

FACULTY TRAINING FOR ONLINE TEACHERS IN
THREE RURAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

by

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A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Online education is providing community colleges opportunities to reach students through the use of technological advances. These technological advances have allowed faculty to develop new teaching skills and transfer these skills into pedagogical practices in an online environment. Faculties who have taught in the online environment have developed, through training, the knowledge and expertise in the teaching strategies which have become common in online education. The purpose of this study was to examine how the training instructors receive support their teaching classes in an online environment at community colleges. This research study followed a qualitative research design; a collective case study that included administrators who made the decisions for online education, trainers who provided professional development training, and faculty who had taught online classes at community colleges.

In response to the overarching question that guided this study, *“How does professional development training influence faculty teaching online at Alabama’s rural community colleges?”* this study found that technological skills and familiarity with online education theories and pedagogies facilitated the transfer of pedagogical strategies from the training to their online classes. The study found that when faculty received training incorporating online pedagogical strategies, the online teaching practices taught during the training were transferred to their online classes. This study also made clear that the instructors’ interest in online education was a driving force for the establishment of formal professional development training programs at their institution. The results of this study can inform all community colleges on the need for

professional development training, inform innovations in faculty training for online teaching, and encourage further research in the area of training for online teaching and learning.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Teresa, my wife and best friend. Her love, friendship, support, and honesty has made me the person I am today. She has taught me how to live, to love, and to laugh. She has helped me see what is truly important in life. During this four-year journey, she has been at my side providing support and making sacrifices. Teresa, this accomplishment is as much yours as mine. I love you.

Also, I want to dedicate this dissertation to Paige, my daughter. She has been an inspiration to her mother, me, and all those who know her. She has motivated me in ways she will never know. Every morning she wakes with a smile which provides me with that encouragement that all things will be fine. Paige, I love you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Professional development began to grow in response to the realization that the rapid growth of new community colleges in the early 1960s and 1970s was waning and that people, rather than buildings, programs, and organizational structures, needed attention (O'Banion, 1981; Watts & Hammons, 2002). Hammonds, Wallace, and Watts (1978) stated that there were multiple events that led to professional development at community colleges, including (a) the need for increased effectiveness and efficiency due to competition for limited tax dollars and beginning public demands for accountability, (b) the acknowledgement that the future success of the community college depended on the ability of its personnel to adapt to a constantly changing environment, (c) the development of a technology of instruction with potential for improved instruction unknown to most faculty, (d) an awareness to faculty that they were becoming unable to cope with the needs of the increasing percentages of "high risk" students enrolling in community colleges, (e) a recognition among leaders that change was imperative and they needed to become skilled in planning, implementing, and evaluating change, (f) the increasing influence of court decisions, collective bargaining, and federal regulations on instructional governance, and (g) and the occurrence of a relatively high turnover in leadership positions at the midmanagement levels.

In the most recent writing on faculty and staff development, Bellanca (2002) states:

More than at any other time in their history, community colleges need to plan and provide comprehensive ongoing professional development programs for their faculty and staff.

Colleges are faced with an increasingly diverse student body with varying expectations, learning styles, and service preferences: new and growing competition, technological advancements, and changing government policies and societal demands. Community colleges can no longer respond in traditional ways. (pp. 35–38)

Community colleges are continuing to change in response to community and societal changes, and those who lead, teach, and provide support in those colleges will need to continually grow and change as well (Watts & Hammons, 2002). Watts and Hammons (2002) further stated, “Professional development has provided and will continue to provide the necessary programs to meet growth needs and appears now to be a permanent fixture in community colleges.” (p. 8)

The adoption of *online education* practices has produced important changes in education in the last decade, including a growing tendency towards new models of teaching and learning that include a combination of web-based technologies and classroom instruction (Bonk, Kim, & Zeng, 2006; Dziuban, Moskal, & Hartman, 2004; Horizon Report, 2005). This use of web-based systems has produced an important increase in the offering of distance education courses by higher education institutions (Lewis, Snow, & Farris, 1999), and it has had an impact on classroom education as well (Bates & Poole, 2003; Curtain, 2002; O’Sullivan, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Spector & Teja, 2001).

Successful online course experiences for students and instructors depend on the expertise and dedication of a well-prepared online instructor (Ko & Rossen, 1998). New instructors need comprehensive training to ensure a strong start, and continuing support and services throughout their distance education experience to promote maximum quality and satisfaction in the online courses they teach (Lieberman & McNett, 2000). When online instructors are fully equipped

with proper technical skills, familiarity with the online learning environment, and most importantly, a true awareness of effective online pedagogies and teaching strategies, the online learning experience they create have the highest potential to succeed (Bedore, 1997).

Training, including professional development training, is useless if it cannot be transferred into performance (Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Learning is of little value to organizations (and community colleges) unless it is transferred in some way to performance (Holton, Bates, Seyer, & Carvalho, 1997).

Therefore this study will use Holton's (1996) transfer of training model as a guiding framework. This model proposes three primary outcomes and three primary inputs of a training intervention. The three primary outputs are: learning, individual performance, and organizational results. The three primary inputs are: motivation to transfer, transfer climate, and transfer design (Holton, 1996).

According to Holton (1996), motivation to transfer comprises four categories: intervention fulfillment, learning outcomes, job attitudes, and payoff. Transfer climate was described by Schneider and Rentsch (1988) as a "sense of imperative" (cited in Holton, Bates, Seyer, & Carvalho, 1997, p. 97) that arises from a person's perception of his or her work environment and its influences on the extent to which that person can use learned skills on the job (Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Training design can be summarized as the characteristics of the learning environment, such as the materials, opportunities to practice, providing feedback, and learning objectives.

Statement of the Problem

At present, there is an impetus to encourage faculty to integrate technology in their teaching and learning after evidence that the use of technology provides new opportunities for

learning, for collaboration, and for developing learning communities (Cross, 2003; Horizon Report, 2005). The central focus of any distance-learning program should be expertise in teaching and making sure instructors are well trained (Dingle, Gooch, Knapp, & Kelly, 1999).

The purpose of this study was to examine the training instructors received in support of their online classes at the community college and to contribute research on professional development training. The results of this study can be used to enhance professional development programs, to develop new strategies for faculty training, and to equip instructors with skills that support pedagogical decisions when integrating new approaches, which include technology.

Research Questions

The overarching question, which this research addresses, is “How does professional development training influence faculty teaching online at Alabama’s rural community colleges?” To guide the data collection and analysis, the following sub questions were explored:

1. What professional development training (including follow-up training) is provided to community college teachers preparing to teach online?
2. How do the elements of Holton’s Transfer Model influence the application of this professional development training to teaching the online class?

Methods

This study followed a qualitative research design, more specifically; the study was designed as a collective case study (Stake, 1995). Case studies are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system (Merriam, 1998). The bounded system in this case study is the community college with the unit of analysis being the community college staff involved in the delivery of online courses, including instructors, trainers and distance learning coordinators.

Three Alabama community colleges (Alpha State Community College, Beta Community College, and Charlie Community College) were selected for inclusion in the study. Fourteen participants were selected across all community colleges. The participants included distance learning coordinators, trainers, and instructors.

This study included multiple sources and multiple methods of data collection (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2000). Specifically, four steps were followed in the data collection process: (a) pilot study, (b) open-ended interviews with participants, (c) in-depth study of documents collected from participants, and (d) summary write-up of each case.

Limitations

Unlike quantitative research studies, the design of qualitative research lacks a consistency, or uniformity, of a prescribed procedure. Therefore, this study was limited in the following ways:

1. This study was restricted to participants teaching online classes in rural Alabama Community Colleges.
2. Due to the sample size and absence of randomization, the sample did not allow for statistical generalizations.
3. The Distance Learning Coordinator at each college selected the participants based on criteria developed by the researcher. In this scenario the limitations to the study are that the qualitative research cannot be generalized and the selection of participants could be biased.

Additionally, the qualitative data gathered by the researcher may be subject to other interpretations thereby reducing the degree of external reliability of the results. Therefore,

generalizing the results to other community colleges outside the State of Alabama may not be possible.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review focuses on: a) the research regarding professional development training for faculty teaching online courses at the community college and b) the theory of transfer, including the skills and competencies, which instructors learn or acquire when teaching courses in both the classroom and online environment. The first section focuses on the history of the community college. The second section introduces previous research on professional development for online education, its evolution, and its impact on faculty practices and college campuses. The third section focuses on the theories of transfer of learning and types of transfer from one experience to another.

Section I: History

Community colleges as referred to today had humble beginnings in the Midwest. Joliet Junior College opened in 1901 by its founding fathers, J. Stanley Brown, Superintendent of the Joliet Township High School and William Rainey Harper, President of The University of Chicago. They sought to create an institution that provided education that was equal to that a student could receive at a university in the first two years. The first year enrollment consisted of six dedicated students; the school today has grown to serve over thirty-five thousand people. The founders hoped to create an alternative for students that wanted to further their education and still remain in the community. A community college by definition is an institution accredited to grant an associates degree as its highest diploma. It also serves many functions within its surrounding area, including promoting community, social, and economic improvement (Cohen,

2002). It has been said that the community college is kind of like an American thermometer, and that "The way we are as a learning society is best understood by the way we use community colleges" (Adelman, 1992, p. v)

President Harry S. Truman initiated the community college countrywide after World War II, when thousands of veterans returned with GI Bill funds, but had limited access to higher education. President Truman created a commission on higher education, which identified a huge gap in access to secondary education and the limited access to postsecondary education for many families. That gap was making it impossible for veterans with families, working people, and the vast majority of America's rural population to advance their education. Truman called for the creation of public "community" colleges—two-year institutions of higher education located in communities for general academic education as a doorway to universities and for technical training and degrees. The goal was to make higher education more accessible and to fuel America's booming economy, which required ever-increasing workplace skills (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947).

The Truman Commission Report played a large roll in this educational acknowledgement by proclaiming that forty-nine percent of the population possessed the mental ability to complete fourteen years of education. This made America take a closer look at a handful of two-year educational institutions that had been established some thirty years earlier in quiet rural communities, like Joliet, Illinois.

As a result, the number of community colleges grew from eight at the turn of the 20th century, to nearly sixteen hundred in 1998 (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The funding, authorization, coordination, and control of such an expansion of capacity required collaborative public effort (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

Cohen and Brawer (1996) suggested that five core functions of community colleges evolved over the 20th century. The five functions are (a) general education/academic transfer: (b) occupational, vocational and technical education: (c) continuing education: (d) developmental or remedial education: and (e) community services.

Section II: Professional Development and Online Education

The thesaurus of the Educational Resources Information Center database referred to professional development as: activities to enhance professional career growth. Fullan (1991) expanded the definition to include "The sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement" (p. 326).

Grant (1996) suggested a broader definition of professional development, which included the use of technology to foster teacher growth.

Professional development went beyond the term 'training' with its implications of learning skills; and encompassed a definition that included formal and informal means of helping teachers to not only learn new skills but also to develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice and explored new or advanced understandings of content and resources. [This] definition of professional development included support for teachers as they encountered the challenges that came with putting into practice their evolving understandings about the use of technology to support inquiry-based learning. Current technologies offered resources to meet these challenges and provide teachers with a cluster of supports that helped them grow in their professional skills, understandings, and interests. (p. 2)

The U.S. Department of Education (2001) referred to professional development as: "An activity that includes improving or increasing teachers' knowledge of academic subjects, is not a

one-day or short-term workshops or conferences, advances teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies based on scientifically based research and provides training for teachers in the use of technology so that it can be effectively used.” (p. 23)

Online Education

Distance learning was typically understood as: “Learning that takes place when a teacher and student are separated by physical distance and technology is used to bridge the instructional gap” (Martin, 2005, p. 398). This ‘distance,’ scholars argue, was actually psychological as well as physical due to the lack of face-to-face interaction utilized in on-line learning (Wynia, 2000). However, some saw the distance gap being bridged by other technology such as videoconferencing, which allowed for real-time television interaction (Martin, 2005). Even this technology was not without issues. Students at remote sites were sensitive to the lack of physical face-to-face interaction with instructors and fellow classmates (Forster & Washington, 2000; Freitas, Myers & Avtgis, 1998; Wagner, 1997; Wynia, 2000). Students and instructors both lose visual cues and nuances only found in a traditional classroom setting (Schuhmann et al., 2000).

Online education referred to teaching and learning using the Internet as the source of information, communication, and collaboration in both classroom-based instruction as well as in distance education (Bates & Poole, 2003; O’Sullivan, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Spector & Teja, 2001). Distance education had exponential growth in the last decade thanks to the appearance of the Internet (GAO, 2002). Traditional campus-based universities encouraged instructors to distribute their courses on the Internet (Armstrong, 1999; Smith et al., 2002).

Community colleges had recognized that the traditional time-bound, place-bound, role-bound, and efficiency-bound structures of higher education were hindering their ability to serve students of the 20th century (Milliron & Miles, 2000). Milliron (2000) further states: “Students

and faculty want to be freed from fifty-minute classes, thirty-person classrooms, strictly-defined relationships, and restrictive bureaucracies.” (p. 32) Surveys collected by Milliron and Miles indicated that the “Community college Chief Executive Officers have a growing interest in increasing emphasis on learning and transforming their colleges into more responsive, learning-centered institutions” (p. 21). Even the most cursory look at the explosion of literature, conferences, products, services, new businesses, and websites, which has focused on the technology revolution in education over the last five to ten years left no doubt that information technology had transformed the educational enterprise (Milliron & Miles, 2000).

Online Education on Campuses

Most of today’s college students have an online presence and regularly communicated online in some form (Huwe, 2006; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Sreebny, 2007). By using familiar technology environments, today’s faculty could cultivate a learning environment in which they more effectively reach today’s students (Kagima & Hausafus, 2001). Smith (2007) stated:

The technology changes that today’s students have embraced, give us, as those tasked with ‘educating’ them, two options. We can embrace their technology, or we can deny its impact on their (our) lives. The first choice will allow us to maintain our positions and continue to assist students with their desire to learn. The second choice may put us in a class by ourselves – with students avoiding our classes and universities in favor of those who make an effort to understand and attempt to respond to their needs. (pp. 3-4)

Colleges and universities have tapped into the online market in an attempt to increase revenues, expand educational reach, and recover a portion of the investments made in technology (Holzen & Rickman, 2003). These large investments in technology were justified by the

increased revenue and by their impact on the educational institutions' rapport with the outside world regarding the use of cutting edge technology to deliver online education (Larreamendy-Joerns & Leinhardt, 2006).

Pedagogical challenges such as overcrowded courses, problems in the transfer of learning, need for opportunities for extended classroom practice and high teacher and student ratios have been successfully addressed via implementing online education models (Bates, 2000; Olin, 2001). Furthermore, administrative and economic issues, such as scheduling problems, low enrollment, limited physical space, and the need to reach the student population beyond the limits of campus have been solved through the use of online education. Two examples of institutions that illustrate the implementation of online technologies to solve the issues mentioned above were the University of Illinois Springfield and the University of Central Florida (Hartman & Truman-Davis, 2001; UIS Press Release, 2001). Both institutions increased enrollment exponentially and expanded beyond the physical limitations of their campuses in a very short time thanks to the adoption of online education practices (Oakley, 2000).

Faculty Interaction with the Online Environment

The appearance of virtual classrooms, online communities, peer networks, online libraries, and collaborative learning circles has influenced and expanded the ways faculty and students connect, communicate, and interact with one another (Bonk, Kirkley, Hara, & Dennen, 2000). Most faculties use the Web to look for information, communicate with others, conduct research, and to access library materials, as well as to access administrative and support services (Baldwin, 1998; Cravener, 1998). Using the Internet was not unfamiliar to faculty however; instructors used the Internet more often for individual communication and research than for teaching (Cho, 2002; Sax, Astin, Korn, & Gilmartin, 1999).

New research, which has explored the transition from face-to-face to online distance education, has suggested that using online technologies for teaching involves more complex developments than a change in the delivery method (Bates, 2000; Bates & Poole, 2003; Boettcher & Conrad, 1999; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Spector & Teja, 2001). Moving practices from the traditional, face-to-face teaching context to a virtual environment involved learning to teach in a technology-mediated environment and also meant transferring principles and concepts related to educational theory (Scagnoli, 2007).

Faculty Training and the Online Environment

Several studies had been performed which indicated that training was a major issue when preparing community college faculty to teach in online environments. Simpson and Head (2000) issued a report on the Distance Education Program at Tomball College in Texas which revealed two common problems: a) faculty do not have the skills to teach in a distance education environment because they may not have the technology application and course design skills and b) colleges are doing little to train their faculty in these abilities. Two of the main points to resolving these problems were to implement and maintain a training program for faculty and to also set and continually review instructor standards.

Another case study conducted in Nebraska during the year 2000 also examined faculty members developing online courses at the college. The results of this study were similar to that of the study performed in Texas, in that, training for faculty was determined to be a critical element of online courses. Henning (2000) conducted this study examining the experience of nine faculty members in the development of two online courses at a community college in southeast Nebraska. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and participant observations. One finding determined that faculty participants should be given the opportunity to

become students before becoming online instructors. In other words, the finding determined that faculty participants should be given training opportunities on the mechanics of the online platform and methodology of transferring traditional classroom instruction to an online setting before being certified as online instructors. Palloff and Pratt (1999) commented on the need for faculty training, by stating:

It is assumed by academic institutions that if online courses and programs are offered, teachers will know how to teach in that environment; and more importantly, students will know how to learn or engage with the material. Our experience both in teaching online courses and in consulting with faculty, faculty developers, and administrators across the United States is that the opposite is true. Faculty needs training and assistance in making the transition to the online environment however; students also need to be taught how to learn online. Learning through the use of technology takes more than a mastery of a software program or comfort with the hardware being used. It takes an awareness of the impact that this form of learning has on the learning process itself. As more institutions and their instructors enter the cyberspace classroom and encounter both successes and difficulties in the process, they are coming face-to-face with the realities of online teaching and asking more, not fewer, questions about how to make this transition successfully. (p. 25)

According to Fenby (2006), training should take place in an online environment to provide faculty with a realistic training atmosphere:

Most of the training should take place in an online learning community classroom. This will give the faculty training in the pedagogy and the valuable practical experience of having been an online learner. After faculty members' have been through training; they

need mentoring by an experienced online teacher as they teach and prepare their first class. (p. 76)

Based on these studies it was clear that faculty should be given training opportunities on both the mechanics of the online platform and methodology of transferring traditional classroom instruction to an online setting before being certified as online instructors. Once this training had been accomplished it was important that mentors, or experienced online instructors, oversee the beginner instructors as they prepared and taught their first online course.

Section III: Transfer of Training

Definition

Transfer of learning is the degree to which an individual transfers the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained formally or informally to new situations (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Enos, Kehrhahn, & Bell, 2003). Transfer is a critical element in learning, and it involves complex cognitive processes. Transfer occurs when an individual is faced with a situation or problem and draws from previously acquired knowledge to deal with this new circumstance (Ormrod, 2004; Schunk, 2004).

Historical Overview

In the nineteenth century, the theory of formal discipline supported the idea that learning in one situation would improve performance in another situation regardless of the similarities or differences between the two situations (Ormrod, 2004). Advocates of the formal discipline believed that transfer of learning was strengthened through practice of the new knowledge.

Because there was little evidence that learning which occurs in one context could be easily generalized to any other context, Thorndike and Woodworth in 1901 challenged this theory with a new theory of transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Yamnil & McLean, 2001). The new

theory suggested that knowledge is not transferred unless there is similarity between the learning situation and the application situation. This became known as the theory of the “identical elements” (Thorndike & Woodworth in Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

According to this theory, the amount of transfer of training that will occur in a new situation depends on the number of elements, which the two situations have in common (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2001). This was followed by the stimulus-response or generalization theory of transfer (Skinner, in Schunk, 2004). Expanding on the idea of identical elements, the generalization theory indicated that some transfer occurs through generalization, and, if the stimulus and response are similar in the two situations, transfer may occur automatically (Ormrod, 2004; Schunk, 2004).

From a cognitive perspective, transfer was related to information retrieval. Transfer occurred when an individual retrieved the right information at the right time to be applied in a new situation (Gagné, Yekovich, & Yekovich, 1993; Schunk, 2004). Because transfer involved activating propositions in long-term memory, cognitivists suggested the use of different types of mental exercises to promote the organization of knowledge in such a way that information retrieval could occur more easily. The cognitive perspective, therefore, placed emphasis on strategies that enhanced transfer, such as the creation of concept maps and other sources of cued-learning to help learners make the connection to the information previously stored in their memory (Prawat, 1989; Tao, 1998).

In the late 1900s, context-based learning in the form of a theory known as “situated learning” gained prominence. Situated learning suggested that learning should occur in the context where it is going to be applied, or in a very similar environment, to facilitate transfer (Herrington, Oliver, Herrington, & Sparrow, 1987). The theory of learning generated some

controversy because it could imply that it was unlikely that learning will transfer outside the context where it was learned and applied. The theory was also criticized on the grounds that it was too vague to allow any prediction on when transfer will and will not occur (Ormrod, 2004). The idea that learning had to be tied to real-world activities or similar-to-real-life contexts to ensure transfer is still supported by various authors today (Bennet, Harper, & Hedberg, 2002).

Types of Transfer

According to Yamnill and McLean (2001), “Training is useless if it cannot be transferred into performance.” (p. 197) A review of literature (Baldwin & Ford, 1988) classified the factors affecting training into three categories: (a) training inputs, including trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment: (b) training outputs, consisting of learning and retention: and (c) conditions of transfer, which focus on the generalization and maintenance of training. Learning is of little value to organizations unless it is transferred in some way to performance (Holton, Bates, Seyer, & Carvalho, 1997).

Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of a training focused on individual performance. This model proposed three primary outcomes of training intervention: learning, individual performance, and organizational results. The three primary inputs are: motivations to transfer, transfer conditions (environment), and transfer design (Holton, 1996). See Figure 1: Illustration of Holton’s Transfer of Training Model.

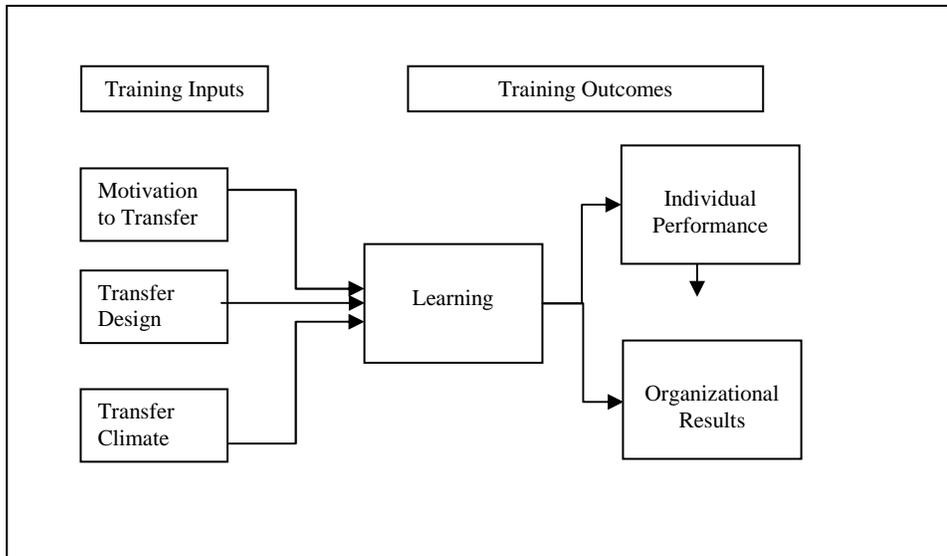


Figure 1: Illustration of Holton’s Transfer of Training Model

Motivation to Transfer

Motivation was presented as one of the key influences on performance outcomes, and was described as the individual’s desire to use newly acquired knowledge and skills on the job (Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Individuals’ motivation is a powerful force to achieve transfer of learning (Scagnoli, 2007). The concept “motivation to improve work through learning” (Naquin & Holton III, 2002) implies an individual’s willingness to transfer the knowledge acquired to improve work processes.

According to Holton (1996), motivation to transfer comprises four categories: (a) *intervention fulfillment* (e.g., refers to the perception of learning something that has met the trainee’s expectations and has fulfilled his/her need for performance-related learning), (b) *learning outcomes* (e.g., the results of learning will have an effect on motivation to transfer, this is also related to the expectancy theory), (c) *job attitudes* (e.g., meaning that a person’s commitment and job satisfaction should influence motivation to learn and to transfer to the job),

and finally, (d) *payoff* (e.g., one who sees utility in training is more motivated to transfer to the job than one who does not).

The attitude of faculty to online instruction affects the willingness of instructors to teach online (Kosak, Manning, Dobson, Rogerson, Cotnam, Colaric, & McFadden, 2004). Some instructors expressed concerns about the effectiveness of this form of instruction for student learning (Jones, Lindner, Murphy, & Dooley, 2002). The novelty of this medium elicits further negative attitudes from faculty (Valentine, 2002). Jones et al. (2002) found that faculty members who did not believe online learning to be the educational equivalent to traditional courses were philosophically opposed to distance education. Additionally, there was a fear of feeling incompetent, as faculty members were used to being in a position of expert authority (Hutchins, 2003). Meyan et al. (1997) note that teaching online made all course content public and open to review and evaluation and that student performance could be measured as well as instructor responsiveness to student activities, questions and comments.

Transfer Climate

Holton's (1996) transfer of training model included "transfer climate" defined as the mediating variable between organizational context and a person's job attitudes and work behavior as a result of an individual's perception of their work environment. Thus, even when learning occurs in training, the transfer climate may either support or inhibit the application of learning to the job or the extent to which a person can use learned skills on the job (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992).

Transfer climate was described by Schneider and Rentsch (1988) as a "sense of imperative" (cited in Holton, Bates, Seyler, & Carvalho, 1997, p. 97) that arises from a person's perception of his or her work environment and its influences on the extent to which that person

can use learned skills on the job (Yamnil & McLean, 2001). Research in the corporate environment has shown that transfer is more likely to occur in supportive work environments than in non-supportive settings (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Lim & Johnson, 2002). The transfer climate appeared to be important if transfer of training behavior is to occur (Yamnil & McLean, 2001). In contrast, research conducted in higher education settings showed that environmental aspects were not such an influential factor in the transfer of learning in academia, given the autonomy and freedom of choice associated with academic teaching (Richardson, 2002).

Preparing individuals to accept training-induced change and encouraging them to express their new capabilities in the work environment requires training that is delivered at the appropriate level and is congruent with contextual supports (Yamnil & McLean, 2001). An individual's ability to transfer was related to the individual's cognitive skills to understand and master content (Richardson, 2002) and the ability to transfer and implement previous knowledge in a new situation. If content does not support or actively discourages the use of new skills prior to the implementation of training, it is unlikely that trainees will be motivated to learn (Yamnil & McLean, 2001).

Ormrod (2004) identified the following as the principles that may predict transfer: (a) meaningful content (i.e., the more meaningful the learned information, the higher the probability of positive transfer), (b) in-depth knowledge (i.e., something that is learned well is more likely to be transferred than superficial knowledge), (c) identical elements (i.e., the more similar the learning and the transfer situations, the more likely it is that knowledge will be transferred from one to the other), (d) principles transfer more easily than details or facts (i.e., general rules are more applicable than specific information), (e) opportunities for practice (i.e., the more new knowledge is applied and the more varied the situations to which it is applied, the higher the

possibility that it will be transferred to new situations), and (f) time span between learning and practice (i.e., the shorter the time between learning and applying the new knowledge, the more likely that positive transfer will occur).

Baldwin and Ford (1988) classified work environment factors as training inputs defined as peer and supervisory support and opportunities and constraints to perform learned behaviors on the job. Work environment variables were those factors that are present in the work environment that can influence an individual's motivation to learn, motivation to transfer, and actual transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities to the job. Work environment included factors on the job that can influence the application of learned skills, such as manager support, peer support, proper technology, and the opportunity to utilize new skills (Noe, 1999). The critical issue of any training program is the successful transfer of the newly acquired skills back to the work environment (Ford, Quinones, Seago & Sorra, 1992).

Transfer Design

Holton's (1996) definition of training design can be characterized as the conditions necessary within a training program for facilitating the transfer of training. Training design can be summarized as the characteristics of the learning environment, such as the materials, opportunities to practice, providing feedback, development of learning objectives, and organizational results. Training design was described as one of the most important influences on training transfer (Brinkerhoff & Gill, 1992). According to Holton (1996),

One cause of failure to transfer is that training design rarely provides for transfer of learning. Cognitive learning may well occur, but program participants may not have an opportunity to practice the training in a job context or may not be taught how to apply their knowledge on the job. The training itself can have a direct influence on transfer of

training. Holton's evaluation model does not provide guidelines to explain what constitutes appropriate transfer designs. (p. 18)

Bates (1997) insisted that a key aspect of training design was formulating a training program, which directly addressed individual and organizational problems. A number of studies have suggested that the issues of relevance of knowledge, skills, and attitude taught in training are of critical value in determining transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Garavaglia, 1993). Baldwin and Ford (1988) conveyed that transfer is facilitated when there is a direct relationship between the context where training is produced and the context where it is going to be applied. To ensure better transfer, variability in the use of examples and different opportunities and degrees of practice need to be considered in training design to assure better transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Yamnill & McLean, 2001).

Learning

Holton (1996) provided a definition of learning as the achievement of the learning outcome desired in an HRD intervention. In respect to this study "an HRD intervention" means a training program. Merriam-Webster further defines learning as (a) the act or experience of one who learns, (b) knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study, and (c) modification of a behavioral tendency by experience (as exposed to conditioning).

Individual Performance

Holton (1996) defined this as a change in individual performance as a result of learning being applied on the job. Individual performance was the key and transfer of training was a core issue with respect to linking individual change to the requirements of the organizational system (Yamnill & McLean, 2001).

Organizational Results

Holton (1996) defined organizational results as results at the organizational level as a consequence of change in individual performance. Simmons (1999) further expanded organizational results as special measures of the organization that can be taken before and after learning takes place and to help the process of transfer to the workplace.

Conclusion

Research in the area of transfer of learning in adults revealed a gap in the research of transfer of learning. This regards transfer of learning from informal learning to the job and how people transfer knowledge from one working situation to another (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Enos, 2001; Holton, Bates & Ruona, 1998; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Naquin & Holton, 2002; Richardson, 2002; Rouiller & Godstein, 1993; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Research showed that formal training had played a minor role in preparing faculty for technology integration compared to self-directed learning, learning by doing, continuous learning through instructional technologies, and most importantly, and informal learning from colleagues (Armstrong, 1999; Ehrmann, 2002). In preparing themselves for online distance education, instructors should (a) focus on gathering information from different sources (colleagues, students, and existing research) which are compatible with their teaching responsibilities, (b) reflect on their own practice, and (c) reflect on their classroom experience (Bellon, Bellon, & Blank, 1992). “The most powerful influence on teacher learning is the experience that comes from teaching” (Bellon et al., 1992, p. 450); they learn as they teach, placing “a heavy emphasis on learning by doing” (Belle & Rappold, in Ehrmann, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to examine the training Alabama community college instructors' received to support their online teaching duties. This study followed a qualitative research design. More specifically, the study was designed as a collective case study (Stake, 1995). Case study is defined as an intensive description and analysis of a single unit or bounded unit such as an individual, program, event, group, or community (Merriam, 1998). The inclusion of multiple cases may enhance external validity or generalization of the findings (Merriam, 1998). "By looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, we can understand a single-case finding, grounding it by specifying how and where and, if possible, why it carries on as it does" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 29).

Research Questions

The following questions, as discussed in Chapter One, are based on Holton's (1996) transfer of training model with the following questions serving as a framework for this study. The overarching question which this research addressed was: "How does professional development training influence faculty teaching online at Alabama's rural community colleges?" To guide the data collection and analysis, the following sub-questions were explored:

1. What professional development training (including follow-up training) is provided to community college teachers preparing to teach online?

2. How do the elements of Holton's Transfer Model influence the application of this professional development training to teaching the online class?

Section I: Research Design

Overview Qualitative Research

Qualitative research can be seen as an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of subcategories, such as ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and case study. Creswell mentions five traditions, while others include more (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002). All of the traditions or subcategories have several common elements such as: studying individuals in natural settings (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Munhall, 2001); collecting data in the form of rich descriptive words rather than numbers (Merriam, 1998; Labuschagne, 2003); understanding the meanings people place on their personal experiences (Creswell, 1998; Labuschagne, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Morgan & Drury, 2003; Munhall, 2001); and using the researcher as a tool to gather and analyze data (Bolan, Gleeson, & Murphy, 2003; Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998).

Patton (1990) claimed case study methodology to be useful in understanding a “special people, particular problem, or unique situation in great depth” (p. 43). According to Bromley (1990), case study is a “systemic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest” (p. 302). Bromley (1986), Creswell (1994), Stake (1995) and Yin (1994), have used the case study method to develop rich and inclusive understandings about people.

Whereas, the quantitative researcher seeks to “disclose subjectivity” (Munhall, 2001, p. 73) and explain the case objectively and free of researcher bias (Morgan & Drury, 2003), qualitative researchers reveal their biases. This is accomplished through the practice of reflexivity (Yardley, 2000) which is the process of documenting how the “research process and

often themselves in particular, construct the object of research” (Bolan, Gleeson, & Murphy, 2003, p. 2).

According to Labuschagne (2003) qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data collection: a) in-depth, open-ended interviews: b) direct observation: and c) written documents, including such sources as open-ended written items on questionnaires and personal diaries. The data from *open-ended interviews* consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data from *observations* consist of detailed descriptions of participants’ behaviors, staff actions, and the full range of human interactions. *Document analysis* yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from records, correspondence, official reports, and open-ended surveys.

Reliability of qualitative research “can’t be defined as some equivalence of measurement based on a predefined scale of calculation separate from the experience and understanding of the researcher” (van Manen, 2000). Reliability can only be had through intersubjective corroboration that occurs when others can find their own experience in the researcher’s interpretation (Seamon, 2000, van Manen, 2000). This principle of intersubjective corroboration is similar to the term “credibility” used by Guba and Lincoln (1994).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) proposed four criteria for evaluating qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. *Credibility* involves developing believable results from the participant’s perspective. To satisfy the criteria for credibility the researcher asks the question “Was the study done in such a way that the participant’s data were accurately identified or described?” *Transferability* is the degree of generalizability of the results to other settings. This may be enhanced by thoroughly describing the research context and assumptions that were central to the research. *Confirmability* is the extent to which others may

confirm the results. As the researcher provides documentation of procedures used to reexamine the data throughout the study, confirmability may increase.

Case Study Research

Case studies are narrative in nature and designed to engage those employing the methods to solve dilemmas, stimulate reflection, and disseminate character, emotion, setting, and dialogue (Merriam, 1998). Case studies offer numerous ways for observers to create images of participants, engaged in resolving daily problems and in reflecting on issues that can either enhance or decrease effectiveness in the classroom (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2003). A qualitative approach also allows members to feel the “pulse” of the culture via conversations, feedback, and surveys, with all participants becoming key players (Merriam, 1998).

Case studies are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system (Merriam, 1998). Creswell (1998) defines a case study as an exploration of a “bounded system” or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. Some consider “the case” as an object of study (e.g., Stake, 1995) while others consider it a methodology (e.g., Merriam, 1998). According to Creswell (1998), the bounded system is bound by time and place, and it is the case being studied – a program, an event, an activity, or individuals. The bounded system in this case study is the community college with the unit of analysis being the instructors of online courses at the community college.

Section II: Population, Participants, Data Collection, and Analysis

Selection of Sites and Participants

Community college criteria and selection. Three Alabama community colleges were selected: Alpha Community College, Beta Community College, and Charlie Community College. The following criteria were used in selecting the community colleges:

1. Offer online learning courses,
2. Distance Learning Coordinator responded to initial email questionnaire,
3. Used fulltime faculty and staff to conduct professional development training,
4. Fulltime faculty who teach both traditional and online courses,
5. Rural Alabama college classification by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching,
6. Classification as Associate level institutions where all degrees are at the Associate level, and
7. One college each from the classification of small, medium, and large populations based on The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Table 1 shows the selected colleges and characteristics.

Table 1:

Summary of the Characteristics of Colleges Selected

Community College	Number Online Classes – Fall 2009	Carnegie Classification
Alpha Community College	46	Medium, Rural Population Area
Beta Community College	26	Small, Rural Population Area
Charlie Community College	40	Large, Rural Population Area

The researcher sought in-depth information with three cases to provide reasonable coverage of the phenomenon of interest, professional development training for faculty teaching online. A continuous assessment of progress during the data collection stages confirmed the suitability of the cases selected for the phenomenon of interest in this study; therefore, the study was completed with the three community colleges initially selected.

Participant criteria and selection. The researcher selected fourteen participants who were involved in online education delivery including: distance learning coordinator (DLC), trainers (T), and instructors (I) from the three community colleges. The selection criteria used were the following:

Distance Learning Coordinators:

1. Designated as the distance learning coordinator at the community college,
2. Job title or duties involve distance learning.

Trainers:

1. Faculty or staff members of the community college,

2. Conducts training sessions at the college,
3. Job title or duties involve training faculty members,
4. Referred to researcher by the distance learning coordinators during Pilot Study (See Appendix A for screening document).

Instructors:

1. Full-time instructors,
2. Experienced in teaching both traditional and online courses,
3. Taught online classes during the fall semester 2008,
4. Referred to researcher by the distance learning coordinators during Pilot Study (See Appendix A for screening document).

Table 2 lists the participants and key characteristics.

Table 2

Combined Participant's Background Information

School	Participant	Position	Teaching Experience	Online Experience	Teaching Area	Department
Alpha	Professor Jones (DLC, T, and I)	College-wide Division Chair for Distance Education and Psychology Instructor	9 years	7 years	Psychology	Social and Behavioral Sciences
Alpha	Dr. Snow (T and I)	Instructional Designer and English Instructor	11 years	2 years	English	English
Alpha	Professor Walker (I)	Business Instructor	9 years	7 years	Accounting and Business Law	Business
Alpha	Professor Criner (T and I)	Instructional Designer and Computer Science Instructor	5 years	2 years	Computer Science	Computer Science
Beta	Professor Davis (DLC and T)	Distance Learning Coordinator, Physical and Health Education Instructor, and Head Coach	4 years	4 years	Physical and Health Education	Nursing and Allied Health
Beta	Professor Payne (I)	Psychology and Economics Instructor	6 years	4 years	Psychology and Economics	Business and Social Sciences
Beta	Professor Johnston (I)	Division Chair and English Instructor	15 years	4 years	English	Humanities and Fine Arts
Beta	Dr. Rodgers (I)	English Instructor	3 years	2 years	English	Humanities and Fine Arts
Beta	Anthony Wilhem (T)	Director, Information Technology Office			Trainer	Information Technology
Charlie	Dr. Jordan (I)	English Instructor	16 years	6 years	English	English
Charlie	Professor Brooks (I)	English Instructor	7 years	4 years	English	English
Charlie	Professor Short (I)	Department Chair and Business Instructor	28 years	1 year	Office Administration	Business
Charlie	Professor Browder (I)	Division Director, Business Technologies	24 years	7 years	Business and Economics	Business Technologies
Charlie	Dr. Fergusson (DLC and T)	Director, Center for Instructional Excellence			Trainer	Center for Instructional Excellence
Average			11 years	9 years		

Note: I = Instructor, DLC = Distance learning Coordinator, T = Trainer

Data Collection

Data were collected via long interviews that were informal and interactive with open-ended questions (Merriam, 1998). Kvale (1996) contends that the research interview is an interpersonal conversation between two people with mutual interest. The interviews often should address at the outset of every interview the researcher's motives and intentions and the inquiry's purpose (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The participant is then asked to reflect and report the experience fully. According to Merriam (1998), the researcher may have a set of pre-written questions available which would create a highly structured interview; however, the interviewer may elect to use a semi-structured interview. This type of interview is guided by a list of questions but neither the wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand and to new ideas on the topic. Boeree (2003) stated that for an unstructured interview, "Although you may interact with the person, ask questions, ask for detail, for clarification, and so on — you should avoid as much as possible, forcing the person in any direction, other than keeping their attention on the original topic" (p. 1).

The researcher's goal in this study was to collect data in order to understand the experience of each participant. Each participant was interviewed through mutually convenient, scheduled appointments at times that were conducive to non-disruptive dialog (Repass, 2002). Each interview was conducted in-person. At the initial meeting, the scope of the study was explained as outlined in the Informed Consent Form and provided the participants the opportunity to ask questions concerning the research and expectations for their participation (Repass, 2002). The researcher addressed ethical issues concerning the use of this research for the purpose of a dissertation, confidentiality of data and the preservation of participant's

anonymity (Merriam, 1988). The researcher took detailed notes and audio taped the in-depth interviews. After the interview, each recorded interview was transcribed verbatim. According to Merriam (1998), verbatim transcriptions of recorded interviews provide the best database for analysis.

This study included multiple sources and multiple methods of data collection (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2000). The methods involved interviews, observations, and study of documents. Specifically, four steps were followed in the data collection process: (a) pilot study, (b) open-ended interviews, (c) in-depth study of documents, and (d) summary write-up of each case.

Step One: Phase 1

This step consisted of sending emails to the Deans of twenty-one Alabama Community Colleges explaining the research criteria and asking for the appropriate name and contact information for the college's distance learning coordinator. The initial interview was to gain permission to conduct the research at the college and identify potential participants for the study.

Step Two: Open-ended Interviews

The second step included open-ended interviews with each participant, which was conducted in person by the researcher. The purpose of this interview was (a) to gain a full understanding of the trainer's perception on professional development training, and the follow-up training provided to instructors who teach online classes and (b) to gain a full understanding on how does professional development training influence faculty teaching online at Alabama's rural community colleges. Each interview took approximately fifty minutes. The data collected in these interviews were recorded and transcribed for later analysis. See Appendices A, C, and D for interview protocol.

Step Three: In-depth Study of Documents

In the third step, the in-depth study of documents, the researcher conducted a review of the course documents which included: course syllabi, assignments for online classes, student assessments, instructional design policies and procedures, and training materials both in paper form and on the college web-site with the aim of examining the pedagogy and teaching style of each participant in online courses. See Appendix B for document analysis protocols.

Step Four: Within Case Report

At the end of this stage, the researcher wrote up a summary of the data collected for each case called a within-case report. A printed copy of the report was sent to each participant to assure accuracy.

Descriptive and Reflective Notes

The researcher's interview notes incorporated both descriptive and reflective notes. The descriptive notes give a description of the setting and the events, which occurred during the interview such as disruptions, interruptions, and body language. The reflective notes (Appendix E) contain personal thoughts, feelings, and intuitions, which arose during the interview (Repass, 2002). These are listed under "Reactions" at the end of each interview transcript.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this qualitative research began soon after the pilot study conclusion of data collection, a practice that is suggested because it facilitates the emergent design and the emergent structure of later data collection phases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interim analysis helped to identify recurrent themes within the data and provided guidance for the next steps in data collection.

Data analyses were ongoing. Data were continually read, re-read, and coded in order to develop themes throughout the research study and document procedures used. This increased the confirmability of the results. Documenting any changes that occurred and how they impacted the study ensured dependability. Thorough descriptions of the research assumptions central to the research are included in order to maintain transferability. Triangulating the various sources of information gathered through interviews, observations and emails, aided in validating the study.

The within-case analysis process began by regarding every observational note and every statement in the interview, as equal in value while relevant statements emerging from the data were highlighted. Horizontalizing or the deletion of irrelevant, repetitive or overlapping statements or notes occurred next. The horizons or textural meanings and invariant constituents of the case study were left in the data transcriptions. These remaining coded responses were grouped together and placed in an outline format. According to Merriam (1998), these coded statements can be defined as assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of the data. The researcher read and re-read the interview responses several times in order to gain a picture of the data as a whole, and in order to become aware of themes which would emerge from each participant's responses. As themes emerged, the researcher recorded and organized relevant thematic statements. In order to be characterized as a theme, the researcher required the presence of at least two significant coded responses. This allowed the researcher to address the research questions for each case in Chapters Four through Six. The cross-case analysis compared and contrasted the key findings of the cases.

Researcher Role

In this study, the researcher adopted the role of an "insider researcher" (Asselin, 2003; Smyth & Holian, 1999). The "insider researcher" is an individual who conducts research in an

environment where the researcher and the participants either know or know of each other (Rabbitt, 2003). He portrayed an interpretive role; making observations; exercising judgment; analyzing; and constructing a reality which was based on the interaction between the participant's contributions to the research and the researcher's interpretations. He did his best to judge the results based on his practical experience and knowledge of the research in the field. However, knowing that case study research is "distinguished partly by its admission of the subjective perception of the researcher and participant into the research frame" (Preissle, in Merriam, 1998, p. 22); there was continuous assessment as data collection progressed. Advisor, faculty, and expert consultations were utilized whenever the interpretation of the data rendered this necessary.

The researcher is a faculty member of an Alabama community college and an employee of the Alabama Community College System, which oversees all the Alabama community colleges, and is familiar with the context in which the data was collected. He has a relationship with the participants of the study either directly or indirectly. The researcher's prior work experience allowed insight into the manner in which other outside government organizations conduct online training for instructors as well as students. These benefits gave the researcher the "environmental intelligence" (Smyth & Holian, 1999), or knowledge of the culture where the research was taking place. It also gave access to participants and access to others in the participants' work environment (i.e., individuals who could provide information and facilitate planning for data collection, scheduling, phone numbers, resources available, etc). However, being an inside researcher also poses challenges. Research shows that "the insider researcher has a past, current, and expected future role in the organization, which brings aspects of the organizational history, working relationships, and personal alliances into play in the research

process” (Smyth & Holian, 1999, p. 1). In such cases, the dual role of researcher and community member puts a strain on the researcher who has to prove more strongly his/her credibility (Rabbitt, 2003). Prior knowledge of the participants and the setting may also affect the way that participants are approached and the way they respond to data collection (Rabbitt, 2003; Smyth & Holian, 1999).

Researcher Positionality

As a seasoned online instructor at a community college, a student taking online classes, and a former sixteen-year employee of the Federal Government who utilized the Internet to prepare and submit numerous high visibility reports to Congressional Leaders as well as having completed multiple training classes through the use of online courses, I have faced countless challenges to my personal and professional development. I have experienced failure in the classroom and have treaded water through the lonely (Bullough, 1989) “sink or swim” stage (Sagor, 1997) of induction in my professional career. Because I have been an employee of the Federal Government who used the Internet to complete job duties and professional development training, an instructor in Academia who utilized the Internet to conduct online courses, and a student who participated in online courses to further my education, I understood and empathized with novice instructors and students regarding the frustrations and concerns they had in their first online classrooms. I distinctly recalled my novice years - accompanied by a feeling of helplessness; the never-ending paper load (Deiderich, 1974); and the stress of time management (Jackson, 1968). It was as if I were once again “walking in their shoes.”

Learning to navigate content, standards, and classroom management, while simultaneously developing an instructor persona is challenging for beginning instructors. I continue to seek improvements in my instruction and in student achievement. I have come to

realize, first hand, that diversity issues play an important part as instructors experiment with multicultural issues in the online environment in addition to examining the different learning perspectives of students.

As an instructor, I could easily take a stance toward current and anticipated demands on the educational system however, at the same time, I understand why online courses have met so much resistance and training has been underachieved.

CHAPTER FOUR

WITHIN-CASE ANALYSIS FOR ALPHA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This within-case analysis highlights the individual characteristics of each case and leads to the comparison and contrast that will be presented in the cross-case analysis displayed in chapter seven. By presenting each individual case first, the pedagogical strategies used are examined within their own context. Therefore, the chapter is organized as follows: (a) introduction of the case, (b) participant's background information, and (c) within-case analysis organized by research question. Thick descriptions and direct quotes taken from the various sources used in the data collection are included to illustrate the explanations.

Case One: Alpha Community College

Introduction

Carnegie Foundation classifies Alpha Community College as a medium two-year college-serving a medium rural population area. Alpha Community College had forty-six online classes scheduled during the Fall Semester 2008. The researcher interviewed four participants at Alpha Community College: Professor Jones, Dr. Snow, Professor Walker, and Professor Criner. All four participants were full-time instructors at Alpha Community College who taught both traditional and online classes. Table 3 summarizes the participants teaching experience.

Table 3

Alpha Community College Participant's Background Information

Participant	Teaching experience	Online Experience	Teaching Area	Department
Professor Jones (DLC and I)	9 years	7 years	Psychology	Social and Behavioral Science
Dr. Snow (T and I)	11 years	2 years	English	English
Professor Walker (I)	9 years	7 years	Accounting, Business Law	Business
Professor Criner (T and I)	5 years	2 years	Computer Science	Computer Science
Average	8.5 years	4.5 years		

Note: I = Instructor, DLC = Distance learning Coordinator, T = Trainer

Interview Day

It was a cloudy, cold, and misty day as the researcher drove to the Sumiton campus of Alpha Community College. The interviews took place on December 17, 2008, just three days prior to the faculty Christmas break. This was the last day of final exams, and faculty and staff would be completing their work for the semester. As the researcher drove onto the campus, the feeling of a semester coming to an end was at hand with parking readily available. As the researcher waited in the hall of the General Education building, where the interviews would take place, there were scarcely any others there. This was another sign that the semester was coming to a close. Professor Jones, who was returning from her last final, cordially greeted the researcher. After she deposited her things in her office, they went to an empty office adjacent to her office. The interviews were conducted there. As one interview was completed the next interviewee would come into the office. Each participant was excited about the current distance education program at the college and eagerly expressed enthusiasm during the interviews.

Themes Presented by Research Question

Question 1: Professional Development Training

Evolution of Alpha's Distance Education Training

Professional development training for online instructors had steadily progressed at Alpha Community College since the first online classes were offered in 2001. As the instructors were interviewed it became very apparent that none of them wanted to remember their first online class. Professor Jones stated: "When the college first offered online classes it was to stay in competition with other schools and the college offered very little training." All of the instructors agreed they had to figure out how to use the online software basically on their own. Professor Walker had to teach herself through trial and error:

TRAINING!!!! My biggest challenge was the technology. I obtained the knowledge for teaching online classes through trial and error. My formal training came from classes I was taking in my doctoral program, which dealt with integrating technology into the classroom setting.

Professor Criner stated the lack of training provided to online instructors was revealed in that first online class:

I am kind of laughing because that first online class was a fiasco. You get better with experience and learn from your colleagues, learn from your mistakes; learn from classes you take and those you teach. Training would have helped tremendously.

At the time the college started their online program they were using WebCT. A major problem with the use of this program was instructors' had no formal training provided to them as to how to use the platform. The instructors had no clue what the software would allow them to do, much less how to use certain functions. There were certain instructors who would offer

workshops on the software, which were more or less on the mechanics of how to perform certain functions. Dr. Snow stated:

I took a small workshop that was offered by another instructor who was using WebCT.

The workshop was centered on how to use the tools provided by the software but I wouldn't say that would be considered formal training.

Use of the available tools in WebCT was the focal point of confusion when Alpha Community College began offering online classes. According to Professor Jones, "Instructors needed to know more about the hardware tools found in the software used for online classes. What does this tool do? At that time, it was difficult, because I didn't know how to use it."

The college contracted WebCT to provide training on their online platform after instructors voiced their concern about these types of issues. Professor Jones stated: "WebCT was hired and they came in and trained our instructors." Professor Walker further explained, "After time we were actually provided training, like the cart before the horse."

Presently, Alpha Community College had converted to Blackboard because of the purchase of WebCT by Blackboard. Blackboard personnel were contracted through the college to provide training on the online software. Professor Jones stated:

We now have Blackboard instructors come to Alpha and train our faculty. Since I have been in charge of the distance education program, we have had a formal training process in place. Not only on the pointing and clicking, but also on the online strategies needed for successful online classes to include educational teaching tools and the best practices in each.

Instructors' were experiencing problems the first semester the college offered online classes. Presently the college had provided more and more professional development training to

online instructors. Part of this is due to the fact that Professor Jones was appointed as the College-wide Division Chair for Distance Education (Distance Learning Coordinator). In discussing her dual role she understood the importance of online classes and the training provided:

I am very excited about the online classes at Alpha. Since I was one of the first to develop and teach an online class and have since moved into a leadership role within distance education I use the online component heavily not only for my online class but also in my traditional classes. I have first hand experience on the benefits of training, and have worked hard to get training provided for our online instructors.

The college had recently provided a vision for distance education. Blackboard personnel came to the college each semester (summer excluded) and conducted a two-day, fourteen hour training session. The training involved the mechanics and methodology of online class environments. Professor Jones stated:

The training consisted of pedagogies of online classes and provides examples of good and bad courses. The training includes hands-on training where the instructor's receiving the training develops their courses during the training sessions. The training includes transitioning a class from the traditional lecture format to an online format. This has become part of the culture we have adopted at Alpha Community College.

Perceptions of Online Education Program

The instructors interviewed had a very positive perception of online education. This was not always the case. When Alpha Community College first offered online classes many instructors were faced with a "culture shock." These instructors were against online education because they feared change. Professor Jones stated:

I actually heard that from our instructors. I know it's a fear of change. It comes out of a concern for what's going to happen to my job. Our philosophy (at Alpha Community College) is, if you do not want to teach online you do not have too. If we force people into it; the quality will not be there. We don't want to force people to do something with which they are uncomfortable with, not to mention stepping on their academic freedom and intellectual freedoms.

One of the instructors interviewed was totally against the online education program. This instructor had now adopted the philosophy that online education offers students the same education as a traditional classroom experience. She has become one of two Instructional Designers. Dr. Snow stated:

When I was first introduced to online education I was against it. I thought there was no way online education could be as effective as face-to-face education. I believed this was a technique teacher's and students were using to try to get out of doing their work.

Training had enabled this instructor to change the way she thought about online education. While working on her doctorate there were classes that she took online. She stated that: "I really started learning a lot and enjoying the process, so I volunteered to teach an online English course." Professor Walker stated:

Training helped open up some new ideas and a new way of structuring things. One of the last training sessions actually introduced me to construct items in content modules, which is something I had not done prior to that. It was suggested that we use content modules in order to make the conversion into Blackboard easier. It made it simpler for me to upload my information from WebCT into Blackboard. Everything follows each section in the

course textbook. I am able to feed it to the students a little bit at a time using content modules.

Administration Support

Professor Jones displayed enthusiasm about Alpha Community College Administration taking steps to reorganize the online education program into a separate Division of the college:

We have recently reorganized distance education and the President has appointed a distance education chair and a small President's Advisory Committee for distance education. This committee makes recommendations about policies, procedures and so forth for the college. The online training manual (the online faculty handbook) is a product of the Presidents Cabinet that has made recommendations about policies and so forth. We have also done a lot of work on the online webpage. Since our reorganization, we (Alpha Community College) have moved a little farther into having this as a natural division of the college. One of the standards does say that your budget reflects your commitment to online distance education. We did not initially have distance education previously in our budget; however we now actually have a line item in the budget for distance education. So we are moving in the direction that we're actually following through with our goals and plans for distance education. We are writing a three-year plan, strategic plan, for our process for the goals we want to accomplish. Our ultimate goal is to have a virtual campus that has administrators, just like a regular campus. Eventually, that is where we want to go and we're getting there.

At Alpha Community College, the administration had been very supportive of the culture change to an online environment and had provided funding and other resources to train their online faculty. Dr. Snow stated:

Our current college wide dean is very supportive. She wants to see it grow, she wants to be sure we have the resources to help it grow and to help it grow positively to ensure quality. She supports the instructional designers; she supports (Professor Jones) in her role (Distance Education Coordinator), and sees that this is one of the best ways our college can grow. We currently have a new President who will be arriving in January. We had an Interim President this past year. He was weak in the area of technology, although he seemed to understand the importance of technology. The President and Vice-President who were here before the Interim President seemed to have the attitude that there was no way online education could have quality. They would say yes. We need to do it however; the resources weren't devoted to online education.

The Interim president at Alpha Community College appointed two online instructors during the fall semester 2008 to the position of instructional designers. These instructional designers provided follow-up training to online instructors.

One of the Instructional Designers, Professor Criner described how she worked with faculty:

This is a new position, just created this fall semester 08. Primarily our goal is to assist faculty members who are using Blackboard. I serve the Fayette, Hamilton, and Carrolton campuses. Throughout this whole semester, once instructors found out there were instructional designers available, who could help them with their class they began calling for assistance. Many of the calls began with the tools; i.e. my questions will not show up, or my system will not open, how do I send out a powerpoint presentation, how do I change my header on the course content page, or what do you think of my class? We are now able to assist our instructors in better designing their online class for our student

base. When I go in to meet with a faculty member, the first thing I tell them is that I will look at this from a student standpoint first. I want to see what their students see the first time they come into the class. Once I tell them that, if their feathers have been a little ruffled, they are much more relaxed because they do not think I am coming in to rip their class apart. I have had some real good communication with our faculty members about this and once they realize my intentions, our working relationship is much more effective. When you hear about an instructional designer and know about all their responsibilities, they will want to make my class look like theirs, which is not at all what I do or want to be portrayed at this job. I have a very good relationship with faculty on the campuses and they feel very comfortable coming to me, complaining to me, or telling me their success stories. Faculty has become very comfortable with me. This is my goal, 'I want them to know I am here to help them.'

Instructional Designer Support

Alpha Community College appointed the Instructional Designers not only to provide additional training to instructors but also follow-up training to the initial professional development training instructors' receive. Instructional Designer Dr. Snow stated:

The college does a combination of training where we do bring in someone from Blackboard who is a certified trainer. In addition to that Professor's Walker, Jones, and I have been providing training for new online instructors for our campuses. We go from campus to campus and train instructors on how to use the tools. My responsibility is to review the learning styles or teaching strategies as practices for the online environment. In addition to that, I have also held open labs where instructors come after they have finished training and are in the process of working on new courses. I help them get

hands-on feedback during that lab session. I have reached out to instructors since I became an instructional designer this term (fall semester 08). My future plans are to develop an online resource site for instructors to utilize at their convenience and also to have me there to answer questions and have resources for them to utilize. I want to start offering the open lab sessions once or twice a month instead of once a semester.

Training Curriculum

Alpha Community College had developed a Distance Education Faculty Manual. The manual included items such as: distance education policies, online course approval steps, and tips for a successful online course. This manual was posted on the Alpha Community College website and focused on the procedures to which each online instructor must adhere too. For example, in the tips to a successful online course section the following were addressed:

1. Make the transition from classroom to online instruction incrementally,
2. Have a co-worker “test-drive” your course before presenting it to students,
3. Ensure you, as a facilitator, have at least daily presence in your class,
4. Keep the students engaged,
5. Know the technology you are utilizing.

One other item which had helped the transition at Alpha Community College to an online environment was the fact that the Administration at Alpha Community College have determined that, not only online instructors needed to be trained, but all Division Chairs and Campus Associate Deans must have training for online courses. The policy set forth in the Distance Education Faculty Manual requires:

All Division Chairs and Campus Associate Deans are trained in Best Practices of online instruction. This was to enhance the evaluation process for online instructors. All

Division Chairs and Campus Associate Deans must meet with the Distance Education Chair to discuss the evaluation items before they meet with the instructors.

Question 2: Transfer of Learning

Motivation to Transfer

Alpha Community College adopted online education in 2001, which caused many changes in their teaching practices. For example, with online classes, new models of teaching and learning evolved which included a combination of web-based technologies and classroom instruction. Instructors were motivated to teach online classes because the college developed a vision for online education at Alpha Community College. As a result, instructors were trained on the use of both the mechanics of the software and methodology of transferring information to an online environment. According to Professor Jones:

Our college has provided a vision for distance education, and encouraged people to get on board, but certainly not force anybody to participate if they are not comfortable with the online environment. We have Blackboard instructors come to Alpha Community College and provide formal training to our faculty, not only on the pointing and clicking but on the online strategies needed for successful online classes to include the best practices in educational teaching tools.

Instructors had encountered a changing role in the classroom and had adapted by participating in different training scenarios. Dr. Snow stated:

I think that it (teaching) is a changing role; and I think that it is very important for instructors to realize it is a change. As our role as an instructor changes; it becomes a different environment. It is a type of culture, which I have to adjust to in the way I

interact with students, motivate with students, inspire students, and communicate with students.

This is just one of the ways training influenced online instructors at Alpha and provided them with the knowledge to adapt to this new type of teaching. Instructors at Alpha received training, not only through professional development provided by the college, but these instructors were students themselves in an online class environment. Dr. Snow added:

When I began my doctorate program, I was very skeptical about online classes and thought I was not going to learn very much, however I'd 'jump through the college hoops' and take the required courses and get my Doctor of Philosophy degree. However, to my surprise, when I started taking online courses I really started learning a lot and enjoying the process - so much so - I volunteered to teach an online course at Alpha Community College.

Transfer Climate

Administration support. Administrators were very supportive of online education and had created a work environment that focuses on providing adequate resources to all instructors. Therefore, instructors with the proper technical skills, were familiar with the online learning environment, and had first hand knowledge of online pedagogies and teaching strategies.

Professor Criner stated:

With the technology, the students have the same opportunity (online) as our traditional classroom students. Sometimes, maybe even more, because these students can contact us (instructors) outside of our normal work hours. Almost every passing semester the instructor becomes more real in the class. There is a stronger presence of the instructor

through the use of the technology. This allows you to purge your lectures and post them online.

Appropriate technology. Web-based systems, through the use of technology, not only enabled colleges to offer distance education courses but the technology had impacted the traditional classroom. Instructors at Alpha Community College not only utilize their skills obtained through professional development training for an online course but also incorporate these skills into their traditional classroom. Professor Walker stated:

Even though I don't teach all my classes in a traditional or online format, I supplement each and every class, and have for years with an online supplement. I tell my students it is extremely important they prepare for class, especially in accounting class. If you do not come to class you will not pass. If you can't make it to class, I have materials and resources out there for you. There is no reason why you cannot keep up. This is why the powerpoints, lecture notes, quizzes, and these things are out there for them.

Transfer Design

Professional development training was provided to online instructors in real life work environments and through the use of instructional designers. The training provided to the instructors was through lecture, powerpoint, and web-based techniques centered on developing their classes to improve in student learning outcomes.

The use of their knowledge from the professional development training was the course catalyst for discussion forums in the online class. The use of web links and the use of email guide the class interaction. Students were motivated by the instructor's interest in facilitating and enhancing the students' learning experiences. Professor Criner stated:

Microsoft 2007 has a great tutorial on their website, so as I was sitting in the training listening to his advice (instructional trainer) and recommendations, this was one of the items I decided to incorporate into my online class as a web link.

Online instructors were always looking for new ideas to enhance students' learning. In an online environment students are allowed to work on their assignments at a time that is convenient to them, rather than the instructors. Professor Criner added:

As my students have a problem, for instance inserting a page number, they can go to the Microsoft Office 2007 website and click on the tutorial. It walks them through the process. It is those kinds of other content areas that I will be able to add to my class.

The Blackboard training materials contain a section on "Goals" which was presented for online instructors. The goals were defined as a general statement about student learning outcomes. Blackboard personnel and Instructional Designers provide training on the proper methods of developing these goals. Also, the Learning with Integrated Technologies briefing provides training as to how instructors could transfer their knowledge to an online environment. These are presented through a group training session providing trainee's "Good Teaching Practices." A list of seven good teaching practices was presented during the training session. These good practices are: encourages contact between students and faculty, developing reciprocity and cooperation among students, using active learning techniques, giving prompt feedback, emphasizing time on task, communicating high expectations, and reflecting diverse talents and ways of learning.

Encourages contact between students and faculty. The instructor's online classes required interaction between the students and faculty. Professor Jones' class had assignments that require the students to provide personal responses. One of the assignments in her class is for students to

explain their experience with psychology and how it plays a role in behavior. All the instructors' syllabi stated "the student may contact (the instructor) by email through Blackboard anytime during the semester or other times during regular office hours."

Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students. The uses of the discussion board required student interaction by mandating students respond to all co-student responses in the class. For example, each week Professor Jones had a discussion forum covering the weekly topic. Students must respond with their thoughts on this subject, and all students are required to post a response. Professor Jones stated, "By having the students respond to other student forums, interaction occurs and students are able to see how others view a particular topic. Of course, I am there to keep the discussion on track."

Uses active learning techniques. Students must be actively engaged in course discussions, they must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. Instructors transfer this learning objective to their online class. The researcher reviewed the instructors' syllabi, observed one online course content, and determined that the instructors had extensive use of discussion threads and practical application exercises throughout the semester. Professor Walker stated, "Students are engaged in discussions throughout the semester covering the accounting material."

Gives prompt feedback. Students needed help in assessing their existing knowledge, frequent opportunities to perform and receive feedback, and time to reflect on what they have learned. The instructors provided numerous methods in providing prompt feedback to the students. Email, online discussions, tutorials and other methods were utilized throughout the semester. Professor Walker used an accounting personal trainer. The students submitted their answers and immediately received feedback. "This gives students immediate feedback, not by

providing the correct answer but by indicating which questions were wrong.” The students are then allowed to rethink the problem and resubmit their answers.

Emphasizes time on task. Technology allowed students to study more effectively, provided increased interaction between instructor and student, and accessed important resources for learning from their desktop. As noted earlier, all the instructors’ course syllabi and online course content allowed students opportunities to enhance their study habits. This technology also enhanced the instructors’ ability to track each student’s participation and interaction throughout the semester.

Communicates high expectations. Instructors explicitly communicated criteria for evaluating course objectives; and provided performance criteria by posting samples of excellent, average and sub-average work. The instructors wanted to see their students excel and provided many different types of exercises, which gave the students’ opportunities to improve.

Reflects diverse talents and ways of learning. Instructors provided different opportunities for the students to express personal talents and transfer lessons learned from the class into their daily lives. Instructors provided visual presentations, assignments on practical and simulated experiences, prompt evaluation of student content. Instructors’ online courses included powerpoint presentations on each subject matter covered throughout the semester and numerous assignments, which reinforced the subject matter and grading rubrics.

Learning and Individual Performance

Professor Walker has made a clear distinction between the pedagogical practices used in her online course and her traditional classroom course. She converted her traditional classroom into a format to be taught in an online environment. The changes that this new environment

imposed on her class, such as the use of a forum for the students' interaction, had subsequently influenced her traditional classroom.

Dr. Snow believes that the most difficult part of online instruction was moving from the traditional classroom environment to a technology-mediated environment:

Our role as instructors has changed to a different environment a type of culture that I have to adjust to in the way, in which I interact with students, motivate with students, inspire students, and communicate with students. I think one of the things I have to do is be more of someone who facilitates, guides the students, advises them with the resources (quality resources), and then encourage them to interact with those resources and to interact with others in the online course, including myself and their classmates, in order to help them understand the course content.

One of the methods the online instructors utilized, which professional development training provided, was the use of the discussion board. Since the face-to-face contact traditionally available in a traditional classroom setting was gone in the online learning process, instructors utilized other means to communicate with the students. A key ingredient to successfully master this area was the ability to verbally communicate with a keyboard. The communication was intense and demanding. The faculty facilitator felt good about communicating in writing because that was a base element in the process. Professor Criner used discussion boards in her online classes. She used discussion areas which pertained to the course materials:

I have discussions, which are solely related to Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc. I facilitate discussions on these areas with the students. I send powerpoint presentations to my students for each section we cover. Students work on assignments individually and I

grade them and provide timely feedback. If it is wrong, then I'll say you should go back and readdress this issue, look at page so and so in your book, and send the assignment back to me. Once they are completed, I can grade your work again. There is a lot of communication, particularly with assignments and of course, I have assessments, little quizzes, for each section we cover.

After studying the class materials, syllabi, and other documents, and conducting the observation, I am better able to understand what the professors meant when they said that their classes were designed for the instructor to interact with students, motivate students, inspire students, communicate with students, and have students perform the same tasks with their fellow students. These pedagogical practices, which enabled instructors to design their online course with student learning outcomes prevalent, are presented next, classified by phases of instruction, namely presentation, guidance, and assessment.

Presentation. Professor Jones uses course content and student discussions to introduce the topics of the course materials in the online class. She requires students to present discussions each week on the course materials and respond to other student's discussions. This method kept the students actively participating in the class; gave them access to other students understanding of the course material; and provided them with critical thinking opportunities.

Guidance. Professor Jones used the discussion area as a means for question and answer segments. She encouraged the students to post their questions through the use of a questions forum with their comments, questions, or concerns about the course materials. Another method she applied was to encourage the use of email. She responded to the students email in a timely manner. Online resources were made available to the online students which complimented the readings or discussions, such as powerpoint presentations and lecture notes.

Assessment. The assessment and evaluation of the students' understanding of the course materials was evaluated by Professor Jones requiring assignments that had to be completed for each chapter. She gave three exams, which covered the material provided for the course. Professor Jones stated, "I require that students take all three exams at a testing center." These exams were given at the Testing Centers, which were established on all four Alpha Community College campuses at Hamilton, Fayette, Jasper, and Sumiton.

CHAPTER FIVE

WITHIN-CASE ANALYSIS FOR BETA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This within-case analysis highlights the individual characteristics of each case and leads to the comparison and contrast, which will be presented in the cross-case analysis displayed in chapter seven. By presenting each individual case first, the pedagogical strategies used are examined within their own context. The chapter is organized as follows: (a) introduction of the case, (b) participant's background information, and (c) within-case analysis organized by research question. Thick descriptions and direct quotes taken from the various sources used in the data collection are included to illustrate the explanations.

Case Two: Beta Community College

Introduction

Carnegie Foundation classifies Beta Community College as a medium two-year college serving a small rural population area. Beta Community College had twenty-six online classes scheduled during the Fall Semester 2008. The researcher interviewed five participants at Beta Community College. They were Professor Davis, Dr. Rodgers, Professor Payne, Professor Johnston and Mr. Anthony Wilhelm. Four participants are full-time instructors at Beta Community College teaching both traditional and online classes. The other participant, Mr. Wilhelm is in charge of the professional development program. Table 4 summarizes the participants teaching experience.

Table 4

Beta Participants Background Information

Participant	Teaching experience	Online Experience	Teaching Area	Department
Professor Davis (DLC and I)	4 years	4 years	Physical and Health Education	Nursing and Allied Health
Professor Payne (I)	6 years	5 years	Psychology and Economics	Business and Social Sciences
Professor Johnston (I)	15 years	4 years	English	Humanities and Fine Arts
Dr. Rodgers (I)	3 years	2 years	English	Humanities and Fine Arts
Anthony Wilhelm (T)			Information Technology	Director, Information Technology Office
Average	7 years	4 years		

Note: I = Instructor, DLC = Distance learning Coordinator, T = Trainer

Interview Day

It was a clear and warm morning as the researcher drove from Pensacola, Florida to the Brewton campus of Beta Community College. The interviews took place on February 13, 2009, Friday before the Presidents' Day holiday. This was the last day of the week and faculty and staff were anticipating a three-day weekend. As the researcher drove onto the campus the feeling of a week ending was apparent with parking readily available. As the researcher walked to the Library, where the interviews would take place, there were few people around. This was another sign that the week was coming to a close. Professor Davis was waiting and cordially greeted the researcher. As one interview was completed the next interviewee would come into the office. Each participant was excited about the current distance education program at the college and eagerly expressed enthusiasm during the interviews.

Themes Presented by Research Question

Question 1: Professional Development Training

Evolution of Beta's Online Teacher Training

Professional development training for online instructors had steadily progressed at Beta Community College since the first online classes were offered in 2001. As the instructors were interviewed it became very apparent that none of them wanted to remember that first online class. Professor Johnston stated, "It was 'Trial by Fire.' I have had many challenges and made many mistakes but I have learned from those mistakes." When the college first offered online classes the reason was more to stay in competition with other schools because online education was becoming part of the norm. Professor Payne stated, "They (administrators) see online education as a way things will work in the future and see it as a necessity plus it is a benefit to the students."

Beta Community College offered no formal professional development training for online classes when the first online class was offered. In fact, the college had a small number of online instructors and required them to be full-time faculty. "I think it is beneficial that all online instructors are full-time. Presently, we have a total of six online instructors," stated Professor Davis.

Perceptions of Online Education Program

The instructors interviewed had a positive perception of online education. This was not always the case. When Beta Community College first offered online classes many instructors were reluctant, especially the older instructors (those that had been teaching awhile). These instructors were against online education because they feared change. Professor Davis stated,

“Some instructors that we have tried to get onboard are a little reluctant, usually the older instructors who aren’t really sure about technology and are a little resisting.”

Professor Payne stated that other instructors have spoken to her about being hesitant transitioning their teaching to online classes:

There was a lot of apprehension to start with, nervousness, worried about how much work is involved in setting the class up. How much work is involved in maintaining the class? It’s basically like teaching however many students are in the class individually. So there is a lot of work. They ask is it really that much work and yes it is. There is the dynamics of an online class like what do instructors do because these students will be working on the weekend.

Training via Graduate Coursework

As the interviews progressed, it became apparent that even though the college did not offer professional development training, instructors used training from other areas such as their graduate level coursework. Professor Payne used her college assignment for her first online class:

The first class I actually put online was one of my graduate level courses. The course I was taking consisted of creating an online class and figuring out how to develop it. I chose to develop a course I could teach at Beta Community College. Teaching online classes was something which interested me. This is why I chose the project of developing an online Economics class. I knew online classes filled with students quickly. I was interested in teaching online classes because I was taking online classes.

Professor Davis had a similar experience, “I basically had to jump in there and ‘get my feet wet.’ It was necessary to utilize the experiences from online classes I had taken in my

graduate work.” Dr. Rodgers, the newest faculty member interviewed at Beta Community College, used his experience from graduate school:

I taught my first class as a teaching assistant at the University of Southern Mississippi on world literature, which was a hybrid course. Lectures were filmed and put on the website so you did not have to go to an actual classroom. Parts of my duties in that class were to film and help grade assignments. I thought that was a good introduction to online classes because the students who needed a classroom environment could learn something practical. My first totally online teaching assignment was with the University of Phoenix. This took some getting used to; but once I learned the use of communicating with only words it was not that bad. Communicating with words came simple to me because of my creative writing degree. Also, they have a pretty extensive training program, a six-week training course before you could begin teaching the class. Basically you became a student in the class and took the training courses as if you were a student. I think this really helped me see everything from a student’s perspective.

Training via On-The-Job Experience

Professor Johnston was the only instructor interviewed who had no prior experience in online classes. She had never taken an online class or taught an online class:

I am not a spring chicken anymore. I am young enough to realize that we are going to have to accept change because that is the way the world is moving. That is why I choose to teach online classes. I have young children and fully anticipate that by the time my seven-year-old gets to college you probably will not even have to set foot on a campus. I know that happens now in many places and I think they will be able to create even more

of a college experience using an online environment. I think we are in a situation where if we don't change and grow with the students needs, we will put ourselves out of business.

Professor Payne had the same realization that online education was a change that students wanted and she wanted to be part of this culture change:

I saw this as being something a lot of schools were going to do, something that would be in high demand. I realized even if we didn't have enough students on our campus to make my online economics classes, I could teach them online and draw in students from other areas. Also, I saw this as giving me job security as well as being part of the way things will go in the future.

Training via the Distance Education Committee

Professor Johnston's training came from other instructors who had been teaching online classes, "I learned a lot, not from the workshops we had been offered, but I learned from the teachers who were presently teaching online classes."

At first, the college did not offer formal professional development training for online classes. Instead, the instructors had to obtain their knowledge through the use of a "cohort system." Professor Davis stated, "I had to go through it and figure it out for myself because then there was no formal training."

Since the college offered no formal professional development training for instructors during the initial startup phase of online education the instructors teaching online classes met and exchanged experiences. Professor Davis stated:

It was a lot of one-on-one because in the beginning, it was just I and one other instructor.

Then it turned into three and then to four. At that point we decided we needed to form a

distance education committee and really begin discussing the online part of the school in order to try and move it forward.

Professor Payne added that the online education program really began at Beta Community College when several instructors decided to try and teach an online class:

There were a couple of instructors who had taught online classes before me and had been working with Blackboard so I got help from them. They showed me how to navigate because at that point, we did not have a committee or any formal training. There were just a few instructors who stated, 'I think I want to try this.' So we did. Very shortly after that, they started an online committee because everybody who was teaching online classes got together and shared information. Shortly afterward, the technology guys got involved in training the new people coming into the distance education program. Training was primarily on the use of Blackboard. A lot of it we had already been doing by just figuring it out on our own and with each other. The technology guys got involved and started training and showing other instructors how to do it. They showed us things we did not know. Online training evolved in that manner.

Beta Community College recently purchased Blackboard rights. This means the college uses the program on their own server as opposed to the program being hosted on the Blackboard Company server. Distance Learning Coordinator and Professor Davis stated this was when the formal professional development training actually began:

Training actually started last semester (Fall 2008) with the purchase of Blackboard rights. Mr. Wilhelm started out once every couple of weeks holding basic training on Blackboard. This covered mainly the mechanics of how to use the 'buttons and whistles.' All faculties are required to post office hours on Blackboard and their faculty pages on

Blackboard. This required basic training for all instructors —whether teaching traditional or online classes. Presently, Mr. Wilhelm is developing the intermediate training sessions for all instructors. Later he will develop an advanced training session for those ready to teach online. All instructors on campus have received basic training on the use of Blackboard. We plan to include adjuncts to the training sessions by Fall 09.

Administration Support

Beta Community College administration had been very supportive of the culture change to an online environment and had provided funding and other resources to train their online faculty. Presently, the administration believes only full-time instructors should be teaching the online classes. Professor Davis reflected this policy:

The administration has stated they will not allow an adjunct to teach online classes at this time. Administration believes that full-time faculty will be more dedicated to the online process, given the fact the college is in the infancy stage of getting courses available online.

Professor Davis further stated the administration at Beta Community College was very supportive of the online education program and wanted other instructors to become part of this changing education:

Administrators are very supportive and they encouraged the distance education program and provided the ability to offer more online classes. The administrators worked hard to get other instructors onboard and expanded and purchased unlimited amount of space on the Blackboard module. Even if students do not take online classes, they have to use Blackboard. Therefore, they actually have some knowledge of the online platform. This will better enable these students to take online classes. Students are receiving an

orientation every semester on the use of Blackboard. Some instructors are using Blackboard as a substitute for days they are unable to meet classes in the classroom. This has been really beneficial to the college in purchasing the Blackboard rights.

The administration has a more positive attitude toward the professional development training presently provided as compared to the lack of training when Beta Community College first began offering online classes. Professor Payne stated:

I know the administration sees training as important. That is good and it has been good for us. It has greatly helped those of us who are interested in doing online classes. They have also been very supportive and encouraging. Even before we formed the online committee, administrators and instructors were helping each other. They (administrators) were glad we wanted to teach online classes because they knew this was the future of education. This is where we (instructors) wanted to go so we were given the liberty to play around with online education and work through it and get it started.

The administration required professional development training on Blackboard for all full-time instructors, whether teaching online classes or fully traditional classes. The goal was for all instructors to become familiar with and comfortable using the Blackboard program. According to Professor Davis, "Presently all instructors (traditional and online) have access to Blackboard. Instructors are beginning to use Blackboard more frequently for their traditional classes. Many are using the discussion board and posting assignments in Blackboard."

Professor Payne believed once instructors utilized Blackboard they would see the importance of online classes and want to become an online instructor:

I think if more instructors would give it a chance and attend some of the in-depth training we have recently been offered they would come to the realization of the importance of online education and give it a chance.

The atmosphere at the college was one of survival. Classes must be offered to students based on their needs and these services must be provided in a manner which benefits the students. Professor Payne expressed this sentiment by stating:

I think the administrators see online education as something that is coming and molding education. They see this as the way things will work in the future and see it as a necessity for college survival. It is also a benefit to the students. It is good to be able to provide education to other service areas. We have a lot of people who are first time students and non-traditional students who work. A lot of our students have families. Many of our students also have to consider the cost of gasoline, and the fact that they live in a rural area and have to drive a long way to get to class. It is a great benefit to the students who are capable of doing online classes to have that option available. It helps economically, and sometimes you can take more classes than you would be able to if you had to drive to campus. Maybe they can take a couple of online classes and only come to a campus class two days a week versus having to come five days a week. I think it is a big benefit to students especially in our service area.

Technology Staff Support

Beta Community College had a small technology office consisting of three information technology personnel. The head of the department, Mr. Wilhelm, provides the training to instructors teaching online classes. He stated: "Primarily, the official professional development training is compiled and delivered by myself. Our 'veteran' online instructors also provide an

excellent support group. All new online instructors and all other instructors are required to use Blackboard.”

The future plan, from a training perspective, is to continue updating and developing the training suites in Blackboard. The plan is to hold live Blackboard basic professional development sessions each term for new instructors. This training will be offered on limited schedules. It will be scheduled around new instructors but will be open to all staff.

Training Curriculum

Professional development training was broken into three distinct parts: basic, intermediate, and advanced. Each of these is posted on the Blackboard site so instructors can review the material at any time.

Basic. The basic Blackboard professional development-training course is an introductory one for all instructors teaching online and traditional classes. The training covers the mechanics of how to use the different functions available within the program. Mr. Wilhelm explained the basic course:

We started with the development of the Blackboard Basic course. It is an introductory course for the first-time Blackboard user, which covers the required use of Blackboard for our instructors. This course includes written material (with a one document printable copy) and a video series. The Blackboard Basic course is also done in live sessions with instructors and the video material developed after several live sessions.

Intermediate. The intermediate Blackboard professional development-training course is a detailed course for all instructors teaching online and traditional classes. Mr. Wilhelm explained the intermediate course:

The Blackboard Intermediate course is a series of ‘sessions’ that detail the use of various functions in the system, which instructors can use to enhance their class. These sessions are video only. We found if we can get an instructor to watch a video, we have fewer questions, even than with our live sessions. This course is not complete. There is one session available. We put development on hold once due to multiple other pressing projects and then again, for the release of Blackboard 9. We will be installing Blackboard version 9 in the April or May 2009 timeframe.

Advanced. This section is under development by the training personnel.

Perceptions of Professional Development Training

In the initial phase of offering online classes, the college did not provide professional development training. However, this has since changed. Professor Payne stated:

Very early on, training was not available. The college had just not gotten to that point where there were enough instructors to provide training. I think a new instructor coming in today will have more training opportunities and information available. The training website itself has a tremendous amount of resources available, including videos and/or written instruction on how to do certain tasks. However, the original training, which was provided to instructors, lasted two to three hours and was too much information to absorb at once. Therefore the training website was developed for instructors to utilize at later times. The material is exactly the same as that covered in the training session. The website has everything broken down into topics an instructor can click on and watch the video or read the instructions. It is amazing how the trainers have setup their training material.

Professor Johnston, who had never taken an online class, felt the training the college presently offers is adequate:

For me, the training has been adequate. The college has added some special professional development classes since I started teaching. Things, which I already knew but made me, consider those things in a different way. We have had some very beneficial professional development activities within the last year, since we have taken Blackboard over on our own server. Most of this I already knew because I learned it on my own, however for someone new, it is very beneficial.

The technology staff (trainers) took their job seriously and did everything to ease the stress of teaching online classes. Dr. Rodgers stated:

The technology people are fantastic and, in my case, have never taken over an hour to answer questions concerning Blackboard. Both the online committee and the trainers have worked together to ensure that the online classes are well prepared. I think they are doing a great job.

Professor Payne felt the training was very beneficial and had made the instructors aware of the technology:

It made me aware of things I could do in my online classes, features of which I was not aware of previously. I knew a great deal prior to this timeframe; however I found easier ways of doing things. I think with new teachers they are not always aware of what technology can do. It will improve on all the items you incorporate.

Instructor Perceptions of Trainers

Dr. Rodgers had a very positive attitude toward the trainers, “Both the online committee and the trainers have worked together to ensure that the online classes are well prepared. I think

they are doing a great job.” Professor Payne liked the manner in which the professional training was incorporated into Blackboard:

The material is exactly what was covered in the training session. The website has everything broken down into topics. An instructor can click on what they are working on at the present and watch the video or read the instructions. This is amazing how the trainers have setup their training material.

Professor Davis echoed the perceptions of the trainers and how positive they are in providing support to all instructors; “They (trainers) are onboard and have really worked hard to get training materials available to instructors. Our trainer is very enthusiastic about the online program and has developed the basic training materials in a short time for instructors.”

Question 2: Transfer of Learning

Motivation to Transfer

With online classes, new models of teaching and learning had evolved which included a combination of web-based technologies and classroom instruction. Professor Payne likes the fact that administrators provided online instructors time at home to perform their online classes, “There are some semesters which I use virtual hours. Administrators allow you a certain amount of hours to work at home, which I appreciate.” Professor Davis enjoys her online classes because of the freedom they allow her while she is traveling with the softball and volleyball teams:

I enjoy my online classes and being an online instructor. I teach two traditional classes as well. Having to go back and forth, with the volleyball and softball teams, I enjoy the online classes more because my other half of the job as coaching requires me to be on the

road a lot. It makes it easier with online classes because you can email back and forth to correspond with online students.

This is just one of the ways training had influenced online instructors at Beta Community College and provided them with the knowledge to adapt to this new type of teaching. Instructors at Beta Community College received professional development training provided by the college. Therefore, they have been students themselves in an online class environment. Professor Payne is aware of the technology that surrounds the future college student and she expressed education must be offered through the use of technology:

Instructors should be willing to use the technical side because the students we have coming up now grew up on technology. Some instructors are excited about it, love it, and want to become part of the process. Some are nervous about it because they are not technology driven. These instructors are scared of the online education mainly because of the technology. I think more instructors need to give it a chance and come to some of the training. You go to the training excited but if do not use it for a while you forget what you have learned. Our technology guys have everything online so if you forget you can go to Blackboard. There are videos that show you step by step how to get through the process, and refresh your memory. These guys have videos posted which show you how to work through each area of Blackboard. I think if more instructors would give it a chance it would benefit our students. The students have had cell phones a long time. In order to reach this generation we must move in that direction without compromising the integrity of instruction. I like my traditional campus classes but you have to bring some of that other stuff into education. You must give them the option.

Transfer Climate

Instructors had the proper technical skills, were familiar with the online learning environment, and had first hand knowledge of online pedagogies and teaching strategies; to ensure the online learning experience created could be fully successful. Professor Johnston had learned through the online committee and professional development training how to set up a course that was user friendly:

Blackboard is our primary method of delivery. We have had some very beneficial professional development activities within the last year. A lot of the professional development activities are designed to make us think about how to setup our class in a manner, which is user friendly to the student.

Web-based systems through the use of technology have enabled colleges to offer distance education courses. The technology also has impacted the traditional classroom. Instructors at Beta Community College utilized their skills obtained through professional development training for an online course and incorporated these skills into their traditional classroom. Professor Payne was excited the administrators and trainers required all instructors to use Blackboard in some form or fashion:

Everybody, even instructors who were not teaching online classes, are to setup in Blackboard. The instructor web page which was originally on the college website is required to incorporate this into Blackboard. They must include their contact information, picture, syllabi, office hours, and other information in an attempt to make everybody start using the software. This will make everything the same for all the students. For every class you go to the same place by logging into Blackboard. A student can obtain the syllabi for any class; find any teacher's email address and their phone number and office

hours. This is good for the students but this also keeps those instructors who are not teaching online classes involved in using the technology and becoming familiar with it. I do not believe they have been one hundred percent successful but this is our goal.

One of the methods the online instructors utilized, which professional development training provided, was the use of the discussion board. Since the face-to-face contact available in a traditional classroom setting is obsolete in the online learning process, instructors utilized other means to communicate with the students. A key ingredient to successfully master this area was the ability to verbally communicate with a keyboard. The communication was intense and demanding. The faculty facilitator felt good about communicating in writing because that was a base element in the process. Professor Payne used discussion boards in her online classes. She used discussion areas, which pertained to the course materials:

I use discussion board in my psychology classes and I will come up with something that illustrates the material we are covering. One of the questions is where psychology is talking about drug use and abuse. I will post a sentence or two about legalizing marijuana and ask the student, what do you think after reading the discussion about legalizing marijuana, are you for it or against it? I lay out what I am looking for and then I will have students post their opinions. A lot of the discussion is about opinions.

Professor Payne also used the discussion board as a means to allow students to obtain knowledge on real workplace psychology experiments:

Also, in the psychology classes I will perform experiments online. For example, visually and mentally rotating objects. There is a silhouette of a guy holding a basketball in one hand. Different views will flash on the screen; one time he is straight up and down; one time he is leaning to the left; one time he is leaning to the right; and one time he is upside

down with the basketball in a different hand. This is testing how quickly you can mentally recognize the object. I have them talk about their experience. Do you think the males or females would be better? This is the whole thing; are males or females better at mentally rotating objects? They will talk about their experiences and many will say for example, if it was a woman – I got my husband to do it to see if he could do better than me and the husbands often get their wives to do it. Then they are saying why do you think girls and guys are better at this?

Transfer Design

The use of knowledge from the professional development training was used as the course catalyst for discussion forums in the online classes. The use of web links and the use of email guided the class interaction and motivated the instructors' interest in facilitating and enhancing the students' learning experiences. The instructors incorporated the use of many tools and web links discussed during professional development training into their online class.

One of the training experiences put to use by Professor Johnston was to ensure the students received prompt feedback:

All written work is emailed to me and I use the tools in Microsoft Word to correct and add comments and send it back too them. Immediately, when I receive the email I send a reply to the student that I have received their work and give them an approximate time they can expect me to return their work. Most of the time it is within two to three days unless it is a long assignment, which I take four to five days before providing comment. If it is a research paper it will usually take six to seven days before I provide feedback. Students will always know their timeframe of when to expect work comments.

The professional development training has placed emphasis on maintaining a strong communication network between the instructor and the student. Dr. Rodgers effectively does this through emails: “I do this primarily through attachments but I also use course calendar. I maintain a lot of communication with students through email and announcements and also send an email to the students any time I post an announcement.”

Beta Community College trainers provided training through the use of videos and audio tools. This method had been adapted as a means of instruction to the students by Dr. Rodgers:

I use movies especially in the Literature courses. I use both visual and audio tools in my online classes and use a lapel microphone so when I am lecturing in my classroom I can record this for my online class.

Professor Payne used the discussion board for a real life psychology exercises to allow the students to focus on changing their overall attitudes. This exercise is referred to as the “Happy Days” exercise:

I have students do an experiment like an exercise we call the ‘Happy Days’. I tell them to pick one day this week and every person you meet I want you, whether it is a stranger, a friend or foe, to say something positive all day. I want you to look for something positive in everybody that day, whether it is the check out person when you go to Wal-Mart, and tell this person you like their hair, but only if you really do. Find something really truly positive because people know when you are blowing smoke. I want you to be positive to every single person. Say ‘Hey’ to every stranger you meet all day and then tell me what happens. Is your day different than a normal day? How did you feel and how did people react to you? This is one of my favorite discussions. I feel I have them do actual psychological experiments in their daily life. Usually everybody comes out very positive

from that 'Happy Day.' ... I love the discussion board, reading what students experienced. I could do this all day long and I will still not have the same experience you would have or that anyone else would have, so we learn from each other's experiences.

Learning and Individual Performance

After studying the class materials, syllabi, and other documents, and conducting the observations, the researcher better understood what the professors meant when they said their classes were designed for the instructor to interact with students, motivate students, inspire students, communicate with students, and has students perform the same tasks with their fellow students. These pedagogical practices, which enabled the instructors to design their online courses with student learning outcomes prevalent, are presented next, classified by phases of instruction, namely presentation, guidance, and assessment.

Presentation. All four professors used course content and student discussions to introduce the topics of the course materials in the online class. They required students to present discussions each week on the course materials and respond to other students' discussions. This method ensured students were actively participating in the class, had access to other students understanding of the course material, and provided critical thinking opportunities.

Professor Johnston utilized the discussion board to keep the students actively participating in her online class, "I post a question the students must address on their own. They post their responses and then have to go back and choose responses from one or two other students and post a reply."

Guidance. All the professors used the discussion area as a means for question and answer segments. They encouraged the students to post their questions through the use of a questions forum with their comments, questions or concerns about the course materials. Another method in

guiding the students was to encourage the use of email and instructors responded to the students email in a timely manner. Online resources were made available to the online students, which complimented the readings or discussions such as powerpoint presentations and lecture notes. Professor Payne stated, "I have powerpoints for all the chapters that come with the book and use them as a guide in creating my own. Also, I have associated notes linked to powerpoint slides."

Assessment. The assessment and evaluation of the students understanding of the course materials was present and all the professors required assignments that must be completed for each chapter. They gave exams that covered the material provided for the course. Professor Payne used timed tests, which have been posted in Blackboard:

I use online tests, which are open book, but they are timed so students have to read the material and be prepared to take the test. There is not enough time to look up everything because the questions are mostly applications rather than looking up definitions.

CHAPTER SIX

WITHIN-CASE ANALYSIS FOR CHARLIE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This within-case analysis highlights the individual characteristics of each case and leads to the comparison and contrast that will be presented in the cross-case analysis displayed in chapter seven. By presenting each individual case first, the pedagogical strategies used are examined within their own context. Therefore, the chapter is organized as follows: (a) introduction of the case, (b) participant's background information, and (c) within-case analysis organized by research question. Thick descriptions and direct quotes taken from the various sources used in the data collection are included to illustrate the explanations.

Case Three: Charlie Community College

Introduction

Carnegie Foundation classifies Charlie Community College as a medium two-year college-serving a large rural population area. Charlie Community College had forty online classes scheduled during the Fall Semester 2008. The researcher interviewed five participants at Charlie Community College: Dr. Jordan, Professor Brooks, Professor Short, and Professor Browder. Four participants were full-time instructors at Charlie Community College teaching both traditional and online classes. Also, interviewed was Dr. Fergusson, who was the Director of the Center for Instructional Excellence, the office responsible for professional development training. Table 5 summarizes the participants teaching experience.

Table 5

Charlie Participant's Background Information

Participant	Teaching experience	Online Experience	Teaching Area	Department
Dr. Jordan (I)	16 years	6 years	English	English
Professor Brooks (I)	7 years	4 years	English	English
Professor Short (I)	28 years	1 year	Office Administration	Business
Professor Browder (I)	24 years	7 years	Economics	Division Director, Business Technologies
Dr. Fergusson (DLC, T, and I)			Director, Center for Instructional Excellence	Center for Instructional Excellence
Average	19 years	4.5 years		

Note: I = Instructor, DLC = Distance learning Coordinator, T = Trainer

Interview Day

It was a bright, clear and warm morning as the researcher drove from Montgomery to the Dothan campus of Charlie Community College. The interviews took place on March 2, 2009. The visit to Charlie Community College brought back many good memories of the researcher's past employment. As the researcher stopped at the rest area just outside of Dothan, Army helicopters from Fort Rucker were flying over practicing their maneuvers. This reminded the researcher of the many audits he performed at the Army base. As the researcher turned from the main road, he could not help but think of why the community colleges were established because there was nothing but farmland. The researcher passed by many fields, freshly plowed, awaiting the planting of crops. This is what the founders of the very first community college in 1901 had hoped to create; an alternative for students that wanted to further their education and remain in the community.

The researcher was greeted by Dr. Fergusson and was taken on a walking tour of the campus. An exciting moment that stuck out to the researcher was when Dr. Fergusson gave a brief history of a parking lot on campus. This was part of the Tuskegee Army Air Field and the parking lot was the lower end of the runway used for training by the Tuskegee Airmen.

Themes Presented by Research Question

Question 1: Professional Development Training

Evolution of Charlie's Online Teacher Training

Professional development training for online instructors steadily progressed at Charlie Community College since the first online class was offered in 2001. As the instructors were interviewed it became very apparent that none of them wanted to remember their first online class. Professor Brooks, who had no experience in online classes recalled her confusion, "I had never taken an online class as a student, so there was confusion on my part understanding the online format and how materials should be delivered in order to create a learning environment for the students."

Charlie Community College offered no formal professional development training for online classes when the first online class was offered. Professor Brooks would have gladly accepted training had it been offered:

I think if somebody had passed me a clue about online classes I would have taken it gladly. The Center for Instructional Excellence (present office responsible for training) was not in existence when I taught my first online class and so any training on online concepts would have made a difference for me.

Dr. Jordan had no idea how to develop an online course because she had received no training:

Looking back on that first class I remember honestly speaking, it was probably a fancy correspondence logistics course where I posted new assignments. Students posted their completed assignments for me to grade. We may have interacted if they had a question or I may have posted instructions. Other than that there was never any real interaction, there was no such community, and none of the things that we know now made for good pedagogy online. I didn't know what I was doing. I had no training at that point. I'm one of those that had no training in online teaching so I just did what I did in class, and thought ok let me post it here. I posted notes that would be equivalent to the lectures I gave, but that's not the way I should do it. So this was pretty much the way it was, an online correspondence course.

Professor Browder recalled his first online class as an avenue through un-chartered territory where neither his colleagues nor he knew exactly how to accomplish the mission:

I began with just learning the delivery system myself. This was basically unchartered territory for me. I was in a situation where my colleagues did not know any more about the process than I did so I was pretty much on my own. Trying to figure out, what I wanted to do, how to use the system, and get the class going was my biggest undertaking. For a while I was just one step ahead of the student's technology wise. This was the first time I had been exposed to WebCT. I did a hurried job to get all the information loaded onto the software.

Perceptions of Online Education Program

The instructors interviewed had a positive perception of online education. When Charlie Community College first offered online classes, the instructors were apprehensive. However,

they wanted to become a part of this new education endeavor during the start-up phase. Dr.

Jordan stated:

When we started our online program, they (administration) asked for volunteers, people who would be interested in getting in on the ground floor, being the first ones to do it. At that time I wasn't really comfortable. I didn't know that much about computers. I knew what I did basically with using Word Processing but that's about it. I was a bit reluctant but I felt like online learning was going to be the wave of the future so to speak, so I thought this is something that is going to happen, and if that's the case then why not go ahead and get in on the ground floor. I did want to be first to learn all there is to learn and maybe be the groundbreaker. That's kind of how I felt; it's going to happen so let me jump in.

Professor Browder had the same viewpoint that he wanted to become involved with a totally new type of education:

I've always had interest in technology and anything to kind of spice up what you are doing when you've done the same thing as long as I've done it. I saw a golden opportunity to work on something new. Generally my experience is if you get into something a little earlier then you have more control and can find your place in the process. Altogether I kind of volunteered rather quickly.

Training via Graduate Coursework

Dr. Jordan received her training for teaching online classes through her doctorate work by taking online classes:

I took doctoral studies online and patterned my teaching course after those online classes. I started my doctoral program in 2004 and finished in 2007. I started teaching online

classes at Charlie Community College in 2003, probably about a year before I started my doctoral online classes. So when I started with my coursework everything was new to me and I thought, 'I'm doing the online classes I was teaching all wrong.' I decided to do what I was learning in my doctoral class and found out this works."

Professor Brooks was not intimidated by technology and learned the online format through her graduate coursework at The University of Alabama, both as a student and a teaching assistant, "I'm not intimidated by technology so that was a good thing. I did my graduate work at the University of Alabama, and taught as a teaching assistant."

Professor Short gained her training for the online class environment while teaching at a local high school:

I taught web design in high school so everything we did was on the Internet. I kept students' grades on the Internet. I have grown with the ages from the manual typewriters all the way through to the computer age of today.

Training via the Center for Instructional Excellence

In 2006, as part of a grant through the Federal Strengthening Institutions Program, more commonly known as Title III, Charlie Community College founded the Center for Instructional Excellence. The purpose was to strengthen faculty capabilities in utilizing technology in the teaching and learning process. This office provided training and support for faculty, with a focus on strengthening skills in the use of technology. Structured as a multi-service resource facility, the Center for Instructional Excellence supports faculty revising and developing curricula and course materials and assessing their efforts to integrate technology into instruction. Professor Brooks discussed training:

I attended a training session before Christmas. The Center for Instructional Excellence provided the training in a classroom atmosphere and we had to go to class for a whole semester. My class was on Fridays so I would go to the classroom where trainers would teach us. They did try to cover the pedagogy, which Dr. Fergusson wanted but we (trainees) did not want it so they taught us how to use the technology.

At Charlie Community College, faculty members, much like all higher education faculty members, are struggling to adapt to the constantly changing world of technology. In order to alleviate some of the problems instructors faced, a formal training program was established at the college. Dr. Fergusson and his staff are responsible for moving the online program to the next phase, "Our office developed guidelines and standards for use of instructional technology that led the effort to increase use of instructional technology within the college and participated on college committees overseeing technology."

In 2006, a formal training session was instituted at the college and all instructors whether teaching online or traditional classes could attend. Professor Short stated, "Maybe two summers ago we had a workshop to teach us how to use WebCT and how to teach online courses. It was a whole summer and I think we met once or twice a week all summer."

Dr. Jordan attended a training session, which she considered being the closest thing to training instructors on how to teach online classes and she would like to see more training:

It started out offering a semester long training course instructors could attend; however, there was only space for twenty-five people. You could attend the training which lasted a full semester and you had an instructor not only teaching about the equipment, different little gadgets and tools that were available, but also giving information on how to do

things. That's the closest thing we have as far as training on how to teach online. I would like to see more of that quite frankly.

Professor Brooks learned about two new software applications that she could use during a training session:

I have never heard of Respondas or Studymate until the Center for Instructional Excellence classes. I love Respondas and only post my quizzes in this application. Studymate is part of Respondas; it lets me do games out of study information. I have one Studymate file that has seventy-seven literary terms in it and students can pick what game they want like Hangman or Wheel of Fortune or crossword puzzles. Also, students can use flashcards instead of making their own because the application software already has the information and students can point and click to flip them over and see the answer and learn. Students love the Studymate program.

Administration Support

At Charlie Community College, administration has been very supportive of the culture change to an online environment and has provided funding and other resources to train their online faculty. Dr. Jordan believes the administrators foresee online education as something, which can be utilized to reach new boundaries:

I think the administrators are supportive of online learning and they realize that it is an important part of education that is not going to go away. I think that is one of the reasons they are supportive because they know it opens up a whole new area of access for people who have boundaries and are not able to attend college. With online education these students can take college courses and they can take them online. This is a big opportunity

to increase enrollment, offer courses to students who otherwise would not be able to go to college.

Professor Brooks believes administration has delegated the oversight of the online education classes to the Center for Instructional Excellence:

I think administrators realize students want online classes, so they encourage online teaching. They are not micromanagers when it comes to dictating what can be and what cannot be in an online class. They work very close with the Center for Instructional Excellence and trust the Center for Instructional Excellence monitors and maintains the integrity of online classes. Our administrators are not hands-on involved but they definitely see the need and encourage the fulfillment of that need.

Professor Browder believes administration really does not understand the time required for online classes:

Sometimes I believe administrators do not understand the amount of time it takes to teach an online class and do it properly. It is a whole lot of work involved in an online class at some point or another for example in developing the course.

Technology Staff Support

Charlie Community College has a technology staff consisting of the Director, instructional technologist, web media technician, and two part-time support staff. The Director, Dr. Fergusson, is in charge of providing the training to all online instructors, as well as the traditional classroom instructors with a staff of five personnel with varying educational degrees:

The faculty member currently holding the Director position has a Doctor of Philosophy in Education with specialization in Instructional Design for Online Learning. A bachelor's degree is required for the instructional technologist position. The web media technician

holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with specialization in Information Systems Management and the two part time support staffs both hold Master's degrees.

External Influences on Training Offered

Charlie Community College was in the process of updating their online delivery system in 2007; however, according to Dr. Fergusson about this same time a statewide committee was formed to standardize the system for all community colleges:

We had gone through a full learning management system selection process and selected a system, Angel Learning Management System, but about this time the State Distance Education Advisory Committee was formed and their initial charter was to find a standardized learning management system for all the schools. Once a system was selected the State would barter a system wide price that would save money for individual schools. That was early spring of 2007 and nothing has been done since so we are stuck in limbo. At this time we are just going to hold off until our Southern Association of Colleges and Schools reaffirmation in 2011 to do anything unless the State committee says otherwise.

According to Dr. Fergusson, the future distance education program at Charlie Community College, from the training perspective, depends on policies and decisions directed at the State level:

The distance education program will be up to college administrators to decide on moving forward with technology. The distance education leaders within each institution and system will play an important role in advising higher-level administrators on what is needed. Once a course of action is decided upon it will take support from the institution in the form of training to make the changes happen.

Dr. Fergusson, in developing the online training curriculum for Charlie Community College, had contacted trainers at other community colleges to research the specifics of their training programs:

Many times I have contacted by phone the training staffs at Northwest Shoals Community College and Beta Community College to discuss their training curriculum provided to instructors. Also, I have physically been to Pensacola Community College to observe their training program. My philosophy is to see what other institutions offer, what worked and what failed, in order to expedite the training program at Charlie Community College.

Dr. Fergusson, the Director of the Center, had experienced first-hand how faculty views the technological changes which resulted in the online education program at Charlie Community College:

Community college faculty members much like all higher education faculty members, are struggling to adapt to the constantly changing world of technology. I see a continuing disparage of technology savvy faculty and those who resist. Online instruction is still developing. Institutions that have done well so far seem to standardize the online courses and use a cookie cutter approach. The future holds much opportunity for education but it remains to be seen whether institutions stick with the safety of standardization of online courses or allow experimentation with emerging technologies. There is evidence, which shows that online instruction can be just as effective as face-to-face.

Dr. Fergusson describes a lack of State-level oversight committees related to online training:

Supposedly there are two State-level committees. A distance education committee and our representative is the Dean of Student Services. She has no instructional experience at all, but she represents the school on that committee. I have been told the committee agenda is to evaluate how people are using technology and what kind of training is going on, similar to what you (researcher) are doing here. The other committee, the Distance Education Advisory Committee, I am the representative but I have never met, never received any invitation, so I think that committee is just dead in the water right now. That is the committee was supposed to look at finding a statewide Logistical Management System, and look at the options to get a better deal using a large buying leverage power. This committee has not met in two years. They met once and put a stop to what we were doing. I think the committee was halted because we (committee members) wanted to see what they (State level) were doing and this committee has not met since, that I am aware of. They could have been meeting, but I have not been invited but supposedly I am the representative on that committee.

Perceptions of Professional Development Training

The instructors interviewed had a very positive perception of online education. However, during the initial phase of online education, professional development training was not offered and instructors are unsure if it would have been beneficial. According to Professor Browder:

Yes. Training would have helped. However, I am not sure until you get headlong into the process you know what questions to ask. I do think in the beginning it would have been very important to have a real good resource person or source of information available. I remember the day that I started with online classes. I really did not understand what I was getting into. Once I did an online class, I started understanding the process and what

questions to ask. I think today, even if you have not taught an online class, you have an idea what is going on. An online class would have been easier and more beneficial to me if training had been incorporated.

Professional development training was not available during the initial phase of the online education process; however, when training was first initiated it did not cover the pedagogy aspect of teaching online. This has since changed according to Dr. Jordan:

It was still new, so nobody took training because we were all learning as we went. As time passed we were offered some isolated training sessions mostly on how to work the equipment and how to navigate WebCT. Quite frankly there had not been, and that was one of my disappointments, there were not many, if any, training sessions on the pedagogy of how to teach online. The closest thing that we have since I have been teaching online is the Center for Instructional Excellence.

Professor Brooks had a very positive attitude toward the professional development training, especially since the Center for Instructional Excellence was created and provides helpful advice:

I would not have had a clue about certain software available without the Center for Instructional Excellence. They rescued me from problematic situations when something was not working. They heard me say this is what I need to do with my class and they were like, 'Well, we have this software and we can show you how to use it.' Training was usually very fast and very personal. Even if I mess something up they would come over and show me how to fix it. They were patient with us. It was great.

Professor Short used the Center for Instructional Excellence anytime she had problematic issues with the online classes:

So if I needed help I just called the Center for Instructional Excellence where Dr. Fergusson works. Someone would talk to me over the phone or they would take control of my computer from their office and show me what to do. It really worked out. There are a lot of people over there that would help. There is a site on the WebCT page where you could click and find out different information. This usually answered the questions many instructors asked. I was excited when they finally put it in format on screen so I could click it and look at the steps online.

Question 2: Transfer of Learning

Motivation to Transfer

The majority of the instructors interviewed had varying opinions concerning motivations to transfer learned knowledge. Dr. Jordan was motivated by the doctoral courses she was taking online and the fact that she had a genuine interest in online education:

So when I started with my doctoral coursework everything was new to me and I thought, 'I was doing the online classes I was teaching all wrong.' I decided to use information I was learning in my doctoral class for the online class I was teaching and noticed this worked. Quite frankly, the things that I have incorporated into my online class I borrowed from my doctoral work and this initially got me really interested in online learning. The things I was learning actually helped me change my online class in a manner that made the class successful. I really have a genuine interest in online education. I'm not just doing it because they asked me to do it. I really love it.

Professor Brooks does not particularly enjoy her online class, because she is a people person and wants the personal interaction with students in the classroom:

Personally I do not want to teach all online classes because I get a kick out of getting to know students in class. I can toss ideas around as a group where even though you can do that in an online environment, it is limited. The new WebCT has a chat program attached so I think eventually we may purchase webcams, which may generate great class interaction, but I really enjoy my traditional classes more even though I feel like I do a fairly good job with my online class. I basically have one online class I volunteered for and occasionally administrators give me others as needed.

Transfer Climate

Administration support. The instructors interviewed determined training, as well as access to available accessory software, gave them the opportunity to customize the learning environment for their particular subject matter. This might not have been available prior to the establishment of the training center. Professor Brooks was excited about a new program the Center for Instructional Excellence purchased for the use of enhancing online classes:

In my class we do a lot of poetry so I use Camtasia software. This is something new for me this year. This software was something I recently added to my classes and the Center for Instructional Excellence showed me how to use it. Students can see a poem on their computer screen. I have added my voice over the poem, as I read the poem line by line. I am able to talk the students through so they can hear my comments as we go line by line. Also, this enables me, as an instructor, to allow my students to hear how it is properly read because much of what we deal with in this class is the older language styles. This style is unfamiliar to the students so I am able to give them the audible experience of how the words are put together. I just try to get a good mixture of visual and auditory learning methods.

Appropriate technology. Dr. Jordan was satisfied with the online platform the college uses for their online education program:

I have pretty good equipment and cannot think of anything I would like to have as far as the technology is concerned. I probably have more than I need. There are lots of things that are available that I do not use. I have come to subscribe to the idea that all the bells and whistles are not necessary. Students have a hard enough time communicating in an online learning platform anyway especially if you have students that are not computer savvy. I certainly do not want to add anything to their frustration.

Transfer Design

The Center for Instructional Excellence had incorporated training into multiple segments and posted the training in WebCT for instructors or other faculty members to review at any time.

Figure 2 shows the training web page that was setup into eight segments:

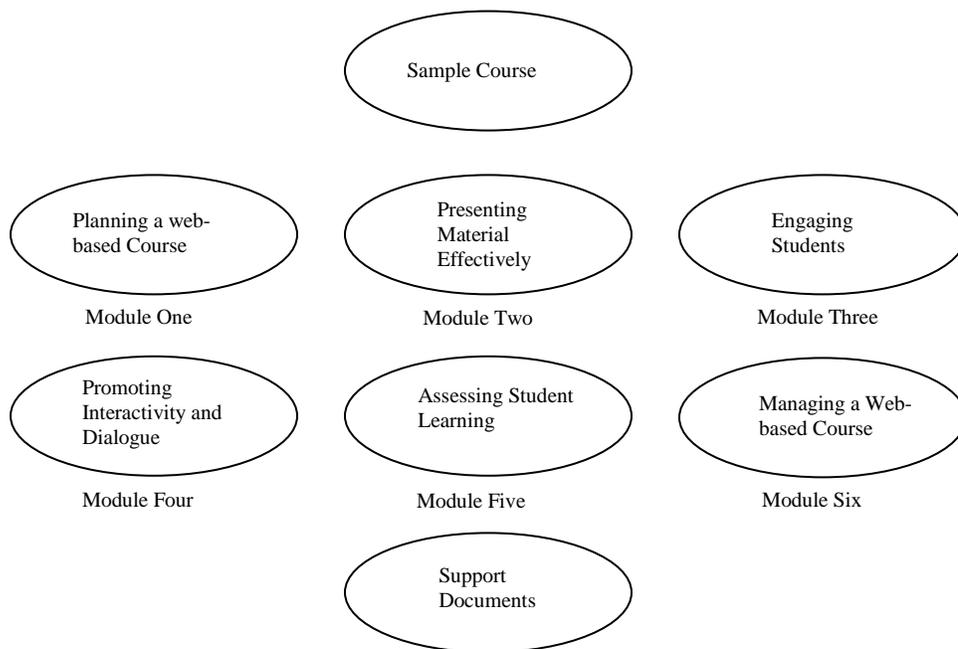


Figure 2. Charlie Community College Training Web Page

As shown in Table 6 the online training consists of six modules and each is described below:

1. Module one provides information on the three types of courses that Charlie Community College offers and how WebCT is used to support those course types. Additional resources and support are presented to help plan and organize online course materials.
2. Module two provides information on presenting material effectively using Power Point, Portable Document Format (PDF), and Units/Modules.
3. Module three provides information on engaging students using Camtasia, which allows the capture of all actions that occur on the computer screen. Instructors and

- course developers can use Camtasia to capture PowerPoint presentations with audio narration and to capture demonstrations of using computer software and websites.
4. Module four provides information on using WebCT's Email, Discussions, Chat and Whiteboard to effectively communicate with students. Whiteboard provides an area to demonstrate problems, just like a white board in a classroom, to online students.
 5. Module five provides information on assessing student learning and recording student grades using the Quizzes, Assignments, and Manage Students (My Grades) WebCT tools.
 6. Module six provides information on managing a WebCT course. Managing tools included are backing up a course, restoring a course, tracking students, and managing students.

The knowledge gained from the professional development training was used as the course catalyst for discussion forums in the online class. Also the use of web links and the use of email to guide the class interaction enhanced the students' learning experiences. The instructors incorporated the use of many tools and web links discussed during professional development training into their online class.

One of the training experiences put to use by Professor Brooks was to ensure the students were presented with every available option to help them understand the poetry covered in class:

Camtasia is my newest software and I absolutely rely on PowerPoint, Respondas and Studymate. The only things that I can think of that I have wanted to do but have not taken the time is incorporate video and do some recording particularly with how to do research papers. Some of my students were complaining in the poetry section 'I don't understand the poems and when I get to the quiz I'm like was that even in the poem?' So I started

lecturing over the text and let students follow my mouse down the line in order to slow them down when they are reading and show them what is significant in the poem so they would be prepared for the quiz. I learned this from the Center for Instructional Excellence. So it's good to get suggestions for your class. However, it is up to individual instructors how to utilize their best strengths as a communicator, in order to communicate effectively. Students like to see your personality come out a little.

Dr. Jordan used the knowledge she gained from her doctoral work as a catalyst for her online classes:

Cappella being an online university and the degree, which I pursued, professional studies, allowed me to build my own program. The program I was interested in, because I taught at a community college, was adult learning. I had dabbled with this online experience. This experience was not quite what I thought it should be and I really wanted to make it better so I built my program around online learning and adult education. I put those two together and I took several courses in converting traditional courses into the online environment and how to teach adults in the online environment, so I had extensive training in that area.

Learning and Individual Performance.

After studying the class materials, syllabi, and other documents, and conducting the observations, the researcher better understood what the professors meant when they said their classes are designed for the instructor to interact, motivate, inspire, and communicate with students and have them perform the same tasks with their fellow students. These pedagogical practices, which enabled instructors to design their online course with student learning outcomes

prevalent, are presented next, classified by phases of instruction, namely presentation, guidance, and assessment.

Presentation. All four professors used course content and student discussions to introduce the topics of the course materials in the online class. They required students to present discussions each week on the course materials and responded to other students' discussions. This method kept the students' actively participating in the class, allowed access to other students' understanding of the course material, and provided critical thinking opportunities.

Professor Brooks utilized the discussion board for in-depth discussion among student groups consisting of five to six students per group:

I organize my discussion board in different sections. I give students an assignment to discuss, for example an aspect of the class I teach every year is British Literature. I will give them a discussion question based on a story and I actually have started to divide my class into discussion groups. A weekly topic is posted on the discussion board and they discuss it and have to make a general comment and then they have to respond to what someone else has posted in their group.

Guidance. All the professors used the discussion area as a means for question and answer segments. They encouraged the students to post their questions through the use of a forum. Another method in guiding the students was to encourage the use of email and they responded to the students email in a timely manner. Online resources were made available to the online students, which complimented the readings or discussions such as PowerPoint presentations and lecture notes.

Dr. Jordan used the discussion board for students to acknowledge they had read the syllabus and to ask any questions:

One of my first discussions is a syllabus acknowledgement. Post a discussion indicating that you have read the syllabus and that you understand the course requirements.

Assessment. The assessment and evaluation of students' understanding of the course material was present. All the professors required assignments, which must be completed by the students for each chapter. Professors gave exams, which covered the material provided for the course. Dr. Jordan used the test application in WebCT for all exams, except the final:

Students do not have to come to campus for tests per say. All exams are posted on WebCT except the final exam. The final exam is proctored and most of them do end up coming to campus because most of them live in this general area. They can either come to this campus or to the campus in Eufaula. If they live too far away or if they are in a location that prohibits them from coming they are able to get a proctor in the area.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

The within-case analysis presented in the previous sections provided insight into the influence of professional development training provided to online teachers in Alabama's community colleges. This chapter aims to deepen the understanding of professional development training by providing additional insights that derive from the comparison across cases. Approaches suggested by experts in the qualitative analysis methods (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2006) have been followed to complete this analysis, as previously reported in Chapter 3.

Cross-Case Analysis by Research Question

Question #1: Professional Development Training

Evolution of Professional Development Training

The participants at each of the colleges conveyed that when online education was first initiated in 2001, their institution did not provide professional development training for teachers teaching online classes. Beta Community College Professor Johnston summarized this best, "It was 'Trial by Fire' that first online class." This was the message conveyed to the researcher by all participants at the three colleges. None of the participants wanted to recall their teaching experiences for their first online class. Each participant's description of their first teaching experience in an online environment explained the hardships they faced, not only in learning the software applications, but transferring their teaching from a traditional classroom to an online classroom. Charlie Community College's Professor Brooks provided insight into the feelings of all participants at each of the colleges in this study, "I think if someone had passed me a clue

about online classes I would have taken it gladly.” When college administrators’ at all three colleges became aware of the hardships online instructors were facing and the informal training they were providing to each other, they took steps to offer college-wide professional development training as part of their online education program.

These findings were consistent with research that explored the transition from face-to-face to online distance education. This research suggested that using online technologies for teaching involved more complex developments than a change in the delivery method (Bates, 2000; Bates & Poole, 2003; Boettcher & Conrad, 1999; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Spector & Teja, 2001). These findings are also consistent with two studies, a report on the Distance Education Program at Tomball College in Texas (Simpson & Head, 2000) and a case study conducted in Nebraska (Henning, 2000) that determined faculty training to be a critical element of online courses.

Attitudes Toward Online Education.

Even though colleges did not provide training on how to teach online classes, all the participants had a very positive perception of online education. In fact, all the participants volunteered to teach online classes for two primary reasons, (a) they understood online teaching as a changing role in education and (b) they were students in an online education program.

Changing role in education. The participants suggested that due to the economic situations in today’s colleges, administrators were offering online classes to offset funding constraints and because the students wanted them. Recognizing this shift, the participants readily volunteered to teach online.

Experience as students in an online program. Instructors who experienced online classes as a student held positive perceptions of the quality of online classes. Alpha Community College

Professor, Dr. Snow, shared her experience “When I began my doctorate program, I was very skeptical about online classes and thought I was not going to learn...to my surprise, when I started taking online courses I really started learning...that I volunteered to teach online courses.” The participants suggested that many instructors who were against online education had a fear of feeling incompetent just as the participants had felt when they first taught online classes. However, these attitudes changed due to the participants’ involvement with online education as a student. Beta Community College Professor, Dr. Rodgers, used his experience from graduate school: “I taught my first class as a teaching assistant at the University of Southern Mississippi...I think this really helped me see everything from a student’s perspective.”

Administration Support

The cross-case analysis found that all the participants’ perceived administrators positively when it came to the college’s online education. Once administrators understood the frustrations their online instructors were experiencing they became instrumental in the establishment of professional development training, not only for online instructors, but traditional classroom instructors as well. In fact, at Alpha Community College, administration is moving in the direction of having their distance education program as a separate Division of the college. As stated by Professor Jones, “A complete division of its own.”

Also, at all the colleges, administrators required the use of online software for all classes, whether traditional or online, to help encourage participation by instructors in an online environment. All the participants suggested that this was another form of training for instructors and students on the use of online materials. However, administration at Alpha Community College have taken training for online instructors a step further by requiring all Division Chairs and Campus Associate Deans to receive this training. The policy set forth in Alpha’s Distance

Education Faculty Manual requires: “All Division Chairs and Campus Associate Deans are trained in Best Practices of online instruction.”

Technology Staff Support

All participants were tremendously satisfied with the current professional development training programs at their respective college. Each participant had a direct relationship with the professional development training provided by the colleges. The participants’ experience suggested the technology teams were fantastic and had provided the participants with knowledge on available software, which made teaching online classes more pleasurable. Beta Community College Professor, Dr. Rodgers, summed up the feelings of all participants at the three colleges, “The technology people are fantastic.” The training provided by all three colleges enhanced the awareness of new ideas in both the mechanics and pedagogy of teaching an online class. One example of this was summarized by Charlie Community College Professor Brooks who learned about two new software applications, “I had never heard of Respondas or Studymate until I attended the Center for Instructional Excellence training classes.” The finding was consistent with research that concluded the work environment should include factors on the job that can influence the application of learned skills, such as manager support, peer support, proper technology, and the opportunity to utilize new skills (Noe, 1999).

External Influences on Training Curriculum

The cross-case analysis suggested there have been outside influences on decisions made at the local community college levels. For example, there are two State-level committees that have oversight of online education within community colleges. Charlie’s Director of the Center for Instructional Excellence stated, “Supposedly there are two State-level committees.” State-level committees and their involvement with online education were not mentioned at the other

two schools; however, these schools are part of the same state organization, Alabama Community College System Education.

The cross-case analysis suggested one college, Charlie Community College, experienced external influences when updating their online delivery system in 2007, about this same time a statewide committee was formed to standardize the system for all community colleges. As stated by Dr. Fergusson, “The State Distance Education Advisory Committee was formed and their initial charter was to find a standardized learning management system for all the schools...nothing has been done since so we are stuck in limbo.” Furthermore, this committee only met once about two years ago. Dr. Fergusson further stated, “The future distance education program at Charlie Community College, from the training perspective depends on policies and decisions directed at the State level.”

The other State-level committee, the Distance Education Committee, has as its agenda, according to Dr. Fergusson, “To evaluate how people are using technology and what kind of training is going on, similar to what you (researcher) are doing here.” Another interesting point to this committee concerns the Charlie college representative to the committee. As stated by Dr. Fergusson, “She has no instructional experience at all, but she represents the school on that committee.”

Training Curriculum

Professional development training at the three colleges consisted of (a) the use of instructional designers, and (b) the establishment of training centers.

Instructional designers. At Alpha and Charlie Community Colleges used instructional designers (also referred to as instructional technologists) for assisting faculty with online classes, as well as, follow-up training. The participants at those colleges expressed enthusiasm about the

instructional designers and their ability to help them on the mechanics of the online software and the pedagogy of constructing their class. For example, the instructional designers' descriptions of their duties suggested at first they were helping online instructors on the mechanics of the software (how to use the tools). As time progressed they received requests to help with the pedagogy of constructing individual online classes. Alpha Community College Instructional Designer and Professor Criner stated, "Many of the calls began with needing help with the tools... Faculty has become very comfortable with me and they know I am here to help." The finding was consistent with research data that faculty needed training and assistance in making the transition to the online environment and learning through the use of technology took more than a mastery of a software program or comfort with the hardware being used (Palloff & Pratt, 1999).

Training centers. The training centers were established as a means to better prepare faculty for teaching in the online environment. The participants expressed satisfaction with the training centers and found the training beneficial. According to the participants, the training resulted in their online classes having a better design and providing increased student learning opportunities.

In the training centers, the trainers were consulted each other, as well as, other colleges when developing their training programs. For example, the trainers at Beta and Charlie Community College corresponded on their training methods and have both posted their training sessions online for follow-up training. The finding was consistent with research suggesting that teachers be provided with a cluster of supports that help them continue to grow in their professional skills, understandings, and interests (Grant, 1996).

Other Sources of Training

The participants at all three colleges provided descriptions of their experiences, which suggested that even though they did not initially receive professional development training when online education programs began, they acquired knowledge in online learning through their enrollment in online graduate courses and communication provided by other instructors who were familiar with the software and online teaching.

Enrollment in online graduate courses. Since there was no formal training provided to online instructors, many participants used experience obtained through their enrollment in online graduate courses. All the participants volunteered to be a part of the online teaching program at their respective institution, therefore, many of the participants enrolled in graduate degrees that aimed at teaching instructors how to teach online classes. The findings were consistent with research that found most of the training should take place in an online environment that will give the faculty training in the pedagogy and the valuable practical experience of having been an online learner (Fenby, 2006).

Communication with experienced peers. Since the three community colleges reviewed offered no formal training when online classes began, all the participants developed an informal cohort system as a way to gain knowledge on how to teach in an online environment. Beta Community College Professor Johnston received training from a peer network, “I learned a lot from the teachers who were teaching online classes.” Participants at each of the colleges conveyed many times knowledge sharing was through online instructors meeting to discuss their hardships and successes while teaching an online class. Even though this seemed to be within each curriculum division, the participants expressed this was their method of obtaining knowledge on how to successfully conduct an online class. The finding was consistent with

research on faculty member training which concluded they needed mentoring by an experienced online teacher as they taught and prepared their first online class (Fenby, 2006).

Question #2: Transfer of Training

Transfer of learning is the degree to which an individual transfers the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained formally or informally to new situations (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Enos, Kehrhahn, & Bell, 2003). Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of training focused on individual performance. This model proposed three primary outcomes of training intervention: learning, individual performance, and organizational results; and the three primary inputs: motivations to transfer, transfer conditions (environment), and transfer design (Holton, 1996). Holton's transfer model provided a lens which to view the transfer of learning from professional development training to teaching the online class.

Motivation to Transfer

Motivation was presented as one of the key influences in performance outcomes, and it was described as the individual's desire to use newly acquired knowledge and skills on the job (Yamhill & McLean, 2001). The cross-case analysis showed the participants at the three colleges desired to use the knowledge and skills obtained through the different modes of training in their online classroom. The participants recognized the changing role in education from the traditional classroom to an online environment and prepared for this change by participating in different training scenarios.

Transfer Climate

The findings of this study were consistent with research conducted by Holton (1996) on the transfer of training model, which includes "transfer climate." Transfer climate defined conditions in the work environment that support transfer. The participants' perceptions of

administration were positive. The administrators were very supportive of the online education and provided resources ensuring the online classes could be offered at each of the colleges reviewed by the researcher. For example, at all the colleges reviewed, administrators took an active role in the online education process by attending meetings of the online distance education committees. At Beta Community College, administrators allowed the online instructors to use “virtual hours,” which are hours an instructor can work from their residence.

Training Design

The findings for training design were consistent with Holton’s (1996) definition of training design, which can be characterized as the conditions necessary within a training program for facilitating the transfer of training. The participants revealed there was no formal training available during the initial start-up phase of online education. However, since the participant’s were motivated to succeed in this new form of education, they were instrumental in working with each other and administrators in developing formal professional development training. From the hardships the participants faced, professional development training was formed and applied throughout the colleges to include: (a) the use of instructional designers, (b) the use of informal cohort groups and distance education committees, and (c) the establishment of training centers.

For example, with regards to instructional designers, the college provided follow-up training and advisory advice to online instructors. This made it more likely instructors would transfer their training into their online class. With regard to administrators establishing distance education committees, of which all online instructors and a representative from the training community are members, the instructors and trainers are able to meet and discuss their hardships and successes. This was a factor that drove the training provided to online instructors. Finally,

training centers had been established that provided the training to online instructors in both a classroom and online environment.

The trainers provided the initial training consisting of both the pedagogy and technology training in computer labs. Each training session was videoed or audio taped and posted on the college's website for use as follow-up training. The training covered the mechanics of how to use the different functions available within the online program and a detailed use of various functions in the system, which instructors can use to enhance their class.

Learning and Individual Performance

The data from the three cases revealed professional development training practices enabled instructors to design their online courses with student learning outcomes in the forefront. These are classified by phases of instruction, namely presentation, guidance, and assessment.

The strategies used in the presentation phase included (a) bringing lecture materials to the online classroom using PowerPoint, web pages or links, audio or video files, or text documents: (b) incorporating excerpts of online discussions or from the online presentation materials: and (c) integrating online students' work on the topic in the presentation. Analyzing the data from the three cases, the phase of presentation showed evidence of use of pedagogical strategies received from professional development training. In all three cases, instructors used online technologies in their classes that had been used in their training courses.

In the phase of guidance, all of the participants used e-mail as an option for students to communicate with the instructor, just as had been done in their training classes. Since all participants were already familiar with the use of e-mail before they started teaching online, it cannot be said that this e-mail use was adopted because of the training. On the other hand, the

use of the discussion forum was considered as a transfer from the professional development training because the participants acknowledged first using them after the training.

Finally, in the phase of assessment, all of the participants transferred the assessment of student learning of the course materials into their online class. All the participants provided online tests for students, which are timed; so students have to read the material and be prepared to take the test or they will not have enough time to finish.

The participants became familiar with online testing procedures in two ways (a) they had been students in an online class and (b) received training through their college. Since the participants had been students taking online graduate-level classes they were trained on the testing procedures used for online classes. Also, trainers at their college had provided policies and procedures on testing student learning in an online environment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

Although previous studies have suggested that professional development training provide pedagogical strategies for online teaching in the classroom, there were no studies, which explored this topic in Alabama Community Colleges. The results of this study were consistent with previous researchers' suggestions (Henning, 2000; Simpson & Head, 2000) indicating that professional development training was a major issue on faculty's ability to design and teach online courses.

Similarities and Differences

All three of the colleges reviewed had established comprehensive professional development training programs at the time of review. There were similarities and differences in the manner in which professional development training was developed and provided to online instructors.

Similarities. The training programs evolved from the instructors who were teaching online classes from the initial startup phase in 2001. These instructors were selected on a volunteer basis and basically had no training provided to them. They learned how to teach online classes through on-the-job training or by "trial and error." Since training had not been provided these instructors formed informal committees where they would meet and provided each other with successes and failures of online education they had learned from experience. At all three colleges the informal committees were recognized by administrators, which eventually led to the professional development training programs being established for distance education. Another avenue many of the instructors utilized for training purposes were their participation in graduate

courses. Instructors were pursuing advanced degrees from universities, which were tailored, to online education. In fact, many of the classes they had to complete for these degrees were taught in an online environment. In summary all three colleges had developed training curriculum for their distance education programs. These scenarios had been followed at all three colleges.

Charlie Community College suggested there had been external influences on decisions made at their college. Charlie was in the process of updating their learning management system when a State-level committee was formed to standardize the learning management system for all community colleges. However, this committee has been inactivated, thereby placing Charlie Community College in limbo as to which direction the college should proceed in obtaining a learning management system. Even though this influence was not mentioned at the other two colleges, they are part of the same organization, the Alabama Community College System, so the same observations apply to them as well.

Online instructors at all three colleges reviewed understood distance education was a new shift in teaching methods based on economic factors and students wanted this type of learning. Therefore, each instructor volunteered to teach online classes. This perception was a main factor in instructors obtaining training in preparing them to teach online classes as students in an online education program.

Differences. Alpha state utilized contracted Blackboard personnel for their professional development training that was provided once a year during the fall semester. At the time of this review, this was different from Beta and Charlie State, in that they had established Divisions within their colleges that provided training sessions year round. Also, there were differences in the manner in which follow-up training was provided. While Alpha State had two instructional designers who provided the majority of follow-up training in one-to-one mode, Beta and Charlie

State incorporated the professional development training sessions into their training website. This website allowed instructors to refresh their training knowledge by accessing the training site anytime they need a refresher course. Of course, there were also personnel within the training division who would provide face-to-face help to any instructor that requested assistance. Another difference in training programs was that Beta State required all instructors to participate in professional development training for distance education whether teaching online classes or not. This scenario was to allow all instructors to become familiar with the online process. Also, Alpha State required all division chairs and associate deans to attend distance education professional development training.

Transfer of training

The Holton Transfer of Training Model captured the professional development of the community college participants in this study. Holton (1996) provided a conceptual evaluation model of training focused on individual performance. This model proposed three primary inputs: motivation to transfer, transfer conditions (environment), and transfer design and three primary outcomes of training interventions: learning, individual performance, and organizational results (Holton, 1996).

Training Model Inputs

Motivation. Motivation to transfer is defined as an individuals desire to use knowledge and skills on-the-job. Instructors were motivated by training they received on the pedagogy and the valuable practical experience of having been an online student while enrolled in graduate school. At all three colleges instructors who had taken graduate courses concentrating on how to teach in an online environment understood online education was changing the role of teaching and that it was very important for them to realize this change. Because of this knowledge,

instructors at Alpha motivated others by conducting small workshops on the methodology of teaching in an online environment. At Beta Community College instructors were given the opportunity to use “virtual hours” which are hours instructors are allowed to teach their online classes from home. Another motivating factor prevalent at all three colleges was the use of a cohort system where instructors teaching online classes would informally meet and share their thoughts and ideas on how to better their online classes.

Transfer climate. Transfer climate is defined as the mediating variable between organizational context and a person’s job attitudes and work behavior as a result of an individual’s perception of their work environment. All three colleges provided training to their online instructors in a real life work environment. All the colleges provided training in a face-to-face environment. Beta and Charlie went one step further by recording and posting face-to-face training sessions to their training website. Factors in the training design that allowed transfer of knowledge were administration support of online classes and the use of instructional designers as training personnel. The workplace atmosphere was an environment that allowed faculty to maintain a positive attitude towards online education even when training on this subject was not available. Because of this attitude teachers at all three colleges volunteered to teach online classes, developed and delivered small workshops to help and encourage faculty teaching online, and conducted informal meetings to discuss ideas on ways to better their online classes.

Transfer design. Transfer design is defined as the conditions necessary within a training program for facilitating the transfer of training. The colleges provided online instructors with a positive climate for transferring their knowledge to their online classes. All three colleges provided instructors a web-based system for use in both their online and traditional classroom. All three colleges had established formal Distance Education Committees and administration

support had been provided to the distance education programs. The committees, along with the support of administration developed a vision for distance education at their colleges. In addition, at Alpha instructional designers had been appointed, while Beta and Charlie had incorporated training sessions into a training website. This website allowed new instructors the opportunity to participate in the previous training sessions and allowed present instructors the opportunity for refresher training.

Training Model Outputs

Learning and Individual Performance. Learning is defined as the desired outcome of a training program. Individual performance is defined as a change in individual performance as a result of learning being applied on the job. There were several factors present that contributed to administrations desired learning for online teachers to strengthen their online classes through training focused on distance education. Instructors at all three colleges converted their traditional classroom into a format to be taught in an online environment. One of the methods the online instructor's utilized at all three colleges, which professional development training provided, was the use of the discussion board. All instructors used course content and student discussions to introduce course materials in the online class, used a questions forum and email to guide the students, and gave tests to determine students' understanding of the course materials. Alpha established testing centers where all online students were required to take their tests, Beta and Charlie instructors gave timed tests, but Charlie instructors require students to take finals on campus.

Organizational results. Organizational results are defined as changes that occur at the organizational level as a consequence of a change in individuals. This study did not explicitly explore organizational results but some overall observations can be made. Initially there was no

training offered when online classes began at the colleges so one organizational change outcome was to ensure that some form of training existed to guide and direct teachers toward this new endeavor. At one college, training was initiated in the form of Blackboard training sessions through contractual avenues with Blackboard personnel. Also, this college required all division chairs and associate deans to attend this training. All the colleges reviewed had developed policies and procedures for the distance education programs to include a Distance Education Faculty Manual. Technology offices were established and staffed with qualified individuals in charge of conducting training sessions on distance education matters. All three colleges provided face-to-face training sessions and at two of the colleges, the training material used was posted on their college online education websites.

How does professional development training influence faculty teaching online at Alabama's rural community colleges?

This study identified several factors that contribute to professional development training that helps faculty teach online. These factors include: administration support (transfer climate), technology staff support (transfer climate, transfer design), training curriculum (transfer design), and motivation to transfer.

Administration Support (Transfer Climate)

The role of administration is a major key to offering professional development training to online teachers. Even though as this study showed, teachers will obtain training through other avenues, it is essential to provide training through the college. The attitudes of the teachers are directly tied to how they perceive they are supported by administration. All three cases revealed administration was thought of favorably by each of the participants. In fact, training would not have been established at the three colleges had it not been for the support of administration.

Technology Staff Support (Transfer Climate, Transfer Design)

The role of the technology staff is another major key to offering professional development training to online teachers. The colleges reviewed had a well-organized technology staff eager to help instructors increase their knowledge of online teaching strategies. These individuals developed and provided training to all instructors at the colleges and provided software suggestions to enable instructors to enhance their online classes.

Training Curriculum (Transfer Design)

All three colleges had spent countless planning hours configuring their training program for online instructors. Alpha State utilized yearly training sessions and instructional designers to teach the proper techniques of online teaching. Beta Community College and Charlie Community College utilized multiple training sessions offered each semester (summer excluded) in computer labs. In addition they captured each training session and posted them to the college websites. This provided instructors a mechanism to review the sessions whenever they felt they needed follow-up training.

Directors of Training at Beta and Charlie Community College correspond with each other on a regular basis. They share successes and hardships and learn from each others' programs.

Motivation to Transfer

All the participants volunteered to teach online classes and came to understand the importance of the online education program at their college. They understood this was a new form of education desired by students and wanted to become a part of the first to teach online classes at their college. Faculty also sought training experiences when their colleges offered none.

Summary

This study found that faculties were not provided training during the initial start-up phase of online education because the community college administrators assumed teachers would know how to teach in that environment. They soon found out that training and assistance were much desired by their online instructors. This study suggested that since their institution did not offer training, these faculty members obtained training through other means. As a result these faculty members were instrumental in helping the institutions establish formal training programs.

Additionally, this study in conjunction with recent research on training (Fenby, 2006), suggested training should take place in an online learning environment to give the faculty training in the pedagogy and experience of having been an online learner. This study suggested training provided faculty with the readiness to teach online classes. The training provided familiarity with technology and with the pedagogy of using course content and context in an online environment.

Implications for Practice

The study identified factors that facilitated the effect professional development training had on faculty at Alabama's rural community colleges in the development of online classes. These findings also have implications for the practice for community colleges offering or planning to offer online classes.

Faculty Professional Development Training Curriculum

Faculty training for online teaching should include modules on pedagogical strategies in addition to modules on the mechanics and application of online tools. Training which was focused entirely on the mechanics of the application of software tools and did not provide information on the pedagogical strategies fails to provide faculty with the knowledge needed to

teach online (Palooff and Pratt, 1999). Consistent with previous research, this study found that online teaching should focus on pedagogy (Bates, 2000; Bates & Poole, 2003; Boettcher & Conrad, 1999; Palooff & Pratt, 2001; Spector & Teja, 2001) and how technologies can provide alternate ways of knowledge and uses of information as they taught and prepared their first online class (Fenby, 2006).

Follow-Up Training/Instruction

Follow-up instruction should be provided to increase the likelihood that faculty will apply what they learn during training in their online class. Training that does not allow for follow-up instruction does not provide faculty a mechanism to refresh and reiterate the pedagogical strategies learned in the initial training. Follow-up instruction activities identified in this study included: (a) training captured by video or audio taped and put on the college website, and (b) one on one sessions by the instructional designers, as needed.

Support System For Faculty Teaching Online

Establish a community of online teachers—whether face-to-face or online. Faculty members who had taught online classes after participating in professional development training for online teaching needed to be given opportunities to reflect on their online teaching experiences. This helped them produce changes in their teaching methods. Informal learning from their colleagues, as this study showed, played an important role as a motivator for reflection and exploration of new ideas. The colleges studied provided avenues to facilitate and encourage opportunities for faculty reflection and sharing of teaching methods. This knowledge was incorporated into the professional development training programs. These initiatives enhanced transfer and ultimately increased faculty interest in integrating online technologies.

Administration Training

Require all instructors not teaching online classes to have exposure to the online software and to use online tools for some aspect of their class. Also, administrators should be required to attend this training to ensure they have first-hand knowledge of the online classroom experience. This knowledge will allow administrators who are appointed to state-level or local level committees dealing with online teaching to have some training on the subject.

Staffing of Training Effort

Require training personnel to have exposure in either actual online teaching or extensive professional development training in the proper techniques of teaching in an online environment. The training staff should have first-hand knowledge of teaching in an online environment. Also, require the use of instructional designers to strengthen training programs. These individuals should have prior experience teaching in an online environment or have had extensive training in the area of online education. Administrators should consider appointing instructional designers who are teaching online classes at their college since they would be familiar to the remaining faculty.

Organizational Structure for Distance Education

Administrators should strongly consider establishing the training programs for online education as a separate division of the college with a separate Dean, Director of Technology, Distance Learning Coordinator, and training personnel. This Division should maintain a separate funding line to ensure accountability of funding and student learning outcomes. Since teaching in an online environment requires additional and special technological resources a separate division would make the program more manageable. Also, this will broadcast the college's commitment to

online distance education and allow the college to maintain a separate strategic plan, resulting in a stronger distance education program.

Delivery of Training

Provide training in an environment that realistically represents the online classes at the colleges. One recommendation is to establish training centers on campus where not only faculty, but students, can receive training on the proper techniques for teaching and learning of an online class. Training personnel should deliver face-to-face instruction to faculty members and provide follow-up training via the web or instructional designers. Capturing the actual face-to-face training and posting it to a training website where instructors can access anytime would provide a tremendous amount of training hours to faculty. Establish a separate instructor and student training module for the delivery of follow-up training.

Vision Sharing

Reinstate or establish State-level committees to provide oversight and vision sharing to all community colleges within the State. This committee would provide an avenue for sharing distance education procedures among community colleges. Ensure the committee members selected to represent the respective community college has first-hand knowledge on teaching in an online environment.

Reflective Commentary

As the researcher, I was surprised to find the three colleges reviewed had established comprehensive professional development training programs. Based on my personal experience in the education field I had initially thought there would be some training provided for distance education instructors but not to the extent that these findings revealed. It was exciting to see in practice things discussed while taking instructional technology courses. For example, one class I

completed had revealed the importance of instructional designers in developing and sustaining online classes. I was actually permitted to see this in action when I collected data from Alpha State. This reinforced the importance of the role instructional designers have on training curriculum for online instructors. Another key training ingredient that I enjoyed was the training websites developed at Beta and Charlie State. This reinforced my understanding of the importance of internet websites in providing instructors with immediate training or in other words, training “just in time.”

Recommendations for Further Research

There are still elements that remain unexplored dealing with professional development training in Alabama’s rural community colleges. Some items that need further study are:

1. Include a larger number of participants to lend additional validity to the initial findings of this research.
 - a. Include adjunct faculty who teach online classes.
 - b. Include faculty who have not taught online classes.
 - c. Include additional community colleges.
 - d. Compare community colleges within an urban/suburban and/or another sector.
2. Include participants at the State-level to determine:
 - a. What policies and procedures are being reviewed and/or developed to standardize online education within The Alabama Community College System.

- b. Whether state-wide committees of distance education should be reactivated and include representatives from colleges who have experience in an online environment.
3. Perform a quantitative approach and use a statistical survey across all community colleges.

Conclusion

In response to the overarching question that guided this study, “*How does professional development training influence faculty teaching online at Alabama’s rural community colleges?*” this study found that technological skills and familiarity with online education theories and pedagogies facilitated the transfer of pedagogical strategies from the training to their online classes. The study found that when faculty received training incorporating online pedagogical strategies, the online teaching practices taught during the training were transferred to their online classes. This study also made clear that the instructors’ interest in online education was a driving force for the establishment of formal professional development training programs at their institution. Results from this study have the potential to inform innovations in faculty training for online teaching and to encourage further research in this growing area.

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Appendix A: Distance Learning Coordinator

Examples of possible interview questions:

- Can you tell me a little bit about your duties as the Distance Learning Coordinator?
- Can you elaborate on how your job duties affect the distance education faculty?
- How do you view the changing role of an instructor?
- What is your perception of online instruction?
- How does your institution select instructors for online courses?
- Does your institution offer professional development training to faculty that will be/or presently are teaching online courses? What type of training is offered?
- Does the training provided include segments on both the mechanics and methodology of instructional techniques needed for online classes? Describe?
- How would you rate the usefulness, effectiveness, etc. of the training provided?
- Do you think this type of training is beneficial to the online instructors? Why? How?
- Who provides the training to your online instructors
- What credentials are required for the trainer?
- What method is used in providing the training, for example in a classroom environment or through a Web-based platform?
- Does your institution have training materials? If so, can I obtain copies of the materials?
- Do the instructors receive certification from the training provided?
- Can I receive a list of 2 full-time instructors that teach both traditional classes and online classes at your institution that you feel would be a good representative for online professional development training so I can send each a survey for further research?

Appendix B: Guide to Study of Documents

Goal of document analysis: Provide information about the professional development training and how distance education coordinators, trainers, and instructors' perceive as the helpfulness of the training.

Reviewing the SACS distance education policy, college distance education policy, training materials, which will provide data to understand how these policies are fulfilled in the professional development training of instructors for online courses? The following table presents what will be analyzed and some examples of what may be found.

Steps	Method used	Tool
a) Presenting new training information and materials	Does the training material cover both the mechanics of the online platform and methodology of teaching course material in an online environment?	Do training materials show how the trainee can fulfill becoming and effective online instructor?
b) Guiding the learning process	Are training documents explicit on how trainees will be guided to learning and acquiring new concepts or skills? For example. 1- by means of questions and answers sessions; 2- by means of participating in synchronous or asynchronous follow-on training;	Do training documents make reference to how the trainee will fulfill this process? For example, - Discussion will follow the presentation of new topics - New concepts will be discussed? - Use of web applications for guidance (e-mail, chat, online forum)
c) Practicing or applying new concepts or skills	Is it explained in the training documents how the learning of new skills or concepts will be reinforced? For example, 1- by means of individual or group activities 2- by means of participating in projects or other activities	Do training documents define applications or techniques that will be applied in the online classroom to enable the practicing and application of new concepts or skills?
d) Assessing learning	What do training documents say about assessing instructor's performance and evaluation?	Are training documents explicit about feedback and follow-up procedures?

Appendix C: Trainers

Examples of possible interview questions:

- What credentials are required for you to do the training?
- What does the training consist of?
- How often is the training conducted?
- What type of follow-up training is offered?
- Are all instructors required to participate in the training? Why or Why not?
- Is the training hands-on?
- Is the training conducted in a classroom setting or an online environment? Describe?
- Have you taught or been a student of an online class?
- What is your perception of the training offered based on your experience of an online class either as a student or an instructor?
- Does the training provided include segments on both the mechanics and methodology of instructional techniques needed for online classes? Describe?
- How would you rate the usefulness, effectiveness, etc. of the training provided?
- Do you think this type of training is beneficial to the online instructors? Why? How?
- Who provides the training to your online instructors?
- What credentials are required for the trainer?
- What method is used in providing the training, for example in a classroom environment or through a Web-based platform?

Appendix D: Online Instructors

Examples of possible interview questions:

Motivation to transfer:

- Can you tell me a little bit about your experiences teaching online courses?
- Can you tell me how you felt the moment you were asked/told that you would be teaching online classes?
- Did you hear other instructors comment on the fact they would be teaching online courses?
What are some of the responses you heard?
- When you think about your changing role as an online instructor, how does that make you feel?
- Do you think others view online instruction as less important than a traditional face-to-face class? Can you elaborate.
- What are your thoughts on an online class?
- As you reflect on your first online class, what are some things that could have helped in your transition from a traditional to an online environment?
- How did you obtain the knowledge to conduct an online class?
- Where did you obtain this knowledge?
- Why did you obtain this training?
- In an online environment how do you provide the new information and materials?
- What web tools are used to enable the practicing and application of new concepts or skills?
- What web tools are used to enable feedback assessment and evaluation of learning in this online course?
- What was your perception of the training?

Transfer Climate:

- What were some of the hardships you faced when you first taught an online class?
- Where you able to apply the knowledge you gained from the learning experience into your online class approach?
- What do you feel were the results of the training you received as far as the outcome of your online teaching experience?
- Do you communicate with other instructors when faced with problematic areas in your online class?

Transfer Design

- Does the training you receive provide the opportunity for you to practice the content in your actual job context?
- What do you think are the administrators' and trainers' attitude toward online education? How is this attitude displayed in the training you receive?
- Do you perceive the training as an actual hands-on in a real life environment?
- What are some examples of training that enabled you as an instructor to increase your performance?
- Was this training offered through your institution or did you receive it from an outside source?
- Do you feel additional or more in depth training could have saved you as an instructor valuable time and energy?

Work Environment

- Do you feel you have the right equipment to perform your duties as an online instructor? For example, an adequate online platform to conduct your classes.

- Do administrators provide adequate time away from the job for you to complete training?
- How do you feel about teaching online classes?

Individual Performance:

- Do you wish you could teach only online classes?
- What tool or application allows you to fulfill this process in the online classroom?
- Do you feel that you have had problems in your online class?
- Could you elaborate on some of the problems you have experienced?
- Do you think that this training allowed you as an individual to increase the performance of the online class from an instructor's standpoint?

Organizational Results

- What are the goals of your college regarding professional training for distance education classes? For example, does your college have a mission goal statement for distance education?
- What support system is in place for when you complete professional development training? Do you have a mentor system?
- How well do you think your college is meeting those goals?

Appendix E: Reflectivity Questions

Examples of possible reflectivity questions.

- Immediately after the interviews, I will ask myself the following suggested questions (Boeree, 2003, pg. 1) and document my responses to each interview.
- Was I fully present, phenomenologically? Or, did I sink into routine, a sort of semi-conscious scribbling?
- If I was fully present, did I nevertheless take care not to allow my own desires, interests, needs, or thoughts to distort the interview?
- How was my "esthetic" sense? Did I see the patterns or essences?
- Did I communicate them to the reader, as the interviewee would have wanted me to?
- Did I check my intuitions with the person by reflection or by simply asking?
- Did I capture the person as well as the topic? Did I capture the conversation, the flow of words and ideas between two real people in a real setting?
- These responses will be listed on the transcripts at the end of each interview. These transcripts are located in the appendices.