An Investigation into the Experiences of

Traditional Higher Education Instructors Transitioning into Effective Online Instructors

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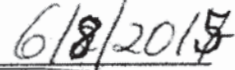
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Traditional Higher Education Instructors Transitioning into Effective Online Instructors

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Abstract

Traditional classroom educators face the challenge of teaching online due to the

increasing demand of online courses at higher education institutions. Educators who

transition from the traditional classroom to online instruction experience the need to

incorporate different skills and strategies in order to become an effective online

instructor. This qualitative study sought to investigate the difficulties experienced by

traditional classroom instructors who are attempting to transition to an online classroom

format and what strategies can be used to overcome these difficulties. A qualitative

meta-synthesis design was used for this research study because the research questions and

approach position towards the appropriateness of meta-synthesis research. Four themes

presented themselves from the meta-synthesis of eight research studies. The following

four themes captured the experience of educators transitioning from traditional

instruction to online instruction: increased workload, changing roles and skills, enhanced

support and training, and various communication and engagement strategies.

The findings from this study found that traditional educators transitioning to online

instruction face many challenges as they attempt to create an engaging classroom

environment that echoes engagement in a traditional classroom. The results of this study

can assist educators in developing their online teaching skills.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Brick and mortar colleges are no longer the main venue for students to obtain a college education. According to survey responses from over 2,200 U.S. colleges and university students in 2005, almost 3.2 million students were enrolled in at least one online course during the fall semester of 2005 (Steiner & Hyman, 2010). This equates to an increase of almost one million students from the previous academic year of 2004 (Steiner & Hyman, 2010). According to a study performed by Sloan Consortium (2012) based on responses from more than 2,800 colleges and universities in the United States, the number of additional students taking online courses has grown by over 570,000 to a new total of 6.7 million annually. In the fall of 2010, there were 6,142,280 students taking at least one online course and in the fall of 2011 the enrollment increased to 6,714,792 students (Sloan Consortium, 2012). According to the Sloan Consortium (2012), 70% of higher education institutions believe that online education is important to the overall success of their institution. From the above statistics, it is apparent that online education is growing in popularity and is a common consideration to degree seeking students. According to the Sloan Consortium (2012)

> There is a relationship between the size of the institution and whether or not they have or are planning on a Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). The largest schools (15000+ total students) have a higher rate of offering MOOCs (8.9%) and over twenty percent (21.4%) are in the planning stage (p. 9).

Consequently, according to Adams and Defleur (2005 as cited by Linardopoulos, 2012), candidates with a degree obtained via the traditional mode of instruction have a higher

chance of being hired when compared to candidates who completed a degree fully online or partially online.

Background

Traditional classroom educators face the challenge of teaching online due to the increasing demand of online courses at higher education institutions. Educators who transition from the traditional classroom to online instruction experience the need to incorporate different skills and strategies in order to become an effective online instructor (Barrett, 2010). According to Barrett (2010) "due to the technological advancements in the online environment, online instructors must have a different type of skills sets in order to compete in today's online learning environment" (p.18). According to Gibson, Harris, and Colaric (2008) "in an online classroom, the instructors are expected to be proficient in the latest Internet technologies such as e-learning software, e-mail, and online discussion boards" (p. 355).

Crawley et al. (2009) indicated that the transition from traditional face-to-face instruction to online instruction is challenging because face-to-face instructors do not anticipate the high interactivity and increased interaction that online courses present (Crawley et al, 2009). According to Wickersham and McElhany (2010), online faculty transitioning from traditional instruction have concerns about the amount of time it takes to design, develop, and teach a course online (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010). Additionally, many faculty members do not believe their course content within the traditional classroom will translate well into the online learning environment (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010). Some faculty members also feel as though there is a not enough interaction in an online course like in a traditional course; however, this lack of

interaction may be due to ineffective design of the online course (Wickersham &

McElhany, 2010). According to Wickersham and McElhany (2010) "above all, faculty

are concerned about quality and they desire to know more about how to achieve that

quality for teaching online to ensure their students are receiving the best education" (p.

5).

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to investigate the difficulties experienced by traditional

classroom instructors who are attempting to transition to an online classroom format and

what strategies can be used to overcome these difficulties. According to Cowan, Neil,

and Winter (2013), many online instructors who previously taught in face-to-face

environments lack the skills necessary to be effective online instructors due to online

training that is focused mainly on technology tasks and general pedagogical techniques

such as presenting relevant material and providing feedback. As a result, there is more

emphasis on the implementation of the tools and strategies in the learning management

system than on teaching techniques that support active learning such as collaboration and

case-based and problem-based learning (Cowan et al., 2013). Another difficulty is

achieving an effective level of engagement with students in the online environment due

to the lack of contact with the students (Sheridan & Kelly, 2010). According to Crawley,

Fewell, and Sugar (2009), inadequate engagement techniques can make it hard for

instructors to gauge whether students comprehend coursework that is usually

accomplished through sharing of ideas, spontaneous questions, and investigations in

response to teachable moments that arise in face-to-face classrooms. According to

Schmidt, Hodge, and Tschida (2013), online instructors must discover multiple methods

to effectively connect with students in an online environment. Since there is a large body of scholarly literature on the phenomenon of traditional educators transitioning to online instruction there is a need for a synthesis of knowledge from research and practice. Current knowledge can be advanced by the generation of a new interpretive synthesis through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous qualitative studies. Through a meta-synthesis the researcher can provide a better discernment of the challenges, practices and strategies that traditional educators experience to successfully transition into effective online instructors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative meta-synthesis study was to investigate the experiences of traditional higher education online educators who have transitioned into online instructors to provide a synthesis of effective strategies that contribute to effective transition to assist educators in developing their online teaching skills. The methodological strategy for conducting this study involves in-depth search strategies across a range of databases and information sources such as Ebrary, EBSCOHost, Gale Academic OneFile, ProQuest, RefWorks, SAGE, SpringerLink, and Web of Knowledge. The meta-synthesis was conducted from multilevel keyword searches of journals that contain scholarly peer-reviewed qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies on the experiences of traditional educators who transitioned to online instruction. A meta-synthesis consisting of thick descriptions of ideas and themes, distinctions between ideas and themes, and lessons learned provided important characteristics of successful strategies, review and document the efficiency of different strategies, contribute to program effectiveness, and assess and document potential indicators for future

applications. Since there is a large body of scholarly literature on the experiences of traditional educators who transitioned to online instruction there is a need for a synthesis of knowledge. Through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous studies, current knowledge can be advanced. A meta-synthesis can flesh out the challenges, practices and strategies required in order for traditional educators to successfully transition into effective online instructors.

Research Questions

The research questions in this study guided the research. The answer to these research questions contribute to the literature in the field of online education because they focus on the specific challenges in online education and how to overcome these challenges using effective strategies and practices. By answering these questions, it aids in guiding traditional instructors into becoming effective online instructors. The expected outcome for these questions is to pinpoint best practices and methodologies in the field of online education.

Q1. What are the challenges for online educators who previously taught in a traditional classroom when attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation?

Q2. What teaching strategies should instructors acquire/incorporate to be effective in an online classroom environment?

Nature of the Study

This study followed a qualitative meta-synthesis approach. A qualitative meta-synthesis study refers to cross-case analysis or synthesis of various qualitative studies on the same subject (Patton, 2002). Qualitative meta-synthesis enables the researcher to

build theory through identification and extrapolation of lessons learned from various qualitative studies (Patton, 2002). The lessons learned from each case or qualitative study was used to generate generic factors that contribute to program effectiveness or program non effectiveness (Patton, 2002). Noblit and Hare (1988) described qualitative meta-synthesis analysis as "meta-ethnography in which the challenge is to retain the uniqueness and holism of accounts even as we synthesize them in the translations" (p. 7). Through this qualitative meta-synthesis, it is essential to understand the experience of traditional online educators who transition into online educators to distinguish the skills and strategies that contribute to effective online instruction.

The research questions in this study oriented towards examining scholarly peer reviewed qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies of online educators who have experience teaching in a traditional classroom. This data was used to identify experiences of traditional educators who transitioned into an online instructor role. A critical theoretical approach provided a basis for the study in order to provide a window into the online college classroom environment to contribute to the making things better within online college classrooms. Understanding the practice of online instruction and the challenges of online instruction aided in the interpretation of the effective strategies and practices that work best in an online classroom.

Significance of the Study

Since there is a large body of scholarly literature on the phenomenon of traditional educators transitioning to online instruction, there is a need for a synthesis of knowledge from research and practice. A qualitative meta-synthesis design was appropriate for this research study because the research questions and approach

positioned towards the appropriateness of meta-synthesis research. Current knowledge on this phenomenon can be advanced by the generation of a new interpretive synthesis through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous qualitative studies. Through a meta-synthesis design, the researcher accessed a larger population and data source that provided a better discernment of the challenges, practices and strategies that traditional educators experience to successfully transition into effective online instructors. The more data available to the researcher, the more the researcher could understand the whole experience of educators who make the transition from traditional instruction to online instruction. Additionally, this research design aided in pinpointing strategies of traditional instruction and thrashed out those skills that effectively translate into effective concrete online teaching strategies.

Definition of Key Terms

Asynchronous. An asynchronous course is one in which instruction can be delivered at a different time than the course work is completed (Smith, 2010).

Brick and Mortar Education. Brick and mortar education relates to a conventional business that serves customers in a building as contrasted to an online business (Brick and mortar, 2014).

Computer-Mediated Communication. Computer-mediated communication occurs through human interaction occurring through information and communication technologies (Wei, Chen, & Kinshuk, 2012).

Online Instruction. Online instruction is instruction that is either wholly or partially delivered over the Internet (Ahmed, 2003, p.1).

Learning Management System (LMS). A learning management system is a space used to teach online courses. Basic tools such as a discussion board, grade book, and a place to share content are provided to interact with online students (Kipp and Kristin, 2013).

Qualitative Research. Qualitative research is a type of research that focuses on finding out factual inner meanings and innovative insights without statistical analysis. It is designed to allow the researcher to provide in depth interpretations of phenomena (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2010).

Social Presence. Social presence is a phenomenon that enables virtual activities to be transformed into impressions of "real" people (Robinson & Hullinger, 2008).

Student Engagement. Student engagement is an activity that implements both a process and an outcome in which faculty provide students with active learning experiences and students show their engagement by actively participating in class activities such as discussions and interaction with the professor and their peers (Heller, Beil, Dam, & Haerum, 2010).

Synchronous. Synchronous communication is communication that must be carried out at the same time but not necessarily in the same physical location (Smith, 2010).

Summary

This study sought to investigate the difficulties experienced by traditional classroom instructors who attempted to transition to an online classroom format and what strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. The purpose of the qualitative meta-synthesis study was to investigate the experiences of traditional higher education online

educators who have transitioned into online instructors to provide a synthesis of effective strategies that contribute to effective transition to assist educators in developing their online teaching skills. The methodological strategy for conducting this study involved in-depth search strategies across a range of databases and information sources such as Ebrary, EBSCOHost, Gale Academic OneFile, ProQuest, RefWorks, SAGE, SpringerLink, and Web of Knowledge. The meta-synthesis was conducted from multilevel keyword searches of journals that contained scholarly peer reviewed qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies. Through a meta-synthesis of other qualitative studies, current knowledge on this phenomenon can be advanced through the distinction of recurring ideas, themes, and differences to build a clearer interpretation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review was to integrate and synthesize the major and foundational literature on skills and strategies necessary for traditional college instructors to become effective online instructors. Common issues that arose in online instruction versus traditional classroom instruction are discussed as well as guidelines for best practices in online teaching, and the importance of student engagement. The following literature was reviewed to analyze and compare best practices in online teaching and to highlight foundational literature in this area of study. Research studies are grouped based on their themes. Each individual article or study is summarized according to its relative importance in the literature on the following topics: communication in the classroom versus online, teaching online versus within a traditional classroom, concerns of traditional and online educators, guidelines for best practices in online teaching, importance of social presence in an online class environment, and methods used to engage students in an online class environment.

Documentation

The search strategy for this review of literature implemented multiple library and search engine searches. In-depth search strategies using multilevel keyword searches of journals across a range of databases and information sources such as EBSCOHost, Sage, Gale Academic OneFile, SAGE Journals Online, and ProQuest, was conducted. The initial criteria for selection of studies was based on the selection of only qualitative scholarly peer reviewed research studies published in the last six years that contain qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies of experiences of traditional educators who transitioned into online instruction. The search criteria also included

qualitative scholarly peer reviewed research studies that contain information on best practices of online teaching and successful methods used to engage students in online learning. Additionally, qualitative scholarly peer reviewed research studies pertaining to common issues that arise in online instruction vs. traditional classroom instruction were also reviewed.

Communication in the Classroom vs. Online

Since students interact differently with the instructor in an online classroom than they interact with the instructor in a traditional classroom; online educators must incorporate different methodologies to be effective in an online classroom environment (Esani, 2010). According to Esani (2010), "How educators communicate with students is crucial in both the traditional college classroom and in the online environment but the method and frequency of communication differs dramatically in each setting" (p. 1). According to Cater, James, Michel and Varela (2012), "Face-to-face communication is richer because it contains not only verbal cues, such as voice inflection and intonation, but also nonverbal cues, such as facial expression and bodily gestures" (p. 1). In an online classroom instructors communicate with their students mainly through interaction via discussion forums, message chats, electronic whiteboards, audio devices, and video devices for verbal and non-verbal communications (Wei, Chen, & Kinshuk, 2012). According to Shackelford and Maxwell (2012), multiple communication modes and required student participation in instructor facilitated discussions aids in encouraging a sense of community in an online classroom. Glazer, Breslin, and Wanstreet (2013) examined faculty perceptions of creating learning communities at a virtual university. According to Glazer et al., (2013) faculty feel community is developed through respectful

interactions that promote student learning. According to Wei, Chen, and Kinshuk (2012), "The nature of online learning is analogous to the computer-mediated communication environment" (p. 530).

Communication in an online classroom is conducted mainly through instructional technologies. Carlson, Austrbara, McNeill, Powell, and Witt (2012) examined instructional technologies used in online courses. Ten different online instructional technology tools were evaluated by Kennesaw State University faculty to analyze each tools use in communication courses in order to address Angelo's (1991) four dimensions of higher learning (declarative, procedural, conditional, and reflective) (Carlson, et al., 2012). The tools were compared and contrasted to assist university instructors in making informed decisions about which tools tend to be the most effective in an online course environment (Carlson, et al., 2012). The programs that are useful for synchronous online class meetings were Wimba, GoToMeeting, and Second Life. These programs proved to be of limited use for asynchronous courses. The programs that are useful for preparing materials such as podcasts to post on a website in an online course include Camtasia, Captivate, Final Cut Pro, and Audition. Instructors used Facebook and Twitter to assist in creating a sense of community. The programs used for editing and creating lectures outside of the classroom include Final Cut Pro, Audition, and Camtasia (Carlson, et al., 2012). According to Carlson et al. (2012), wikis, Facebook, Twitter, and GoToMeeting are deemed by Kennesaw State University's faculty as easy to learn instructional technologies. Final Cut Pro and Audition technology were considered complex instructional technologies and required formal training. Wimba and Second Life instructional technologies were deemed somewhat complicated to learn, while Camtasia

and Captivate software packages were a little less complicated to learn, but formal training is not required (Carlson et al., 2012). According to Carlson et al. (2012), all of these tools can be used to assist faculty solving issues when delivering various types of training, however they are not interchangeable. The instructional software packages do not all serve the same purpose therefore they are not usable for solving each issue equally well. According to Carlson et al. (2012) and Angelo's (1991) dimensions of higher learning, the best tool for the fourth dimension is facebook, or reflective learning. Wimba was deemed to require too much of a time investment for first-dimension, declarative learning. According to Carlson et al. (2012) "instructors should think carefully about pedagogical problems they wish to solve, consider which technology would best solve the problem, and experiment with that technology throughout a course" (p. 344-345).

Communication in online classrooms is either asynchronous or synchronous. Huang and Hsiao (2012) examined online instructors' experiences and perceptions of online teaching and their communication with students in an online environment. According to Huang and Hsiao (2012), instructors preferred asynchronous communication (not occurring at predetermined or regular intervals) because it provided an equal opportunity for students to participate as compared to synchronous communication or face-to-face classes where a few students would tend to dominate the class discussions. According to Kopzhasarova, Sokolova, & Magzumova (2012), "Creating communication on the Internet takes time." "It is necessary to maintain the social and psychological environment in which the involved student, assurance that he is

respected as a person with his own views, interests, strengths, weaknesses and preferred learning style for him" (p. 93).

In a study by Dykman and Davis (2008) comparing online education to conventional education, how educators communicate with students in an online environment is one of the key ingredients to success in online teaching. According to Dykman and Davis (2008) "when there is a failure to communicate expectations and the student is not doing what the teacher intends, the situation can deteriorate without either party realizing that there is a problem until it is too late" (p. 157). There are many in-person opportunities to reinforce expectations and explain misunderstandings in a traditional college classroom. These studies emphasize the need to further investigate the teaching practices of online instruction to better understand which skills and strategies are necessary for traditional college instructors to transition effectively into online instruction.

Teaching Online vs. within a Traditional Classroom

Teaching online can be very different than teaching in a traditional classroom. Dykman and Davis (2008) dealt with the question: How is teaching online different from conventional teaching? According to Dykman and Davis (2008),

> Teaching online is complicated by the need to adapt what has been a highly social process that of educating students in a traditional school and classroom setting, to an online computerized setting with limited social interaction. The biggest challenge for online educators is to make this adaptation work effectively (p. 1).

Dykman and Davis (2008) found that online instructors need to clearly understand what to expect in an online teaching environment. They should know what to look for and

how they are most likely to succeed. Online instructors must communicate early with each student and be dependable in dealings with students. Online instructors must invest a lot of time ensuring students understand everything and what is required of them (Dykman & Davis, 2008).

Due to the differences in traditional instruction and online instruction instructors must implement specific strategies to successfully transition from traditional instruction to online instruction. Borrego (2010) presented strategies from a review of literature on successfully transitioning from traditional instruction to online instruction. According to Borrego (2010), the traditional instructor must first consider the infrastructure required to transition into online instruction. This infrastructure includes some of the following information technology support for staff, faculty and students; library support for offsite students; web presence; electronic mad; and training for faculty and students.

Effective training is important to successful transition from traditional instruction to online instruction (Borrego, 2010). The two types of training instructors should commonly expect is course development training and course delivery training (Borrego, 2010). In the traditional classroom there are defined objectives, required textbooks, and additional accompanying materials defined for courses (Borrego, 2010). In an online classroom instructors must be prepared to require new activities that typically take the place of classroom lectures, due to the asynchronous environment of the online format (Borrego, 2010). Online instructors typically require students to conduct research off-line on the course work covered within each online module, complete individual and/or group activities; engage in online discussion, and other similar activities (Borrego, 2010). Quantity of interaction between students and the instructor is often tracked to ensure an

adequate amount of student participation. For example, many e-learning management systems provide basic tools to measure the amount of interactions taking place, but not the quality of interaction (Borrego, 2010). Example reports generated from e-learning management systems may include the quantity of posts by each student for each online module, or the time each student spends online participating in each online module (Borrego, 2010).

Although college online instruction differs slightly from public online instruction in k-12 schools much can be learned from instructors who teach in public k-12 online schools. Coy (2014) examined a veteran teachers transition from traditional k-12 instruction to virtual k-12 instruction and the changing set of competencies for a successful transition to online teaching in a k-12 virtual school. According to Coy (2014) a veteran teacher taught in traditional k-12 brick-and-mortar schools for over 15 years. She taught kindergarten through eighth grade in special education and general education face-to-face classroom settings. After transitioning to virtual k-12 instruction her responsibilities included teaching both students with disabilities and general education students in the elementary grades. According to Coy (2014), "online or virtual environments differ from traditional face-to-face settings on many levels" (p. 110). The changes in communication in online environments causes challenges that can often make managing student behavior from a distance problematic. Additionally, the interaction between the teacher and student in an online environment may cause a disconnect because of the differences in interaction, how often they interact, and the tools available to instructors that may alter the traditional notion of teaching for both the teacher and the student.

According to Coy (2014), one of the most significant challenges in online instruction is striving to meet the needs of younger students and those with learning disabilities. Since the challenges for online students are similar to those faced by traditional face-to-face teachers, teachers are able to transfer their skills and strategies from traditional brick and-mortar schools to meet the challenge. To successfully meet the challenge, teachers must develop creative strategies to assist students in overcoming potential learning barriers.   Teachers can provide additional learning material that aids students in their learning and comprehension of course materials (Coy, 2014). Interactive videos, text-to-speech software, and additional alternatives for assessments can be used to aid students learning and comprehension of course material. Since face-to-face communication is minimized in online instruction, teachers can organize special events for families and students that live in the same geographical area so that students get to know one another. Field trips can be designed to incorporate specific educational goals (Coy, 2014). A field trip such as this may include a writer's workshop so students can access face-to-face writing support, or a trip to a museum may include lessons and activities supporting curriculum objectives. Teachers involved in online k-12 schools invite students and parents to informal web cam meetings where students and parents can get to know the instructor and view the instructors' work space. Teachers also create fun PowerPoint presentations with lots of pictures and visuals or fliers about their interests to help students to get to know the instructor. Teachers commonly interact with each other through phone calls, e-mails, and at face-to-face meetings.   Additional opportunities for instructor communication may include web chat features and visits to each others' classes virtually, and working together on scheduling changes in order to better meet student

needs. With the implementation of many of the activities described above, the veteran

teacher in this study was able to make a successful and comfortable transition from

teaching in the classroom to teaching online (Coy, 2014).

As with traditional instruction, institutional quality standards are important to the

success of online instruction. Wickersham and McElhany (2010) investigated the

concerns of university administrators and faculty within three academic colleges toward

online education and their attitudes towards the establishment of institutional quality

standards related to online education. A case study design was used to conduct

interviews with the campus faculty and administrators to find out the concerns of the

administrators and faculty. The study found that faculty and administrators have many

common concerns about online education. They also have similar suggestions for

addressing concerns. Faculty concerns relating to online teaching did not differ among

institutions.

One of the main common issues among institutions was the amount of time it

takes to design, develop, and teach a course online (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010).

Additionally, many faculty members do not believe their course content within the

traditional classroom will translate well into the online learning environment

(Wickersham & McElhany, 2010). Faculty expressed concern to know more about how

they can ensure the same quality of learning produced in a traditional classroom in an

online classroom. Faculty also felt as though there is a not enough interaction in an

online course like in a traditional course; however, this lack of interaction may be due to

ineffective design of the online course. Another concern was faculty fearing increased

enrollment by administrators rather than capped enrollments similar to traditional

classroom enrollments. Faculty was also concerned about how prepared students are when dealing with technology and the ability for students to be self directed to learn the course material without an instructor physically guiding them throughout the course. Requirements for course testing, security, and academic honesty were also other areas of concern by faculty members (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010).

According to Wickersham and McElhany (2010) "above all, faculty are concerned about quality and they desire to know more about how to achieve that quality for teaching online to ensure their students are receiving the best education" (p. 5). To reduce some of these concerns, faculty mentioned that they would like to receive more support for course development. Proctored student testing environments, student enrollment caps, time management strategies and course evaluation tools to assist in determining if a course is a good candidate for online delivery were among suggestions mentioned by faculty. Faculty also mentioned student orientation opportunities to prepare students for online learning (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010). Faculty preferred interactive workshops that focused on best strategies for online instruction. Faculty also suggested sessions that deal with faculty development, evaluation strategies, course assessment, student engagement strategies, and best practices for incorporating other technologies and synchronous/asynchronous communication technologies to enhance teaching and learning online. Administrators and faculty mentioned concerns about how to determine courses that are fit for online delivery and what steps to take to proceed with online course scheduling (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010). Administrators also mentioned the need for a high level of support for faculty and students. Faculty and administrators expressed similar concerns that ranged from high standards for course

development and delivery and the implementation of best practices for course and program assessment in an effort to provide the most effective support and training available for faculty and students (Wickersham & McElhany, 2010).

Wagner, Garippo and Lovaas (2011) conducted a longitudinal comparison of online instruction and traditional instructional delivery methods. Their research involved one introductory business application software course that was delivered as a traditional face-to-face course and as an online course over a period of ten years. The same instructor taught both courses using the same criteria and standards. Student performance was analyzed across 30 sections of the course. The results of their study indicated that there was no significant difference in student performance between the online course and the traditional course delivery method. Students were able to succeed in the introductory business applications course in an online format or a traditional format. According to Wagner et al. (2011), when online students are given the proper materials such as online lecture notes, multimedia presentations, clear instructions, reasonable assignments, a quality textbook, and access to an instructor via website or e-mail, they are as successful as those students who engage in traditional classroom learning.

Mayes, Luebeck, Ku, Akarasriworn, and Korkmaz (2011) examined the challenges of administering effective online instruction by reviewing current literature on online instruction as it relates to themes that pinpoint influences of learners and instructors, technical and social tools used in online instruction, pedagogy, assessment practices in online instruction and opportunities and challenges that arise in online instruction since 2005. Mayes et al. (2011) focused on the common context of their combined efforts providing effective instruction in mathematics and professional

development for mathematics educators at the secondary and collegiate levels. According to Mayes et al. (2011), initial face-to-face orientation and technology training sessions for all instructors and participants prepares students for the rigor of online learning and reduces the time instructors or technical assistants spend aiding students with issues related to technology. Instructors can then focus on teaching and facilitation activities rather than technical issues. Course activities can be used in building a sense of community. Effective course activities for building a sense of community include whole group discussions, small group discussions, paired group discussions, and individual reflection discussions (Mayes et al., 2011). According to Mayes et al. (2011), discussion groups should contain explicit instructions for how to initiate presentations, support extend ideas, and critique, challenge, or defend the thinking of participates involved. Instructors can also benefit from online training courses that target effective instruction practices. Shared personal vignettes, comparisons of instructional strategies and in depth examinations of a students' work can help other instructors implement effective teaching methods. According to Mayes et al. (2011), mathematics instructors use their classrooms as real-time "living laboratories" to experiment with mathematics teaching, learning, and assessment strategies introduced in online courses.

Meyer (2012) interviewed ten online faculty members about their motivation for teaching online and the effect of teaching online on their teaching and research productivity. According to Meyer (2012), five of the faculty interviewed felt they spent much more time developing online courses compared to traditional courses. Simon (2011) examined the experiences of five foreign language teachers preparing to teach online. According to Simon (2011), "One of the most persistent challenges that faculty

need to overcome before agreeing to teach online is the still wide-spread perception, both inside and outside of academic circles, that online learning is a less worthy form of education" (p. 1).

Lloyd, Byrne, and McCoy (2012) studied barriers that online instructors face when teaching online. Lloyd et al. (2012) surveyed various faculty groups at one state university located in the southeastern U.S. with an enrollment of approximately 4,500 students. The results of the study identified interpersonal barriers, institutional barriers, training and technology barriers, and cost/benefit analysis barriers (Lloyd et al., 2012). According to Lloyd et al. (2012), "Those faculty who had the least experience with online education perceived the barriers as greater than those who had the most experience with online education" (p. 7).

Butts, Heidorn, and Mosier (2013) sought to clarify whether there is a considerable difference in student engagement in an online course environment and a traditional face-to-face teaching environment. Butts et al. (2013) studied the differences in student perceptions of engagement among undergraduate health and physical education classes by comparing online instruction to the lecture format implemented in traditional face-to-face courses. Butts et al. (2013), surveyed 22 undergraduate health and physical education majors that were enrolled in the summer semester. One section of the course was offered online and one section of the course was offered by traditional lecture in a face-to-face setting. The course curriculum and assignments were the same for both formats. Based on the results from the survey, there was no dramatic difference in 33 of the 34 variables used to measure engagement (Butts et al., 2013). According to Butts et al. (2013), "students in undergraduate physical education teacher preparation courses can

be engaged in course content, whether that content is offered completely online, or in a traditionally-based face-to-face format" (p. 8).

Sword (2012) examined the experiences of nursing instructors transitioning from teaching in the classroom to online instruction. Sword (2012) interviewed 10 nursing instructors about their personal experiences of transitioning into online instruction. The findings revealed that many of the instructors experienced frustration with technology issues and adapting to the changes in online instruction and communication with students. According to Sword (2012), "While many participants found the transition frustrating, for some faculty, the experience included elements of excitement and feelings of pioneering" (p. 210).

Schmidt, Hodge, and Tschida (2013) examined the experiences of online instructors and the processes they went through while learning to teach online. Participants in the study participated in focus groups and included online instructors from various program areas and levels of experience within the college of education at a large southeastern university (Schmidt et al., 2013). The findings of their study were categorized as initial experiences, learning from early experiences, and the evolution of the online instructor. According to Schmidt et al. (2013), online instructors must discover multiple methods to connect with students. Some of the examples discovered in the focus groups include the following: video conferencing in place of face-to-face lectures, having students read course materials posted online and then participating in online discussions rather than face-to-face discussions, and holding Skype sessions to provide students with one-on-one feedback that would have normally taken place after formal face-to-face class sessions (Schmidt et al., 2013).

Mischelle and Perumean-Chaney (2011) examined instructors' experiences who developed and delivered an online statistics course. The study discusses how teaching online can inform traditional classroom pedagogy (Mischelle & Perumean-Chaney, 2011). According to Mischelle and Perumean-Chaney (2011), although many studies suggest that the development and delivery of effective online instruction is due to the instructor's ability to transfer traditional pedagogy to an online environment, there is not enough literature available on how to transfer the knowledge and skills associated with effective online teaching to the traditional classroom setting. According to Mischelle and Perumean-Chaney (2011), teaching online can improve traditional style teaching when an instructor is aware of what material is most effective to the students' understanding and learning though online course development activities. Online teaching experience helps instructors create new strategies for submitting course work, and encourages multiple venues for the instructor to clarify class work in a forum every student can get involved (Mischelle & Perumean-Chaney, 2011). An improved ability to use new technologies for online instruction can expand an instructor's ability to deliver course materials in creative stimulating ways (Mischelle & Perumean-Chaney, 2011). Online instruction can also improve the ability to maintain the course schedule (Mischelle & Perumean-Chaney, 2011). Additionally, the ability to teach in more than one format increases an instructor's instructional skills and the ability of a department to teach students (Mischelle & Perumean-Chaney, 2011).

Comas-Quinn (2011) examined teachers' experiences teaching a blended learning course after teaching primarily in the classroom. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted with Spanish teachers who previously taught Spanish face-to-face and

now teach Spanish using a blended learning approach in which teachers implement three types of teaching: face-to-face, online synchronous and online asynchronous (Comas-Quinn, 2011). The findings revealed that instructors commonly experienced technical issues due to being new to teaching online, felt many of the online tools were poorly integrated into the course, and felt there was not enough time to attend to each area of the blended learning sections (Comas-Quinn, 2011). These studies emphasize the need to further investigate the teaching practices of online instruction to better understand which skills and strategies are necessary for traditional college instructors to transition effectively into online instruction.

Hyland, Pinto-Zipp, Olson, and Lichtman (2010) discussed how advancements of technology and the competition to recruit students has challenged schools to expand the traditional teaching methods to attract more students (Hyland et al., 2010). The study was designed to pinpoint the usefulness of implanting Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) to teach administration and management content in Physical Therapy (PT) education (Hyland et al., 2010). The hypothesis was that CAI is just as effective for assimilation of information as traditional lecture instruction (TLI). According to Hyland et al. (2010), this hypotheses was supported. In a professional management and administration PT class, CAI is equally effective for assimilation and retention of information when compared to TLI (Hyland et al., 2010). This evidence supports the implementation of CAI in teaching administration and management material to students and provides institutions of higher learning with an optional teaching strategy to meet the needs of students (Hyland et al., 2010).

Concerns of Traditional and Online Educators

Barrett (2010) provided a discussion on existing recruitment and hiring strategies when hiring traditional teaching staff compared to hiring online educators. Barrett also detailed the growing issues that arise when traditional teachers either decide to or are tasked with transitioning over to online instruction. Additionally as overview on how one online university has approached online teacher training for both experienced instructors, as well as new teaching recruits as they prepare to transition from traditional classrooms over to virtual classes (Barrett, 2010). The findings noted that conventionally, teachers served as role models when they lead lectures, graded assignments, and provided guidance and leadership to their students (Barrett, 2010). However, the role and function of the instructor has changed due to economic and technological advancements (Barrett, 2010). Consequently, online instruction has begun to draw many more students to take online courses and instructors to teach online (Barrett, 2010). With this increasing influx of students and the need for qualified instructors; educational institutions are redesigning their recruiting, hiring, and training methods (Barrett, 2010). As a result, the need to offer more effective and efficient online instructor training to enable instructors to best meet the ever changing needs of their students continues to grow (Barrett, 2010).

Zhao, McConnell, and Jiang (2009) conducted a study that examined teachers' conception of e-learning in China. According to Zhao et al. (2009), the purpose of the study was to examine the understanding that Chinese teachers' have about e-learning and to attempt to build a bridge between research and practice for understanding the application of e-learning in China. This study used phenomenography to examine the teachers' conception of electronic instruction (Zhao et al, 2009). The researcher

interviewed 24 Chinese teachers in this study. The grounded theory approach provided a basis of analysis for this study. The findings from the study presented a set of categories of conceptions (Zhao et al, 2009). The findings suggest that traditional teaching using techniques such as lecturing is the central method used in China and are unlikely to present conditions for mainstreaming e-learning in the near future (Zhao et al, 2009). The researcher provides a compelling case for the meaning and significance of the findings. The findings demonstrated that traditional forms of teaching hold more value in higher education in China. The study provides an understanding of traditional Chinese teaching culture and how Chinese instructors view e-learning and how to implement forms of e-learning in instruction (Zhao et al, 2009).

Gregory and Jones (2009) conducted a study that analyzes what is occurring in college classes and the dependent nature of teaching approaches. According to Gregory and Jones (2009), there is not enough literature on the factors that determine the beliefs and conceptions of teaching approaches. The purpose of the study was to look at what is occurring for Australian educators that teach management studies to a wide range of students that comprise of a mix of local and international students within a shifting university context (Gregory & Jones, 2009). Gregory and Jones (2009) used a qualitative research design that incorporated a grounded theory methodology. The researchers interviewed 25 university lecturers from five different universities in Melbourne (Gregory & Jones, 2009). They also conducted observations of eight of the lecturers' teaching styles (Gregory & Jones, 2009). According to Gregory and Jones (2009), one of the threats to validity is providing a sufficient explanation of the movement of the analysis from the raw data to the final model. According to Gregory and Jones (2009)

"giving an adequate account of the movement of the analysis from the raw data to the final model is always a problem for grounded theory within the limits of a journal article" (p. 774). The findings from the study suggested that lecturers that are 'people-focused' focus mainly on students (Gregory & Jones, 2009). Lecturers that are *ideas-focussed* focus mainly on discussing ideas, concepts, and knowledge, transmitting, and presenting (Gregory & Jones, 2009). Lecturers that are 'structured' focus mainly on preserving and managing the content and methods of instruction (Gregory & Jones, 2009). Lecturers that are 'flexible' focus mainly on adjusting the material and techniques of teaching to suit the needs of many diverse students (Gregory & Jones, 2009). The researchers provide a compelling case for the meaning and significance of the findings. The findings demonstrate an addition to existing literature and distinguishes the result of contextual factors on instructional approaches (Gregory & Jones, 2009).

Crawley, Fewell, and Sugar (2009) conducted a study that examined an instructor's transition from teaching in a traditional setting to teaching online. According to Crawley et al. (2009), the purpose of the study was to report on the aspects of making the transition from traditional teaching to online instruction. In this study, Crawley et al. (2009) aimed to answer the following questions:

What are the fundamental characteristics of this instructor's face-to-face teaching?

How does this instructor capitalize on these characteristics in an online environment?

What resources does this instructor introduce to teaching that are unique to online, technology rich environments that are unavailable in face-to-face instruction? (p. 166).

Crawley et al. (2009) used a phenomenological perspective to examine the participant. The main participant for the study was a senior science educator with 39 years of teaching experience (Crawley et al, 2009). Crawley also examined a junior science educator with 14 years of teaching experience (Crawley et al, 2009). The analysis for this study began with analysis of traditional face-to-face instruction (Crawley et al, 2009). The researcher videotaped and analyzed thirteen 2 hour traditional face-to-face classes conducted by a senior science educator (Crawley et al, 2009). The next stage of analysis consisted of an interview with a junior science educator (Crawley et al, 2009). The interview explored the phenomenon of planning for and teaching online (Crawley et al, 2009). According to Crawley et al. (2009), the findings from the study indicated that the transition from traditional face-to-face instruction was technically hard due to the lack of resources. Additionally, face-to-face instructors do not anticipate the high interactivity and increased interaction that online courses present (Crawley et al, 2009). The researchers also found that online classes seem to focus more on engagement than activity. The researchers provide a compelling case for the meaning and significance of the findings. The findings demonstrated that although student's expressions are not evident in online instruction greater frequency of interaction and a variety of interaction helps create other opportunities for learning (Crawley et al, 2009). Although the participant in this study had years of experience teaching in a traditional setting, there was still many teaching strategies for the participants to learn to effectively teach online.

Rosenthal (2010) conducted a study that examined online instruction from the perspective of a first time online instructor whose background consists only of teaching in a traditional face-to-face setting. The purpose of the study was to examine prior

research on course design and to examine ideas and conclusions made from two asynchronous online discussions concerning online instruction (Rosenthal, 2010). In this study, Rosenthal (2010) conducted research and analyzed 2 online discussions to draw conclusions about online instruction. The researcher analyzed prior research and made discoveries about online course design (Rosenthal, 2010). The researcher also presented analysis from active discussions in two discussion forums within an online course (Rosenthal, 2010). According to Rosenthal (2010), the findings suggest collective participation is a necessity for an on-line course. The researcher provides a compelling case for the meaning and significance of the findings. The findings demonstrated the benefit of new technologies in an online classroom (Rosenthal, 2010).

Singleton-Jackson and Colella (2012) examined an instructor's experience creating and delivering an online writing course called Foundations of Academic Writing (FAW) for undergraduate students (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). The case-study discusses the development and delivery of an online course that was created in response to the identification of a need for effective and efficient delivery of writing instruction to large numbers of university students (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). The study describes how a traditional face-to-face online academic writing course evolved from an elective course enrolling 150 students to a required course enrolling over 2,000 arts and social sciences and engineering students at a mid-sized Canadian university (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). The instructor's experiences included technological challenges, issues handling cheating, course pedagogical issues, and many course successes (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). To ensure that all course content is standardized, all instructors and students use the same online platform and all master

courses are created by the course coordinator and duplicated for each section of the course (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). By implementing this system any problem within the platform can be easily corrected throughout each section of the course (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). According to Singleton-Jackson and Colella (2012) "with over 2,000 students working online, even the smallest "hiccup" with the online platform can set off a ripple effect that can call for hours of work on the part of the instructors and teacher assistants (TAs)" (p. 27). Through the progression of this course and increasing enrollments, the majority of technology problems were related to the course section size because the course management platform was not designed to handle large class sizes (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). This issue was handled by establishing subclasses or "pods" within the sections. For example, although there may be as many as 400 students enrolled in one section within the online platform, the students are broken up into groups of 80 (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). According to Singleton-Jackson and Colella (2012) "due to the large enrollments, online delivery is the only way it can practicably be offered, and the use of an online pedagogy leads to measurability of learning through pre- and post-test scores" (p. 28). Since the pre-test and post-test award points based on completion rather than on performance, many students completed these tests haphazardly just to receive points for completion (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). This manner of awarding points for completion rather than performance represents a threat to the validity of the conclusions in that students are not required to perform well on the tests in order to obtain their points (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). For this reason, the decision was later made to

award points based on actual performance so as to maximize student effort and participation (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012).

Cheating is an ongoing issue in courses delivered online and in traditional face-to-face settings (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). In the online foundations of academic writing course, the most noticeable instances of cheating appeared to be on the weekly online quizzes (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). It was discovered that students were getting together in groups and taking turns at attempting the quizzes, while one student of the group submitted his/her answers and then students used the feedback as an answer key to share with the other students (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). Instructors rectified this problem by changing the quiz settings so that students would not receive feedback until beyond the due date for the quiz (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). Plagiarism is another form of cheating that instructors must be aware of (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). According to Singleton-Jackson and Colella (2012), instructors and TAs need to take the time to get to know their students' writing to help in recognizing plagiarism. In the online foundations of academic writing course, students are divided into class segments and each segment is assigned to a TA (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). Because each TA marks the same students' writing week after week, drastic changes in the quality of the submitted work can be identified easier and the TA can then work with the course instructor to take action to determine if plagiarism has occurred (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012). The major strengths of the online foundations of academic writing course lie in the pedagogical power of the adopted approach to teach writing online. Delivering this course online enables instructors to provide enhanced feedback to a larger population of learners in a more rapid manner than

could be accomplished in a traditional face-to-face course (Singleton-Jackson & Colella, 2012).

Baran, Correia, and Thompson (2011) reviewed literature on online teaching in an effort to understand what is lacking in online teaching literature in order to aid researchers and practitioners in developing programs that support mechanisms for online teaching in higher education. According to Baran et al. (2011), the terms roles and competencies hold different meanings for online instructors. The most common online instructor roles identified were managerial, instructional designer, pedagogical, technical, facilitator, and social roles (Baran et al., 2011). Several competencies were suggested for each role depending on the context in which the online teaching was performed (Baran et al., 2011). According to Baran et al. (2011), although the use of roles and competencies guide the development of teacher preparation and training programs, it does not address issues of empowerment of online teachers, promoting critical reflection, and integrating technology into pedagogical inquiry. According to Baran et al. (2011), "we need to consider online teachers experiences and viewpoints." "Encouraging online teachers to consider alternative viewpoints and frames of references thus needs to be the focus of the online teacher preparation and professional development programs" (p. 434).

Guidelines for Best Practices in Online Teaching

There are many effective teaching practices and strategies that can be implemented to enhance online instruction. Smesny and Bellah (2012) used a Delphi method to obtain a consensus of suggested best practices for teaching lecture and laboratory-type topics online. An exhaustive worldwide search provided a pool of online instructors who teach online equine reproduction courses (Smesny & Bellah (2012). The

online instructors completed a questionnaire (Smesny & Bellah (2012). The consensus provided the following best practices for teaching equine reproduction lecture laboratory type topics online: assignments, multiple exams over the course of the semester, lectures that mirror the textbook in logical order, PowerPoint presentations with pictures, quizzes, summary notes, videos, and vocabulary lists (Smesny & Bellah, 2012). Smesny and Bellah (2012) recommend online instructors participate in professional development workshops, become involved in communities of practices, and explore other disciplines' successful methods of online instruction.

Ward and Kushner (2010) examined the TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge) framework to provide a comprehensive view of the online teaching and learning process. The TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge) framework explains how content, pedagogy, and technology knowledge are related and how they intersect to create new kinds of knowledge that is needed to support online teaching and learning (Ward & Kushner, 2010). According to Ward and Kushner (2010), understanding TPACK will aid instructors transitioning from face-to-face instruction to online teaching and learning. Ward and Kushner (2010) recommend online instructors develop new schemas for online learning by understanding the dynamic TPACK framework. Online instructors should themselves become learners in online environments. Online instructors should first consider content and pedagogy before beginning the process of new online course development (Ward & Kushner, 2010). Additionally, online instructors should help students become competent learners of online environments (Ward & Kushner, 2010).

Delaney-Klinger, Vanevenhoven, Wagner, and Chenoweth (2014) examined literature on best practices for new online course development, modification of an existing online course and the adoption of an existing online course. Delaney-Klinger et al. (2014) offer guidelines and sample scenarios in an effort to provide instructors with a road map to follow when tasked with creating a new online course or teaching an existing online course. According to Delaney-Klinger et al (2014) when developing a new online course it enables the faculty member to use the format or structure that they are most comfortable with. Starting from scratch with a new course may also enable the faculty member to improve the overall quality and design of the course (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014).

Some of the disadvantages that come with creating a new online course from scratch include increased time developing the course and non compensation for extra time spent working on the course due to possible adjunct faculty status (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). If faculty does not have experience teaching online they may not have the skills to effectively implement the appropriate tools within the course management system (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). Additionally, the development of a new course may require additional training and technology learning hurdles for the instructor which could add to the time and cost to develop the course (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014).

Another approach to online instruction is the option to revise an existing online course. According to Delaney-Klinger et al (2014) this approach involves adopting the overall existing structure and current course materials associated with an existing online course. When adopting an existing online course the new instructor makes the online course his/her own by personalizing the course content with material specific to the new

instructors own chosen material such as videos, personal information, stories, jokes, and supplemental material (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). After a few course sessions the course gradually adapts to the new instructors desired format, new course material, and the course is continually formatted to ensure that the course contains up-to-date and applicable information (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). This approach enables an online instructor to get up and running teaching an online course in a shorter time than creating a new course from scratch (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). Consequently, this approach requires more time than simply assuming control of another instructors course (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). According to Delaney-Klinger et al. (2014), this approach also enables a new instructor to adapt to another instructor's course without investing a lot of additional time and resources. This approach is valuable for a tenure track faculty member who is already busy vying for promotion (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014).

When instructors adapt another instructor's course, there are challenges that instructors should be aware of (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). One challenge Delaney-Klinger et al. (2014) mentioned is in regards to the lack of direction and guidance provided when instructors customize an existing course while also attempting to utilize the existing structure of the course. Additionally, an online instructor may be electronically observed and assessed to ensure that the course is not altered too much (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). Another approach to online instruction is the option to completely use the current content and structure created by another online instructor (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). According to Delaney-Klinger et al (2014), this approach assumes that the entirety of the course is provided to the new instructor with the intention that the materials will be used as the instructor sees fit and does not infringe on any

ownership expectations. When a course is adopted in its entirety, it saves time since there is no development and time spent modifying the course (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). According to Delaney-Klinger et al. (2014) "because the course is fully prepared, the instructor is able to focus on implementation and e-moderating, which are at the core of successful online experiences for students" (p. 48). This option can possibly enable the instructor to have more time to distinguish the most effective course elements for creating additional online courses (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). This would be significant for instructors that have minimal online teaching experience or will only be the instructor for the course very few times in the near future (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014).

According to Delaney-Klinger et al. (2014), there are important factors to consider when making the decision whether to create a new course, revise an existing course, or adopt an existing course in its entirely. Although there are no rules that are set in stone there are some considerations that can aid in guiding an instructors decision on which would be the best fit (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). An instructor should first evaluate how much time it will take to develop an online course and whether there is adequate time available (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). Since the development of a new course that begins from scratch takes the most time, an instructor must have adequate time to develop a course from scratch (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). According to Delaney-Klinger et al. (2014), "for most faculty members, these efforts come in combination with many other activities, such as face-to-face teaching, research, writing, and meeting service obligations" (p. 48). A second factor instructors should consider is the frequency with which the instructor will teach the course in the future (Delaney-

Klinger et al., 2014). Some teaching responsibilities involve long-term teaching loads while some courses require additional instructors to teach the course (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014). It is also important for instructors to consider their experience level or familiarity with the course (Delaney-Klinger et al., 2014).

Keengwe and Kidd (2010) reviewed literature on the topic of online learning and instruction. Keengwe and Kidd (2010) described distinctive aspects of online instruction and some of the barriers to online instruction, the revised faculty roles in online instruction, and some implications for online instruction. The reflections of Keengwe and Kidd (2010) pinpoint many effective strategies that can be used to help faculty transition from traditional pedagogical platforms in the tradition classroom to online instruction (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). According to Keengwe and Kidd (2010), some of the barriers to online instruction include poor faculty time management, absence of rewards, increased workload, lack of administrative support, increased cost, poor course quality, absence of student contact, and technological equipment concerns.

In order to overcome many of these barriers, it is vital that department heads pinpoint technology issues and solve these issues early; encourage effective communication between instructors and students; be aware of negative instructor dispositions and train instructors to overcome them; stress to all faculty the need for distance education courses and tenure and promotion should be provided according to online instructors that meet the workloads of instructors that teach in the classroom (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). According to Keengwe and Kidd (2010), "inadequate hardware and software, slow internet connections, lack of technical expertise among the instructors, and a lack of release time for instructors to develop and design their online

courses have been cited as barriers to faculty participation in developing and teaching online courses" (p. 535). To overcome these barriers, instructor support and the recommended training is vital (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).

According to Keengwe and Kidd (2010), online instructor duties can be designated under four categories; social, pedagogical, technical, and managerial. The pedagogical role expresses educational instruction although the social role takes into account the creation of a student friendly and social environment which is necessary for online learning (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). The managerial role includes outlining a schedule, keeping up with the students learning, establishing objectives, and designing rules while the technical role is concerned with instructors being skilled with the technology used in the classroom and ensuring that the students are as comfortable with the technology as the instructor (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).

According to Keengwe and Kidd (2010), online instructors conduct interactions between students, content, and technology. These tasks are categorized as cognitive, affective, and managerial (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).   Cognitive tasks involve activities that involve answering learner's questions; monitoring and revising learner's queries and replies to other student queries; analyzing and interpreting information; and assisting learners to engage with other learners on the topics discussed in the course (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Affective tasks are based on behavior and influence the way students relate to the instructor and other learners in the online course environment (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Managerial tasks include the instructor's role in motivating student participation and active engagement in course activities and communicating and interacting with other

support staff, and monitoring and evaluating student learning outcomes (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010).

According to Keengwe and Kidd (2010), instructors who are new to online learning environments need to plan to spend a good amount of time attempting to understand their different roles and responsibilities in the online forum of learning and teaching. Additionally, instructors developing and teaching online courses must remember that pedagogy is critical to the success of online instruction (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Instructors may need to modify the teaching methods they commonly practice in the traditional classroom and employ new skills that work best in an online course environment to effectively transition from traditional pedagogy to active online learning pedagogies (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). It is vital that online faculty be able to create a strong learning environment for all learners within the course community (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). When faculty have a deep understanding of online course design and delivery and the challenges of teaching online, they are more apt to be involved and become successful online instructors (Keengwe & Kidd, 2010). Keengwe and Kidd (2010) stated, "to aid faculty develop and teach online courses requires that instructional guides, professional development opportunities, and instructional materials are carefully designed to address all components of the learning and teaching process including pedagogy, course management, technology and the social dynamics" (p. 537).

Ng, Cheung, and Hew (2010) explored the use of online scaffolds in regards to a group of online students' unstructured problem-solving procedures in asynchronous online discussions (Ng et al., 2010). The outcome showed that the use of online scaffolds to model a desired learning strategy did not prove to make a significant difference in the

number of unstructured problem-solving procedures. Additionally, the results of the study were affected by the wrong selection of message labels and under-usage of sentence openers in the discussion area (Ng et al., 2010). The study found that clearer message labels and sentence openers that support the Socratic questioning approach can improve the use of online scaffolds (Ng et al., 2010).

Tu, Blocher and Gallagher (2010) examined the impact of threaded and flat-structure discussion boards on students learning. The results of the study showed that both formats enhanced and inhibited students' discussion within online discussion environments (Tu et al., 2010). Both the threaded and flat-structure discussion designs encouraged discussion between participants differently and both enabled learners to engage in meaningful and higher order communication (Tu et al., 2010). Their study suggests that learners should change how they see their role as learners and think of themselves as "network" learners while instructors should see online discussions as "network" discussions (Tu et al., 2010). Educators should encourage network learners to describe the organizational scaffolding of their network learning structures and environments so that they are clearly defined. According to Tu et al. (2010) network discussions must employ effective network instructional strategies.

Bennett and Santy (2009) conducted a case study that demonstrated the use of peer observation in online learning and teaching. The study discussed how peer observation can be applicable in enhancing online teaching and learning in health and other educational contexts (Bennett & Santy, 2009). According to Bennett and Santy (2009) vast amounts of literature on peer observation and a small amount of literature on online peer observation has introduced diverse approaches which causes complexities in

health education settings (Bennett & Santy, 2009). The authors, which are lecturers from two different departments in the same university, shared their experiences of online peer observation and after face-to-face discussions of different areas they documented a review of a specific aspect of each others' chosen learning activities (Bennett & Santy, 2009).

Goldman (2011) examined best practices for finding a balance between quality and workload in asynchronous online discussions. According to Goldman (2011), an appropriate balance between quality and workload should be measured by value perception, satisfaction and retention of students and instructors. Edwards, Perry, and Janzen (2011) examined findings on excellence in online teaching with findings from an earlier study focused on exemplary face-to-face educators. According to Edwards, Perry, and Janzen (2011), exemplary online educators influence learning through their expertise in a particular subject and their ability to relay a strong online presence in their online classroom.

Baran, Correia, and Thompson (2013) examined model online teachers' transition to online teaching in an effort to pinpoint the strategies that contributed to their success. Two central questions were examined: What successful practices do model online teachers employ in their online teaching? How do model online teachers transition into online teaching in a way that creates successful practices? The study implemented case studies on six exemplary online teachers within a large research university in the United States (Baran et al., 2013). The findings indicated that success in the online teaching environment was often linked to the instructors' ability to change the role they normally play and reinvent themeselves within an online environment (Baran et al., 2013).

According to Baran et al. (2013)

> Their portrayal of the teacher self, both built on a plethora of previous experiences and reformed with the affordances and limitations of the online environment, went through a process whereby teachers were constantly challenged to make themselves heard, known, and felt by their students. (p. 2)

Casey and Kroth (2013) researched techniques experienced online instructors implemented in order to establish a strong presence in their online classrooms. Casey and Kroth (2013) conducted interviews with eight experienced online instructors from the business and education departments of at their respective university. Casey and Kroth (2013) also reviewed the syllabus used in each of the instructor's online course. The findings indicated four categories that emerged from the data: planning and organization, communication, collaborative work, and student self direction (Casey & Kroth, 2013). According to Casey and Kroth (2013), online teaching, like classroom teaching, requires planning and organization and ongoing and consistent communication with students. Ekmekci (2013) examined online course structure and the role it might play in improving teaching presence in online learning environments. According to Ekmekci (2013) "given that asynchronous online learning will likely be an integral part of education for the foreseeable future, instructors involved in this medium need to pay special attention to the way their teaching presence is perceived by learners" (p. 36). These studies emphasize the need to further investigate the teaching practices of online instruction to better understand which skills and strategies are necessary for traditional college instructors to transition effectively into online instruction.

Importance of Social presence in an Online Class Environment

Social presence is a vital element in an online classroom environment. According to Dunlap and Lowenthal (2009), "although learning management systems offer several tools that support social learning and student engagement, the scope, structure, and functionality of those tools can inhibit and restrain just-in-time social connections and interactions" (p. 1). This statement seems to support the idea that not all tools designed to support social presence enhance learning in an online learning environment. Dunlap and Lowenthal (2009) used twitter as a tool to support social presence in an online course. Dunlap and Lowenthal (2009) found that Twitter is a powerful tool for establishing informal, free-flowing, just-in-time communication between and among students and faculty. Dunlap and Lowenthal (2009) concluded that formal and systematic research is needed to truly assess the value of using Twitter in the classroom as well as its relationship to social presence.

Ko (2012) conducted a case study on 12 French as a foreign language (FFL) beginners at a Taiwanese university. The study investigated the impacts of synchronous Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) with webcam and headset mode learning environments on learners' perception of social presence (Ko, 2012). The participants were divided into three groups and they conducted tasks in three different learning environments (video/audio, audio and face-to-face) during an academic semester (Ko, 2012). All participants conducted the same task in synchronous text chat. The participants' interview transcriptions, learning journals and the instructor's observation journal provided information about their perception of social presence (Ko, 2012). The learners' perception of social presence directly affected the results of the study (Ko,

2012). Most of the participants favored CMC with webcam and headset mode because they viewed the availability of their partner's facial expressions as beneficial (Ko, 2012). According to Ko (2012), the differences in the environments are reflected in how the learner perceives social presence.

Peck (2012) studied the effects of social presence through the implementation of a social networking site within a university online course and a university traditional class. The goal of this implementation was to increase online participation and increase student engagement in online and in traditional face-to-face classes. The social networking site was designed to cause progression in student participation culture and increase engagement among students in online and in face-to-face classes. Peck (2012) found that the posts that had the highest responses contained titles that were very short and implemented directives and verbal details that suggest immediacy. The posts that contained responses that asked for assistance produced low responses or no responses (Peck, 2012). The posts that contained the highest amount of responses were the posts that contained controversial subject matters (Peck, 2012). Gender appeared to be a factor, since blogs posted by males had much higher response rates than blogs posted by females (Peck, 2012). According to Peck, "the research found that the online site produced discursive shifts in "real life" interactions, and provided a speaking-space for quiet students" (p. 1). During the course of the study, students became more comfortable with the site and more social networking occurred sparking more student participation in the online and traditional face-to-face forums (Peck, 2012).

The importance of instructor social presence in an online learning environment is a widely discussed area of concern in regards to online learning. Lear, Isernhagen,

LaCost, and King (2009) conducted a study on 241 students enrolled in 32 online classes. Lear et al. (2009) found that the instructor elements with the most impact were instructional designs for interaction and evidence of instructor engagement. According to Lear et al. (2009), "the study also found that the instructor was mentioned by 81% of the students, either individually or in conjunction with content and/or other students, as a major factor in helping students to develop community in the online environment" (p. 95). According to their study, there is a correlation between instructor social presence and students developing a positive comfort level for learning in an online environment (Lear et al., 2009).

Cobb (2011) suggests a correlation between instructor social presence and students developing a positive comfort level for learning in an online environment. Cobb (2011) implemented a descriptive, correlational design to sample and survey students in a Registered Nurse: Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-BSN) program who were taking any of the web-based nursing courses offered during the semester (Cobb, 2011). The purpose of Cobb's study was to assess social presence in online nursing courses and its relationship to student satisfaction and perceived learning (Cobb, 2011). The findings suggest that establishing comfort and a sense of community in the online course may be more important to perceived learning than instructor performance and communication within the medium (Cobb, 2011). Cobb's study supports the findings conducted by Lear et al. (2009).

In accordance with several research studies on instructor social presence, the impacts of social presence not only have the ability to provide a sense of community it also impacts learning. Pollard, Blevins, Connor, and McGovern (2013) explored the

relationship between instruction and social presence of the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework, learner motivation, and self-reported learning. Their study surveyed 1472 online MBA students (Pollard et. al, 2013). The results of the surveys indicated that teaching presence, social presence, and learner motivation, collectively, were significant predictors of self-reported learning (Pollard et al., 2013). Mackey and Freyberg (2010) investigated student learning responses and social presence during a graduate-level engineering course taught via traditional and synchronous distance-learning formats. They specifically looked at quantification of participation, academic performance assessment based on homework and exam scores, and survey-based assessments of student perceptions of the course (Mackey & Freyberg, 2010). Based on the findings, Mackey and Freyberg (2010) concluded that "their findings do not suggest that cognitive learning is strongly affected by social presence, implementing strategies to enhance social presence may improve the overall learning experience and make distance learning more enjoyable for students" (p. 33)

Mennecke, Triplett, Hassall, Conde, and Heer (2011) support the view of social presence having an effective influence on online learning. According to Mennecke et al. (2011), social presence accounts for a higher level of perceptual engagement that users experience as they engage in activity-based social interaction in virtual environments.

Whipp and Lorentz (2009) examined three online instructors and how they differed in their use of cognitive and social supports as well as how those differences relate to student perceptions of performance, seeking help, and support (Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). The primary data sources for their study included each instructor's course postings, in-depth interviews with each instructor, an observation of each

instructor's field notes on course discussions, student interviews, and an accounting of each final student grades (Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). Secondary data sources incorporated the use of archived course documents and student discussion postings (Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). According to the findings from the study although all instructors apply strategies that assist learning, they vary in their questioning technique, application of instruction, concentration on group dynamics, and support for task structuring (Whipp & Lorentz, 2009). The instructors' variation in teaching presence caused differences across courses in, students seeking help in course discussions, student perceived notions regarding support, and final course grades (Whipp & Lorentz, 2009).

According to Mennecke et al. (2011),

> The social presence theory suggests that a communicative act in a virtual environment builds on the embodied sense of self and is realized through co-participation in a particular context that is defined, in part, by the symbolic meaning associated with the space that is shared and tools that are used. (p. 414)

Leong (2011) also realized the importance of social presence theory in online learning. Leong (2011) surveyed 294 students who were taking a predominantly online course that included some face-to-face sessions (online hybrid) but excluded traditional face-to-face courses supplemented by some online course components. According to the study by Leong (2011), a learner's interest affects social presence and satisfaction directly. Interest of learners appears to influence satisfaction indirectly through social presence and cognitive absorption (Leong, 2011).

Methods Used to Engage Students in an Online Class Environment

There are several methods that can be implemented in an online classroom to encourage student engagement. According to Rose & Smith (2007 as cited by Mokoena, 2013), students in online courses should be motivated to contribute to class discussions. The main focus for institutions and instructors should be specifically focused on how to produce increased engagement and sense of community, resulting in enhanced student satisfaction and persistence in online programs (Young & Bruce, 2011). According to Lane, Hunt and Farris (2011), "Despite all the electronic distractions present, if classroom activities are fun and interesting, students quickly become engaged" (p. 115). Balan and Metcalfe (2012) conducted a study identifying teaching methods that engage entrepreneurship students. According to Biggs (2003 as cited by Balan and Metcalfe, 2012), it is desirable that teaching methods engage students so that they can best learn how to deal with the complexities of new venture creation.

Lindquist and Long (2011) created a digital educational tool to aid student engagement with online primary sources. To guide the creation of the tool students and faculty were interviewed before the creation of the tool. To assess the functionality of this tool it was incorporated for use by the faculty and students enrolled in humanities courses at the University of Colorado. To gather data the users participated in semi-structured interviews concerning their use of the tool (Lindquist & Long, 2011). The findings in their study suggest that primary sources have the ability to cause students to show more interest in the subject matter and to become excited about learning. Primary sources can enhance learning. Although primary sources can be beneficial, to learning they can

present unwanted challenges if the primary source is not easy to use and designed to support faculty goals (Lindquist & Long, 2011).

Vitale (2010) examined literature on key elements used to plan, organize, and manage asynchronous online courses, especially for educators new to teaching online and the faculty that mentor new online instructors. Course engagement and faculty-student online communication strategies are explored (Vitale, 2010). According to Vitale (2010), clear course engagement strategies create a positive student learning environment and are foundational to building an online learning community. The early establishment of faculty-student engagement guidelines helps faculty new to the online classroom to quickly manage the online environment (Vitale, 2010). Additionally, keeping the lines of communication open with students encourages students and faculty to learn more about each other (Vitale, 2010). Active discussion and communication provides students with a comfortable environment to ask questions and correspond with the instructor as well as other classmates (Vitale, 2010). According to Vitale (2010), discussion threads for each major course assignment will provide students with a continuous opportunity to clarify the requirements with the instructor and each other (Vitale, 2010). This strategy could potentially decrease the amount of faculty time spent responding to queries since all students have continuous posting access (Vitale, 2010). The use of icebreaker strategies encourages student participation (Vitale, 2010). Effective icebreaker strategies include the following: encouraging students to post a personal introduction during the first week of class, instructing students to find and respond to another student's posting, and encouraging students to find and read important course documents in which they must comment and ask questions concerning the documents (Vitale, 2010). Additionally,

providing an ungraded quiz during the first week about important course policies and procedures may also stimulate course participation (Vitale, 2010).

Pearson (2010) discussed the use of blogs with over 263 students for four semesters in an introduction to social issues course. Pearson (2010) detailed how blogs can effectively be used to enhance skill building, student engagement, and participation. An overview of the blog included student's evaluation of the blog assignments, a discussion of the challenges and limits incorporating technology, and the use of blogs as a course writing requirement (Pearson, 2010). The results demonstrated that blogs can be a useful tool that provides students with an alternative venue for discussing complex issues in a safe forum where students can collaborate with others and practice the skills of summarization and argumentation in written forms (Pearson, 2010). Because the blog provided a level of anonymity, students were more opt to express their genuine thoughts and viewpoints without the pressure conforming to other's expectations. The use of blogs also provided a way to extend the time students usually spend exchanging ideas (Pearson, 2010).

Ladhani, Chhatwal, Vyas, Iqbal, Tan, and Diserens (2011) examined how role-play in formal educational activities in an online setting might influence learning. Role-play was incorporated in an online web-based discussion forum as a tool to motivate learning and to increase participation. Faculty members moderated online discussion on the subject of community-based medical education using an online role-play exercise with other faculty members. Thirty-six out of 102 students actively participated in the online forum. This exceeded the participation in other online forums. The results of the study suggest that online role-play encouraged participation among the diverse group of

faculty members. Based on the findings role-playing can be an effective tool for collaboration among faculty members in the online environment (Ladhani et al, 2011).

Liu, Richard, Curtis, and Lee (2007) used a case study approach to investigate participants' perceptions of creating learning societies within online courses in an MBA program. They found that students felt a sense of belonging to a learning community when they took online courses in this program. Bonnel and Boehm (2011) conducted a study to discover how seasoned online faculty provides feedback to online students. The findings support and extend the guidelines for best practices in online education and center on multisource feedback strategies during course design (Bonnel & Boehm, 2011). These studies emphasize the need to further investigate the teaching practices of online instruction to better understand which skills and strategies are necessary for traditional college instructors to transition effectively into online instruction.

Summary

The need for additional research on online education is vital to the education industry. Instructors who teach primarily in the traditional classroom are being encouraged to also teach online and some classroom instructors are transitioning to teaching online entirely. The skills that are deemed effective in a traditional classroom do not always translate over to effective skills in an online learning environment. Since students and the educator interact differently in a traditional classroom than in an online classroom; online educators must device new methods to effectively educate students in an online classroom environment.

How educators communicate with students is crucial in both the traditional classroom and in the online environment but the method and frequency of

communication differs dramatically in each setting. In a recent study comparing online education to conventional education, how educators communicate with students in an online environment is one of the key ingredients to success in online teaching.

According to Dykman and Davis (2008),

> When there is a failure to communicate expectations and the student is not doing what the teacher intends, the situation can deteriorate without either party realizing that there is a problem until it is too late. In a conventional classroom, there are ample face-to-face opportunities to reinforce expectations and clarify misunderstandings. And students can easily check with other students for clarification of what they do not understand. In an electronic classroom, these contacts are not so easily made. (p. 157)

The qualifications for teaching in a traditional classroom and an online classroom also differ dramatically. For example, traditional classroom educators must be skilled lecturers whereas online instructors may never be tasked with lecturing the class through spoken word. Additionally, online instructors must be skilled at providing timely responses to students via electronic communication in various forms such as discussion forums, e-mail, and announcements whereas classroom educators have fewer electronic transmissions. As the number of virtual schools increase, so too do the number of teachers entering the field of online distance education.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Since there is a large body of scholarly literature on the phenomenon of traditional educators transitioning to online instruction, there is a need for a synthesis of knowledge from research and practice. A qualitative meta-synthesis design was appropriate for this research study because the research questions and approach position towards the appropriateness of meta-synthesis research. Current knowledge on this phenomenon can be advanced by the generation of a new interpretive synthesis through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous qualitative studies. Through a meta-synthesis design, the researcher accessed a larger population and data source that provided a better discernment of the challenges, practices and strategies that traditional educators experience to successfully transition into effective online instructors. The more data available to the researcher, the more the researcher could understand the whole experience of educators who make the transition from traditional instruction to online instruction. Additionally, this research design aided in pinpointing strategies of traditional instruction and thrashed out those skills that effectively translate into effective concrete online teaching strategies.

Alternative research designs such as meta-analysis, quantitative analysis and mixed method analysis were rejected for this study because these types of studies do not provide adequate methods of in-depth observation and examination to advance towards the best analysis and understanding of best practices of the phenomenon in this study. Quantitative research addresses research objectives through experimental measurement that involve numerical measurement and analysis (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2010). This study was not concerned with numerical measurement and analysis but

rather in-depth analysis of multiple cases. Although the implementation of the techniques from both qualitative and quantitative analysis can present diverse findings this research instead focused on identifying themes (similarities/differences) within cases and across cases. Lastly, the measures used in qualitative research are usually more adaptable to change and include more complex explanations than quantitative research (Zikmund et al., 2010). Although there are other approaches that can be used to provide a summation or contrast of findings of a collection of similar studies, according to Thorne (2008) "qualitative meta-synthesis explicit objective is to synthesize new knowledge on the basis of products that are interpretive accounts of cases, events, or phenomena" (p. 510).

Research Methods and Design(s)

This study followed a qualitative meta-synthesis approach. A qualitative meta-synthesis study refers to cross-case analysis or synthesis of various qualitative studies on the same subject (Patton, 2002). Qualitative meta-synthesis enables the researcher to build theory through identification and extrapolation of lessons learned from various qualitative studies (Patton, 2002). The lessons learned from each case or qualitative study is used to generate generic factors that contribute to program effectiveness or program non-effectiveness (Patton, 2002). Noblit and Hare (1988) described qualitative meta-synthesis analysis as "meta-ethnography in which the challenge is to retain the uniqueness and holism of accounts even as we synthesize them in the translations" (p. 7). Through this qualitative meta-synthesis, it was essential to understand the experience of traditional online educators who transitioned into online educators to distinguish the skills and strategies that contribute to effective online instruction. The quantitative

method was not appropriate for this research because quantitative analysis does not devote adequate methods of in-depth observation and examination to advance towards the better understanding of best practices of the phenomenon in this study.

The research questions in this study oriented towards examining scholarly peer reviewed qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies of online educators who had experience teaching in a traditional classroom. This data was used to identify experiences of traditional educators who transitioned into an online instructor role. A critical theoretical approach provided a basis for the study in order to provide a window into the online college classroom environment in order to contribute to making things better within online college classrooms. Understanding the practice of online instruction and the challenges of online instruction aided in the interpretation of the effective strategies and practices that work best in an online classroom.

Population

The population for this study was derived from scholarly qualitative peer reviewed archived studies on the phenomenon of traditional educators who transitioned into higher education online educators. The initial criteria for selection of studies was based on the selection of only qualitative scholarly peer reviewed research studies that contained qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies of experiences of traditional educators who transitioned into online instruction. An inclusion and exclusion criteria for relevance and credibility to the research topic was established when selecting qualitative studies specific to the research.

Sample

The data for this qualitative meta-synthesis was derived from various published scholarly peer reviewed qualitative research studies on the phenomenon of traditional educators who transitioned into higher education online educators. In-depth search strategies using multilevel keyword searches of journals across a range of databases and information sources such as Ebrary, EBSCOHost, Gale Academic OneFile, ProQuest, RefWorks, SAGE, SpringerLink, and Web of Knowledge was conducted. A target of about 10 to 12 scholarly peer reviewed qualitative research studies that were published in the last six years and contain interviews, focus groups, or case studies were included in the meta-synthesis. The target of ten to twelve studies was chosen to incorporate the descriptive phenomenology method. According to Noblit and Hare (1988 as cited by Walsh and Downe, 2005) "descriptive phenomenology uses small sample sizes to elucidate the detail lived experiences and attempts to tease out an essence in phenomena, uncontaminated by the researcher's presuppositions" (p. 207). According to Sandelowski, Docherty, and Emden (1997 as cited by Bondas & Hall, 2007), each study contains a great deal of valuable information therefore 10 studies are recommended. According to Paterson, Thorne, Canam, and Jillings (2001 as cited by Bondas & Hall, 2007), 12 studies are recommended when conducting a meta-synthesis. Keywords that related to the experiences of traditional instructors who transitioned to online instruction, difficulties and challenges of transitioning to online instruction, lessons learned during the transition to online instruction, strategies that contribute to effective transition were used pinpoint qualitative scholarly peer reviewed research studies that contained

qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies of experiences of traditional

educators who transitioned into online instruction.

Materials/Instruments

The method used to select qualitative research studies for this study consisted of

the selection of only qualitative scholarly peer reviewed research studies that contained

qualitative interviews, focus groups, or case studies of experiences of traditional

educators who transitioned into online instruction. Traditional educators who have taught

for at least one year in the traditional classroom before transitioning to online instruction

were included in the study. Additionally, traditional instructors may teach solely online

or in the traditional classroom as well as online.

Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

The methodological strategy for conducting this qualitative meta-synthesis

involved in-depth search strategies across a range of databases and information sources.

To ensure validity, only scholarly peer reviewed research studies that contain qualitative

interviews, focus groups, or case studies of experiences of traditional educators who

transitioned into online instruction were included in the synthesis. The following

electronic databases were searched for the years 2009 - 2015: Ebrary, EBSCOHost, Gale

Academic OneFile, ProQuest, RefWorks, SAGE, SpringerLink, and Web of Knowledge.

The following keyword phrases were used to search for scholarly peer-reviewed

qualitative studies: face-to-face to online teaching, face-to-face to online instruction,

transitioning to online instruction, moving from face-to-face to online teaching, face to

face instruction vs. online instruction, teaching online, understanding the role of an online

instructor, challenges for online educators, online teaching strategies. Each scholarly

peer-reviewed qualitative study received systematic attention (Bondas & Hall, 2007). To

determine appropriateness for inclusion in the study, the following screening questions

were applied to each research study: Is the study full-text, scholarly, and peer-reviewed?

Does the research study fall within the years 2009 – 2015? Do the participants in the

study have experience teaching in a traditional classroom and online? Is the research

study a qualitative study that contains interviews, focus groups, or case studies?

Critical Appraisal

Additionally, a critical appraisal based on the approach by Sandelowski and

Barroso (2002) was used to determine inclusion and exclusion criteria for relevance and

credibility. Within each category of relevance and credibility, indicators were used to

form the critical appraisal findings (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002). Each study was

examined within the following categories of relevance: The amount of information the

study provided on the description of participants, future research suggested, and whether

the findings related back to the content in the study. Each study was examined within the

following categories of credibility: The amount of information the study provided on the

recruitment and data collection, the data analysis process, and thick description of

findings (see Table 1).

Table 1

Results of Critical Appraisal

	Credibility			Relevance		
	Recruitment and data collection	Data analysis process	Findings involve think description	Description of participants	Future research suggested	Findings related back to content
Author						
Baron, E Correia, A Thompson, A (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crawley, F Fewell, M Sugar, W (2009)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
De Gagne, J Walters, K (2013)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meyer, K (2011)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Schidt, S Hodge, E Tschida, C (2013)	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	✓
Simon, E (2011)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Sword, T (2012)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Uca-Gunes, E Gumus, S (2010)	✓	✓	✓	✓	O	✓

Key: ✓ = sufficient detail and explanation given: ✗ = no information provided O = some detail and explanation given.

Assumptions

To capture the experiences of participant's in this study, data was collected from 8 scholarly peer reviewed qualitative studies containing interviews, focus groups, or case studies on the phenomenon of traditional educators who transitioned into higher education online educators.

Limitations

A limitation to this meta-synthesis study was locating the desired amount of qualitative studies that contain interviews, focus groups, or case studies analysis on educators who transitioned from traditional instruction to online instruction and additionally met the criteria for relevance and credibility. To mitigate this limitation, the primary data sources for this research were expanded to contain a wider range of scholarly databases and the timeline for selecting studies was expanded to include an additional year. Additionally, a lesser number of studies were included in the meta-synthesis. To ensure validity, only scholarly peer reviewed research studies were included in the synthesis. A total of 8 studies were included in the synthesis.

Delimitations

The target number of studies for the proposed meta-synthesis was 10 to 12 scholarly peer-reviewed qualitative studies containing interviews, focus groups, or case studies on the phenomenon of traditional educators who transitioned into online educators. The boundaries for the study included only peer-reviewed qualitative studies published in the last 6 years that contained interviews, focus groups, or case studies on the experiences of traditional educators who transitioned into online educators. Since a final selection of 10 to 12 scholarly peer-reviewed qualitative studies could not be

obtained, a lesser number of studies were included in the meta-synthesis. The boundaries

for the study remained the same even though a lesser number of studies were obtained.

Ethical Assurances

It was important to be mindful of the ethical concerns that related to this

qualitative meta-synthesis study. First, it was vital to ensure that only scholarly peer

reviewed studies were synthesized in this study. To ensure that the research studies

included in this research are scholarly peer reviewed studies, only databases that provide

a mechanism for singling out scholarly peer reviewed studies from highly regarded

journals and publications were used to gather data for this study. Secondly, it was

important to ensure another author's work was not harmed by misrepresenting claims

made within the peer reviewed studies included in the meta-synthesis. It was essential

that each and every claim and conclusion the researcher made be traceable to the data

(Shank, 2006). According to Shank (2006), "It is important to leave not only a final

record of your work, but also a working record" (p. 119). It is critical that an Institutional

Review Board (IRB) form was completed and submitted to the IRB committee of

Northcentral University. All research conducted by faculty mentors, faculty, staff, and

learners must be evaluated and approved by a constituted IRB committee before any

investigations can be performed.

Summary

This study followed a qualitative meta-synthesis approach. A qualitative meta-

synthesis study refers to cross-case analysis or synthesis of various qualitative studies on

the same subject (Patton, 2002). Qualitative meta-synthesis enables the researcher to

build theory through identification and extrapolation of lessons learned from various

qualitative studies (Patton, 2002). Current knowledge on the phenomenon of traditional

educators transitioning to online instruction can be advanced by the generation of a new

interpretive synthesis through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous

qualitative studies. Through a meta-synthesis design, a larger population and data source

can be accessed providing a better discernment of the challenges, practices and strategies

that traditional educators experience to successfully transition into effective online

instructors. Throughout this study, it was important to be mindful of validity threats and

ethical concerns that related to this qualitative meta-synthesis study. To ensure validity,

only scholarly peer reviewed research studies were included in the synthesis. Each

qualitative research study was given systematic attention (Bondas & Hall, 2007). An

inclusion and exclusion criteria for relevance and credibility to the research topic was

established when selecting qualitative studies specific to the research. It was important to

be mindful of the ethical concerns that relates to this qualitative meta-synthesis study. It

was vital to ensure that only scholarly peer reviewed studies were synthesized in this

study. It was also important to ensure that there was no harm done to another author's

work by misrepresenting claims made within the peer reviewed studies included in the

meta-synthesis. It was essential that each and every claim and conclusion made be

traceable to the data (Shank, 2006). According to Shank (2006), "It is important to leave

not only a final record of your work, but also a working record" (p. 119).

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this qualitative meta-synthesis study was to report on the experiences of traditional higher education online educators who have transitioned into online instructors to provide a synthesis of effective strategies that contribute to effective transition to assist educators in developing their online teaching skills. A qualitative meta-synthesis design was employed for this research because the research questions and approach position towards the appropriateness of meta-synthesis research. Current knowledge on this phenomenon can be advanced by the generation of a new interpretive synthesis through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous qualitative studies. Through a meta-synthesis design, the researcher accessed a larger population and data source that provided a better discernment of the challenges, practices and strategies that traditional educators experience to successfully transition into effective online instructors.

The research questions in this study guided the research. The answers to the research questions aided in guiding traditional instructors into becoming effective online instructors. The expected outcome for these questions is to pinpoint best practices and methodologies in the field of online education.

Research Questions

Q1. What are the challenges for online educators who previously taught in a traditional classroom when attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation?

Q2. What teaching strategies should instructors acquire/incorporate to be effective in an online classroom environment?

Results

Studies Included in the Meta-synthesis

Eight qualitative research studies were included in the meta-synthesis. Fifteen

studies were initially identified during the preliminary screening process. Four studies

were eliminated because the studies did not provide information on whether every

participant had prior classroom teaching experience. Three studies were eliminated

because the findings did not contain enough thick description. The final 8 studies

included in the meta-synthesis provided sufficient descriptions of participants;

recruitment and data collection, data analysis process, and thick descriptions of findings

(see Figure 1). Although most of the eight studies suggested future research, 3 of the 8

studies did not make recommendations for future research. In Table 2, the characteristics

of the eight research studies are summarized. All of the research studies used qualitative

research, had a similar purpose, and used similar methods to gather data. The totality of

the research studies contained over 60 participants.

Table 2

Characteristics of Studies

| Author and year	Research title	Purpose of research	Research design and data collection	Number of Participants in study
Baron, E Correia, A Thompson, A (2013)	Tracing successful online teaching in higher education: voices of exemplary online teachers	Examine exemplary online teacher's transition to online teaching.	Qualitative multiple case study approach/interviews	6
Crawley, F Fewell, M Sugar, W (2009)	Researcher and researched: The Phenomenology of change from face-to-face to online instruction	Report on the transformation over time of one senior science educator from face-to-face to online instruction.	Phenomenology/interviews	1
De Gagne, J Walters, K (2013)	The lived experience of online educators: Hermeneutic Phenomenology	Examine experiences of educators who teach online	Qualitative Hermeneutic Phenomenological approach/interviews	11
Meyer, K (2011)	The influence of online teaching on faculty productivity	Examine how teaching online impacts productivity.	Qualitative methodology/interviews	10
Schidt, S Hodge, E Tschida, C (2013)	How university faculty members developed their own teaching skills	Understand the experiences of instructors who move from face-to-face to online teaching.	Qualitative approach/focus groups	3 groups
Simon, E (2011)	Preparing future foreign language faculty to teach online	Examine the experience of 5 instructors preparing to teach online.	Qualitative case study/survey and interviews	5
Sword, T (2012)	The transition to online teaching as experienced by nurse educators	To explore the perceptions experiences of nurse faculty as they transition from traditional classroom to online teaching.	Phenomenology/interviews	20
Uca-Gunes, E Gumus, S (2010)	Instructors' transformations during early online teaching experiences.	To examine instructors transformations during early online teaching.	Qualitative case study/semi structured interviews	7
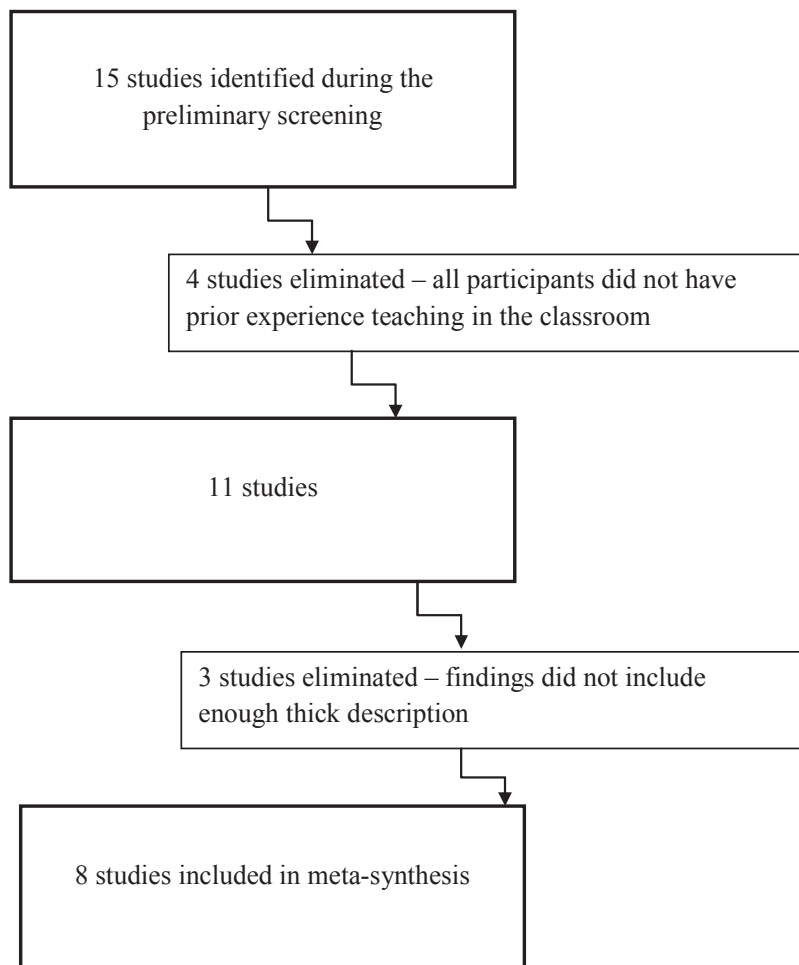
Figure 1. Flow chart of final selection of studies.

Synthesis of Themes

A cross case analysis technique commonly referred to as meta-ethnography was used to synthesize the eight research studies in this study (Noblit & Hare, 1988). Noblit and Hare (1988) described qualitative meta-synthesis analysis as "meta-ethnography in which the challenge is to retain the uniqueness and holism of accounts even as we synthesize them in the translations" (p. 7). The synthesis entailed reading each study in its entirety while taking notes within the study and highlighting important ideas relevant to the study.

A second reading of the studies fleshed out information that pertained to the following research questions: What are the challenges for online educators who previously taught in a traditional classroom when attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation? What teaching strategies should instructors acquire/incorporate to be effective in an online classroom environment? During the second reading of each study, eight sheets of paper served as instruments to take notes. On one side of each paper, challenges of online instructors were noted. On the other side of each paper, strategies used to overcome common challenges were noted. Four themes presented themselves from the synthesis of the eight research studies. The following themes encompass the experience of traditional instructors transitioning to online instruction: increased workload, changing roles and skills, enhanced support and training, and various communication and engagement strategies (see Figure 2).

Research Question 1

What are the challenges for online educators who previously taught in a traditional classroom when attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation?

Theme 1

Increased Workload. A challenge for transitioning online educators attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation was instructors' ability to adapt to an increased workload. Almost all of the research studies mentioned that participants felt that their workload increased while teaching online. Many of the participants were surprised at how much more time it takes to teach online than to teach in the classroom. Participants mentioned that online instruction requires more time to prepare to teach online, grade activities, and interact with students in an engaging manner. According to De Gagne and Walters (2010), a participant stated,

> It's very convenient for me but also labor-intensive. It does require a lot more time for me to be personable, to interact with them through different visual cues, different sounds, pictures, and ways of presenting the material and that is very labor intensive (p.361).

According to Meyer (2012), one participant stated,

> I've put some more time and thought and energy into designing the courses and more work into updating the shell. In an on-campus course, you just change the data on the syllabus and you walk in and teach. So I think my own productivity

and time spent on teaching has increased. It's more than what I spend on on-campus classes (p. 43).

According to Sword (2012) participates stated,

Online equals double my time. Probably I had a misconception that teaching online was going to save me time and it was just the opposite, it actually takes more time to teach online than it does in the classroom (p. 269).

According to Baran, Correia, and Thompson (2011), participants mentioned that there was more time and workload involved in designing and teaching online courses. All of the participants felt the need to devote additional time to planning and developing the course materials in advance.

According to Schmidt, Hodge, and Tschida (2013),

Focus group participants agreed that the finding of different ways to connect with students along with the changes to course content and advances in technology mean that they spend much more time on their online courses than they would have in similar face-to-face courses. One participant noted that her online courses were continually evolving due to book updates in the field and new content being developed, but also due to new technologies becoming available (p. 134).

One participant mentioned that grading was more time consuming online (Crawley, Fewell, & Sugar, 2009). According to Crawley et al. (2009), "retrieving assignments was only the beginning. Reading, scoring, and returning assignments in this new electronic environment presented additional problems and required this instructor to explore new ways of managing communications (p.171). Uca-Gunes and Gumas (2010) mentioned

that some of the participants' academic research in their field suffered as a result of an increased work load in the online classroom.

When adapting to an increased workload, participants stated that setting boundaries with students and time management are key strategies. According to De Gagne and Walters (2010), one participant stated,

> I tell them when I am available, when I am in my office, that they can call me, they can e-mail me at these times and I'll get back to them. And I also tell them that I am not available on the weekend, you know that is my family time. They really seem to respect that I have a life outside of that (p. 360).

According to De Gagne and Walters (2010), another participant stated, "You should add your workload slowly so you don't get over your head, and learn to be an excellent time manager" (p. 360).

According to De Gagne & Walters (2010) another participant stated,

> I expect my students to give me at least 24 to 48 hours because I know they shouldn't expect me to be able to be available 24 hours and 7 days. So I set the limit up front but I think it's like a war… I mean war in a way, in responding to those emails and also giving comments on their papers (p. 360).

According to Meyer (2012), a participant stated, "You never shut down… So it is really an issue of time management. I've settled into a rhythm … I have to be in virtually every day" (p. 44).

Theme 2

Changing Roles and Skills. Another challenge for transitioning online educators attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student

motivation and participation was instructors' ability to adapt to new roles as a teacher and acquire new skills that are specific to teaching online. Participants commonly experienced the need to reinvent themselves as online instructors. Online teaching tended to be more custom-made to the student than face-to-face teaching (De Gagne & Walters, 2010). Participants described their role in the online classroom as more of a learning facilitator or coach (De Gagne & Walters, 2010). According to De Gagne and Walters (2010), one participant stated,

> I love how my role is redefined in this environment. I am not a lecturer delivering direct instruction each class. Instead, I am a one-on-one guide, providing feedback, and pats on the back along the way. I firmly believe that we learn best in this environment and I love that the online modalities encourage this type of learning (p. 362).

Participants needed to learn to teach in a new way and obtain new skills to engage students in an online classroom environment (Sword, 2012). According to Sword (2012), participates lost familiar and usual ways of teaching when transitioning to online teaching. One participant who is a online nurse instructor stated, "it was like flying blind and it was almost like being a new nurse all over again, where I didn't have a clue what I was doing and yet it was my job" (Sword, 2012, p. 269). According to Crawley et al. (2009), the participant's willingness to abandon previous patterns of practice made it possible to imagine new ways of doing things, ask questions, and seek guidance. According to Schmidt et al. (2013),

> Most participates agreed that with experience came more strategies and options they could employ. One participant summed up her feelings about teaching

online versus face-to-face as follows: It's like throwing darts at a dart board.

You're just trying to find one way to hit a bull's eye with each and every student.

(p. 134).

One participant mentioned that online student profile had an effect on their teaching style (Uca-Gunes & Gumas, 2010). According to Uca-Gunes and Gumas (2010), a participate stated, "in face-to-face classes, he was used to lecture to students which have similar profile level. But he realized that, students profile and level ranges can be quite wide in this online system" (p. 842).

According to Baran et al. (2011) a participant stated,

Think about what you are doing and think about your ownership of it. The role

you play as a person versus the technology's role and the content's role. Don't

ever factor yourself out. Because the minute you factor yourself out, you've just

made your course into a textbook. If there is no role for you as a teacher or you as

a human, you are not really teaching and you don't really exist. You become just

like an automated grading machine. Don't let yourself just become a machine.

You always have to take ownership of your class and ownership of the experience

of those people, people-to-people and people-to-you (p. 29).

According to Baran et al. a participant stated,

You got to know what you are teaching or I don't know how you are going to do

it. Because you can't organize the class well in terms of the structure if you don't

know what's important what you want them to know and how you want them to

work with this. Because, you have to know how to engage them in it (p. 21).

Theme 3

      Enhanced Support and Training. Another challenge for transitioning online educators attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation was acquiring enhanced support and training. Participates in this study often mentioned the importance of enhanced support and training when transitioning from traditional face-to-face instruction to online instruction. The importance of faculty mentoring, curriculum design training, pedagogy training, computer training, and faculty development stood out as important types of training for successful transition to online instruction. According to Sword (2012),

> Making the transition to online teaching necessitated many resources, including mentors, administrative support, information technology staff, software platform support, policies and procedures, and peer faculty support. When asked about the availability of resources to help with the transition to online teaching, responses included: No, that's been kind of a rocky area as well. I've done it all on my own and I did a lot of stumbling and they weren't there when I needed them (p. 270).

According to Meyer (2012), participants stated,

> I don't feel there's enough emphasis on pedagogy and instructional design and curriculum design. Having a Ph.D. does not mean faculty members are prepared to teach (p. 44). Two persons noted that learning how to design online courses had allowed them to achieve efficiencies in the use of their time (p. 44).

According to De Gagne and Walters (2010) one participant stated, "I usually attend summer workshops and implement new online teaching strategies for the following fall classes. By attending workshops, I was able to get some updated information and skills

that are useful for teaching development and competency" (p. 362). According to Uca-Gunes and Gumas (2010), one participant stated, "Instructors should have sound training, orientation was not enough" (p. 842). According to Simon (2011), after participants took a training course to teach online they stated,

> The course made her more comfortable with technology. Another one noted that after taking the course and teaching her own online course, she no longer saw technology and teaching as incompatible, adding maybe I was just thinking I had to compete with the technology instead of actually making it work (p. 272). According to Baran et al. (2011), "considering the workload required for deep and prolonged engagement with the students, teachers recognized the importance of technological and pedagogical support, especially with the increased number of online students enrolled in the courses" (p. 26-27).

According to Schmidt et al. (2013), in addition to instructors, learning how to use the online learning management system (LMS) is important for instructors to learn how to teach online. According to Schmidt et al. (2013), "there was consensus that learning to teach online involved learning how to put appropriate course content on a website, and develop activities, projects, and assignments. But a separate skill was still the actual process of teaching online" (p. 133). According to Schmidt et al. (2013), one participant stated, "the one piece of support I got from the department was a professor that had been here for 10 years had given me the design of the course, but how to teach online was zero" (p. 133).

Research Question 2

What teaching strategies should instructors acquire/incorporate to be effective in an online classroom environment?

Theme 4

Various Communication and Engagement Strategies. Teaching strategies that transitioning online educators should acquire/incorporate to be effective in an online classroom environment were aspects of various communication and engagement strategies. The need for online instructors to be able to use various methods to effectively communicate and engage students in an online environment was a common theme throughout the study. The lack of face-to-face connections with students concerned many instructors and caused instructors to implement multiple methods of communication to connect and engage online students. According to Sword (2012), many participants felt sad and uncomfortable about the possibility of losing the warmth and connections commonly made in the traditional classroom. Participants stated, "Can't see ah-ha moments in their eyes" and "I am a very visual person. You know, I like to look at the whites of their eyes. I like the head nod and the eye contact" (Sword, 2012, p. 270).

A participant stated,

> There is so much when you take a physical person and reduce some down to a piece of e-mail. You've taken away everything. You have taken away their personality, their gender, their culture, their attitudes, and their spirit. You just rob your student. So online, I think you have to figure out how do I reinvest them in their personhood and their spirit? How do I give them a presence, and how do I

help everybody appreciate the authenticity and presence of that person? So we

have to remake us as persons online (Baran et al., 2011, p. 26).

According to Crawley et al. (2009) uncertainty about teaching online without

face-to-face access caused a participant to become more creative with a broad variety of

electronics, Web based tools and programs to effective engage online students. This

participant engaged his students through the use of iPods, YouTube videos and Facebook.

The participant could engage with students individually, in small groups, or as a whole

class. This variety of engagement caused students to participate more online and

removed student hesitation (Crawley et al., 2009). According to Uca-Gunes and Gumas

(2010) one participate suggested recording lectures and making the lectures available

online. Students could then access the lectures at their convenience.

According to Schmidt et al. (2013),

> The idea that online instructors find different ways to connect with students
>
> resonated with focus group members. Examples of those different ways were
>
> discussed by several focus groups. They included the use of video conferencing in
>
> place of face-to-face lectures, having students read course materials posted online
>
> and then participating in online discussions rather than face-to-face discussions,
>
> and holding Skype sessions to provide students with one-on-one feedback that
>
> would have normally taken place after formal face-to-face class sessions (p. 134).

According to Baran et al. (2011), immediacy of response to student's questions

and concerns factors into teacher presence. One participant stated,

> It is just like in face-to-face, there are instructors that don't respond to the
>
> students. They never respond. That's just extremely frustrating to students. So

you have to be responsive even if it's a two sentence e-mail. I got your e-mail. I will talk about this in class on Thursday. You got to be responsive to students because they deserve an answer just like face-to-face students do. So when you teach online, you think about their questions online are as valuable as the ones you have in the class (Baran et al., 2011, p. 29).

Another participant stated, "the ability to give complete feedback is essential. Feedback such as "nice job" is pretty useless to a student. Giving detailed feedback is needed. I like to include examples" (De Gagne & Walters, 2010, p. 360). According to De Gagne and Walters (2010), other participants stated,

Students should never be waiting long periods of time for feedback. Also detailed feedback is a must (p. 361). Providing prompt feedback, I believe is the most important for effective teaching. Since students do not meet faculty, online feedback is the only way in which students feel connected (p. 361). Learners don't have a specific time and place to talk to an instructor and get clear direction, so you must give near-immediate and thorough feedback and answer questions (p. 361).
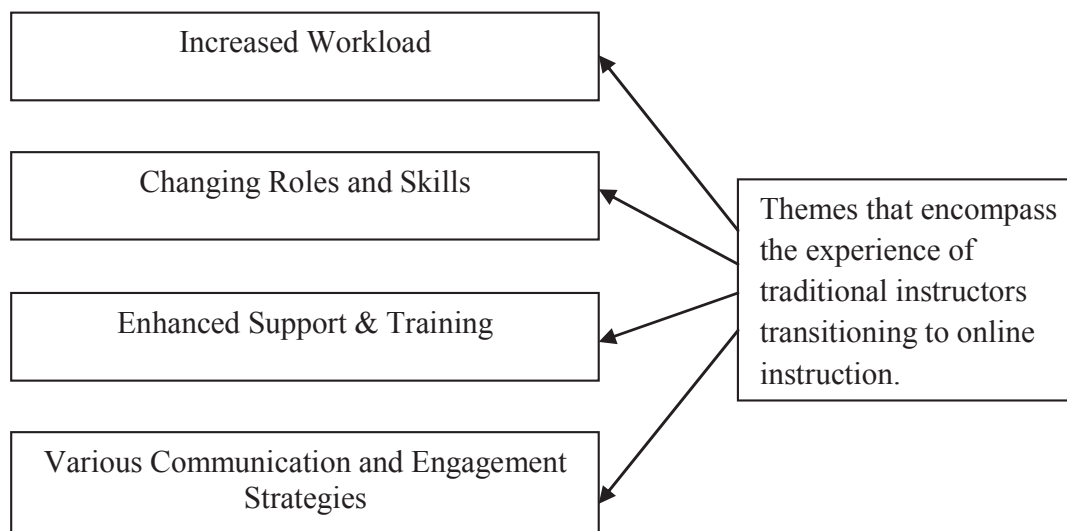
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│      Increased Workload      │
└─────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Changing Roles and Skills  │          │  Themes that encompass   │
└─────────────────────────────┘          │  the experience of       │
                                          │  traditional instructors │
┌─────────────────────────────┐          │  transitioning to online │
│  Enhanced Support & Training │          │  instruction.            │
└─────────────────────────────┘          └──────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Various Communication and    │
│   Engagement Strategies      │
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Figure 2. Themes that encompass the experience of traditional instructors transitioning to online.

Evaluation of Findings

Given the literature on educators who transition from traditional instruction to online instruction; the majority of the results from this study were in line with current literature on this topic. An important theme discovered from this study is the changing roles and skills required of an educator who transitions from traditional instruction to online instruction. The literature review discussed some of the differences in roles in traditional instruction versus online instruction. According to Dykman and Davis (2008),

> Teaching online is complicated by the need to adapt what has been a highly social process that of educating students in a traditional school and classroom setting, to an online computerized setting with limited social interaction. The biggest challenge for online educators is to make this adaptation work effectively (p. 1).

According to Barrett (2010) teachers served as role models when they lead lectures, graded assignments, and provided guidance and leadership to their students. Now however, the role and function of the instructor has changed due to economic and

technological advancements (Barrett, 2010). Based on the research, understanding the difference in roles and skills required to teach online can aid educators in being as effective in an online classroom as in a traditional classroom.

Another theme identified from this study is the need for enhanced support and training for traditional educators transitioning to online instruction. The literature review discussed the need for effective training for online instructors. According to Borrego (2010) effective training is important to successful transition from traditional instruction to online instruction. The two types of training instructors should commonly expect is course development training and course delivery training (Borrego, 2010). According to Mayes et al. (2011), discussion groups should contain explicit instructions for how to initiate presentations, support and extend ideas, and critique, challenge, or defend the thinking of participates involved. Based on the research, educators making the transition to online instruction can be more effective in the online classroom if they are prepared for what to expect and how to actively and effectively engage online students.

Another theme discovered from this study is the need for various communication and engagement strategies in online instruction. The literature review discussed differences in communication in a traditional classroom and an online classroom. According to Esani (2010), "How educators communicate with students is crucial in both the traditional college classroom and in the online environment but the method and frequency of communication differs dramatically in each setting" (p. 1). According to Mennecke et al. (2011) social presence accounts for a higher level of perceptual engagement that users experience as they engage in activity-based social interaction in virtual environments. Based on the research, understanding the need for various

communication and engagement strategies will encourage educators to be more creative with their communication strategies in an online classroom.

An unexpected result from this study was the educator's experience with adaptation to an increased workload of activities associated with teaching online. To prepare to teach online and to effectively meet the needs of student's instructors devote more time to teaching and to the preparation of class than they are initially accustomed to. Based on the research, ensuring that instructors are well-informed of the increased workload associated with teaching online early on instructors will be better prepared to deal with the activities associated with teaching online.

Summary

Educators who transition from traditional classroom instruction to online instruction experience the need to reinvent themselves as teachers in order to be effective online instructors. Many educators who make the transition to online instruction experience an increased workload due to the difference in handling activities that are usually accomplished in-person in the traditional classroom and due to the difference in communication with students in an online classroom. Many educators experience changes in their roles as a teacher and the need to acquire new skills due to new methods of communication with students and the new technological skills required to teach in an online teaching environment. Educators who teach online commonly experience the need for improved departmental support and enhanced training due to the new skills required to teach online. Additionally, due to the lack of face-to-face connections with students in the online classroom, educators commonly experience the need to use various methods to effectively communicate and engage online students.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Limitations

A limitation to this meta-synthesis study was locating the desired amount of

qualitative studies that contain interviews, focus groups, or case studies analysis on

educators who transitioned from traditional instruction to online instruction. To mitigate

this limitation, the primary data sources for this research were expanded to contain a

wider range of scholarly databases and the timeline for selecting studies was expanded to

include an additional year. To ensure validity, only scholarly peer reviewed research

studies were included in the synthesis. Each qualitative research study was given

systematic attention (Bondas & Hall, 2007). A critical appraisal based on the approach

by Sandelowski and Barroso (2002) was used to determine inclusion and exclusion

criteria for relevance and credibility. Within each category of relevance and credibility,

indicators were used to form the critical appraisal findings (Sandelowski & Barroso,

2002). A total of 8 studies were included in the synthesis.

Ethical Assurances

It was important to be mindful of the ethical concerns that relate to this qualitative

meta-synthesis study. First, it was vital to ensure that only scholarly peer reviewed

studies were synthesized in this study. To ensure that the research studies included in this

research were scholarly peer reviewed studies, only databases that provide a mechanism

for singling out scholarly peer reviewed studies from highly regarded journals and

publications were used to gather data for this study. Secondly, it was important to ensure

that another author's work was not harmed by misrepresenting claims made within the

peer reviewed studies included in the meta-synthesis. It was essential that each and every

claim and conclusion the researcher made was traceable to the data (Shank, 2006). According to Shank (2006), "It is important to leave not only a final record of your work, but also a working record" (p. 119). It was critical that an Institutional Review Board (IRB) form was completed and submitted to the IRB committee of Northcentral University. All research conducted by faculty mentors, faculty, staff, and learners must be evaluated and approved by a constituted IRB committee before any investigations can be performed.

Overview

This chapter addresses the research questions from this study and logical conclusions are drawn from the research. The limitations that affected the interpretation of the results are addressed. The results of the study are explained as a result of describing how the results responded to the study problem, fit with the purpose, demonstrate significance, and contribute to the existing literature. The implications of the study results are addressed and potential ways to apply conceptual frameworks, models and processes are discussed in relation to the study.

Implications

Research Question 1. What are the challenges for online educators who previously taught in a traditional classroom when attempting to create an engaging classroom environment that promotes student motivation and participation?

As traditional educators transition to online instruction they face many challenges as they attempt to create an engaging classroom environment that echoes engagement in a traditional classroom. A common challenge uncovered from this meta-synthesis is instructors experience with adaptation to an increased workload of activities associated

with teaching online. To prepare to teach online and to effectively meet the needs of

students instructors devote more time to teaching and to the preparation of class than they

are initially accustomed to. Participants commonly mentioned that teaching online takes

more time due to the activities associated with preparing the online classroom,

implementing new engagement strategies, and grading online electronic assignments.

When preparing the online classroom participants mentioned spending more time either

designing the course and/or updating the shell of the course for customized use. More

time is required to plan and develop course materials in advance than in the traditional

classroom. Additional time is spent engaging students due to the loss of face-to-face

contact with students in the online classroom and due to the need to ensure that online

students are engaged and understanding the subject matter. Instructors found it is

necessary to create multiple engagement techniques designed to encourage student

motivation and participation. Grading required more time because each assignment has

to be opened one at a time and detailed feedback is vital to encourage and motivate online

students. Instructors also spent extra time responding to students' questions in a timely

matter. Online students commonly expected immediate answers to their questions since

the online classroom is accessible 24 hours of everyday.

When adapting to an increased workload, participants stated that setting

boundaries with students and time management are key strategies. Participants

commonly set office hours and informed the students when they are available and when

they are not available. Another participant mentioned the importance of evaluating your

workload and adding to your workload slowly to avoid becoming overwhelmed. Another

participant used an assistant to assist with activities associated with grading assignments.

Based on the research, ensuring that instructors are well-informed of the increased workload associated with teaching online early on instructors will be better prepared to deal with the activities associated with teaching online.

A major theme in this meta-synthesis is the participants experience with changing roles and the need to acquire new skills when teaching online. Traditional educators transitioning to online instruction face the need to reinvent themselves as teachers and to learn new skills that are specific to instruction in an online classroom environment. In this meta-synthesis, some participants were surprised to find that many of the teaching strategies that worked well in the traditional classroom were not effective in the online classroom. Participants had to abandon previous patterns of practice and implement new methods of instruction to effectively teach online. Many participants described their role in the online classroom as a facilitator or coach instead of a teacher. While some participants welcomed their new role, some participants felt lost and uncertain with how to approach teaching online.

With the absence of face-to-face lectures, the need for various effective communication and engagement strategies became vital to the success of teaching online. The role of the instructor changed from a teacher to more of a one-on-one guide that provides feedback and encouragement to students as they complete their online course activities. Online instructors must provide feedback that stimulates learning in several facets of the online course. Participants had to be willing to abandon previous teaching practices to embrace new ways of doing things in the online classroom. It was important for participants to take ownership and understand their role in the online classroom. According to Schmidt et al. (2013), most participates agreed that they were able to apply

more effective strategies as they gained more experience teaching online. Based on the research, ensuring that online instructors are knowledgeable of how to effectively utilize the educational learning management system (LMS) to its full potential and ensuring they understand their role as an online instructor will empower instructors to embrace new teaching strategies that enhance learning online.

Another challenge discovered from this meta-synthesis is the instructors' experience with support and training in online instruction. Many participants mentioned the need for improved support and training for teaching online. Although some participates felt that they received adequate training, many participants did not feel as though they were prepared to teach online. Some participants felt as though they were learning how to teach online as they went along instead of learning beforehand. Some participants trained themselves by accessing other resources and asking other online instructors for assistance. Some participants mentioned that becoming an online student themselves helped them become better online instructors. Although many instructors mentioned receiving some training, several instructors mentioned an absence of training that focused directly on how to teach online. A number of instructors were taught how to use the learning management system (LMS) but were not taught how to effectively teach online. Some instructors also felt that there were not enough support systems available when assistance was needed while teaching online. Participants mentioned the importance of the following as they made the transition to online instruction: mentors, pedagogy training, faculty development activities, computer training, learning management system (LMS) training, administrative support, peer faculty support, software platform support, and pedagogical support. Based on the research, ensuring that

online instructors are provided training and support on an ongoing basis enables

instructors to feel more confident in teaching online and applying effective strategies that

encourage learning.

Research Question 2. What teaching strategies should instructors

acquire/incorporate to be effective in an online classroom environment?

This meta-synthesis drew out teaching strategies that transitioning instructors

implement to become effective online instructors (see Figure 3). One teaching strategy

associated with online instruction is the ability to manage the various activities associated

with teaching online. Transitioning online instructors must adapt to an increased

workload that includes added activities such as setting up the online classroom for

customized use, grading multiple electronic weekly assignments, responding to multiple

e-mails in a timely manner, and providing detailed feedback that engages students and

promotes learning. To adapt to this increased workload, participants mentioned setting

boundaries with students and time management as key strategies. Participants often set

office hours and informed students of the times they are available and times they are not

available. One participant was not available to students on the weekends and felt as

though the students respected that he/she had a life outside of teaching online. Another

participant set a time limit on how long it will take to grade activities and respond to e-

mails and informed the students of the time limit. One participant gave a time limit of at

least 24 to 48 hours. Another participant managed activities by adding to the number of

classes taught slowly so as not to become overwhelmed. Based on the research, when

online educators manage their time wisely, they can devote more time to creating and

implementing strategies that engage online students and promote learning.

Another teaching strategy associated with online instruction is the ability to reinvent yourself as a teacher and to learn skills that put you in the role of an encouraging facilitator or coach as opposed to a lecturer in a traditional classroom. One participant described their new role as a one-on-one guide providing feedback, and pats on the back along the way. Another participant stated that they had to learn to teach a new way and obtain new skills that are designed to engage students. According to Crawley et al. (2009), the participant's willingness to abandon previous patterns of practice made it possible to imagine new ways of doing things, ask questions, and seek guidance. Based on the research, when online educators clearly understand their role as an online instructor, they feel more comfortable implementing activities designed to encourage students and promote learning in the online classroom.

Another teaching strategy fleshed out from this meta-synthesis is the ability to create a presence online. Many participants spoke of creating a presence online, creating a presence enabled instructors to convey to students that there is a real person teaching the course that provides support and encouragement. Instructors created presence by using various communication methods such as video conferencing in place of face-to-face lectures, e-mail correspondence, interactive online discussions, and Skype sessions that provided students with one-on-one feedback. Participants also mentioned that prompt responses to students questions also factors into instructor presence. Prompt responses to student queries ease student frustrations. One participant stated that a short response to an e-mail is better than no response at all. A short response can be followed up with an in-depth response. Another participant mentioned the importance of detailed feedback in all correspondence with students. Thorough electronic feedback is essential

since this is the main source of communication in an online course. Participants stated

that feedback should be detailed and include examples. Based on the research, when

instructors implement various communication and engagement strategies, they create

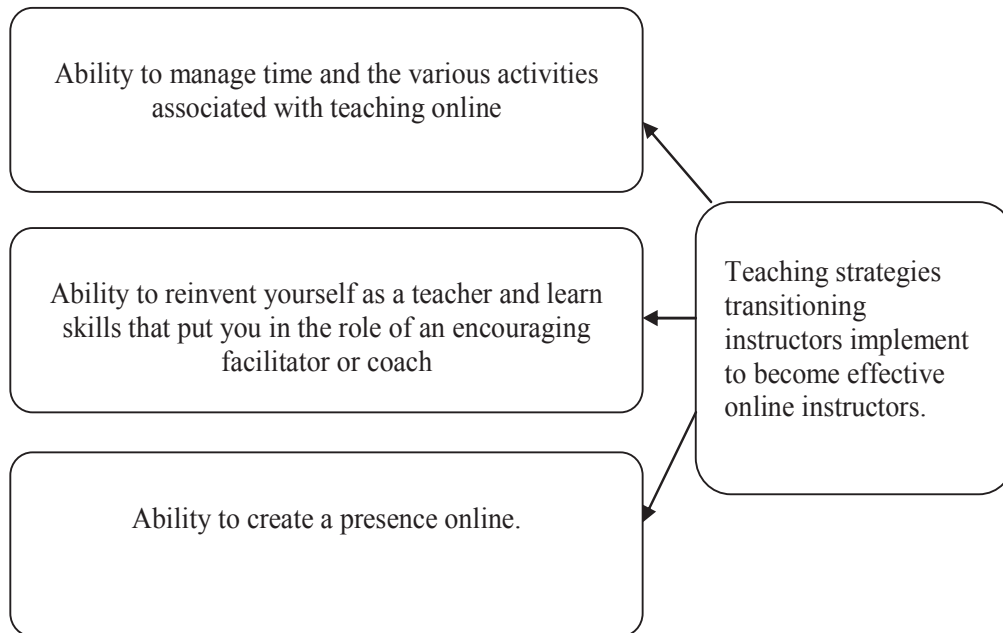more opportunities to connect with online students and promote learning.

Ability to manage time and the various activities associated with teaching online

Ability to reinvent yourself as a teacher and learn skills that put you in the role of an encouraging facilitator or coach

Ability to create a presence online.

Teaching strategies transitioning instructors implement to become effective online instructors.

Figure 3. Teaching strategies transitioning instructors implement to become effective

online instructors.

A limitation that affected the results of this meta-synthesis was the selection criteria used to collect data for this study. The qualitative studies selected for this study covered a broad range of subject matters to prevent the exclusion of valuable data. Although the qualitative studies contained interviews, focus groups, or case studies analysis on educators who transitioned from traditional instruction to online instruction, the subject matter taught by the instructors varied from one participant to another. A total of 8 studies were included in the synthesis.

The results of this study respond to the study problem by drawing out the difficulties experienced by traditional classroom instructors who transitioned to an online classroom format and what strategies they used to overcome these difficulties. This study reports on the experiences of traditional higher education online educators who have transitioned into online instructors to provide a synthesis of effective strategies that contribute to effective transition to assist educators in developing their online teaching skills. Since there is a large body of scholarly literature on the phenomenon of traditional educators transitioning to online instruction there was a need for a synthesis of knowledge from research and practice. A qualitative meta-synthesis design was appropriate for this research study because the research questions and approach position towards the appropriateness of meta-synthesis research. Current knowledge on this phenomenon can be advanced by the generation of a new interpretive synthesis through a new analysis of previously collected data from previous qualitative studies. Through a meta-synthesis design, the researcher can access a larger population and data source that will provide a better discernment of the challenges, practices and strategies that traditional educators experience to successfully transition into effective online instructors.

The more data available to the researcher, the more the researcher can understand the whole experience of educators who make the transition from traditional instruction to online instruction. Additionally, this research design aids in pinpointing strategies of traditional instruction and thrashes out those skills that effectively translate into effective concrete online teaching strategies.

The need for additional research on online education is vital to the education industry. Instructors who teach primarily in the traditional classroom are being encouraged to also teach online and some classroom instructors are transitioning to teaching online entirely. The skills that are deemed effective in a traditional classroom do not always translate over to effective skills in an online learning environment. Since students and the educator interact differently in a traditional classroom than in an online classroom; online educators must device new methods to effectively educate students in an online classroom environment.

How educators communicate with students is crucial in both the traditional classroom and in the online environment but the method and frequency of communication differs dramatically in each setting. In a study comparing online education to conventional education, how educators communicate with students in an online environment is one of the key ingredients to success in online teaching. According to Dykman and Davis (2008),

> When there is a failure to communicate expectations and the student is not doing what the teacher intends, the situation can deteriorate without either party realizing that there is a problem until it is too late. In a conventional classroom, there are ample face-to-face opportunities to reinforce expectations and clarify

misunderstandings. And students can easily check with other students for clarification of what they do not understand. In an electronic classroom, these contacts are not so easily made. (p. 157)

The qualifications for teaching in a traditional classroom and an online classroom also differ dramatically. For example, traditional classroom educators must be skilled lecturers whereas online instructors may never be tasked with lecturing the class through spoken word. Additionally, online instructors must be skilled at providing timely responses to students via electronic communication in various forms such as discussion forums, e-mail, and announcements whereas classroom educators have fewer electronic transmissions. As the number of virtual schools increase, so too do the number of teachers entering the field of online distance education.

The TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge) framework can be applied to this study. Ward and Kushner (2010) examined the TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge) framework to provide a comprehensive view of the online teaching and learning process. The TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge) framework explains how content, pedagogy and technology knowledge are related and how they intersect to create new kinds of knowledge that is needed to support online teaching and learning (Ward & Kushner, 2010). According to Ward and Kushner (2010), understanding TPACK will aid instructors transitioning from face-to-face instruction to online teaching and learning. Ward and Kushner (2010) recommend online instructors develop new schemas for online learning by understanding the dynamic TPACK framework. Online instructors should themselves become learners in online environments. Online instructors should first

consider content and pedagogy before beginning the process of new online course development (Ward & Kushner, 2010). Additionally, online instructors should help students become competent learners of online environments (Ward & Kushner, 2010).

Recommendations

The key themes found from this meta-synthesis are increased workload, changing roles and skills, enhanced support and training, and various communication and engagement strategies. Traditional instructors transitioning to online instruction experience an increased workload due to the new activities associated with teaching online. Instructors experience the need to change their role from a traditional teacher to a facilitator or coach and must learn new skills that are specific to instruction in an online classroom environment. Transitioning instructors require enhanced support and training to ensure that they understand how to effectively utilize the learning management system (LMS) to its full potential and to ensure that instructors understand their role as an online instructor and how to effectively implement teaching strategies that enhances learning in an online classroom.

The findings from this study revealed that traditional educators transitioning to online instruction face many challenges as they attempt to create an engaging classroom environment that echoes engagement in a traditional classroom. A common challenge is the instructors experience with adaptation to an increased workload of activities associated with teaching online. To prepare to teach online and to effectively meet the needs of students, instructors devote more time to teaching than they did in the traditional classroom. Teaching online takes more time due to the activities associated with preparing the online classroom, implementing new engagement strategies, and grading

online electronic assignments. In preparation of teaching online, instructors spend time either designing the course and/or updating the shell of the course for customized use. Instructors spend more time engaging the students in an online classroom than in a traditional classroom due to the loss of face-to-face contact with students in the online classroom and the need to ensure that online students are engaged and understanding the subject matter. Instructors create multiple engagement techniques designed to encourage student motivation and participation. Grading requires more time because each assignment has to be opened one at a time and detailed feedback is vital to encourage and motivate online students. Additionally, instructors spend extra time responding to students questions in a quicker fashion since online students commonly expect immediate answers to their questions given that the online classroom is accessible 24 hours of everyday. Instructors adapted to an increased workload by setting boundaries with students and managing their time when completing the activities associated with teaching online. Instructors set office hours and informed students of the times when they are available and times when they are not available. Instructors informed students of how long it will normally take to grade activities and respond to e-mails. Instructors also managed activities by adding to the number of classes taught slowly so as not to become overwhelmed. As a result of these findings, it is recommended that online educators manage their time wisely so that they have more time to devote to creating and implementing strategies that engage online students and promote learning. For example, instructors can create a schedule that designates specific days to handle certain activities such as office hours, interacting in discussion forums, and providing supplemental Internet web sites that further learning.

Traditional educators transitioning to online instruction face the need to reinvent themselves as teachers and to learn new skills that are specific to instruction in an online classroom environment. In this meta-synthesis, instructors were often surprised to find that many of the teaching strategies that worked well in the traditional classroom were not effective in the online classroom. Instructors had to abandon previous patterns of practice and implement new methods of instruction to effectively teach online. Their new role became one of a facilitator or coach. Although some instructors welcomed their new role, some instructors felt lost and uncertain with how to approach teaching online. Instructors adapted to their new role of teaching by reinventing themselves as teachers and learning skills that put them in the role of an encouraging facilitator or coach. Their new role was described as more of a one-on-one guide providing feedback and pats on the back along the way. Instructors learned to teach in a new way and obtained new skills designed to engage students. According to Crawley et al. (2009), the instructor's willingness to abandon previous patterns of practice makes it possible to imagine new ways of doing things, ask questions, and seek guidance. As a result of these findings, it is recommended that higher education institutions ensure early on that educators transitioning from the traditional classroom to online instruction clearly understand their new role as an online instructor and what skills are required to teach online so that they are prepared to implement activities designed to encourage students and promote learning in an online classroom environment. Instructors should be paired with an experienced mentor and given access to an online classroom to observe the activities that take place in a live online class. Instructors should also be required to take an online class to experience what it is like to be an online student.

Another challenge discovered from this meta-synthesis is the instructors experience with support and training in online instruction. Many instructors felt they needed more support and training when teaching online. Although some instructors felt that they received adequate training, some instructors felt that they were not prepared to teach online. Some instructors felt they were learning how to teach online while they went along instead of learning beforehand. Some instructors trained themselves by accessing other resources and asking other online instructors for assistance. Some instructors mentioned that becoming an online student themselves helped them become better online instructors. Although many instructors mentioned receiving some training, several instructors mentioned an absence of training that focused directly on how to teach online. A number of instructors were taught how to use the learning management system (LMS) but were not taught how to effectively teach online. Some instructors also felt that there were not enough support systems available when assistance was needed while teaching online. Instructors mentioned the importance of the following as they made the transition to online instruction: mentors, pedagogy training, faculty development activities, computer training, learning management system (LMS) training, administrative support, peer faculty support, software platform support, and pedagogical support. As a result of these findings, it is recommended that higher education institutions ensure that transitioning instructors receive in depth training and support before teaching online and on an ongoing basis to ensure that instructors feel confident in teaching online and applying effective strategies that encourage learning online. Higher education institutions should provide in depth pedagogy training that focuses on how to teach online and learning management system (LMS) training that focuses on applying

effective online teaching practices and strategies within the LMS. Administrative support, peer faculty support, software platform support, and pedagogical support should be easily assessed within higher education institutions.

In this meta-synthesis, instructors implemented various communication and engagement strategies. Many instructors spoke of creating a presence online. Creating a presence enabled instructors to convey to students that there is a real person teaching the course that provides support and encouragement. Instructors created presence by using various communication methods, such as video conferencing in place of face-to-face lectures, e-mail correspondence, interactive online discussions, and Skype sessions that provided students with one-on-one feedback. Prompt responses to student's questions also factored into instructor presence. Prompt responses to student queries eased student frustrations. Although some responses to e-mails were brief due to time constraints, a brief response proved to be better than no response at all since a brief response could be followed up with an in depth response as time permits. Instructors mentioned the importance of detailed feedback in all of their correspondence with students. Thorough electronic feedback was essential since this is the main source of communication in an online course. Instructors provided detailed feedback that usually included examples to get the point across. As a result of these findings, it is recommended that instructors implement a variety of communication methods and engagement strategies to create more opportunities to connect with online students and promote learning, such as prompt e-mail correspondence, detailed feedback in all correspondence, interactive discussion areas, and video conferencing.   Instructors should have access to peer groups designed to

allow instructors to share effective engagement strategies that work well in an online classroom.

Traditional instructors transitioning to online instruction must be able to adapt to a new teaching environment that requires added responsibilities that causes a shift in the role of a traditional teacher to more of a facilitator or coach. Practical higher education institutional support and training are vital to ensuring successful transition from traditional instruction to online instruction. For future research, a study on the types of training that is most effective for traditional instructors transitioning to online instruction would be useful.

Conclusions

This study reports on the experiences of traditional higher education online educators who have transitioned into online instructors to provide a synthesis of effective strategies that contribute to effective transition to assist educators in developing their online teaching skills. The findings from this study found that traditional educators transitioning to online instruction face many challenges as they attempt to create an engaging classroom environment that echoes engagement in a traditional classroom. Traditional instructors transitioning to online instruction experience an increased workload due to the new activities associated with teaching online. Instructors experience the need to change their role from a traditional teacher to a facilitator or coach and must learn new skills that are specific to instruction in an online classroom environment. Transitioning instructors require enhanced support and training to ensure that they understand how to effectively utilize the learning management system (LMS) to its full potential and to ensure that instructors understand their role as an online instructor

and how to effectively implement teaching strategies that enhances learning in an online classroom. To overcome difficulties associated with transitioning from traditional instruction to online instruction, instructors must have the ability to manage their time and the various activities associated with teaching online. Instructors must be able to reinvent themselves as teachers and learn computer and pedagogy skills that place instructors in the role of an encouraging facilitator or coach. Instructors also must be skilled at creating presence in an online classroom. With enhanced support and training from higher education institutions, instructors will be more prepared to meet the challenges associated with transitioning from traditional instruction to online instruction and feel more confident engaging students and implementing activities that enhance learning in an online classroom.

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