty participants, as necessary for successful online instruction. Creating video to replicate instruction from the classroom to the online environment requires skills that instructors may be lacking (Hansch et al., 2015). Support for the development of online course content relevant to each academic discipline would complement existing training on available technology for online instruction. Associating technology training with the development of specific online pedagogical practices helps ensure that instructors are able to incorporate technology in a way relevant to their instructional needs (Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015).

Implications of Findings

The implications of findings in this study lead to the importance of forming an understanding of the development of online pedagogy in relation to the changing landscape of higher education. The growth rate in online course enrollment has influenced attitudes about the critical nature of online learning as more college administrators indicate the need for long term strategic planning for online education (Allen & Seaman, 2011, 2015; Crawford-Ferre & Wiest, 2012). As more students access online education, the potential for accommodating a more diverse student population with unique support needs exists. Preparing for the continued growth in online education requires a through and consistent evaluation of professional development and support needs for online instructors (Albee, 2015). Faculty participants addressed in interview responses the evolving nature of their online instruction practice and the need to continue

to assess the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

Another implication associated with the findings and themes of this study is the importance of understanding the process of work involved with online instruction. An unexpected finding of this study relating to the theme of process of work was the challenge expressed by faculty participants of understanding when students needed help and at what point intervention was needed. As online education continues to grow in regard to enrollment and strategic efforts of higher education institutions, so does the uncertainty of how to retain students and ensure student success in online learning (Allen & Seaman, 2015; Williams van Rooij & Zirkle, 2016).

Limitations of Study

The limitations of this study included the lack of generalizability because only one state college was included in the study and requirements of two semesters of online instruction at the selected site limited the pool of faculty members available for the study. The selected site is not unique in the design of having multiple campus locations, making the results of the study beneficial to future research and the inclusion of multiple academic departments provided the opportunity for an increased, diverse sample of faculty participants. The majority of literature regarding online pedagogy and professional development included studies conducted at a university. Little research was found on studies conducted at a state college or community college; therefore, the perspectives of faculty participants from this study contribute to the existing literature with an emphasis on a different setting.

The goal of this study was to explore the experiences of successful online instructors and identify the needs associated with the development and support of online pedagogy. This study was limited to five full-time faculty members from different

academic disciplines at a multicampus state college. Excluded from the study were new faculty members to the college and adjunct or part-time faculty. Further limitations of this study are perspectives of part-time and adjunct faculty and consideration of faculty at other state colleges.

Discussion on Future Directions of Research and Field

The future direction of research of online education and the development of online pedagogical skills will need to address the evolving and changing nature of higher education. Considerations for future research should address the lack of literature associated with the time it takes to transition from face-to-face to online instruction practices. Another consideration for future research is the identification of support needs to prepare adjunct faculty and new faculty members for online course development and enhancement of online pedagogical skills.

Recommendations

The goal of this study was to investigate successes, challenges, and experiences of faculty at a multicampus state college to explore the transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction. The findings of this study revealed themes that led to an understanding of professional development and support needs for online instructors. An assessment of professional development and support needs for the development of online pedagogical skills led to three recommendations for components of online instructor training. The recommendations include (a) implement a faculty technology mentor (FTM) program, (b) assess training needs based on faculty experience, and (c) establish support that associates online pedagogy with technology use.

Implement FTM program. Learning from peers was identified by faculty participants in this study as a significant influence on the development of online

pedagogical skills, particularly in the area of understanding how to incorporate the use of technology within their instructional practice. Faculty adoption of technology through peer support can be accomplished with the implementation of a college-wide FTM program (Baran, 2016). Baran (2016) stated, "FTM programs address the challenges presented by traditional programs, offering faculty opportunities to work one-on-one with a mentor" (p. 46).

Baran (2016) conducted a study on an FTM program designed to establish mentoring strategies that led to success factors based on the individual need of the instructor. The FTM program paired faculty members with technology mentors. The technology mentors worked with mentees to establish individualized technology adoption goals, provide guidance with technology usage relevant to instructional needs, and shared information between the instructional technology department and the mentee (Baran, 2016). Baran's study was conducted during a one-semester graduate course, although recommendations from the study included the need for continuous and sustainable faculty support beyond a single semester.

Findings from Baran's (2016) study revealed the opportunity for critical reflection of practice through peer engagement in a one-on-one setting. Professional-development programs that extend beyond technology training alone are necessary for faculty members to understand how to incorporate the technology within their instructional practice (Baran, 2016; Lane, 2013; Reushle, 2008). An FTM approach to professional development in relation to online pedagogy has the potential to address the challenges identified by faculty participants, in this study, by providing dedicated support for the use of technology to develop relevant online course content.

Assess training needs based on faculty experience. Faculty participants in this

study indicated different levels of support needs as they transitioned from face-to-face to online instruction. Time commitments and increased workloads were challenges identified by faculty participants that influenced their ability to incorporate improved instructional practices in their online courses. Training was identified as an available option, but some faculty participants noted that they struggled with using what they learned from the training in a way that was relevant to their needs. Approaching professional development in a manner that focuses on the technology alone is not sufficient for the development of online pedagogy (Lane, 2013; McQuiggen, 2012).

Developing a framework that addresses the professional development needs specific to online pedagogy ensures a training approach associated with pedagogy, rather than technology alone (Haggerty, 2015). In addition, professional development for online pedagogy addressed in a one-size-fits-all manner misses the opportunity for online instructors to learn or improve upon the skill sets they have or lack for online instruction (Ng, 2015; Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015). Individual training needs for faculty members should be assessed to determine existing instructional strengths that need to be developed in the online learning environment, as well as identify online instructional competencies that require additional training (Baran & Correia, 2014; Bigatel et al., 2012; Haggerty, 2015). Haggerty (2015) suggested that increased academic workloads associated with online instruction can be addressed with the right type of professional development that targets the specific needs of online instructors.

Establish support that associates online pedagogy with technology use. The value of technology and resources available to enhance online instruction was reiterated by faculty participants in this study, but the challenge of easily applying the technology in a relevant way within the online course was often noted. Professional development

designed to guide faculty members through the process of transitioning instructional practices from face-to-face instruction to the online environment helps associate online pedagogy with technology use. Ruggiero and Boehm (2015) designed an online 10-week course that presented the opportunity for faculty to develop a practice of online instruction in a manner that provides transformative experiences as a student, as well as, provides training of technology relevant to online instruction. With an emphasis on curriculum development and online pedagogy, professional development can address the challenge faced by many faculty in regard to effectively incorporating technology to enhance their online instructional practice (Ruggiero & Boehm, 2015; Sun & Chen, 2016).

Conclusion

The data collected from this qualitative study led to key findings and themes associated with the development of online pedagogical skills for faculty participants at a multicampus state college in the southeast. These findings contribute to the existing literature regarding online pedagogy and provide a framework of reference for online instructors, college administrators, and distance learning departments for the adoption of relevant professional development and support offerings that lead to improved online instruction. College administrators should consistently evaluate the effectiveness of resources, tools, and guidance to support online instruction and assess the ability of instructors to enhance online instructional practice through holistic professional development programming (Baran & Correia, 2014). Sun and Chen (2016) stated, "Given the fact that online education is a new dynamic to both novice and veteran faculty, adequate professional development is necessary, which may include effective course design, instruction, implementation, and evaluation" (p. 157). Evaluation of online

instructional support will require an ongoing effort as the context of teaching may shift to

accommodate the needs and expectations of key stakeholders such as students,

administrators, and policy makers (Meyer & Murrell, 2014).

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Appendix A

Demographics Questionnaire

Demographics Questionnaire

Title of the Project: *Assessing the needs of online pedagogical skill development in higher education*
Principal Investigator: Michelle Horton

Date:
Participant #:

- **Gender:**

- **Age:**

- **Race:**

- **Nationality:**

- **Country of birth:**

- **Highest degree earned:**

- **Center/Department/College:**

- **Faculty Status (full time, part time, adjunct):**

- **Years of teaching experience face-to-face:**

- **Years of teaching experience online:**

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for Department Head

Interview Protocol for Department Head

Warm-up

1. Sign "Informed consent statement."

2. Give "Demographic sheet" to fill in.

3. [*Instructions to the interviewer: "Thank you very much for making time for this interview. The goal of this study is to understand the context of online teaching in your department/institution. Since you work with faculty on the design and development of online courses, you are an ideal candidate who would provide details on how faculty teach online, their needs and how you help of consult during this process. Everything that will be said in this interview will be kept confidential. Please feel free to ask for any clarification at any time. If any question will make you uncomfortable, just say that you prefer not to answer."*

4. *Ask permission to tape the interview. If the interviewee does not give permission to tape the interview, take notes.*]

Introductory questions
[*Don't look for in-depth answers here. If the interviewee gives you short answers, no need to ask for elaboration, unless you do not understand something. But if they want to give you a comprehensive idea about their background, let them talk if it does not take more than 10 minutes.*]

- Could you give me some information on your academic background?

- Could you give me some information about your professional experience prior to coming to the College? (e.g., Field of study, Company, Job title/Function, Years with this company, etc.)

- Could you describe your current position? (e.g., Company, Job title/Function, Years with this College, etc.)

  - Allen Green: Instructional Development Specialist for the Master of Science in Agronomy distance education program.
- Could you give me some information about your experiences related to online teaching/learning experiences prior to coming to this College?

Focused questions

Q1- How do department heads work with the faculty who teach online?
- I want to learn a little bit about the context of the distance/online courses that you are involved in. Tell me the context of the online courses and the programs you are working in.

    o Master of Science in Agronomy at a distance.

    o How are the program(s) structured?

    o How long has it been offered?

    o Student profiles?

- Tell me how you work with the faculty who teach online?
    o How many faculty do you support?
    o What is your role in the analysis, design, development, implementation or the evaluation of an online course?
    o How do you interact with the faculty during this process?
        ▪ How often?
    o How do you help or consult faculty?
    o What is your role in the online teaching context?

        ▪ Pedagogical support

        ▪ Technological support

        ▪ Content support

- What types of technologies are you and faculty using in the online courses you design and develop? (e.g., WebCT, Moodle, Web 2.0 tools)? Please describe the types of technology and how you are using it to support student learning.

Q2- How do department heads define successful online teaching?

- How do you describe successful online teaching?

    o What do you think online educators need to know in order to teach online successfully?

- Based on your criteria on successful online teaching, could you please provide 3 nominations for faculty who you think teach online successfully?

- o Having taught at least one online course or teaching an online course this semester

- How do you think they perceive their teaching process as an online instructor in the online environment? What are their teaching approaches?

  - o Examples: (Community centered, Content centered, Assessment centered, Teaching centered?)

- What types of professional development experiences do online faculty need?

  - o What format are you providing professional development experiences to best meet faculty needs?

<u>Closing question</u>
[*Instructions to the interviewer: With this question, I would like to address some of the issues that could have been left out and that are important for the research.*]
- Is there anything else you think will be helpful for me to know about online teaching and learning?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Online Teacher

Interview Protocol for Online Teacher

Date:_____
Start Time:_____
End Time:_____
Participant: #_____

Warm-up

- "This is the typical IRB consent with all the elements, do you mind reading and agreeing to sign?" *[Sign "Informed consent statement."]*
- Do you mind filling in this demographics questionnaire? *[Give "Demographic questionnaire" to fill in.]*
- "Thank you very much for making time for this interview. The goal of this study is to understand how successful online teachers teach online. Since you are identified as a successful online teacher in this college, I would like to learn how you teach online and what you think about your online teaching experiences. I am particularly interested in a comprehensive picture of what it is like for you to teach online. Your experiences and opinions are extremely valuable for this study. Therefore, I would like you to share as much information as you can about your online teaching experiences. Everything that will be said in this interview will be kept confidential. Please feel free to ask for any clarification at any time. If any question will make you uncomfortable, just say that you prefer not to answer. Could you give me permission for taping the interview?"
- *[Ask permission to tape the interview. If the interviewee does not give permission to tape the interview, take notes.]*

1. **Initial Background Questions**

- Could you list the degrees you earned as of today?

- Could you list professional positions you have held as of today?

- Can you tell me which courses you teach online? Which context? Who are your students?

2. **Grand Tour Questions and Probes**
Ask the following open-ended questions, imposing absolute minimum amount of structure upon the faculty response.

- **You were nominated as a successful online teacher in the _____ academic department. What do you do that makes you a successful online teacher?**

- **Tell me how you teach online and what you think about successful online teaching**.

    o What are the best practices in your teaching? Please give examples.

        ▪ How do you prepare for online teaching?

        ▪ What is your involvement in the online course design?

        ▪ How do you design learning activities to engage students?

        ▪ How do you communicate with the students?

        ▪ How do you do course evaluation?

- **How did you make a transition from face-to-face to online teaching?**

    o What differences in terms of your roles do you perceive between face-to-face teaching and online teaching?

    o How is your role as teacher different online?

    o How are the roles of students different online?

    o What were the challenges? How did you meet them?

    o Has becoming an online teacher changed your face-to-face teaching? How?

- **How do you get the support you need?**

    o What resources have you found to be valuable when you teach online? (people, web sites, workshops, etc.)

    o With what aspects of teaching online do you need instructional assistance? How would you like to receive assistance? Can you give some examples?

    o What aspects of your online teaching do you feel could be improved?

- **How do you describe successful online teaching?**

    o What specific experiences, qualities, or knowledge do you consider to be most important to success as an online teacher?

    o What aspects of your role are particularly effective in leading to better student learning or meeting diverse needs?

- o You mentioned… and … as critical for successful online teaching. Is there any other advice you find critical that you would share with people considering becoming online teachers?

- **What else do I need to know to understand what you feel is important to preparing and supporting online teachers?**

Very little research has been done on what successful online teachers do. Your willingness to share your experiences demonstrates your commitment to the teaching profession. Thank you for sharing your expertise.