
Making A Match: Aligning Audience, Goals, And Content In Online Adjunct Training

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Abstract

As increasing numbers of higher education students take online courses, there is a corresponding need for additional instructors to teach these students. The research literature indicates that there are different instructor roles, competencies, and attitudes that are required for teaching effectively online than for teaching in campus-based classrooms. These changes in teaching roles result in a need to provide instructor training that is focused on teaching in online contexts. With the new majority of higher education instructors in the United States being adjunct faculty, training programs are required that are accessible and useful for part-time instructors who may teach at more than one institution. This paper reports the findings of a research study focused on an interinstitutional training course that was designed particularly for adjunct faculty who were preparing to teaching online. The study found that not only the target group of adjunct faculty with no online teaching experience enrolled, but also experienced online instructors, full-time faculty, and nonteaching professionals completed the training course. The study explored the goals the participants had for taking the course and identified strategies for designing training for such a heterogeneous audience.

Introduction

With increasing numbers of higher education students taking online courses (Allen & Seaman, 2013), there is a corresponding demand for additional adjunct faculty to teach these students (Tipple, 2010), as the majority of active higher education instructors in the United States are adjunct faculty (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). Some teaching activities are similar, but there are many different instructor roles, competencies, and attitudes that are required for teaching effectively online than for teaching in campus-based classrooms (Alvarez, Guasch, & Espasa, 2009; Bailie, 2011; Berge, 1995; Ragan, 2009; Smith, 2005; Varvel, 2007; Williams, 2003). In order to help prepare adjunct faculty to effectively teach in the online learning environment, quality training programs are needed (Bedford, 2009; Blodgett, 2008; Chapman, 2011). This paper reports on a study focused on a statewide, interinstitutional training certificate course that was designed for a target audience of higher education adjunct faculty who were preparing to teach their first online course. The demographics and prior online teaching experience of the actual training participants are discussed and their goals for taking the certificate course are explored.

Definition of Terms

There are a number of names for higher education teachers, and "non-tenure-track faculty have earned many different labels - contingent faculty, adjuncts, lecturers, instructors, clinical faculty and part-timers" (Kezar & Sam, 2010, p. xi). This paper uses *instructor* as a generic term for all higher education teachers irrespective of their employment status as full-time or part-time employees. *Faculty* refers to full-time

instructors (tenured or non-tenured) who are employed to work in one higher educational institution as a benefited employee, whereas *adjuncts* are instructors who have part-time, temporary, short-term contracts to teach particular courses. *Higher education* institutions are degree-granting, accredited public and private colleges and universities in the United States. *Online teaching* is "the process of delivering, supporting and assessing teaching and learning through the use of computers and communication networks" (Conrad, 2005, p. 442). Guskey's (2000) categorization of *training* is used in this study with training being a form of professional development that typically "involves a presenter or team of presenters that shares its ideas and expertise through a variety of group-based activities" (p. 22). Training differs from other forms of instructor professional development, (for example, observations, study groups, mentoring, and communities of practice), in that the focus is usually on a facilitated group learning experience with predetermined goals and objectives focused on acquiring new skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes.

Online Enrollment Growth

The overall number of students enrolling in online courses in the United States has continued to grow yearly. Over 6.7 million higher education students took at least one online course in the fall 2011 semester compared to 6.1 million students the previous fall (Allen & Seaman, 2013, p. 17). With this growth in online student enrollment comes a corresponding need for additional instructors to teach online courses as the traditional model of one instructor working with a set number of students per class has not changed. For example, 79% of respondents to the 2011 Instructional Technology Council's (ITC) survey of distance learning administrators "indicated they cap online class enrollments - a figure that has not changed substantially in the past five years" (2012, p. 12) with a maximum of 25 students for introductory math and English courses. Despite the increasing interest in MOOCs, credit online courses are taught in much the same student/faculty ratios as classroom seminars. Respondents to the ITC's survey reported that they had a "hard time finding qualified faculty to teach online" (2012, p. 17) with "more student demand for distance education courses than we have faculty trained to build and teach them" (p. 14).

Adjunct Faculty

Overall, the faculty to adjunct ratio has decreased from 65% of faculty in all types of degree-granting institutions having full-time status in 1991 compared to 50% in 2011 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013, Table 284). This is particularly noticeable at two-year colleges in the United States where adjuncts now represent the majority of active instructors (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2010). Seaman (2009), surveyed instructors employed at 69 four-year colleges and universities in the United States with responses from over 10,700 instructors and found that "all types of faculty teach online in roughly similar proportions, but that specific faculty (part-time and non-tenure track) do so with greater frequency" (p. 15).

Before talking about *adjuncts* in the aggregate, it is important to highlight that adjuncts are individuals with unique needs, preferences, and reasons for teaching part-time in higher education: "Non-tenure-track faculty are a heterogeneous mixture of people who differ greatly in terms of employment, experiences, job descriptions, and motivations" (Kezar & Sam, 2011, p. viii). Gappa and Leslie (1993) created a typology to assist in defining the lifestyles and motivations of adjuncts: specialists, experts, and professionals; freelancers; career enders; and aspiring academics. Online adjuncts, like their on campus counterparts, seem to align with Gappa and Leslie's typology. For example, Bedford (2009) found a subclassification of online adjuncts that she termed *professional* adjuncts who "are a small but growing number of individuals who do not hold full-time jobs but rely on multiple adjunct positions to fulfill their professional needs" (para. 1). Despite the different orientations to the employment, there are commonalities involved in adjunct work situations. The online learning contexts many US higher education adjuncts work within almost always have similar requirements of providing formal, accredited learning that requires assessment; are paced in a semester length format; utilize a learning management system to structure the learning environment; and comply with federal laws that govern areas such as accessibility and student privacy. These commonalities suggest that there are shared training needs for adjuncts who are preparing to teach or actively teaching online. Cooper and Booth (2011) pointed out that all adjunct types included in Gappa and Leslie's (1993) four groups "can benefit from advice and

approaches for teaching practices that enhance and increase effective learning" (p. xii).

Recent studies found which professional development workshops that were focused on teaching and learning in general (not necessarily online teaching) were more available for full-time than for adjunct faculty. The Coalition on the Academic Workforce's (2012) study of over 20,000 contingent faculty members' working conditions found that only 28.7% of workplace support for adjuncts included professional development workshops, while a national US survey on college and university faculty found that 58% of full-time faculty had participated in professional development focused on teaching enhancement in the previous two years (Hurtado, Eagan, Pryor, Whang, & Tran, 2012). In their monograph reviewing all major publications on the topic of nontenure-track faculty (a group that includes adjuncts), Kezar and Sam (2010) reported that "professional development opportunities are more commonly available for full-time non-tenure-track faculty than for part-time faculty" (p. 56), and they recommended that "consortia across similar institutions may be an important direction for creating affordable professional development" (p. 91).

Training for Teaching Online

Palloff and Pratt (2011), commenting on the growth in demand for online teaching, argued that "the training of online instructors has not kept pace with the demand for excellence in the online environment" (p. xiii). If "online learning is about the enhancement of teaching and learning" (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2010, p. 257), then training instructors to effectively facilitate online learning must be a primary consideration in order to ensure quality course design and delivery. As "quality distance education requires *changes* in... pedagogical practices" (Beaudoin, 2005, p. 69), there is a need for instructor training focused on these pedagogical changes in order to exploit the affordances of both new technologies and new pedagogies and thus to provide quality online learning experiences for students.

The research literature on adjuncts preparing to teach online suggests that situating the training in an authentic, online, flexible, training context may work most effectively. Kanuka, Jugdev, Heller, and West (2008) surveyed 161 academics working at a large distance education university in Canada, of whom 107 (66.5%) were adjuncts. Using descriptive and factor analysis, Kanuka et al. reported "the data in this study indicate continuous learning activities should be delivered via digitally-based web-spaces whereby teleworkers can access the information from their home office" (2008, p. 162). The data analysis also highlighted that new instructors should be provided with early training in online teaching. Blodgett (2008) explored what training adjuncts had received to prepare them to teach online, how effective this training was from the perspectives of the adjuncts, and what their perceived needs and preferences for training were. Her research showed preferences for training using online formats to address accessibility issues, providing adjuncts with the experience of being students in an online course, and mentoring. One of Blodgett's three recommendations was that "universities should develop formalized, yet flexible faculty development programs for adjunct faculty who are hired to teach online courses" (2008, p. 88). A similar recommendation emerged from a study focused on whether there were differences in motivation and incentives for online teaching between full-time and part-time faculty. Chapman (2011) found that the motivations for teaching online were similar for both groups, but there was a significant difference in the responses of the two instructor groups as to what incentives would affect their decision to continue teaching online courses: "Two incentives were at the top of the contingent faculty members' list that were significantly different from the tenured/tenure-track faculty – a desire for an online community for DE instructors and a program for certification in online instruction" (Summary and Conclusions section, para. 8). Chapman concluded by recommending that, in order to retain adjunct faculty, "administrators should investigate the feasibility of establishing certification programs for online instructors, not only to motivate them to teach, but to also establish baseline quality standards" (2011, Implications section, para. 4).

The training course this study investigated was designed in alignment with the recommendations found in the literature on how training for adjunct faculty who are preparing to teach online might best be structured. Namely, the training should be delivered in an online format in order to be accessible for adjuncts, as the affordances of the online environment accommodate a variety of possible temporal and geographic constraints part-time instructors who are not based on campus may face. In addition, the training course should result in a certificate that is recognized as meeting established quality standards,

and, in order to make training affordable, a consortium of similar institutions should collaborate in its design, delivery, and implementation.

Problem Statement and Context of the Study

This study focused on evaluating whether the target audience for a training course that was developed for adjuncts who had not yet taught online was the actual audience for the training. The postulated problem of adjuncts not having access to quality training to help them prepare to teach online and institutions needing adjuncts who were trained to teach the increasing number of online students was the impetus behind a MarylandOnline (MOL) project that designed, developed, and implemented a training certificate for adjuncts new to online teaching. MOL was formed in 1999 and is now a statewide consortium comprised of 20 higher education institutions that offer distance education programs.

The *Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching* (COAT) project began in 2008 when MOL funded a research project on the feasibility of developing a statewide teaching certificate for online instructors. The original intent of the COAT project was to produce training that was relevant for two groups: adjuncts who were seeking a training certificate that was portable to multiple institutions and distance learning administrators who could then hire adjuncts who had completed training that was familiar to the administrators. A team of instructional designers and online instructors conducted a literature review focused primarily on online teaching competencies and researched existing online teaching training programs in the United States (see Dubins & Graham, 2009, for summarized results of this research). In addition, 37 Maryland higher education institutions offering online courses were invited to participate in an online survey focused on their existing online instructor training and future training needs. With a response rate of 59%, the results of the survey showed that:

- Learning management system training appeared to be offered sufficiently by most institutions
- Training was more readily available for course development than for teaching online
- Less than half of respondents (44%) offered training for teaching online
- The most common reasons for not offering training were lack of staff (62%) and lack of time (31%) (Shattuck, Dubins, & Zilberman, 2011, p. 45).

The survey results also detailed what training topics the respondents would like to offer to online instructors, but that were not currently offered due to lack of staff and time to develop and deliver training: teaching online, pedagogy, assessment, managing online discussions, Americans with Disabilities Act, copyright laws, principles of course design, and technology. With 71% of respondents indicating that there was a possibility that their institutions would be interested in a statewide online teaching certificate program, and 62% stating that the reason they did not offer training sessions was because they did not have the personnel to design and deliver the training, the COAT team felt able to support their recommendations that a training course resulting in a certificate should be developed and piloted. The final team report detailed what competencies should be included in the prototype COAT training and suggested possible formats and structure.

In 2009-2010, the COAT project focused on designing training which was piloted as a nine-week, asynchronous, online course with 17 adjuncts successfully completing the course. The following year, the COAT project implemented the COAT course as a nine-week, online, instructor-facilitated training course. The full syllabus with course description and objectives can be retrieved from http://www.marylandonline.org/coat/documents/COAT_syllabus_webpage.pdf.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to discover whether the COAT participants aligned with the target audience of adjuncts working in Maryland higher education institutions who had experience teaching campus-based courses, who had not yet taught online, and who had a goal to teach online. Target audience analysis is one of the key components of the analysis phases of well known instructional design models, (see, for example, Morrison, Ross, & Kemp, 2007), and the knowledge gained in this study was intended to help make redesign decisions for future iterations of the COAT course and to develop and share strategies for

developing training for online teaching. In order to compare the target audience with the actual audience, this study focused on answering the following research questions:

1. What were COAT alumni's primary work situations?
2. Did COAT alumni teach online, and, if yes, did they identify taking the COAT course as influencing their choice to teach online? In what way(s) did COAT influence their choice?
3. Why did alumni take the COAT course?

Research Participants

From fall 2010 through spring 2012, 224 participants started one of 11 COAT course sections and 204 successfully completed the course (a success rate of 91%). All 204 COAT alumni were invited to participate in this research study. Seven COAT sections had open enrollment for anyone who met the prerequisites, and four sections were dedicated sections that had been partially customized to meet the needs of two universities. One of these university's participants were mainly non teaching staff who were asked by their university to participate in COAT to help them understand the online learning environment, and they were contacted prior to the study to see if they wanted to participate. Of the 35 COAT alumni from this university, ten expressed interest in participating which meant that the final population for the questionnaire was 179 COAT alumni: the original 204 alumni minus 25 university alumni who choose not to participate.

Research Methods

A researcher-designed online questionnaire was created to collect primarily demographic data with some more open-ended questions in order to answer the three research questions. Table 1 details what questions were asked that were pertinent to this study and how they aligned with the research questions (further questions were asked that related to research questions of the larger, three-stage research project of which this study was the first stage). All responses were anonymous with no identifying information requested. Three email reminders were sent out with an overall response rate of 70%. Participants were not required to answer all questions in order to complete the questionnaire with all questions being optional.

Table 1 *Online Questionnaire*

| Question (Abbreviated) | Purpose | Research Question |
|---|--|--|
| When you took the COAT course: 1. What type of institution were you working at? 2. What was your primary role at that institution? 3. Where is that institution located? 4. If you taught on campus prior to COAT, for how many years? | 1.2.3.4. To identify the salient characteristics of participants and determine if they matched the targeted audience: Maryland higher education adjuncts with on campus teaching experience. | What were COAT alumni's primary work situations? |
| 5. If you taught online prior to COAT, how many courses? 6. Did you first teach online while taking the COAT course? 7. Did you first teach online after taking the COAT course? | 5.6.7. To identify the relationship, if any, between participating in COAT and teaching online courses. | Did COAT alumni teach online? |
| 8. Did your experience taking the | 8. To identify if taking | Did alumni identify |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| COAT course influence your choice to teach online? | COAT was perceived as impacting decisions to teach online. | taking COAT as influencing their choice to teach online? |
| 9. Why did you take the COAT course, and what were your anticipated outcomes from taking the course? | 9. To identify motivations for participating in COAT. | Why did alumni take the COAT course? |

Results

Questions one through seven were designed to focus on who took the COAT course and whether they matched the target audience for the COAT course.

Where did COAT Participants Work?

The majority (70 out of 124) of respondents indicated that they worked in two-year community colleges (see Table 2). Only six respondents (4%) were not working in higher education as their primary workplace with three in Kindergarten-12th Grade and three unemployed. After categorizing the institution types given in the 11 comments, a total of 114 out of 124 (92%) of respondents indicated that their primary workplace provided higher education ranging from awarding nursing diplomas to doctorates. Respondents' primary workplaces were mainly located in Maryland (77 out of 122 respondents) with participants from eleven other states and another country.

Table 2 *Primary Workplace (n=124)*

| Primary Institution Type | Respondents | Percent |
|---|-------------|---------|
| 2-Year Community College - highest degree = Associate | 70 | 56% |
| 4-Year University - highest degree = Bachelor | 10 | 8% |
| Post-Graduate University - highest degree = Master | 6 | 5% |
| Post-Graduate University - highest degree = Doctorate | 21 | 17% |
| Kindergarten-12th Grade | 3 | 2% |
| Was not employed | 3 | 2% |
| Other, please give any details in "Comments" box | 11 | 9% |

What was COAT Participants' Primary Role?

The purpose of this question was to determine respondents' primary professional roles. Table 3 depicts the responses to this question with 46% (56 of 122) indicating that they were working as adjunct faculty. The *Comments* for people who chose the *Other* category reported that seven participants indicated their

secondary role was as adjunct faculty.

Table 3 *Primary Role (n=122)*

| Primary Role | # of Responses | Percent |
|---------------------------|----------------|---------|
| Full-Time Faculty | 33 | 27% |
| Part-Time Adjunct Faculty | 56 | 46% |
| Administrator | 16 | 13% |
| Support Staff | 7 | 6% |
| Other | 10 | 8% |

What was Participants' Prior Teaching Experience?

The expectation of the design team was that COAT participants would have campus-based teaching experience, but not online teaching experience prior to taking COAT. Of the 126 questionnaire responses, 113 respondents indicated that they had taught on campus, with 13 nonrespondents to this question. This does not necessarily mean that these 13 did not have any campus-based teaching experience; they may have just chosen not to answer this question. Almost a third of respondents to this question (36 out of 113) had taught for ten or more years (see Table 4).

Table 4 *Campus-Based Teaching Experience (n=113)*

| # of Years | # of Respondents | Percent |
|-------------|------------------|---------|
| Less than 1 | 13 | 12% |
| 1-3 | 28 | 25% |
| 4-6 | 23 | 20% |
| 7-9 | 13 | 12% |
| 10 or more | 36 | 32% |

Question five asked if alumni had taught online before taking COAT, and 124 respondents answered this question with 51% of respondents (63 out of 124) indicating that they had taught online and 61 (49%) stating that they had not taught online prior to COAT. Of the 63 who had prior online teaching experience, 51% (32 out of 63) had taught one to three courses, 19% (12 out of 63) had taught four to six courses, 6% (4 out of 63) had taught seven to nine courses, and 24% (15 out of 63) had taught ten or more online courses before enrolling in COAT. For the 61 participants who answered *No* and the two who did not answer question five, follow-up questions found that seven respondents answered *Yes* to

teaching their first online course while they were participating in COAT and 19 said that they taught their first online course after COAT. Table 5 summarizes the answers that show how many of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they had taught online and whether their online teaching began before, during, or after COAT. Overall, 71% of respondents (89 out of 125) started teaching online before/during/after COAT.

Table 5 *First Online Teaching Experience in Relation to Taking COAT (n=125)*

| Online Teaching Experience | # of Respondents | Percent |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------|
| Prior to COAT | 63 | 50% |
| During COAT | 7 | 6% |
| After COAT | 19 | 15% |
| No online teaching | 36 | 29% |

Questions one through seven did not give any insight on whether participants took the COAT course because they had a goal to teach online. Two open-ended questions were designed to dig deeper into why participants took the course and whether participating in COAT influenced their decision to teach online.

What was COAT's Influence on Decision to Teach Online?

The question, "Did your experience taking the COAT course influence your choice to teach online?" was directly answered by 93 people with responses ranging from a one word *No* to several sentences. The responses were grouped into four participant types: those who had taught online prior to COAT, those who first taught online while taking COAT, those who first taught online after taking COAT, and people who had not taught online (see Table 6). Only 26% (24 out of 93) of respondents identified COAT as influencing their choice to teach online with 51% (47 out of 93) saying that COAT did not influence their decision to teach online. This is not surprising as 51% (63 out of 123) of respondents had already taught online prior to taking COAT. However, not all of the people who had taught online prior to COAT indicated that COAT had no influence on their decision to teach online. Of the eight people with prior online teaching experience who identified COAT as influencing their decision to teach online, six had taught one to three online courses and two had taught four to six online courses prior to COAT, and their comments are given in Table 7.

Table 6 *Did COAT Influence Your Decision to Teach Online? (n=93)*

| Magnitude Code | Taught online before COAT | Taught online during COAT | Taught online after COAT | No online teaching | % |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----|
| Yes | 8 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 26% |
| No | 36 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 51% |
| Somewhat | 6 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 13% |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|----|
| Required | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2% |
| N/A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1% |
| Nonteaching Role | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 8% |

Table 7 *COAT's Influence on Respondents with Prior Online Teaching Experience*

| # of Courses | Comments |
|---|--|
| Taught 1-3 online courses prior to COAT | <p>1. The COAT course did help clarify and answer a number of questions regarding online teaching which I had. So it had a positive influence in my decision to seek online teaching.</p> <p>2. Absolutely! Taking the course helped me learn how to create the online learning community. It also provided excellent suggestions on how to arrange the course, monitor students' progress, and encourage collaborative student learning. I thought the class was outstanding and I thoroughly enjoyed it!!</p> <p>3. Yes, I needed to train and evaluate an online course in my program. Taking this course gave me the whole perspective.</p> <p>4. Yes, the COAT course was very helpful and I learned a lot of information from taking this class.</p> <p>5. Yes. The course made me more confident in my abilities to teach online effectively and in the possibility of designing an effective on-line class.</p> <p>6. Yes, it helped me to improve my online course structure.</p> |
| Taught 4-6 online courses prior to COAT | <p>7. Yes, especially with design and student preparation and involvement.</p> <p>8. Yes. While I had been teaching online it did make me a bit more focused and organized. Since then, I have rethought my online courses and have taken them off line for one semester to revamp the format/content. This is in conjunction with the college deciding/needing to change LMS systems.</p> |

Some respondents gave additional information about COAT's influence on their choice to teach online with 14 people stating that taking COAT had positively affected their confidence in their ability to teach online. For five respondents, all of whom had not yet taught online, taking COAT made them aware of the increased workload associated with online teaching.

What were Participants' Goals for Taking COAT?

COAT was designed for a target audience of adjunct faculty who had a goal to teach online and who would find a certificate that was portable to multiple institutions useful. Question nine focused on collecting data to see if this assumed goal was the actual goal of COAT participants, and if not, why

people did take COAT. The majority of respondents answered this question (124 out of 126) and their responses were coded using initial coding methods that focused on identifying goals using infinitives where possible to name each code. Some respondents had more than one goal which resulted in a total of 162 data chunks being coded into 15 codes. These 15 codes were made into a code family and the network view is shown in Figure 1.

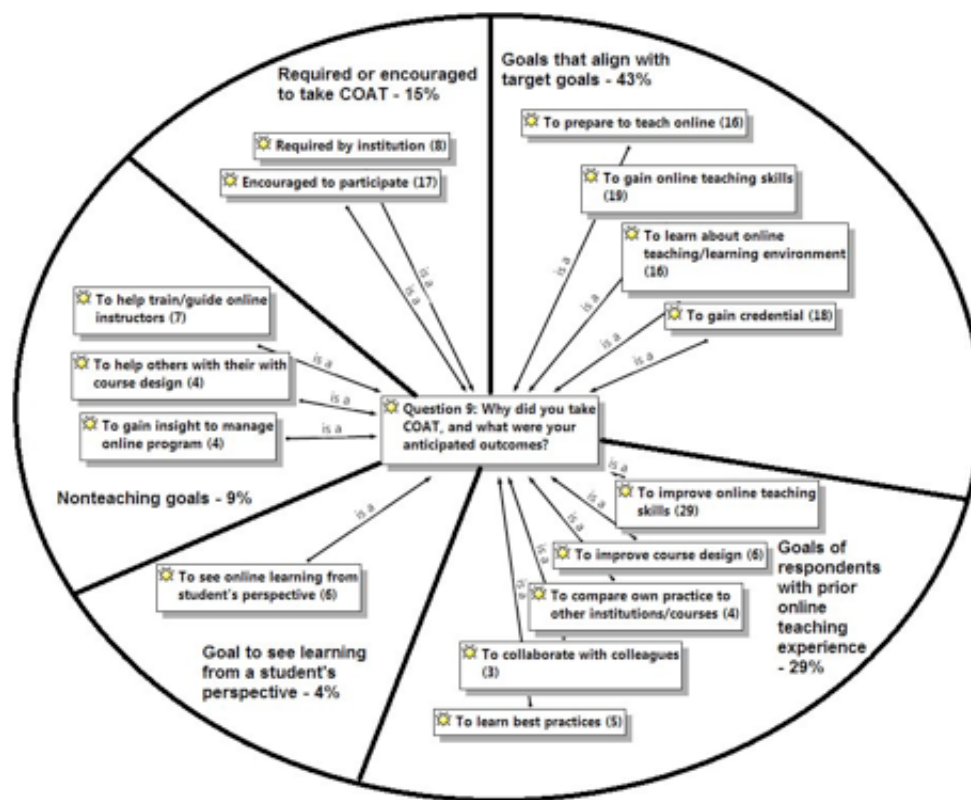


Figure 1. Goals of COAT Participants.

(Note: In the interests of readability, the figure is not drawn to scale)

The first segment in Figure 1 represents the goals of COAT participants that closely align with the goals that the COAT design team assumed participants would have to prepare to teach online, to gain online teaching skills, to learn about the online teaching/learning environment, and to gain a credential in online teaching. The first two codes represent the goals of participants who had no prior online teaching experience when they took COAT who either specified that they wanted to gain online teaching skills (19 responses) or more generally stated that they wanted to prepare to teach online (16 responses). The 16 respondents who identified learning about the online teaching/learning environment were a mixture of all four categories of respondents (prior/while/after/not taught online), and they identified different aspects they wanted to learn about such as the difference between online and face-to-face teaching, the current online environment, research on online teaching/learning, issues to do with online learning, etc. The code *To gain a credential* was populated with responses from people who had taught before/after taking COAT and who had not yet taught online. Six of these 18 respondents highlighted that their goal had not been met: The credential had not helped them find an online teaching position.

The quotations that were coded into the five codes in the next segment represent 29% of stated goals and all came from people who had taught online prior to taking COAT. Their hoped for outcomes from taking this training were to improve their online teaching skills, to improve their course design, to compare their own practice with other institutions/courses, to collaborate with colleagues, and to learn best practices. Five of these respondents explicitly stated that their goals were met. One code is grouped on its own in Figure 1 and contains only six responses from participants who wanted to see online learning from a student's perspective. There were 15 respondents to question nine who identified one of their goals for taking COAT as not being for direct student teaching purposes. Seven people took COAT to help them in their roles as faculty trainers or university leaders. Four respondents managed online

programs and wanted to take a training that would help them in this role, and four other respondents had a role to work with instructors in online course design. The last segment represents the 25 respondents (15% of all coded responses) who identified that they were either encouraged (17 people) to take the training (by their dean, chair, lead faculty, director, or colleague) or required (8 people) to take it by their institution. Of these respondents, 14 identified other personal goals as well (ten from the *Encouraged* group and four from the *Required* group).

Summary

This study focused on who took the COAT training course and whether they aligned with the target audience of Maryland higher education adjuncts who were experienced in teaching campus-based courses. The expectation was that participants would not have prior online teaching experience, but they would have a goal to teach online in the future. Two key unexpected outcomes for the COAT project emerged from the data analysis on who took the course. First, even though the COAT course was designed for and explicitly marketed to adjuncts, half of the participants were not adjuncts, and an unexpected outcome was that full-time faculty and nonteaching administrators would choose to take a training course that was called: *Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching*. Second, a training course that was designed for and marketed to novice online instructors proved to be attractive to, and useful for, experienced online instructors with half of the respondents to the questionnaire indicating that they had taught online prior to COAT.

With so many experienced online instructors and nonteaching professionals participating in COAT, it is not surprising that less than half of coded goals for taking the training course aligned with the COAT design team's anticipated goals of the target audience: to prepare to teach online, to gain online teaching skills, to learn about the online teaching/learning environment, and to gain a credential. The experienced online instructors wanted to improve their online teaching/course design skills and to collaborate/compare practices with colleagues. The nonteaching professionals hoped that the COAT training experience would help them with online faculty training, working with others on online course design, and managing online programs.

Implications for Designing Training

COAT was designed to meet a perceived need for a training course in Maryland for higher education adjuncts who had a goal to teach online. The training was aimed at adjunct faculty with the intention that both adjuncts and administrators who hired adjuncts would benefit from having a certificate that was recognized by multiple institutions. Although no research studies were identified that suggested training for adjuncts should be separate or have different content to training for full-time faculty, a review of the literature found that training for online teaching should be designed to be accessible for adjuncts in terms of providing training in an online, asynchronous format that matched the prevailing delivery model for students.

The unexpected outcome that experienced online instructors, full-time faculty, and nonteaching professionals voluntarily enrolled in and benefitted from taking from a course designed for adjunct faculty who had not yet taught online suggested that the scope of the COAT project was broader than expected. Having a broader audience to the one that was originally targeted by the COAT project necessitates the COAT team considering alternate expectations, experiences, and commitments of participants outside of the original target group. Clearly, the audience for COAT is heterogeneous, and thus flexibility in activities, the inclusion of additional learning outcomes, and increased opportunities for participants to share information about their prior online teaching experiences should be taken into account in COAT redesign decisions for the next iteration. Possible strategies for designing training for such a heterogeneous audience are as follows:

- Design training to be accessible for part-time instructors, but do not explicitly reference a particular target audience such as adjunct faculty.
- Include items in the course description/objectives/marketing that are similar to the goals COAT alumni with prior online teaching experience gave for taking COAT: to improve online teaching and course design skills; to compare existing practice to that of instructors from other

institutions/courses; to collaborate with colleagues; and to learn best practices.

- Utilize design strategies that allow participants with diverse prior experience to omit activities/content that are not necessary or appropriate for their level of experience.
- Allow opportunities for experienced online instructors to share their experiences and knowledge gained in practice.

The findings from this study may be of use to other consortia and higher education institutions that have a need to offer training to online instructors. In particular, being able to strike a balance between designing training that is accessible and appropriate for novice online adjunct faculty while being inclusive and useful to a wider audience, may offer the best of all worlds in terms of providing rich training experiences where diverse academic professionals can share knowledge and learn from each others' expertise.

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