

---

# Faculty Development for Online Learning: Catalysts for Transforming Practice Across Modalities

---

**Katalin Wargo**

*Hawai'i Pacific University*

[kwargo@hpu.edu](mailto:kwargo@hpu.edu)

## Abstract

This case study explored a university faculty development seminar that prepared instructors to design and teach online courses taking place at a mid-sized liberal Arts & Sciences university in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine how faculty development for online teaching may influence changes in thinking about teaching and how that might proliferate throughout instructors' teaching practice more broadly. Specifically, the study sought to examine if instructional practices would transfer to instructors' in-person teaching and how faculty development and the experience of teaching online may have facilitated that transfer. Through an analysis of interviews and teaching artifacts, this study found that participants experienced perspective transformations that affected how they perceived their role as instructors and they transferred some online course design and instructional practices to their in-person teaching. These practices included incorporating more digital tools such as Zoom and Blackboard in instructors' in-person courses, communicating clearly and transparently with students, and designing courses with more intentionality. This study's findings suggest that a structured course design process, self-reflection activities, opportunities to dialogue with colleagues, and course tours that modelled various instructional practices and offered different perspectives on teaching aided in transfer of practices across modalities.

## Introduction

In March 2020, educational institutions across the nation found online learning an absolute necessity as the novel Coronavirus swept the world and shut down in-person learning. This rapid shift to online forms of instruction heightened the need to provide quality faculty development offerings to support instructors in teaching online. In order to successfully teach online, instructors must have a wide range of pedagogical and technological skills in addition to their content knowledge (Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2007). The process of learning to teach online is often difficult for instructors to navigate on their own (Koehler, Mishra, & Yahya, 2009). To ensure meaningful and rich online learning opportunities for students, instructors must be trained to effectively design, develop, and deliver online learning experiences (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008).

Faculty at colleges and universities are often hired for their content expertise and their research portfolio. Typically, higher education faculty often come to teaching with little formal pedagogical training and, as a result, they often teach the way they were taught (Layne et al., 2004). Without professional development intervention, faculty draw heavily upon their past classroom teaching experiences when transitioning to teaching online (Conrad, 2004). However, unlike in the traditional face-to-face space, faculty teaching in online programs are often required to participate in some form of professional development that teaches them how to design, develop, and deliver online instruction (Cobb, 2014). Quality faculty development results in quality course design (Bigatel & Williams, 2015) as training develops new skills and can influence changes in course design practices (Johnson, 2015).

Transitioning to online teaching is oftentimes a challenging process for instructors, as instructional practices that may have worked for them in their traditional classes may no longer work for them online. Faculty development for online learning and the experience of teaching online may cause instructors to reconceptualize their teaching (Terras, 2017), catalyzing them to reflect on, question, and revise their current instructional practices (King, 2002). Teaching online may also cause instructors to change the way they conceptualize their teaching (McQuiggan, 2012). Additionally, as they evolve instructional practices, instructors may even re-conceptualize their roles as instructors (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Not only do roles shift throughout this process, but pedagogical practices change as well. Higher education instructors who began their teaching in the traditional classroom will likely need to adapt their pedagogical approaches in the online classroom (Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2013). As they apply online pedagogies in their online teaching practice they may consider how methods used in the online space may be used in the face-to-face classroom (McQuiggan, 2012; Scagnoli, Buki, & Johnson, 2009). Teaching online may even change instructor's perspectives and practices as they transition back to the in-person space (Stone & Perumean-Chaney, 2011).

## Statement of Purpose

This study sought to ascertain how changes in thinking about teaching may have influenced changes in practice outside of the online instructional experience. Given the limited pedagogical training that most faculty receive, it is essential that emphasis be paid to how colleges and universities may leverage the training opportunities provided to online instructors to affect teaching and learning across modalities.

## Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991;2000) which suggests transformational learning occurs when we shift how we perceive the world. Questioning, challenging, and revising assumptions about the world lead to transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). This is reflective of Schön's (1987) notion of the reflective practitioner, which indicates a need for instructors to interrogate how new learning may intersect or diverge from already ingrained meaning schemes. Transformational learning occurs when individuals question their assumptions, and as a result of this reflective process they experience a fundamental transformation in perspective which leads to changes in behavior (Cranton, 1996; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Taylor, 1997). This theory encapsulates the complexity in learning to teach online as instructors experience dilemmas that may cause them to question assumptions, revise perspectives, and change instructional practice as a result.

## Overview of the Research Design

This case study emerged from a university faculty development seminar for online instructors taking place at a mid-sized liberal Arts and Sciences institution in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine how, if at all, transfer of instructional practices may have occurred as instructors transitioned back and forth across modalities.

## Context

The Online Course Development Seminar (CDS) consists of 10-weeks of faculty development structured to guide instructors through the design and development of an online or hybrid course. The seminar is broken into two discrete five-week segments.

The first segment occurs synchronously, as participants navigate five online modules and five in-person whole-group meetings. This five weeks guides instructors through course mapping, personalizing the course shell in the LMS, designing all module entry pages, and entirely developing the first module of

the course within Blackboard. As this first module is meant to provide a model from which to build out the rest of the course, participants receive peer feedback as well as feedback from the instructional designer before continuing to develop the remainder of the modules of their course throughout the second segment of the seminar.

The second segment of the seminar occurs asynchronously and is used to develop the remaining modules for the course with support of the instructional designer through weekly check-in meetings as well as with support from the production team in creating instructional media. At the end of the ten weeks, the course's teaching readiness is assessed using the Quality Matters rubric.

In table 1, I outline the module descriptions and learning activities that occur during the first five weeks of the seminar.

**Table 1**  
*CDS Learning Activities*

Module	Topic	Description and Rationale	Learning Activities
Week 0	Pre-assessment	We ask participants to attend an intake interview alongside completing two self-assessments before the seminar begins so we know of potential areas for growth.	<i>Blackboard</i> self-assessment
Week 1	Course Organization	Instructional videos on how to organize a course in <i>Blackboard</i> to make it user friendly and intuitive for students to navigate. Easy course navigation is a critical component of highly effective online courses. When we intentionally reduce the amount of scrolling, clicking, and searching, it allows students to spend more time learning the content and less time confused by important details like assignment requirements and due dates, which leads to a better online experience overall.	Online readiness self-assessment Create the skeleton of the course in <i>Blackboard</i> .
	Introducing Community of Inquiry	Introduction to the Community of Inquiry Framework (CoI) video which provides an overview of the Community of Inquiry framework. CoI conceptualizes how we can leverage instructional strategies to develop connection in our courses. Each subsequent section consists of an introductory video delving more deeply into one of the three components of the Community of Inquiry	Reflect upon the notion of "presence" as explained in the Community of Inquiry introduction.  Guest online instructor "tour"

Week 2	Learning Objectives	<p>Framework, as well as brief instructional videos that outline specific instructional strategies related to social presence, instructor presence, and cognitive presence. Some of the topics covered are online discussion, group work, peer review, formative assessment techniques, and feedback strategies.</p>	<p>through course and discuss lessons learned</p>
	Instructor Presence	<p>Instructional videos on writing learning objectives for an online course. Well-defined and articulated learning objectives are essential because they provide students with clear direction for their learning efforts, and they guide instructional decision making throughout the design of the course.</p>	<p>Create a course map with aligned course and module level learning objectives.</p>
		<p>This module also delves more deeply into the Community of Inquiry Framework as we explore the notion of instructor presence. Frequent and timely student-faculty contact is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement, particularly in a digital learning environment. Evidence of faculty concern encourages students to persevere and achieve at higher levels.</p>	<p>Reflect upon the notion of "instructor presence" &amp; add strategies for instructor presence to module 1 course map</p>
			<p>Guest online instructor "tour" through course and discuss lessons learned</p>
			<p>Peer review learning objectives and revise learning objectives</p>
Week 3	Assessment	<p>Instructional videos on the importance of creating online assessments that align to learning objectives and learning activities, both students and instructors benefit when assessments are aligned to instruction. As a result of instruction being focused and</p>	<p>Add module 1 assessments to course map and create these assessments in <i>Blackboard</i></p>

		<p>students being assessed on what they were taught, students are more likely to achieve. Additionally, alignment between assessment and instruction results in instructors being able to focus efforts and make the most of a condensed time frame. Assessment geared towards meaningful learning is therefore embedded throughout daily instruction and course learning activities rather than stand alone.</p> <p>We explore the notion of cognitive presence. Cognitive presence is central to successful student learning and revolves around two key concepts: practical inquiry and critical thinking. The instructional decisions we make to engage learners in critical thinking, and to create learning environments where they develop their own thinking to engage in practical inquiry, all build cognitive presence in the online classroom.</p>	<p>Reflect upon the notion of "cognitive presence"&amp; add cognitive presence strategies to module 1 map</p> <p>Guest online instructor "tour" through course and discuss lessons learned</p> <p>Peer review alignment between learning objectives and assessment in module 1. Revise if needed.</p>
Week 4	Cognitive Presence		
	Instructional Activities		Map out and create module 1 instructional activities
	Social Presence	<p>Instructional videos outlining the process of choosing and designing instructional activities that align with the learning objectives and assessments participants have created for their courses.</p> <p>We delve more deeply into the Community of Inquiry Framework as we explore the notion of "social presence". For both online and hybrid courses, social presence is key to creating an environment that fosters learning.</p>	<p>Reflect upon the notion of "social presence"&amp; add strategies for social presence to module 1 map</p>
Week 5	Accessibility	<p>We can think of social presence as the inclusion of <i>intentional</i> activities and elements of the digital environment that ask students to communicate and interact with the instructor and/ or their peers.</p> <p>We explore accessibility issues and how to make courses more accessible and usable through captions, alt text, and readable PDF's.</p>	<p>Incorporate accessibility best practices throughout module 1</p> <p>Guest online instructor "tour" through course and discuss lessons learned</p>
	Authoring		<p>Author module 1 of the course</p> <p>Peer review of module 1</p>
		<p>Module 5 discusses the importance of what we term "authoring" which simply means clearly communicating course expectations. To this point participants have created a repository of learning activities, resources, and assessments. This may work well in a face-to-face course, where for the most part instructors are able to verbally instruct students how to navigate through the course, highlight what they need to pay close attention to, and clarify where important course materials live as you go. However, in an online or hybrid course, students work through course activities asynchronously and they can easily become lost in <i>Blackboard</i> without intentional and explicit instructions on how to navigate their way through the course for optimum learning.</p>	<p>Use feedback from peer review and instructional designer to revise module 1. Use module 1 as a model to develop the remaining modules of the course over the next five weeks.</p>

## Research Questions

1. What impact, if any, did going through the seminar and teaching online have on instructors' practice outside of online teaching, including their face-to-face course design?
2. What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in practice?
3. What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in practice?

## Methods

The data for this study were generated over the course of fall 2019 to fall 2020. All five participants who took part in the fall 2019 CDS agreed to participate in the study (pseudonyms provided throughout findings). Two semi-structured interviews with individuals (Appendix A) were augmented with participant reflections, email exchanges, and notes from instructional design meetings. As changes to face-to-face practice were noted through interviews, artifacts were collected from instructors such as course syllabi and course materials from their face-to-face courses. Data analysis occurred using inductive analysis using open coding processes to identify themes.

I realized that maybe the students hearing me pose questions to the guest and that kind of thing is a different form of teaching. I had to reorient the way that I think of teaching... I came to see my role as I wasn't just like making appointments with people, but that I had contributed to this as a learning experience...it just required a bit of a shift in the value I thought I was bringing to the students.

Sophie said she would like to continue to incorporate guest speakers in her in-person classes where Zoom would allow her to bring people in from all over the country. Similarly, John felt guest speakers allowed him to bridge Policy content with the Policy world at large. John also found that the structure of the course allowed him to act as more of a mentor to his students. As a result of having done so much of the course planning ahead of time and the scaffolding of the major assignments throughout the course, he was able to use the time he had during the summer to really focus on giving meaningful feedback to students, which he felt positioned him in more of a mentor role.

## Bring in the Digital

Given the exposure to and newfound familiarity with digital tools, it is unsurprising that participants felt they would incorporate more digital tools in their in-person courses. John envisioned teaching in-person classes but then incorporating remote days where students could Zoom in, and they would have a guest speaker. He realized the benefit this summer was that guest speakers were not limited to geographic areas, which means guests can Zoom in from anywhere. Likewise, Emily is using Zoom in order to connect more with students one-on-one during online office hours.

I'm hoping that it might create some freedom for students to talk to me, where they're hesitant to email me for an appointment. And I've never really thought about that before...it's a status thing.

Additionally, she has found instructors are now using Zoom as the norm. Now she feels as though she can ask colleagues to share lectures they've created, and she can bring more of that content into her courses, exposing her students to more perspectives than she had been able to even a year ago because people weren't as familiar with the technology. Participants also appreciated the facility of recording a lecture through Zoom and posting it to the Blackboard LMS. Sophie mentioned how she would like to use Zoom and Panopto in order to create recorded lectures for her in-person classes so she can make time for rich discussion in class. Similarly, Connor said that he was already fairly satisfied with his experiences in the lecture hall but that he would be interested in incorporating flipped content in his in-person courses to give students more access to the content. Another tool he noted using differently in his in-person courses was Blackboard. He pointed out, "I already lean heavily on technology as it is. So being able to make sure that [the course] is designed in a way that is easily parsable for students is a big improvement." John also mentioned using Blackboard more robustly in his in-person courses, which allows him to create an "infrastructure" for his courses. Likewise, Sophie discovered the power of Blackboard to help foster community in her courses.

I never used the discussion function that much on Blackboard. I don't know why. It just kind of bothered me—the setup. I just didn't like it. But [it] worked really well in getting [students] to participate and allowing me to draw out the quieter students...So that's definitely something that I will incorporate into my regular classes.

Emily thought the discussion feature in Blackboard would be nice to pair within class discussions. This would allow her to cover material in class and then provide more time for meaningful discussion outside of class.

## Communicate Clearly and Transparently

The transfer to in-person instructional practices manifested itself in instructors communicating more clearly and transparently with students: providing specific instructions, including assignment models, explaining purpose, using guiding questions, and outlining course objectives. Amelia found that the 'how to' videos she created for students along with models for assignments really helped her students to succeed. She noted the importance of specificity and being clear about what she wanted students to do in each assignment.

Normally there's a written prompt. I'll write out the instructions. Sometimes I suspect students don't read the prompts very carefully. And sometimes I think that the examples, the visual component, enhances what they get out of the prompt. So, I think that will be something that I'll take back into my face-to-face teaching because students really found that helpful.

Throughout the seminar, we encouraged instructors to create videos walking students through assignments, discussing purpose, and providing models to help students understand the success criteria for assignments. Emily also found that being transparent with students about why they were doing an activity to prime the pump before students engaged in learning activities was useful as an instructional approach across the board.

When I'm in person, [students] are often like, 'wait, why are we doing this?' So, I've started assigning things like this ahead of time so they're not like deer in headlights in class.

Similarly, Sophie thought the introductory videos she had created for each module where she was transparent about what she wanted students to learn from the readings and throughout the learning activities was something she would like to continue in her teaching across modalities.

It kind of set the stage for what they should pay attention to, and they appreciated that. So that's something that hadn't been present in my teaching before where I was being more intentional about telling them, 'Here's what I want you to get from what we're doing'. I think that that is something that I should try to do more in the future, whether it's an in person or online class.

Another course design strategy that Sophie felt she would incorporate across modalities was providing specific, actionable, and measurable learning objectives to her students through the syllabus. Initially, when we began writing learning objectives in the seminar, she didn't think the process applied to her discipline. However, as we continued to explore the topic through in-person activities such as peer review, she changed her mind.

You were very specific about what we needed to include in [learning objectives] and there had to be something tangible, like we couldn't just say to "learn history" ... At first, I kind of resisted it because I felt like, 'history is different from the other disciplines. We're not teaching someone a

particular focused skill in the same way that a Math course or Chemistry course would'. But then I said, 'well actually we are'. I just never was encouraged to think about it like that.

Similarly, Amelia found value in using learning objectives to clarify to students exactly what they should be learning throughout the course. She said it was important to "be really clear about what you want students to do, know, and have as part of their mental language." Furthermore, Connor felt the experience of constructing course objectives gave him a "formal language" that he didn't have before the seminar. This formal language helped him to better articulate his instructional decision-making and to communicate to his students exactly what they should be able to know and do with the content.

For many participants clarity stemmed from how we encouraged them to organize their courses in an intuitively navigable way, whether it was through consistency week after week or signaling to students in multiple ways what it is they need to do. John said he was likely to incorporate more structure into his in-person Blackboard courses.

Framing and the organization has been designed to help students be able to navigate the course with minimal questions and give them much more of the background material to do so, whether it's the examples or the templates, whether it's a specific by the date, or here's the link to submit, to, you know, lower the transaction cost.

### **Perspectives for the Institutional Crisis Response**

Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the 7B strategy and appreciated the concern, even when they individually did not need accommodations:

I was not a student that was effected [*sic*] in a horrible way by the Hurricane but the unity I felt from my online professors' response to the situation was the coolest thing I have ever seen. I felt a deeper connection with my online class, people I have not even met, more than with my in-person classes.

Another participant noted, "I was able to make it through successfully and come out of my situation stronger and more prepared for the potential challenges that I would face in the future."

There were a few students who highlighted negative experiences. These experiences focused on both the classroom environment and institutional response. One participant shared a challenging situation with an instructor not complying with an institutional directive:

I did have one professor that did not comply with the delay of classes and started on the normal schedule. When I told her about the delay in classes, she merely stated that she could give us one week extra to catch up.

Another participant was unhappy that only online students were offered the compressed courses stating, "Take into consideration that you guys have commuters that lost everything they had. And to bounce back from that a week later and to go to school is harsh."

For strategies to improve crisis response for online students, participants wanted more empathy from faculty and administrators, mandatory adjustments for all courses, and proactive communication to find out what students need. Some participants desired more flexibility with policies and processes such as temporarily extending academic and financial deadlines. Other participants wanted ways to request emergency assistance such as replacing textbooks and supplies. One final suggestion sought opportunities to participate in the broader community response such as donating funds or volunteering in clean-up efforts.

Framing and the organization has been designed to help students be able to navigate the course with minimal questions and give them much more of the background material to do so, whether it's the examples or the templates, whether it's a specific by the date, or here's the link to submit, to, you know, lower the transaction cost.

Emily noted that being very clear with students about what they needed to do helped to make class activities run more smoothly.

I think I'd structured it so that they were really prepared, which you can't always do in class. Even if you tell people, read this before class, we're going to discuss it. But this was, you know, look at this material, they had to do a discussion board post before their meeting with the reflection. And I had them all look at it. So, they kind of already knew what their group members were thinking about.

Likewise, Sophie experienced that being more organized and providing clarity throughout her course design helped her to avoid students asking so many questions that were related to how to complete course requirements rather than about the content.

I'm not the most organized person...I have to work at being organized, so the [seminar] course helped me. It gave me better tools to get organized or to present the information to students in an organized way. I think that's the number one thing I get questions from students about that doesn't have to do the content of the class. It's like, 'Where can I find this, or what time are we doing this, or when, or how much?' I'm being more proactive in terms of having the information accessible to the students and putting it in the right places so that they can gain access to it, making the class easier for the students to navigate.

Conversely, Amelia found that this very regimented style of course organization online did not mesh well with either her online or her in-person teaching style, "I felt like you kind of lose that fresh engagement when you're laying out the whole course...It's actually not a kind of teaching I'm eager to do a lot." Amelia really enjoyed the organic nature of lesson planning and, though she valued clarity and transparency immensely, she did not take to the very structured approach to course design that we incorporated throughout the seminar.

### **Design with Intentionality**

Participants also talked about how they are thinking more intentionally now about the instructional decisions they're making. Sophie noted that online teaching required that she be 16 more "deliberate" and that she is doing more "thinking through" her instructional decisions in general.

The online training helped me to think through what I'm doing. I realized that I was relying on stuff that will pop in my head in the moment, so it's more spontaneous. The way that I've typically taught, which is I have a general lesson plan, but I wasn't as intentional...I think that the online teaching really helped me bring things I've always been doing together. But to think them through and more of a step-by-step way.

Furthermore, this intentionality revolves around how the instructional decisions she makes align with her overall goals for the course.

I keep saying the word intentional, but it's just thinking much more deliberately about how this activity will contribute to your overall goal, rather than just trying to fill the time.

Likewise, Emily finds herself being much more intentional about aligning her learning activities to the goals for her courses.

I find myself working backwards from the end of the semester—where do I want students to be, what my real goals are, and working back throughout the course to see what assignments, topics, activities are and are not in line with those goals.

Similarly, John said he was thinking more intentionally about how to structure his curriculum so that “assignments build off each other.” The scaffolding of larger assessments and connection between learning activities was a discussion we had multiple times during the design process. John discussed the power of design where learning activities are purposefully woven together.

I didn't have to keep hitting the same point in the same way I hit it through my lecture. I hit it through readings. Then we hit it through discussion. Then we had a guest lecture and then a simulation. So, in one week they had five different avenues to get the same material and they had to apply it.

John said he would like to continue to plan his courses with a focus on recreating that synergy between learning activities. Connor found that being more intentional about outlining course objectives helped him in his overall planning of a course. Not only did it allow him to clearly communicate to students what they should know and be able to do by the end of a course, but it also helped him to very intentionally align his learning activities and assessments to the goals of the course. John also now uses course objectives in order to specifically communicate what he wants students to learn in order to avoid “gaps” in understanding. This suggests that seminar activities that were grounded in the creation of specific, measurable, and actionable learning objectives helped instructors to think more intentionally about their design.

### **Implications for Practice and Future Research**

Instructors' pedagogical practice across modalities is informed by professional development for online teaching as well as by the experiences instructors have teaching in the online space.

#### **Implication for Practice #1: Provide Opportunities to Critically Reflect on Instructional Practice Throughout Design, Development, and Delivery**

Critical reflection on practice was a bedrock of the seminar where participants were encouraged to continually question their instructional decisions in both writing and in discussion with colleagues. Connor said that reflection allowed him to “wrap [his] mind around” his own teaching so he could figure out ways to “grow” as an instructor. Sophie showed how she continued this reflective thinking in practice as she questioned her teaching during this summer, asking “why am I even here?” as she began to re-conceptualize her role to that of a facilitator of learning. This supports Kegan's (2000) findings which suggest that faculty development for online learning can catalyze the kind of critical reflection that causes instructors to question their assumptions about teaching. McVey (2014) also suggests that the more faculty development for online learning can encourage critical reflection, the more likely it is that faculty may experience perspective transformation such as shifting of instructional roles. In order to more intentionally continue this reflective process into instructor's practice in the classroom, Torrisi and Davis (2000) suggest providing consistent opportunities for ongoing reflection throughout the design, development, and delivery of an online course. In order to more intentionally encourage the transfer of practices across modalities, I would suggest using this as an opportunity for further reflection how instructors' lessons learned might apply to their in-person teaching as well.

#### **Implication for Practice #2: Provide Opportunities to Dialogue with Experienced Colleagues**

It was evident from conversations with participants that dialogue with colleagues gave participants varying perspectives about teaching and learning that encouraged professional growth. This dialogue with colleagues was facilitated throughout the seminar as course tours where experienced online instructors came in to discuss their lessons learned and answered questions participants had about online instructional practice. This finding aligns with McQuiggan (2012) who similarly found online instructors valued discussing ideas with colleagues and being able to envision how others put online instructional strategies into practice. This was evident as Sophie learned about the value of asking guiding questions during one of the guest instructor's course tours, a pivotal moment that pushed her to reconsider the value of being transparent with students about what they should be learning. Likewise, John found he valued being able to learn from others experiences and through their course examples. Barker (2003) recommended that new online instructors be added to an online course as an observer to become acclimated to how online teaching and learning works. Additionally, discussion with experienced colleagues encouraged participants to examine their assumptions about teaching, reflective of King (2001) who also found that as online instructors engage in reflexive discourse it may cause them to question their teaching. This is also in line with Brookfield's (1994) notion of critical mirrors, individuals who can provide “reports from the front” of their lessons learned through critical reflection of their own instructional practice.

#### **Implication for Practice #3: Embed Practice with Digital Tools within the Context of Course Creation**

This study's findings also suggest that participants who went through faculty development for online teaching and then taught online incorporated more digital tools in their in-person courses. Specifically, Zoom was used in multiple ways to facilitate guest speakers, office hours, and lecture capture. Participants also felt comfortable using Blackboard in more robust ways in their in-person courses, such as to provide an online infrastructure for the course, to host flipped content, or to facilitate class discussions. The seminar embedded discussion of and training with digital tools as part of a course design curriculum that established learning objectives first, created learning activities and assessments next, and then chose the appropriate tools, digital and analog, to best facilitate those activities in order to meet the learning objectives. Similarly, Solheim and colleagues (2010) suggest that professional development for online instructors should focus less on the specific tools and more on opportunities to experiment with new approaches to teaching in an extended and supported community.

#### **Implication for Practice #4: Use a Structured Instructional Design Process as Scaffolding for Faculty Development**

Providing a clear framework and process for participants to design a course may be beneficial in promoting clarity, transparency, and intentionality in course design. This must be tempered with individual teaching style, as was evident in Amelia's preference for a less structured approach that allowed for organic and emergent phenomena to occur. This study's findings suggest the emphasis on clear communication and transparency in course design throughout the seminar contributed to participants valuing communicating clearly and transparently with students across modalities. This emphasis on clear communication was facilitated throughout seminar learning activities in instructional videos and models and also reinforced through the course tours where experienced online instructors showed participants how they facilitated clear communication and transparency. Similarly, this study's findings suggest that professional development for online learning may contribute to instructors more intentionally designing instruction across modalities. It is essential to use a structured instructional design process for course design (Durak & Ataizi, 2016) and as a framework for faculty professional development. This builds on Ali and Wright (2017) who suggest that, in addition to using a structured design process that aligns with industry standards such as those outlined in the Quality Matters rubric, there should be a stronger focus on professional development that requires systematic reflection on the design, development, and delivery processes as a way to transform instructional practice.

#### **Suggestion for Future Research #1: Conduct Longitudinal Studies**

This study drew upon a small sample of participants over the course of only one year. To contribute to the fields of faculty development and Transformative Learning more meaningfully, drawing from larger samples of participants in longitudinal studies that explore transformations over time would be beneficial.

### **Suggestion for Future Research #2: Examine Different Strategies for Reflective Practice**

I would be interested in more deeply examining specific reflective practices or dialogue strategies that promote transformative learning within the context of faculty development for online learning.

### **Conclusion**

Although Transformative Learning Theory is a useful framework for designing faculty development that may encourage instructors to critical reflect upon the assumptions that guide their practice, it is important to note that not all instructional assumptions may need to be transformed. Higher education faculty come to teaching with a variety of social, cultural, and historical experiences that frame their thinking about teaching. Just as some experiences can create faulty assumptions, other experiences can create well-grounded assumptions to guide instructional practice. It is important that faculty developers not approach faculty development with the mindset that instructors need remediation. Rather, faculty developers can use proven strategies such as critical reflection and reflective dialogue to promote reflective practice which supports intentional instructional decision-making, which results in effective teaching no matter the modality.

---

### **References**

- Ali, R., & Wright, J. (2017). Examination of the QM process: Making a case for transformative professional development model. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 16(4), 329-347. <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5146&context=facpubs>
- Baran, E., Correia, A. P., & Thompson, A. (2013). Tracing successful online teaching in higher education: Voices of exemplary online teachers. *Teachers College Record*, 115(3), 1-41. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/595fb5fdb8a79b4f2b5c6f5c/t/5f258c83401e8d4dfe63d2ce/1596296324332/TracingSuccessfulOnlineTeachinginHigherEducation>
- Barker, A. (2003). Faculty development for teaching online: Educational and technological issues. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 34(6), 273-278. <https://doi.org/10.3928/0022-0124-20031101-10>
- Bigatel, P., & Williams, V. (2015). Measuring student engagement in an online program. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 18(2). [http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer182/bigatel\\_williams182.html](http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/summer182/bigatel_williams182.html)
- Brookfield, S. (1994) Tales from the dark side: a phenomenography of adult critical reflection, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 13(3), 203-216. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0260137940130303>
- Cobb, M. H. (2014). Learning to teach online: A dissertation study of faculty's lived experiences in transformative professional development [Doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama]. University of Alabama Institutional Repository. <https://ir.ua.edu/handle/123456789/2181>
- Conrad, D. (2004). University instructors' reflections on their first online teaching experiences. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 8(2), 31-44. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v8i2.1826>
- Cranton, P. (1996). Professional development as transformative learning: New perspectives for teachers of adults. Jossey-Bass Durak, G. & Ataizi, M. (2016). The ABC's of Online Course Design According to Addie Model. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(9), 2084-2091.
- Johnson, S. R. (2015). A qualitative comparative case study of the influence of a 16-month professional development program on improving the design of an online course in a higher education context (ProQuest Number: 3664673) [Doctoral dissertation, New Mexico State University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Kegan, R. (2000). What "form" transforms? A constructive-developmental approach to transformative learning. In J. Mezirow (Ed.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 35-70). Jossey-Bass.
- King, K. P. (2001). Professors' transforming perspectives of teaching and learning while learning technology. *The Journal of Faculty Development*, 18(1), 27-34. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ643575>
- King, K. P. (2002). Educational technology professional development as transformative learning opportunities. *Computers & Education*, 39(3), 283-297. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0360-1315\(02\)00073-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0360-1315(02)00073-8)
- Koehler, M., & Mishra, P. (2009). What is technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK). *Contemporary issues in technology and teacher education*, 9(1), 60-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205741319300303>
- Koehler, M. J., Mishra, P., & Yahya, K. (2007). Tracing the development of teacher knowledge in a design seminar: Integrating content, pedagogy, and technology. *Computers & Education*, 49(3), 740-762. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2005.11.012>
- Layne, J., Froyd, J., Simpson, N., Caso, R., & Merton, P. (2004). Understanding and improving faculty professional development in teaching. *Frontiers in Education Conference*. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/stamp/stamp.jsp?tp=&arnumber=1408683>
- McQuiggan, C. (2012). Faculty development for online teaching as a catalyst for change. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 16(2), 27-61. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v16i2.258>
- McVey, M. G. (2014). Perceived best practices for faculty training in distance education. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology*, 5(1), 48-56. <https://doi.org/10.4018/jjavet.2014010105>
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. Jossey-Bass.
- Scagnoli, N. I., Buki, L. P., & Johnson, S. D. (2009). The influence of online teaching on faceto-face teaching practices. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 13(2), 115-128. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v13i2.1671>

Schön, D. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions. Jossey-Bass.

Solheim, C., Longo, B., Cohen, B. A., & Dikker, A. G. (2010). Interdependent catalysts for transforming learning environments... and the faculty who teach in them. *Educause Quarterly*, 33(3). <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2010/9/interdependent-catalysts-for-transforming-learning-environments--and-the-faculty-who-teach-in-them>

Stone, M. T., & Perumean-Chaney, S. (2011). The benefits of online teaching for traditional classroom pedagogy: A case study for improving face-to-face instruction. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 7(3), 393-400. [https://jolt.merlot.org/vol7no3/stone\\_0911.pdf](https://jolt.merlot.org/vol7no3/stone_0911.pdf)

Taylor, E. W. (1997). Building upon the theoretical debate: A critical review of the empirical studies of Mezirow's transformative learning theory. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48(1), 34-59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074171369704800104>

Taylor, A., & McQuiggan, C. (2008). Faculty development programming: If we build it, will they come? *Educause Quarterly*, 31(3), 28-37. <https://www.learnlib.org/p/101350/>

Terras, K. L. (2017). Transforming the teacher: Examining personal transformations of faculty redesigning courses from face-to-face to online. *Journal of Transformative Learning*, 4(1), 33-49. <https://jolt.uco.edu/index.php/jolt/article/view/178>

Torrisi, G., & Davis, G. (2000). Online learning as a catalyst for reshaping practice—the experiences of some academics developing online learning materials. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 5(2), 166-176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440050200770>

---

## APPENDIX A

### Semi- Structured Interview Protocol

#### Interview Questions: Interview 1

This interview has 11 questions. The first part deals with how your experiences may have shaped you as a teacher. The second part asks about any changes in thinking and/or practice you may have experienced as you participated in the Online Course Development Seminar.

1. Could you talk about one or two significant experiences that made you the teacher you are today?
2. How would you describe your role as a teacher before you began participating in the online course development seminar. What about after?
3. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the CDS that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
4. Have you noticed any changes in how you think about teaching since taking part in the CDS? What do you think sparked this change?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this change?
  - a. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  - b. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  - c. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  - d. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  - e. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
6. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
  - a. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  - b. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  - c. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  - d. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  - e. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  - f. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
7. How do you feel about this change in perspective?
8. How, if at all, did dialogue with colleagues affect any change in the way you think about teaching and/ or your teaching practice?
9. How, if at all, did seminar reflection exercises affect any changes in the way you think about teaching an/or in your teaching practice.
10. How, if at all, has taking part in the online course development seminar affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
11. How, if at all, has anything else outside of the online course development seminar, for instance remote teaching, affected your teaching? Interview Questions: Interview 2
  1. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect your current approach to teaching?
  2. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the summer teaching online that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
  3. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect how you currently characterize your role as an instructor?
  4. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this experience?
    - a. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
    - b. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
    - c. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
    - d. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
    - e. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
  5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
    - a. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
    - b. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
    - c. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?

- d. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
- e. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?

6. How, if at all, has teaching online this summer affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?

7. How, if at all, has anything else outside of teaching online this summer affected your current approach to teaching?

8. Given the changes to face-to-face teaching practice you mentioned earlier, could I possibly come to observe how these are being implemented in your classes? (specify which might be observable or which might be covered by course artifacts)

---

*Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, XXIV, Number 3, Fall 2021*  
*University of West Georgia, Distance Education Center*  
[Back to the Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration Contents](#)