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PREPARING TO TEACH ONLINE AS
TRANSFORMATIVE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation in
Adult Education

by

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ABSTRACT

An action research study was conducted at a campus college of a large Research I institution of higher education to explore transformative learning among higher education faculty as a result of participating in a blended program to prepare them to teach online. The purposeful sample included six full-time and one adjunct faculty, teaching a mix of undergraduate and graduate courses in education, engineering, and public affairs. All had a desire to move toward online teaching by preparing a course for hybrid delivery during the fall semester of 2009.

This study used a qualitative action research methodology. The purpose of this study was to explore how faculty learn to teach online and how that may influence their face-to-face teaching. The research questions were:

1. Which aspects of the professional development activities do faculty perceive as being most effective in helping them to reflect on and question their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching?

2. Do faculty experience changes in their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of learning to teach online and, if so, how does transformative learning explain the changes?

3. What impact does learning to teach online have on face-to-face teaching practices?

These questions required a research paradigm and methodology that tried to understand faculty as unique individuals with a variety of assumptions, beliefs, and lived experiences that have informed how they teach. Action research consists of a cyclical process of planning, acting and observing, reflecting.

The first phase of planning, which involves problem identification, was completed through a literature review, my own previous research, and dialogue with faculty who considered
changes to their face-to-face teaching after teaching online. The second step of the planning phase defined the details of the action research project including intervention strategies, when and how to begin, and how to involve the participants. These details were determined through a review of multiple faculty professional development programs to teach online, by incorporating the essential attributes needed in a faculty professional development program that is framed within adult education, and by integrating intervention strategies that could facilitate transformative learning. These strategies included individual pre- and post-interviews, journal writing and classroom observations.

The major portion of this project was implemented in 2009 during a six-week summer session and concluded close to the end of the fall semester. The project began with a planning phase that included individual interviews in which the faculty shared their needs, concerns, and personal goals for the program. They were given readings related to online teaching, and access to an online reflection journal and encouraged to complete the readings and post their first journal entry prior to our first face-to-face group meeting. Decisions were made regarding evaluation measures, length of study, and how the action and change would be observed and documented. Faculty were given periodic writing prompts for their personal reflection journals that allowed them to share their learning and ask questions throughout the program.

During the acting and observing phase, the action was implemented and data was collected. The pre-interviews, which were recorded and transcribed, lasted between thirty and sixty minutes. The questions were meant to bring awareness to the assumptions and beliefs upon which their teaching practices are based. Post-interviews were conducted at the conclusion of the faculty professional development program to document changes in their assumptions and beliefs from the pre-interviews.

In the third phase of this action research study, each data collection and evaluation period provided an opportunity to determine whether faculty had an opportunity to reflect on their
previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching. If little or no reflection occurred, a new cycle of action research with a different activity or approach was planned. Alternately, when reflection did occur, then repeating the activity was considered in the next cycle of research. Three cycles of action research were completed so new action could lead to new reflection, which led to more action, and so on. Each cycle provided more learning about the problem and interventions.

Learning to teach online has the potential to transform faculty's assumptions and beliefs about teaching, changing their face-to-face teaching practices. Transformative learning explained changes in previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of learning to teach online. This was most clearly evident in the difference between faculty's expectations of teaching online and what actually happened when they taught online. Learning was better than they expected. Learning to teach online impacted face-to-face teaching practices. Beth was able to be more open and flexible, tailoring classroom time based on students’ online discussion. Ralph used to believe that if students were not in class they could not learn, but there was more soft learning online than in the classroom. Kay stepped away from PowerPoint and replaced it with classroom discussion that was more student-driven based on their online discussions.

The final results from the professional development program to prepare faculty to teach online are shared, including the effectiveness of the various approaches employed, the changes in faculty's assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and the impact on their face-to-face teaching practices.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I feel as though my path leading toward this dissertation began long ago. Because of my volunteer work in my children’s education and other activities, I was eventually offered a job at their elementary school running a computer lab. While there, I saw a need for the teachers to learn more about the software applications their students were using and how to integrate them into their classroom instruction. Arranging training opportunities for them, I often wondered if there was a better way for me to design their learning. At that time, I did not even know there was a theory and practice called adult learning.

Working at the University provided new opportunities for me. Thankfully, I was able to take advantage of so many. I naturally gravitated toward work that supported faculty’s integration of technology in teaching, which eventually extended into online teaching. Once again, I wondered if there was a better way for me to design these learning experiences, and the adult education program seemed to hold the answers for which I had been searching. To be learning about a theory that immediately informed my practice, and to be practicing the work that helped to make sense of the theory, was a perfect match.

From the beginning of my learning in the doctoral program, I had phenomenal support from the professors and administrators at Penn State Harrisburg. Patricia Cranton, with her extensive experience in faculty professional development, is someone I try to model. Her writings on transformative learning and authenticity directly informed my practices and became the foundation for my dissertation. Her lightning-fast feedback kept me motivated and moving forward. Libby Tisdell saw talents in me that I did not realize existed, and her praise raised my confidence. Her writings on spirituality changed the way I view my workspace. Ed Taylor provided the structure I needed to find my place in the program and gain confidence in my
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This research study explores the change in face-to-face teaching practices as a result of faculty professional development for online teaching. The chapter includes a background of the study, problem and purpose statement, guiding research questions, the theoretical framework, and an overview of the research methodology. Also included are definition of terms, assumptions and limitations associated with the study, and the study’s significance.

Background of the Problem

There are a number of driving forces and demands of the 21st century that are putting pressure on institutions of higher education to make changes in their traditional ways of teaching and even changing the entire environment of higher education (Langley, O’Connor, & Welkener, 2004). Perhaps the largest driving force for change in higher education and teaching is the rapid growth of the internet enabling distance education and changing the way we gather and share information, gain knowledge, do business, collaborate, design and deliver instruction, and also changing the speed at which we can accomplish these tasks (Diamond, 2005; Jones, Mally, Blevins, & Munroe, 2003; King & Lawler, 2003; Lezburg, 2003; Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006; Swail, 2002). The availability of the Internet has spurred creative uses of new technologies, changed classrooms, and placed new and different demands on faculty (Lawler & King, 2000; Sorcinelli et al.).

As of fall 2006, almost 3.5 million students were enrolled in at least one online course in an institution of higher education in the United States. This is over double the number of student
enrollees of over 1.6 million in fall 2002. Additionally, 11% of all United States higher education students took at least one online course in fall 2002, and this number increased to almost 20% by fall 2006. Much of this explosive growth was due to new institutions offering online education. It is expected that most higher education institutions planning to offer online courses are already doing so, which should slow the growth rate of online enrollments. However, approximately one-third of higher education institutions account for three-fourths of all online enrollments, so there is still much room for continued growth (Allen & Seaman, 2003, 2007).

Some faculty have embraced online education (Allen & Seaman, 2003), but many faculty are only beginning to integrate technology into their teaching. Most have no experience with online teaching, having spent the majority of their years as a learner in a traditional face-to-face classroom (Brookfield, 2006). Their initial teaching model is typically born from that of their own teachers, and they teach as they were taught (Gallant, 2000; Layne, Froyd, Simpson, Caso, & Merton, 2004). In this way, the teaching and learning environment has not changed much over the years and the instructors regard themselves as the content expert, responsible for course delivery (Conrad, 2004).

Teaching Online

With few faculty having any online experience as a student or teacher, it is not surprising that numerous changes have been noted in the faculty experience when teaching online. Several studies have found that faculty note that which is unfamiliar, different, or absent, and roles seem to change when moving to the online environment (Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Diekelmann, Schuster, & Nosek, 1998; Morris, Xu, & Finnegan, 2005). The loss of face-to-face contact with their students is a common concern shared by faculty teaching online (Conrad; Diekelmann et al.). In addition, online teaching seems to place demands on faculty that are different from those
encountered in the face-to-face classroom (Cowham & Duggleby, 2005). Some faculty report the extensive planning and attention to detail needed to teach online which is often overlooked in traditional classrooms (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005). For example, a few believe that all class handouts must be prepared well in advance, taking away the spontaneity possible in the face-to-face classroom (Conceicao, 2006; Diekelmann et al., 1998). In these cases, the amount of advance preparation and organization equates to more development and design time which gives the online course a distinction of being known as labor-intensive (Conceicao).

In rethinking their familiar ways of teaching when moving online, another change that is noted numerous times is a shift from teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered instruction (Barker, 2003; Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Gallant, 2000; Hinson & La Prairie, 2005; Jaffee, 2003; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). This shift in instruction also shifts faculty’s instructional roles to place a greater amount of responsibility for learning on the students (Barker; Gallant) due to the increased opportunity for student participation in the online environment (Jaffee), often seen within student discussions. In traditional classrooms, students can sit passively and choose not to contribute to discussion. However, in the online classroom, every student is expected to contribute and the online environment provides the time and space for it to happen.

New roles as instructional designer and interaction facilitator can also be taken (Morris et al., 2005; Von Holzen, 2000) as faculty design and deliver their courses online. Still another change in faculty roles is the unbundling of curriculum development, content development and delivery, tutoring, student support services, administration, and assessment from the responsibility of one individual faculty member to multiple individuals or departments (Dirr, 2003). Often when faculty are developing and teaching an online course, they have a team of instructional designers and technical support staff working in tandem with them.

Some faculty might become aware of these altered roles (Ali et al., 2005; Barker, 2003; Jaffee, 2003) or have other teaching roles reawakened (Diekelmann et al., 1998) when moving
from classroom teaching to distance education. For example, online there exists the possibility to create different teaching and learning roles with a less hierarchical structure (Jaffee). Faculty have the opportunity to begin to move away from their role as deliverers of content to constructivist-based facilitators of learning (Barker; Conrad, 2004; Pedersen & Liu, 2003).

All of these potential role changes could have experienced teachers finding themselves as beginning teachers again in the online environment (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Gallant, 2000; King, 2002; Lawler, King, & Wilhite, 2004). The new online class setting challenges their self-concept as expert and could potentially result in resistance to online teaching because of their loss of identity. It has been found that faculty who had not yet taught an online course perceived their online teaching expertise at the novice and advanced beginner levels (Ali et al., 2005).

Learning educational technologies for teaching online may be a catalyst for faculty to reflect on and evaluate their current teaching practices. It is a potential opportunity to develop new ideas about teaching and learning (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006) and to restructure traditional classroom roles and relationships (Jaffee, 2003). Distance education has even been described as a new specialty that prevents faculty from teaching in their familiar ways and having to rethink their teaching practices (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Faculty will not intuitively know how to effectively teach online (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). What worked for them in the past in their traditional classroom may no longer be helpful or reliable in their online classroom. New views of teaching and learning may need to be cultivated for online delivery (King, 2002), which is an opportunity to reconsider their responsibilities and practices as teachers (West, Waddoups, & Graham, 2007) in any teaching setting.
To develop new views of teaching and learning, faculty may need to critically examine their unquestioned assumptions and beliefs about teaching. A comprehensive adult learning theory that facilitates the process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising perspectives is transformative learning theory (Cranton, 2006). This process would need to involve faculty in an examination of their “problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change” (Cranton, 2006, p. 36). Reflective and supportive faculty professional development environments that prepare faculty for this type of change seem to be lacking in the models examined in the next section.

**Professional Development to Prepare Faculty to Teach Online**

While there is a recognized need for professional development to prepare faculty to teach online, there are many different faculty development models being implemented with differing foci on technology, pedagogy, and course content. Some faculty teach their first online course without any prior online teaching or learning experiences, with all of their training completed in face-to-face settings. Other faculty participate in faculty development programs that occur partially or completely online, giving them opportunities for online experiences. Whether faculty development programs prepare faculty to teach online by providing realistic online experiences or not, it seems that most programs take faculty through a step-by-step training process (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; King, 2002).

Some professional development programs take faculty through a series of activities meant to develop various competencies to teach online. In reviewing these competencies, it is interesting to note how many of them are also applicable to the face-to-face classroom. Examples of competencies applicable to both face-to-face and online teaching include modeling the tone and quality of interactions expected of students, providing general grading criteria or grading
rubrics, promoting and encouraging a range of viewpoints in discussions, providing clear due
dates, and establishing an inviting and non-threatening classroom atmosphere (Mandernach,
Donnelli, Dailey, & Schulte, 2005). Additional competencies valued in all teaching settings
include the provision of clear objectives, expectations, and policies, and fostering the sharing of
knowledge, questions, and expertise (Shank, 2004). However, very few competency checklists
specifically apply to only online teaching. Examples include having updated and working links
and announcements, providing navigational cues to help students move through the course
(Mandernach et al.), promptly responding to discussion postings, and helping learners
troubleshoot technical systems (Shank). With so many of the competencies for online teaching
applicable to both the online and face-to-face teaching environments, one can wonder what is so
unique about teaching online that faculty roles are altered and they are made to feel like
beginning teachers again. Perhaps it is not so much the online environment, but the process of
rethinking how they teach that effects so much change in faculty teaching practices as they move
online. Could faculty learning to teach online use their learning experiences to improve their face-
to-face teaching? Could there be a lack of face-to-face teaching competence, which becomes
magnified while teaching in the online classroom?

Given these teaching competencies for online teaching, the question shifts towards how
faculty can develop these competencies and skills. Suggestions range from individualized and
structured peer support (Covington, Petherbridge, & Warren, 2005) to online training courses
Palloff & Pratt, 2001). Another suggestion consists of a diffusion-based framework for faculty
development that would provide multiple spaces offering different points of entry based on need
and experience. One space could offer self-paced tutorials and guided practice activities. Another
space could host a database of success stories. A third space could provide a place for faculty to
engage in discussions with peers. The vision is that each of the spaces would be connected in
such a way that faculty could choose when and where to participate and apply learning directly to
their course design/delivery (Garofoli & Woodell, 2003). This is similar to the suggestions made by others to provide an online repository of ideas, tools, templates, practices, and modules, and to connect those interested in online teaching with both peers and just in time/needed resources (Chizmar & Williams, 2001). This kind of flexibility would allow faculty to tailor their support experience to their actual needs, building in relevancy.

A number of academic institutions have already implemented a variety of development solutions. These include the implementation of mandatory training for all faculty who teach online, with programs ranging from a 6-week intensive program to a 6-month course (Abel, 2005). Some programs are voluntary in which participants can develop their online teaching skills through case studies, project work, discussions, reflective practice with learning journals, and online seminars with guest speakers. Other higher education institutions have an immersive one-week program in which faculty are trained in the tools and pedagogies needed for the online classroom (Covington et al., 2005). Another option has an interactive Web site and CD-ROM that details the elements needed to develop online courses, provides video segments from online instructors and establishes a suggested training plan. One university provides faculty with streaming video and synchronized slides as a way to share current projects with other faculty (Irani, 2001).

Because of diverse demands on faculty time, it has been recommended to provide multiple training opportunities, beginning with an on-site classroom workshop that continues online (Anderson, Varnhagen, & Campbell, 1998). A combination of lunchtime classroom sessions, multi-day institutes, peer/mentor consultations that provide just-in-time training, peer demonstrations, archived sessions, and Web repositories are other suggestions (Chizmar & Williams, 2001). Some of the most popular formats have been short workshops to practice skills, working with a mentor, and release time to devote to independent study (Anderson et al., 1998). It has also been found that developers and faculty alike prefer to select from offerings of formal,
informal, self-paced programs, and short classes offered at different times during the semester (Irani, 2001).

**Faculty Professional Development as Adult Learning**

Faculty development only recently has been addressed as adult learning (Cranton, 1996; King, 2002), which focuses on the unique aspects of adults as learners. The value of this is that it places in the hands of the developers all of the theory, research, and literature from the field of adult education and its various principles, practices, strategies, applications, and experience (Lawler, 2003). Within this adult education framework then, one needs to consider the characteristics of faculty as adult learners and be aware of their pressing problems, concerns, and issues in their professional lives. Faculty bring with them a diversity of life experiences, educational experiences, personalities, learning preferences, and uniqueness. This shapes their perspectives on their teaching practices, influences how they will teach in the future, and even influences their motivation to participate in professional development activities (Lawler). However, very few faculty professional development models explicitly adhere to an adult education framework or recognize faculty as adult learners.

As we approach faculty development from the perspective of the adult learner, we need to take into consideration faculty’s characteristics, the context in which their learning is occurring, and the process we plan to use to deliver the education and training (Lawler, 2003). However, most faculty development models are designed as a one-size-fits-all solution. Few development models view faculty as adult learners and typically do not consider their prior knowledge, experiences (Layne et al., 2004), or uniqueness.

Most of the faculty development models reviewed to prepare faculty to teach online lead faculty through a process focused on learning and change, but none of them provide deliberate
feedback or reflection to use what they are learning for online teaching to inform their face-to-face teaching. They seem to presume that teaching online is separate from face-to-face teaching, even though it is faculty’s experiences in the face-to-face classroom that initially inform their online teaching practices. What if the faculty development models provided activities for faculty to question their assumptions and beliefs about teaching as they looked anew at teaching for the online environment? What if the models intentionally provided activities for faculty to integrate what they were learning about teaching online to also inform their face-to-face teaching? How might these types of activities change faculty’s assumptions and beliefs about teaching and change face-to-face teaching practices? To date, no study has explored changes in teaching assumptions, beliefs, and face-to-face teaching practices resulting from faculty’s preparations to teach online or from teaching online.

**Purpose of the Research**

Professional development programs to prepare faculty to teach online are needed, not only to learn the technical aspects of teaching online, but more important to consider new and different ways of teaching. Too many faculty professional development programs have concentrated on instrumental knowledge including the conversion of course material for the online environment such as adding audio to slideshows, or uploading syllabi to a course management system used for course delivery. These programs often forgot or only skim over the communicative knowledge needed to be successful in the online classroom. This might include how to establish an online teaching presence, how to establish a relationship with the students, and how to have the students develop relationships with each other. Preparing to teach online also presents an opportunity to rethink assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and can be a catalyst for teaching changes.
The facilitators designing these professional development programs need to recognize faculty as adult learners and their professional development as adult learning. This brings all of the theory, research, and literature from the field of adult education and its effective principles, practices, strategies, applications, and experience to the facilitator (Lawler, 2003). With these resources, the facilitator can purposefully design a professional development program to foster transformative learning. A number of studies have investigated changes reported by faculty as they move to the online classroom, including changes in their teaching experience, instructional methods, and instructional roles (e.g., Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004). However, to date, no studies have been conducted that provided faculty with professional development activities for online teaching designed specifically to foster transformative learning to bring about changes in their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and change their face-to-face teaching practices. Therefore, the purpose of this action research study was to explore transformative learning among faculty as a result of participating in professional development activities to teach online.

**Research Questions**

Action research has the intention of creating and understanding change. In preparing faculty to teach online, they were be guided through professional development activities with the intent of fostering transformative learning. Specifically, critical reflection and discourse were used to question previously held beliefs and assumptions about teaching, while also informing their online and face-to-face teaching practices. This study was be guided by the following questions:
1. Which aspects of the professional development activities do faculty perceive as being most effective in helping them to reflect on and question their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching?

2. Do faculty experience changes in their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of learning to teach online and, if so, how does transformative learning explain the changes?

3. What impact does learning to teach online have on face-to-face teaching practices?

**Overview of the Theoretical Framework**

Transformative learning theory, a comprehensive, constructivist theory of adult learning, provides the theoretical basis for faculty changes in this action research study. While definitions of transformative learning theory vary based on the authors’ field of expertise within psychology, sociology, philosophy, political science, etc., they all seem to be held up for comparison against Mezirow’s (1991a) definition of transformative learning:

> Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective; and, finally, making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings (p. 167).

The perspectives Mezirow mentions are the frames of reference through which we filter our meaning-making. They consist of the core structure of assumptions, beliefs, values, and expectations assimilated from our personal history of experiences. Each frame of reference has a number of habits of mind, which are expressed as points of view (Mezirow, 1991a, 2000).

To further explain these meaning structures, consider a faculty member, for example, who, whenever she hears online teaching mentioned, just shakes her head in disgust because she
knows that teaching is only meant to be done face-to-face. She knows this because this is the way she learned, and it is the way she has taught for twenty years. This is her general expectation or frame of reference. The habits of mind are the specific interpretations that guide her reaction, such as assuming that it would be impossible to teach her course content online or that teaching online is not as effective as teaching face-to-face. These might be expressed in points of view. Imagine an administrator approaching this faculty member and telling her that she will be expected to develop and teach an online course next year. This faculty member would probably strongly defend her position against online teaching, and it could become quite an emotional event. If she gave online teaching a chance, this hypothetical faculty member’s story could have several possible endings.

We have a need to understand our experiences and integrate them into our existing meaning schemes. When we experience something that does not fit, such as online teaching, we can reject it, add it to our existing frames of reference, learn a new frame of reference, transform our points of view, or transform our habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000). For our hypothetical faculty member to fit online teaching into her frame of reference she would have to experience a change in a meaning perspective or meaning scheme. A transformation can occur from a disorienting dilemma or from a gradual accumulation of experiences that challenge our previously established perspectives (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 2000). A transformation of habits of mind can promote reflective learning and a transformation of frames of reference can promote transformative learning. Critical reflection and critical self-reflection, experiences that open up new perspectives or challenges existing frames of reference, and discourse with self and/or others are integral to this process of transformation (Cranton; Cranton & Wright, 2008; Mezirow).

Being critically reflective of our own assumptions assumes an openness to consider new information and other’s perspectives. Critical self-reflection creates an awareness of our assumptions and beliefs, and how we came to them. Reflective discourse involves dialogue with
others in which we assess our assumptions and beliefs, try to find common understandings, and validate our meanings. Mezirow explains, “To assess and fully understand the way others interpret experience requires discourse, and to understand and assess the reasons for their beliefs and understandings requires the ability to become critically reflective of their assumptions and our own” (2000, p. 15).

Transformative learning emphasizes the individual, so it is interesting to note the significance relationships play. Mezirow (1991a) acknowledges the importance of relationships with the use of discourse to validate new perspectives on friends, peers, and mentors, supporting his view that learning is a social process that takes place within the individual learner. Support, trust, friendship, and intimacy are also needed in this transformative process (Taylor, 2006). In a review of research in transformative learning (Taylor, 2007), an increase in the role and importance of relationships was noted:

It is through trustful relationships that allow individuals to have questioning discussions, share information openly and achieve mutual and consensual understanding . . . Love, memory and self-dialogue relationships proved significant to transformative learning, with intimate relationships as most significant. (p.179)

Other adult educators and recent studies support the importance of relationships in the perspective transformation process (Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Cranton, 2006b; Cranton & Wright, 2008; Robertson, 1999; Southern, 2007). Within the context of faculty professional development for online teaching, the three relationships that exist and could impact transformative learning include faculty developer-to-faculty, faculty-to-faculty, and faculty-to-students.

It is also interesting to note that Mezirow’s initial study was with women reentering higher education, but there was no indication that perhaps their experience was different in some way from that of men. A number of authors have advocated for an increased role of other
ways of knowing besides those that are rationally and consciously driven (Brooks, 2000; Cranton, 2006b; Dirkx, 2006; Taylor 1997, 2007; Tisdell, 2003). The affective domain can be accessed through art, music, story, imagination, soul work, and image. Mezirow (1991a, 2000) has accepted the importance of other ways of knowing, especially imagination, intuition, and emotion. Perhaps other ways of knowing could be incorporated into faculty professional development programs.

Strategies for fostering transformative learning are lacking in the literature. The closest Mezirow (1997b) comes to offering strategies is by sharing the ideal conditions for discourse and recommending that educators provide learners with experiences that will foster critical reflectivity, imaginative problem posing, and group deliberation and problem solving. Others recognize that more work is needed in providing educators with strategies for putting transformative learning into practice (Ettling, 2006), and call existing publications “obtuse, overly academic, difficult to access, and only now and then [having] direct implications for classroom teaching” (Taylor, 2000, p. 321). A few publications include fostering strategies for educators including critical questioning, consciousness-raising, journal writing, critical incident discussions, and arts-based activities all in accessible language for practitioners (Cranton, 2002, 2006b; Taylor, 2006).

Another area lacking in the literature are the ethical considerations in fostering transformative learning. Mezirow (1991b) cautioned against intentionally teaching for transformative learning without the learners’ knowledge and understanding. Additionally, educators need to continually evaluate their power and influence on learners and question its nature. Transformative learning may result in pain, discomfort, or conflict within a family, community, and culture (Cranton, 2006b). Is change and growth always good? Tennant (2005) recommended, “educators need to be mindful of the fine line that separates illusion, indoctrination, and genuinely transformative change” (p. 111). With the fundamentally deep
changes that could result in learners as a result of transformative learning, what is the educator’s responsibility? Transformative learning could be very disruptive for the learner, and the educator needs to be there for support. Ettling (2006) suggests that educators develop a personal ethical creed. As the ethical dimensions of transformative learning are explored, they should be integrated with the emerging literature on fostering strategies.

Mezirow’s (1991a) transformation theory has not evolved from a single theory or tradition, but has integrated ideas from the fields of psychology (including developmental, cognitive, counseling, and psychoanalytic), sociology, and philosophy with resulting orientations in constructivism, critical theory, deconstructivism, and cognitivism. Therefore, to place it into a single philosophical tradition becomes almost impossible. However, Mezirow (2000) places it within “a liberal tradition that depends ultimately on faith in informed, free human choice and social justice. Rationality, self-awareness, and empathy are assumed values” (p. xiv). It is based on the constructivist assumption that meaning exists within us, within our perceptions of our experiences. Given this list of perspectives and traditions, one might think that transformative learning theory was a truly holistic theory of adult learning. However, the persistence of dualistic thinking around learning as rational or extrarational, reflective or imaginative, cognitive or emotional, individual or social is keeping the theory fragmented (Cranton & Roy, 2003).

I see transformative learning as a way for individuals, together with other learners, individually and collectively, to grow toward self-actualization; to have who they are and what they do approach congruence. However, I also realize that not all individuals have the same opportunities for this kind of learning. I recognize and value differences in individuals, their socio-cultural context and experiences, their positionality, and their objectives and goals for themselves and their education. I am interested in learners’ other ways of knowing, especially using creative and artistic expressions. I wonder how individual differences impact transformative learning experiences. I am convinced that some of the most powerful learning occurs when a
learner can confront, through critical reflection, his or her assumptions, beliefs, and values related to the topic at hand. My thinking continues to be influenced by the writing of the critical theorist Brookfield (2005) as I consider the hegemonic assumptions and ideologies that have shaped my beliefs and values, and I realize the importance of providing opportunities for learners to consider the same of themselves. Above all, compassion and caring are at the heart of transformative teaching and learning. I advocate for a move away from the dualistic thinking that keeps transformative learning theory fragmented, and will use a holistic theory of transformative learning as the theoretical framework for this study. Finally, I believe professional development for faculty preparing to teach online presents a unique opportunity to assess previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Perspective transformation could also impact a faculty’s classroom teaching practices.

Overview of the Research Methodology

Professional development that prepares faculty to teach online presents a unique opportunity for faculty to rethink assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and can be a catalyst for teaching changes. The questions addressed by this study require a research paradigm and methodology that try to understand faculty as unique individuals with a variety of assumptions, beliefs, and lived experiences that have informed how they teach. Qualitative research is a logical fit because of its focus on understanding, its dedication to the study of the process of meaning making, and its depth and detail of analysis (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002). It allows a researcher to include the participants’ experiences and the meanings they make of their experiences, considering the uniqueness of each person’s meaning. Faculty’s prior assumptions and beliefs about teaching, their prior lived experiences with teaching, and their relationships with their students will provide a complex, holistic view of their individual experiences of
learning to teach online. A qualitative design will allow the researcher to look deeply at the faculty’s teaching beliefs and practices, while also allowing each faculty member, and the researcher herself, to look closely at their own teaching beliefs and practices.

Action research is a type of research that typically makes use primarily of qualitative data collection methods. It is a form of inquiry that is intended to have both action and research outcomes (Gravett, 2004) as it aims to solve a specific problem and effect change through a repeated cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection (Kincheloe, 2003; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). The goal of action research is to effect change that is immediately applicable to practice. Because action research starts with everyday experiences and focuses on real-life problems encountered within the context of one’s practice (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Ziegler, 2001), it is a good fit for inquiry by faculty into their teaching practices. Faculty professional development’s desired outcome is teaching change, making action research a logical fit for this study.

While the details of the methodology are outlined in chapter 3, I include a basic overview of how I plan to implement action research here. The sample population for this study will be tenured faculty or full-time faculty who are not on the tenure-track, who have been teaching at the university level for at least six years, and are currently employed by The Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg. Another criterion for participant selection is to have had no experience teaching online. For this study’s purposes, this means that they may have supplemented their classes with online materials and assignments, but they will not have substituted or replaced a face-to-face class session with a completely online class session. The participants need to be scheduled to teach face-to-face during the semester immediately following the study’s professional development activities. They also need to be scheduled to teach either a portion of a course or an entire course online in the semester immediately following the study’s professional development activities. Finally, the participants need to be interested in participating in this study,
able to devote the time required, and be willing to engage in a creative expression of their experiences in the professional development activities that are a part of the study.

This action research study will be conducted as a ten-to-twelve week professional development program during Summer 2009 to prepare faculty to teach online. The participants will be engaged in activities to prepare a certain number of their class sessions for online delivery during the following Fall 2009 semester. All face-to-face professional development sessions will be held on the Penn State Harrisburg campus, with additional sessions held online. The study will continue into the Fall semester with class observations.

There is not just one way to do action research, and multiple data collection methods have been suggested (Kincheloe, 2003; Peters, 1997; Winter, 1996; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). In this study, individual interviews which will be audio-taped and transcribed, creative expressions, group discussions, participants’ and researcher’s journals, teaching philosophy papers, and researcher’s field notes will be used to collect data. Strategies to ensure verification and trustworthiness, as outlined in Chapter 3, will also be employed in this research study.

**Significance of the Study**

Professional development to prepare faculty to teach online has been recognized as a necessary endeavor (e.g., Ko & Rossen, 1998; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Yang & Cornelius, 2005). However, faculty professional development has only recently been recognized as adult learning (Cranton, 1994; King, 2002), and there is little evidence of the use of adult learning theory and research in designing faculty development programs. This study will explicitly use adult learning theory and research to design and develop a professional development program to prepare faculty to teach online. By doing so, it will add to the adult education literature and provide new insights into how faculty learn to teach online.
While changes in instructional practices have been noted in the literature (e.g., Conceicao, 2006; Diekelmann, 1998; Gallant, 2000; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005), no previous study on online teaching has been designed with face-to-face teaching change as an intentional outcome. Therefore, this study will address this gap in the literature by using the preparation to teach online as a catalyst for change in teaching in the traditional classroom. By using reflective activities and discourse intentionally designed to shed light on uncritically assimilated assumptions and beliefs about teaching, faculty’s preparations to teach online will also inform their face-to-face teaching practices.

As faculty prepare to teach online and question their assumptions and beliefs about teaching in the classroom, new insights as to how faculty change teaching practices and what changes occur will be provided by this study. Additionally, the effect of critically reflective activities and discourse with the other study participants will also add new insights into their impact on faculty teaching changes. The applicability of action research in a faculty professional development program will provide insights into its use in a different context.

In preparing to teach online, there will be a personal benefit to the faculty participants as they learn more about themselves as educators and more about the validity of their assumptions and beliefs about teaching. They will be prepared to be effective online educators, but they will also be more aware of how and why they teach as they do in the face-to-face classroom. They could also develop new skills in critical self-reflection to gain new insights to continually improve their teaching practices.

Finally, this study represents personal significance to me. I love the work I do as a faculty developer. This study will present a new way of conducting faculty development for me, and it will have me acting in a new role as an action researcher trying to effect teaching change through transformative learning. Previously, I have not worked with faculty continually on a project of this scope. The reflective activities are new endeavors for me too. So, while I will still be working
as a faculty developer, the implications and outcomes are different and I am open to changes in
myself too. As Marcel Proust (1871-1922) said, “The only real voyage of discovery consists not
in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”

Definition of Terms

Definitions of terms used throughout this study are provided below to allow for
understanding and clarity.

Action research

Action research is a form of inductive, practical research that focuses on gaining a better
understanding of a practice problem or achieving a real change or improvement in the practice
context. It follows a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kuhne &
Quigley, 1997).

Classroom teaching and learning

For the purposes of this study, this refers to teaching and learning in which all credit
hours are conducted in a physical location during specific dates and times with the instructor and
students present. The instructor can use the web to provide supplemental course materials and to
provide course activities to bridge the time between each class session. This will also be referred
to as a traditional class or a face-to-face class.

Critical reflection

This is the type of reflection in which one critically questions “the values, assumptions,
and perspectives presented in the world” (Cranton, 2006, p. 94).

Critical self-reflection

This type of reflection involves becoming aware of the internalized assumptions that
bound and constrain our knowledge.
Frame of reference

This is an individualistic “web of assumptions and expectations through which we filter the way we see the world” (Cranton, 2006, p. 22). It is composed of the two dimensions of habits of mind and points of view defined below.

Habits of mind

This is a set of broad predispositions that filter our interpretation of our experience (Mezirow, 2000). They are expressed as a point of view.

Learner-centered instruction

This is also referred to as student-centered instruction, and is teaching that begins by planning for the learners’ needs, purposes, and goals. Its focus is on the learners, their characteristics and experiences.

Online teaching and learning

For the purposes of this study, this refers to teaching and learning that is delivered completely on the Internet with no face-to-face contact between the instructor and students. Typically online teaching and learning occurs asynchronously, but portions could be synchronous. This could also be referred to as distance education, the online environment, web-based education, and e-learning.

Point of view

A point of view is made up of clusters of meaning schemes that are “sets of immediate specific expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and judgments” (p. 18) that act as habitual rules for interpreting experiences (Mezirow, 2000).

Professional development

Professional development refers to programs and activities that engage university faculty in thinking about their own growth and development as educators, in critical reflection and discourse on their teaching practices, and in the revision of their perspectives on teaching. For the
purposes of this study, professional development refers to the process for preparing faculty for the move from teaching in a traditional classroom to the online classroom.

**Rational discourse**

Rational discourse is a dialogue with others for the purposes of understanding alternative perspectives and testing their validity.

**Teacher-centered instruction**

This is instruction that begins with the teacher’s agendas, ideas, and methods.

**Transformative learning**

Transformative learning is the “process by which people examine problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change” (Cranton, 2006, p. 36).

**Assumptions of the Study**

The following assumptions are held by the author entering into this study:

1. Learning is not only an individualistic, rational, cognitive process, but also a social, emotional, and creative process.
2. Professional development is helpful for faculty preparing to teach online.
3. Faculty come to professional development programs open to the possibility for change.
4. Higher education faculty members’ cognitive development is mature enough to be able to engage in the type of critical reflection and rational discourse necessary for transformative learning.
5. Faculty can identify and be honest about their teaching assumptions and beliefs.

Engaging in creative projects, participants will tap into their feelings and unconscious thoughts.
Limitations and Strengths of the Study

For this study, the following limitations were considered:

1. As a qualitative research study, the results are not generalizable. It will be up to the reader to determine whether the study’s results can be applied to their particular context and population.

2. The action research study’s shorter length of study limits its trustworthiness.

3. Already knowing the faculty participating in this study could impact their reporting of teaching assumptions and beliefs, and any changes resulting from the professional development activities to me, possibly trying to tell me what they think I want to hear.

While all studies have some limitations as listed above, this study also has a number of strengths to highlight:

1. The research was conducted within the authentic context of faculty professional development. This means that the setting was the same as past faculty professional development programs, and used the university’s course management system, which was familiar to all full-time faculty.

2. As the researcher, but also as the person in charge of faculty professional development at this university campus college, which is the research setting, the faculty were already familiar with me as a support person. For this reason, it is possible that an environment of trust, respect, and openness was able to be established more quickly than in other research situations where the researcher and participants are unfamiliar with each other. Also, this support continued after the research project was completed.

While the intent of action research is change, it is flexible enough to allow for changes while the research is in progress. This facilitates ongoing inquiry into the faculty participants’
changing questions and needs, allowing them to reach the professional development goals they set for themselves for this program during their pre-interview.

Organization of the Study

The purpose of this first chapter is to introduce my research through its primary purpose and guiding research questions, and to offer the rationale for my approach. Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review of the major areas of study, including transformative learning, the role of reflection, the development of faculty’s teaching assumptions and beliefs, online teaching as a catalyst for changing teaching beliefs and practices, faculty professional development, and faculty professional development models to teach online. The details of my research methodology and design are described in Chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe each of the three rounds of action research. Finally, Chapter 7 provides an overview of the major findings, and relates them to the literature. Implications for future faculty professional development and future research are discussed and concluding thoughts are shared along with the significance of this study.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of my action research study is to engage higher education faculty members, positioned as adult learners, in a professional development program to prepare them to teach online that could also transform their assumptions and beliefs about teaching and, hence, change their face-to-face teaching practices. This research addresses a gap in the literature on faculty professional development for online teaching. While research has been conducted to note changes faculty report in the online teaching experience (e.g., Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004), no study has explored changes in teaching assumptions, beliefs, and face-to-face teaching practices resulting from faculty’s preparations to teach online. Additionally, while many faculty professional development models exist to prepare faculty to teach online (e.g., Abel, 2005; Chizmar & Williams, 2001; Covington, Petherbridge, & Warren, 2005; Garofoli & Woodell, 2003; Irani, 2001), none include a reflective component to intentionally question faculty’s current assumptions and beliefs about teaching and inform their face-to-face teaching practices.

This literature review provides an understanding of the theoretical framework for this study, the nature of online teaching and faculty’s experiences teaching online, the concept of faculty as adult learners within their professional development programs, and the role of professional development to prepare faculty to teach online. This review also provides an understanding of the empirical literature on those professional development models.
Theoretical Framework: Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory, a comprehensive, constructivist theory of adult learning, provides the theoretical basis for faculty changes in this action research study. Professional development for faculty preparing to teach online presents a unique opportunity to assess previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Since change in previously held assumptions and beliefs is at the heart of transformative learning theory, an overview of this theory is provided in this section.

Transformative learning theory is a theory of adult learning that has evolved through an integration of ideas from the fields of psychology (including developmental, cognitive, counseling, and psychoanalytic), sociology, and philosophy with resulting orientations in constructivism, critical theory, deconstructivism, and cognitivism. It is based on the constructivist assumption that meaning exists within us, within our perceptions of our experiences, and focuses on the individual. In this way, “transformative learning is a process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising our perspectives” (Cranton, 2006, p. 23).

Mezirow’s (1991) definition of perspective transformation has taken a few twists and turns since he first wrote about it. In 1981 he drew on Habermas’s (1971) three kinds of learning of instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory. He also related perspective transformation to self-directed learning in 1985, included three kinds of meaning perspectives in 1991, and acknowledged the importance of the affective, emotional, and social context aspects in transformative learning in 2000. In that same year he introduced habits of mind and points of view to the theory, and in 2003 he acknowledged that a disorienting dilemma was not the only way transformative learning could be experienced but that it could also be a gradual cumulative process. A year later he agreed that transformative learning is a developmental process. He also announced that he had taken the theory as far as he could and now leaves it up to others to
continue its progress. Yet, in a later dialog with John Dirx (Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006), Mezirow offered a definition of transformative learning that seemed to have evolved ever so slightly:

This rational process of learning within awareness is a metacognitive application of critical thinking that transforms an acquired frame of reference – a mind-set or worldview of orienting assumptions and expectations involving values, beliefs, and concepts – by assessing its epistemic assumptions. This process makes frames of reference more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. Frames with these qualities generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p. 2)

While this definition does not appear to mark a change in Mezirow’s beliefs about the process of transformative learning, he does seem to be trying to clarify a point or two. Perhaps because it is within a dialogue with John Dirx, Mezirow seems to be emphasizing the “learning within awareness.” He also adds that transformative learning is a “metacognitive application.” This would be considered the second level of cognitive processing in Kitchener’s (1983) three levels, with individuals monitoring their own progress. However, Mezirow does take the process to Kitchener’s third level of learning, epistemic cognition, by assessing how and what one knows; in other words, “assessing its epistemic assumptions.” Finally, he acknowledges that emotion plays a part in the process.

Common Critiques of Transformative Learning Theory

A number of authors have contributed to the evolution of transformative learning theory through their thoughtful critiques and contributions. The publication of Mezirow’s (1991a) Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning brought his theory to the forefront of the adult education literature, and was criticized for not including issues of context, social action, or power. It was also considered too rational with too much emphasis placed on the individual. Therefore, to truly understand how the theory of transformative learning has evolved and continues to
evolve, these critiques are discussed, loosely arranged in a chronological order, beginning with context.

Learning happens within, and is affected by, the learner’s world. Mezirow (2000) said, “The justification for much of what we know and believe, our values and our feelings, depends on the context – biographical, historical, cultural – in which they are embedded” (p. 3). As an example, consider a faculty member preparing to teach online. Contextual influences could include their own prior teaching and learning experiences, their experiences with technology and their beliefs about its advantages and limitations, their discipline or subject area, their department and institution with its norms and expectations, their students and their expectations of how teaching and learning should occur, and the general public with its expectations for higher education. Since context cannot be removed from learning, the argument seems to become one of degrees of emphasis, which is explained, in the following paragraphs.

Clark and Wilson (1991) criticized Mezirow’s theory for failing to account for context in meaning-making, and they proposed a more contextualized view of rationality. Mezirow (1991b) replied that he considered context implicitly assumed and assured readers that cultural context was integral to making meaning in one’s meaning perspectives. In fact, in Mezirow’s 1991 book, he has a section on the cultural context of learning and pulls from Bowers’ (1984) sociology of knowledge regarding socialization. He recognizes that “culture can encourage or discourage transformative thought” (p. 3). Mezirow replied to Clark and Wilson’s critique to say that he failed to clearly communicate his views, and he welcomed the opportunity to clarify his concepts.

In contrast, Newman (1994) praised Mezirow for recontextualizing the act of reflection by “placing it within a process that requires us to examine our cultural context and examine ourselves as cultural beings” (p. 239). However, Brooks (1989, 2000) still saw the omission of the importance of historical and sociocultural context as a weakness in the model.
Mezirow stressed the role of context more strongly in 2000, saying that “adult learning needs to emphasize contextual understanding” (p. 3). Yet, the calls for the importance of context continued with Jarvis (2005) who claimed that Mezirow omitted the complexity of the social context of learning and the centrality of the place of experience, and with Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) who said that Mezirow’s theory is acontextual and needs to include individual biography and sociocultural factors.

It seems as though the authors all agree that context plays an important role in transformative learning. Perhaps it is the terminology being used, or their specialized focus (e.g., sociology or feminism) that is causing the conflict. The discussion might have been different if Mezirow had made context explicit rather than implicit in his definition of transformative learning, although there still would have been nuances to be teased out and other interests to be served.

Historically, emancipatory learning has been one of the goals of adult education. Mezirow uses Habermas’s (1971) social critique in his transformation theory, and sees Freire’s (1970) consciousness-raising as a parallel to perspective transformation. Mezirow (1991a) says that understanding our reality more fully “contributes to the development of autonomy and responsibility in deciding how to define our problems and the course of action that is most appropriate under particular circumstances” (p. 88). In other words, a perspective transformation could lead to social action, but does not have to do so. It is not the only goal of adult education. His belief is strongly heard when he says, “Adult learning transforms meaning perspectives, not society” (p. 208). He continues, “Education is the handmaiden of learning, not of politics; but significant learning, involving personal transformations, is a social process with significant implications for social action” (p. 208). While he certainly is not denying the possibilities of social action resulting from transformative learning, he does not offer it as a panacea for all of society’s ills.
Newman (1994) believes that this offers little help to those who are oppressed. His focus is on identifying strategies to deal with oppression at the same time. He emphasizes that we should study not the oppressed, but oppression itself. Mezirow (2000) says those who are hungry and living in poverty or other oppressed conditions are less likely to participate in transformative learning. He argued that “often learners are unaware of being oppressed; they internalize the values of the oppressors” (1997a, p. 62). He presents a strong rebuttal to Newman’s critique of transformation learning theory and explains how he sees social action fostered in his model. He also warns that “fostering direct collective action is an area of special competence in which not all adult educators have been trained. It is a specialized area of practice in adult education often best left to experienced social action educators” (1997a, p. 61). However, he says that he has “always held that it is entirely appropriate for adult educators who choose to do so to become engaged in social action education when they feel a sense of solidarity with those who have decided to take such a course of action” (1997a, p. 61).

All theorists seem to agree that social change is at least one objective of transformative learning. The difference seems to be in the emphasis. Social theorists consider collective social action as the primary goal of transformative learning and adult education, while Mezirow believes that one needs to prepare the individual learner first and an outcome could be social action. Considering this perspective within the context of faculty professional development programming, it is interesting to note that faculty professional development could be considered a function of learning to ‘fit in’ the higher education culture and not ‘upsetting the apple cart’ – a socialization into the institution. Could a function of transformative learning within faculty professional development programming be a consciousness-raising of barriers and constraints faculty face within their institution rather than an acquiescence of fitting in? As faculty then would individually and collectively become more aware of institutional constraints, emancipatory learning could be an outcome resulting in social action.
The use of discourse in transformative learning is based on the writings of Jürgen Habermas (1971) who wrote about the ideal conditions for communication. Mezirow (1991a) equated these conditions with the ideal conditions for adult learning. He recognizes that these ideal conditions may never be fully attained, but they that should be the conditions toward which adult educators strive to create communities of critical discourse and to control forces that allow power to interrupt the possibilities for full disclosure. He also recognizes the difference in power between the educator and the learners. These disclosures did not stop Hart (1990) from addressing transformative learning theory’s neglect of power issues, especially in relation to the role of the educator, or from Merriam et al. (2007) saying that Mezirow’s theory does not address power. Although the issue of power is present in Mezirow’s theory, it is not central and that seems to be where the difference lies.

With communication an integral piece of transformative learning, Brooks’s (2000) critique interests me the most. She reminds us of those who have been marginalized, and whose unstoried knowledge has been “erased or silenced as a result of the domination of a language that provides ways of naming only the experiences and knowledge of dominant groups in the culture” (pp. 150-151). Here context and power come together preventing participants in learning from having the language to speak of their own experiences and knowledge. For me it also reinforces Mezirow’s contention that we need to begin with the individual learner. Without individuals having a voice, what does social action become if not yet another exercise in power?

The use of empirical studies, the act of gathering the facts to present a case, the acknowledgement of right and wrong, all present evidence that knowing is valued. It is what one does to convey what they know about a certain topic. Mezirow (1991a) maintained that the process of transformation is a cognitive, rational one: an adult form of metacognitive reasoning. However, Dirkx (1997, 2006) believes that the theory contains an overemphasis on rational thought, and uses a depth psychology framework to explore how adult learners’ unconscious
meanings are expressed in emotions and feelings. His work is in the language of imagination and suggests the use of fiction, poetry, movies, personal journals, and free writing to engage the imagination through images. Educators also need to consider learner’ feelings and fantasies instead of concentrating solely on the cognitive dimensions.

Other authors, including Merriam et al. (2007), agree that rationality is overemphasized and the theory needs to include affective and intuitive dimensions. It is striking to me that Mezirow’s initial study was with women reentering higher education, but there was no indication that perhaps their experience was different in some way than that of men. A number of authors have advocated for an increased role of other ways of knowing besides those that are rationally and consciously driven (Brooks, 2000; Cranton, 2006b; Dirkx, 2006; Taylor 1997, 2007; Tisdell, 2003). The affective domain can be accessed through art, music, story, imagination, soul work, and image. Brooks (1989) sees a need to consider intuition, other ways of knowing, and empathy. Jarvis (2005) believes that a more holistic view of learning is needed with attention to both body and mind. Cranton (2006b), who supports Mezirow’s current definition of transformative learning, also advocates incorporating imagination, intuition, soul, and affect. Mezirow (1991a, 2000) has accepted the importance of other ways of knowing, especially imagination, intuition, and emotion.

The focus on the individual is a Western way of knowing, a psychological approach. Mezirow (1997a) believes that learning is a social process that takes place within the individual learner. Daloz (1999), coming from a developmental psychology perspective, also believes that transformative learning is about personal change. Using Jung’s model of psychological types, Cranton (2000, 2006b) looks at the differences among individual learners based on learning and cognitive styles, and personality traits and how these differences impact their process of transformative learning. However, Clark (in Clark & Dirkx, 2000) argues that there are multiple identities and multiple selves, calling for a pluralistic understanding of the self.
Under all of these selves, does one Self exist? Through critical reflection, critical self-reflection and perspective transformations, can one come closer to knowing a core Self? The literature does not seem to resolve this, but addresses the focus on the individual and the need to broaden the focus socially and relationally.

Knowing the high degree of emphasis given the individual in transformative learning, it is interesting to note the significance in which the role relationships plays. Support, trust, friendship, and intimacy are needed in this process (Taylor, 2006). In his reviews of research in transformative learning, Taylor (1997, 2007) noticed an increase in the role and importance of relationships. “It is through trustful relationships that allow individuals to have questioning discussions, share information openly and achieve mutual and consensual understanding . . . Love, memory and self-dialogue relationships proved significant to transformative learning, with intimate relationships as most significant” (Taylor, 2007, p.179). Clark (as cited in Cranton, 2006b) and Merriam et al. (2007) agree with the importance of relational ways of knowing in the perspective transformation process. Mezirow (1991a) also acknowledges this importance with the use of discourse to test new perspectives on friends, peers, and mentors, supporting his view that learning is a social process that takes place within the individual learner.

In the adult education courses in which I have been a student, whenever transformative learning is discussed the conversation almost always touches upon teaching strategies. The closest Mezirow (1997b) comes to offering strategies is by sharing the ideal conditions for discourse and recommending that educators provide learners with experiences that will foster critical reflectivity, imaginative problem posing, and group deliberation and problem solving. Ettling (2006) recognizes that more work is needed in providing educators with strategies for putting transformative learning into practice, and Taylor (2000) calls existing publications “obtuse, overly academic, difficult to access, and only now and then [having] direct implications
for classroom teaching” (p. 321). More work is needed in offering strategies to facilitate transformative learning.

There is an ethical dimension to attend to within transformative learning. Whenever there is intent of fundamental perspective changes within the learners, the learners need to be aware of that intent. Additionally, the educators need to be mindful of the nature of the changes for which they are intentionally teaching. This could potentially skew the power balance within the classroom to the educator’s side, and could cause great discomfort or conflict for the learners (Cranton, 2006b). Is change and growth always good? Tennant (2005) recommended that “educators need to be mindful of the fine line that separates illusion, indoctrination, and genuinely transformative change” (p. 111). With the fundamentally deep changes that could result in learners as a result of transformative learning, what is the educator’s responsibility? Merriam et al. (2007) pointed out that ethical issues still need to be addressed around transformative learning. Ettling (2006) suggests that educators develop a personal ethical creed. As the ethical dimensions of transformative learning are explored, they should be integrated with the emerging literature on fostering strategies.

At the various presentations at the Seventh International Transformative Learning Conference (2007), it seemed as though perspective transformations were happening everywhere: in health care settings, food safety trainings, through creative art processes, community-based work, cross-cultural mentoring, and by the terminally ill, researchers, and farmers. It reminded me of Kegan’s (2000) warning that the problem of transformative learning’s appeal and success is that transformation begins to refer to any kind of change or process at all. In his research critiques of the past two decades, Taylor (1997, 2007) also noticed transformation’s definition widening. So how narrowly should transformation be defined? Dirkx (1998) believes that perspective transformation “is relatively rare within settings of adult education. Its conscious presence within our lives is best understood as a gift, an act of grace” (p. 11). Tennant (1994) also argued for a
narrower definition, distinguishing between normative development (transformation of meaning schemes) and transformative development (perspective transformation). To address this critique, for the purposes of this research study, transformational learning will be considered a deep fundamental shift in a faculty member’s underlying assumptions and beliefs about teaching, with a potential change in their face-to-face teaching practices.

While Mezirow’s is the dominant theory of transformative learning, alternative perspectives have emerged that address some of the common critiques presented above. In the next section, an overview of these different perspectives is provided, leading to the guiding perspective for this research study.

Additional Facets of Transformative Learning

Cranton (2006b) describes transformative learning theory as a theory in progress as new perspectives gleaned from research expand, contract, and refine it. Much of the credit for this progress can be credited to Mezirow’s engagement in public dialogue as he willingly debated and continued to develop his theory. Additional credit goes to the many authors willing to engage him, daring to look at transformative learning a little differently. Alternative perspectives of transformative learning include depth psychology, constructive-developmental, social-emancipatory, neurobiological, cultural-spiritual, race-centric, and an ecological view towards a planetary community (Taylor, 2008). They address many of the common critiques of transformative learning discussed in the prior section. The key differences to be noted among these perspectives are the goal of transformative learning, the degree of emphasis on the individual, social change, and the role of culture. Those perspectives that align most closely with my personal beliefs and inform my current faculty development practices and this research study are discussed in the following paragraphs.
The goal of the depth psychology perspective of transformative learning is to gain a deeper understanding of one’s inner self through a process of individuation. Based on Jungian psychology, this is considered to be a lifelong journey of developing the individual personality as one consciously chooses their own way separate from the collective (Cranton, 2000; Dirkx, 2000). Individuation draws attention to the unconscious self, apart from the ego consciousness, accessible through images and symbols manifest within the emotional, affective, and spiritual parts of our lives (Dirkx). Fostering an imaginative engagement with the unconscious elements of one’s self is an integral part of transformative learning from this perspective (Boyd & Myers, 1988). Dirkx also calls this perspective a mytho-poetic view of transformative learning (2000) and soul work or inner work (2006).

The constructive-developmental perspective broadens transformative learning to include the entire life span (Kegan, 2000). It focuses on epistemological changes – changes in how we know and what we know – as a natural evolution of our construction of meaning (Daloz, 2000; Kegan). Our identity gradually evolves from one that is uncritically internalized from the values and expectations of those with whom we interact (friends, family, community) to one that is more self-authored. This requires a change in the ways adults “understand themselves, their world, and the relationship between the two” (Kegan, p. 67). It appreciates the role of relationships and social context (Taylor, 2008).

A cultural-spiritual perspective of transformative learning appreciates the role of culture, spirituality, and connections (Taylor, 2008). Here, story or narrative is central to transformative learning and provides a link between individual and social transformation, engaging learners mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically (Brooks, 2000). The narrative assumes a relationship with others, a connected knowing, as each person attempts to understand another’s perspective using empathy, imagination, and storytelling (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). Tisdell (2003) describes this process as “engaging people’s hearts and souls, as well as their minds” and
is “rooted in learners’ culture, history, personal life experiences, and spirituality” (p. 188). This perspective also acknowledges a progression in identity development as people learn to use language to give a voice to their previously silenced selves. The goal of the cultural-spiritual perspective is to move closer to one’s authentic self, integrating their culture, history, personal life experiences, and spirituality (Tisdell).

Given these different perspectives, one might think that transformative learning theory was a truly holistic theory of adult learning. This is not the case due to the continued use of dualistic thinking in defining learning as rational or extrarational, reflective or imaginative, cognitive or emotional, individual or social (Cranton & Roy, 2003). In order to move away from the dualistic thinking that keeps transformative learning theory fragmented, I propose a holistic theory of transformative learning as the guiding perspective for this study, integrating elements of the various perspectives discussed in this section. I echo the sentiments of Ann Brooks (2000) who said, “I want to suggest that when we think about transformative learning, our task is not to use critiques as a way to make our understanding of it smaller; rather, our task is to expand the stories we can tell about it in a way that extends and makes our understanding more complex” (p. 148).

Within faculty professional development, I see transformative learning as a way for faculty members, together with their colleagues, individually and collectively, to grow toward self-actualization; to have who they are and what they do approach congruence. I recognize and value differences in individual faculty, their socio-cultural context and experiences, their positionality, and their objectives and goals for themselves and their professional development. I am interested in faculty’s other ways of knowing, especially around creative and artistic expressions. I wonder how their individual differences might impact their transformative learning experiences. I am convinced that some of the most powerful learning occurs when a faculty member can confront, through critical reflection, his or her assumptions, beliefs, and values about
teaching and learning. My thinking continues to be influenced by the writing of the critical theorist Brookfield (2005) as I consider the hegemonic assumptions and ideologies that have shaped my beliefs and values, and I realize the importance of providing opportunities for faculty to consider the same of themselves. Above all, compassion and caring are at the heart of teaching and learning. This is my holistic perspective for transformative learning.

Now, from this holistic perspective of transformative learning where compassion and caring are at the heart of teaching and learning, we move to the heart of transformative learning which is critical reflection and critical self-reflection (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Cranton & Wright, 2008; Pohland & Bova, 2000). The next section describes the role of reflection, distinguishes between the types of reflection, and considers methods to foster critical reflection, especially within faculty professional development.

The Role of Reflection

With teaching experience, faculty become able to act on intuition and other implicit understandings (Jacobsen, 1998). However, because these understandings are implicit, they are rarely documented, reviewed, or reflected upon. In order to make faculty’s actions and understandings explicit and available for review, an effort at reflective analysis needs to occur (Jacobsen). When faculty consciously reflect on their teaching practices, it helps them to understand what they do and why (Cranton & King, 2003). Jacobsen’s own act of documenting class activities required a thorough reflection that helped in identifying teaching decisions and in changing the way his class was conducted. He shared that while “the idea of documenting teaching is a fairly straightforward concept, it is logistically difficult and at times uncomfortable, yet vitally important for bringing implicit understandings to the surface for reflection and analysis” (p. 131).
Sometimes it is found that faculty’s actions in the classroom are not always consistent with their stated teaching philosophy (Gravett, 2004; Kincheloe, 2003). This could be because they are teaching from rules they have uncritically assimilated into their practice, or because they have adopted socially constructed roles that do not quite fit who they are as teacher. When faculty begin to critically question their teaching practices, they open up their perspectives and transformative learning is possible (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). This type of learning “is grounded in the nature of human communication; to understand the meaning of what is being communicated – especially when intentions, values, moral issues, and feeling are involved – requires critical reflection of assumptions” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 188). Considering the importance placed on reflection within a number of conceptual and empirical studies exploring faculty’s pedagogical growth (e.g., Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 1996, 1998; Kreber, 2000; McAlpine & Weston, 2000; Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin, & Prosser, 2000), the next section distinguishes between the different types of reflection and discusses facilitation strategies.

**Differentiating between Reflection and Critical Reflection**

Reflection is an act of thinking about one’s experience. This can simply mean being aware of an object, an experience, a thought, a feeling, or even of one’s own reflecting (Mezirow, 1998). It could include unarticulated intuitions, a review of one’s experience, evaluating one’s feelings, or ‘thinking on your feet’ (Cranton 1996; Schön, 1983). Reflective thinking can also be initiated when encountering a problem or doubt that formal logic alone cannot answer (King & Kitchener, 2004). “We naturally move toward frames of reference that are more inclusive, differentiating, permeable, critically reflective, and integrative” of our experiences (Mezirow, p. 189).
Mezirow (1991) described three different types of reflection: content, process, and premise. With content reflection, faculty describe their problem and examine its content. They might ask, “What just happened here?” and draw on what they already know or believe (Kreber, 2004). In process reflection, faculty look at the steps taken in trying to solve the problem in order to determine where the thinking might have gone wrong. A question asked here might be, “What led to this problem?” where we find out whether what we do works. Faculty might consult the literature on teaching, conduct their own research on their teaching, or talk to their colleagues. It is important to note that assumptions are not questioned in process reflection. The third type of reflection is premise reflection when faculty question the problem itself. Here the question might be, “Why is this problem important?” where faculty are questioning the assumptions underlying what they thought was true. It is within premise reflection that we engage in critical reflection (Kreber) and where the potential exists for transformation of meaning perspectives (Cranton & King, 2003). “To be transformative, reflection has to involve and lead to some fundamental change in perspective” (Cranton, 1996, p. 79).

Mezirow (1998) differentiated critical reflection from reflection by noting that one needs to make an assessment of what is being reflected upon in critical reflection. In other words, one needs to recognize “the assumptions underlying our beliefs and behaviors” (Brookfield, 1987, p. 13). Additionally, critical reflection can be either implicit as when faculty mindlessly choose between lecture and inquiry-based learning because of their assimilated values, or explicit as when faculty bring “the process of choice into awareness to examine and assess the reasons for making a choice” (Mezirow, p. 186). It demands that we take “the time to look deeply at one’s situation to identify values, assumptions, and beliefs that cause us to interpret the situation as we do” (Watkins & Marsick, 1993, p. 33). It is critical reflection on an assumption, though, that has a “major potential for effecting a change in one’s established frame of reference” (Mezirow, p.186). It is important to note that we “can become critically reflective of our own assumptions as well as
those of others” (Mezirow, p. 186). Mezirow explained that, “We cannot learn the meaning of what is being communicated without becoming critically reflective of sub-textual assumptions about truthfulness, truth, authenticity, and coherence” (p. 188-189).

Critical reflection on assumptions “is the active construction of knowledge claims, understood within the context of their origins” (Mezirow, 1998, p.190). Critical reflection of assumptions can involve an objective reframing and/or action. Objective reframing involves the analysis of text or a problem that can result in instrumental learning. For example, in narrative critical reflection of assumptions, one is “critically examining the validity of the concepts, beliefs, feelings or actions being communicated to you (in speech, books, paintings) by assessing the truth or justification of taken-for-granted assumptions” (Mezirow, p.192). Alternately, in attempting to improve performance, active critical reflection of assumptions “involves a pause in task-oriented problem-solving to critically examine one’s own assumptions in defining the problem. . . in order to take more effective action to solve it” (Mezirow, p. 192).

A continuous, systematic reflective practice follows a logical progression from awareness of assumptions, to examination and consequences of assumptions, to questioning the validity of assumptions which is considered critical reflection (Pohland & Bova, 2000). Brookfield (2006) defines critical reflection as a “process by which we research the assumptions informing our practice by viewing these through four complementary lenses – the lenses of students’ eyes, colleagues’ perceptions, literature, and our own autobiography” (p. 26). It involves “recognizing, judging, and justifying one’s ideas and actions” (Brookfield, 1987, p. 13). He finds critical reflection central to skillful teaching because it informs faculty’s assumptions, making them more accurate and valid, it models critical thinking for students, and it has the potential to reenergize teaching (Brookfield, 2006). It should be noted that while critical reflection is an essential component to transformative learning, critical reflection does not guarantee transformation (Cranton, 1996).
Critical Self-reflection

Critical self-reflection involves thinking about our own assumptions. It “involves critique of a premise upon which the learner has defined a problem” (Mezirow, 1998, p. 186) (e.g., “my course content cannot be taught online,” so I will not get involved with online teaching even though many of my colleagues are excited about their online teaching experiences). This subjective reframing “emphasizes critical analysis of the psychological or cultural assumptions that are the specific reasons for one’s conceptual and psychological limitations, the constitutive processes or conditions of formation of one’s experience and beliefs” (Mezirow, p. 193). It is “a rational process of coming to question habits of mind that have become too narrow and too limiting” (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 289). Mezirow (1998) and Cranton (1996) maintain that critical self-reflection may result in significant personal and social transformations.

Mezirow (1998) described four common forms of critical self-reflection of assumptions that would be familiar to adult educators: narrative, systemic, organizational, and moral-ethical. Narrative critical self-reflection of assumptions involves applying the objective reframing to oneself, as in carrying over insights gained from a critical reflection on assumptions after reading a book to one’s own lived experiences. Systemic critical self-reflection of assumptions “involves critical reflection on one’s own assumptions pertaining to . . . a cultural system” including “the canons, paradigms, or ideologies that have generated traditional roles and relationships” (p. 193). Organizational critical self-reflection on assumptions is directed at the assumptions “embedded in the history and culture of a workplace, and how they have impacted on one’s own thought and action” (p.193). Finally, moral-ethical critical self-reflection on assumptions is directed at one’s ethical decision-making, or value judgments, and “is often related to conscience and one’s idealized self-image” (p. 194).
Types of Learning within Critical Reflection

When faculty learn about teaching, they can engage in content, process, and premise reflection within three different domains of teaching knowledge: instructional, pedagogical, and curricular knowledge (Kreber, 2004). Instructional knowledge consists of the basic things that faculty do: writing syllabi, planning lessons, selecting readings, preparing presentations, and constructing exams. Pedagogical knowledge concerns itself with how students learn, how to best adjust teaching to fit students’ learning style preferences, and how to best facilitate learning. Curricular knowledge is knowledge of how courses fit into the overall curriculum and how one’s teaching fits into the university’s goals. Combining these three types of reflection with the three types of teaching knowledge results in nine different forms of reflection. Their learning might be instrumental, communicative, or emancipatory “depending on the kind of reflection individuals engage in” (Kreber, p. 32).

Mezirow distinguishes instrumental learning as an empirical-analytical method of learning where one verifies beliefs by gathering data to either support or defeat them (Kreber, 2004); either the assertion can be supported or it cannot. Communicative learning is a result of communication with others in which a common understanding or consensus is reached. There is no questioning of why or how the community came to believe what they do; it just is the way it is. Within emancipatory learning, the questioning of assumptions is involved in determining how certain norms and conditions came to be. Both process and premise reflection can occur through these three types of learning (Kreber).

“If our goal is to improve teaching, Mezirow’s model would suggest that it is imperative that we encourage process and premise reflection rather than content reflection on teaching” (italics in original, Kreber, 2004, p. 33). It is “imperative that assumptions are not just taken for
Authors claim that a critically reflective practice can provide faculty a method for reframing an understanding of their teaching practices (Cranton, 1996; Farren, 2008; Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004) and can be used for continuous professional development on their teaching (Cranton & King, 2003). In fact, Cranton suggests that if “educators are to develop their practice, a process including both personal and professional growth, then critical reflection on practice will be central to the learning” (p. 76). However, a number of studies have considered reflection within faculty professional development and they “contribute only in a limited way to our understanding of how reflection may improve teaching practice, and by extension, to the design of educational development initiatives intended to promote reflection on teaching” (Kreber, 2004, p. 30). Additionally, not all faculty are willing to engage in a reflective practice (Menges, 1991). Therefore, it is important to consider how to foster this type of reflection that could lead to teaching changes.

Faculty can learn “about teaching by talking about their experiences, becoming aware of the assumptions and expectations they have, questioning these assumptions, and possibly revising their perspectives” (Cranton, 1996, p. 2). A number of authors have suggested approaches for fostering critical reflection including the use of discourse, critical questioning, journaling, personal teaching philosophies, and metaphors (e.g., Brookfield, 1987, 1995, 2006; Cranton, 1994, 1996, 2006b; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). These approaches are explored in the following paragraphs.
**Fostering Critical Reflection**

Transformative learning theory advocates the use of discourse for reflection, recognizing that it is quite difficult to “articulate assumptions without the help of others” (Cranton, 1996, p. 83). Through discourse we consensually give and assess others’ reasons, arguments and assumptions, examine evidence, and seek to validate beliefs and interpretations to arrive at an agreement on meaning (King & Kitchener, 2004). This special form of dialogue has a goal of “reaching a common understanding and justification of an interpretation or belief” (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 289). Participants consider alternative perspectives and can come to new understandings.

Discourse can be used as a public form of reflection (Langley, O’Connor, & Welkener, 2004). Fink (2003) shares that “when we engage in dialogue with others, the possibility of finding new and richer meanings increases dramatically” (p. 106). In fact, discourse can make explicit issues that might have gone unnoticed otherwise (Jacobsen, 1998). This type of reflection on teaching beliefs and experiences is seen as an integral component of faculty professional development (Hampton, Morrow, Bechtel, & Carroll, 2004). These opportunities are used to reflect on teaching strengths and areas for improvement, and to share these reflections with other faculty (Hampton et al.). “Talking about teaching with others helps us to consider our own views in a new light” (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 289).

Within discourse, critical questioning can be used to bring uncritically assimilated assumptions from the past to the forefront for examination. For this validation process, Brookfield (1987) offers guidelines to develop good critical questioning skills including the need to be specific, to relate questions to particular events, people, and actions, to work from the particular to the general, and to be conversational. Because it is difficult to engage in this type of
questioning without appearing to be threatening, it is important to have this questioning set in a reflective and caring context (Cranton, 1996).

Journaling is another method used for reflection (Brookfield, 2006; Daley, 2003). In this way, faculty can be encouraged to link their past and present experiences with their new learning (Daley). There are many reported benefits of journal writing including coping with our day-to-day lives, measuring our developmental progress, nurturing our voice and spirit, providing an alternative voice, managing our emotions, preserving the past, and reflection upon ourselves (Boud, 2001; Merriam et al., 2007). It is a way for faculty to investigate and improve their teaching (Pereira, 1999) by pausing to open up to multiple perspectives, actively processing their thoughts, and examining their closely held beliefs, goals, and practices.

There are two basic stages in reflective practice that might be experienced through journal writing (Merriam et al., 2007; Pereira, 1999). Within the reflection-on-action stage, through journal writing faculty might write about an experience they had, reevaluate it, decide what might have been done differently, and then try it out. In the context of teaching, faculty could write about a classroom experience, and evaluate any discrepancies between their stated teaching philosophy and their actual practice. Another teaching scenario might have faculty collect a quick end-of-class minute paper asking each student to recall the most important point and something they do not understand from that day’s class. In analyzing the student responses, faculty could realize that their most important point was not what the students’ took away. In reflecting back on the day’s class through journal writing, they might reevaluate it, decide where and how they could have done things differently, and then try it out during the next class session.

In the reflection-in-action stage, faculty reflect on what they are doing while going about everyday practices (Boud, 2001; Pereira, 1999; Schön, 1983). This is commonly referred to as “thinking on your feet” or “learning by doing” (Schön, p. 54). Within the context of teaching, a student may suddenly become disruptive causing the faculty member to consider what caused the
outburst as he/she tries to understand the student’s behavior and react calmly to it. Another teaching scenario could have students highly engaged in a classroom discussion that has gotten off topic, and the faculty member needs to reflect on whether he/she should allow the discussion to continue or to steer them back to the topic.

Pereira (1999) reports that once one is engaged in reflective practice one gains a more holistic perspective as by becoming more conscious of behavior, actions, ideas, ideals, strengths, weaknesses, etc. She sees it as an expanding spiral where today’s experiences support tomorrow’s reflective practice. In fact, she used reflective practice to look at her own work as a teacher in the context of action-research. Her research question was how to improve her teaching practice. She found that the process of learning from her reflections was successful in critically guiding her teaching practices. Her dedication to continue in this reflective practice will require a high level of critical self-evaluation and honesty.

Developing a personal teaching philosophy provides another opportunity for faculty to reflect on their personal beliefs about teaching: their role, their students’ role, and education’s role. This type of writing encourages faculty to compare what they say they believe to what they actually do within their teaching practices, and can create a new awareness (Marceau, 2003). It is assumed that skillful teachers adopt a critically reflective stance towards their practice (Brookfield, 2005) by critically examining their actions and beliefs through self-reflection, and by engaging in discourse with their colleagues in the university and external community (public reflection) (Langley et al., 2004). Faculty working to “describe, question, and develop their philosophy of practice” has the most potential for meaningful growth (Cranton, 1996, p. 82).

By encouraging faculty to “examine their assumptions, gather and interrogate the available evidence from multiple perspective, and be responsible for offering their own conclusions of the evidence” (King & Kitchener, 2004, p. 16), they learn to think for themselves, freeing them from their “conditioned assumptions” (Mezirow, 1998, p. 190) about their teaching
beliefs and practices. Offering techniques to operationalize a philosophy of teaching exercise, Cranton (1996) suggests that faculty could “write a description of one’s philosophy of practice and justify it to a colleague or friend,” discuss it “with learners, asking them to challenge and question what is said,” “find a colleague who seems to share one’s philosophy of practice, and hold a mutual hunt for assumptions,” or “write a description of the philosophy of practice of one’s favorite educator from the past and analyze the assumptions underlying that philosophy” (p. 84).

Although the use of metaphors has not been seen in wide use in the faculty development literature, metaphors are certainly used widely within the literature to describe teaching experiences. For example, Fink (2003) describes the teacher as a helmsman for the learning experience, steering and coordinating the efforts of the students (oarsmen). In a similar vein, Brookfield (2006) pictures teaching as white-water rafting with periods of calm and turbulence. Another author talks about speed bumps on the technology road (Rutherford, 2002). The metaphors used depend on one’s culture, gender, and experiences (Gillis & Johnson, 2002). With these examples, it is obvious that metaphors can say a lot about how teaching has been experienced, but they can also reveal our educational values, beliefs, and principles (Gillis & Johnson).

Metaphorical thinking is seen as a way to clarify our teaching practices and attitudes, show us how we perceive our students and colleagues, articulate the assumptions we bring to the classroom, clarify our roles, identify problems and directions for change, and deepen our awareness as educators. It can be used as a tool to explore our attitudes and beliefs related to teaching and to better understand ourselves as teacher. Sample metaphor exercises include imagining one’s classroom as a room in a house or as a specific type of restaurant, imagining oneself in the classroom as a kitchen utensil or household appliance or as a mode of transportation, or creating a metaphors for the teacher one wanted to be when one began teaching,
the teacher one now wants to be, and the teacher one thinks he/she actually is (if different from
the ideal). These workshop exercises are typically written out with explanations for the choices
made, and then analyzed to discover what they might reveal. These metaphorical journeys can be
used as a springboard for change (Gillis & Johnson).

**Discussion and Summary**

Discovering the sources and understanding the consequences of our assumptions is a vital
component of critical reflection (Cranton, 1996). Once they are brought into our awareness, we
are free to choose whether or not we want to continue believing them, resulting in either a change
in one’s perspective on their teaching practices, or a confirmation. It is important to incorporate
the insightful learning of the sources and consequences of our assumptions into professional
development activities to enable this type of questioning (Cranton). Cranton writes,

> If the process of reflection leads to an awareness of an invalid, undeveloped, or
distorted meaning scheme or perspective; if that scheme or perspective is then
revised; and if the educator acts on the revised belief, the development has been
transformative. (p. 113)

In the Four Quadrant Model for Professional Development (Langley et al.), one
component requires faculty participants to examine their personal assumptions about teaching,
which is considered vital to the reconstruction of their prior beliefs. This time for reflection needs
to be intentionally and systematically fostered within professional development programming
(Brancato, 2003; Cranton & King, 2003; Hampton et al., 2004; Pohland & Bova, 2000).
Reflection that can examine their own goals and values is essential for faculty to integrate their
learning from professional development activities into their teaching. Because this type of
reflection takes time, professional development is one place where some of the time to reexamine
teaching practices and their underlying assumptions can take place (Brancato).
Development of Faculty’s Teaching Assumptions and Beliefs

Graduate students spend a majority of their time producing good research. A few learn about the design of instruction by going through teacher training as an undergraduate or as a graduate teaching assistant. But once they arrive on campus as new faculty members, hired because of their expertise in their subject matter, they might seek out a faculty professional development program on teaching or never find the time to participate (Fink, 2003). For many, their “design of instruction” consists of a list of topics for a particular course with lectures for each topic, a midterm exam, and a final (Fink; Lucas, 2002). The majority does not have any formal training in teaching (Brancato, 2003; Buckley, 2002; Cranton & King, 2003; Fang, 1996; Fink; Lawler & King, 2000; Lucas). In fact, few faculty can be considered experts in the theories underlying their pedagogical decisions, and even fewer are experts in pedagogy for online environments (Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004).

Research “implies that the way in which teaching is conducted in higher education is dependent on the educational beliefs and presumptions of academic staff” (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). New faculty’s beliefs and conceptions of good teaching are formed during their ‘apprenticeship of observation’ during their years spent as a student (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002). They use their best teachers as the models to follow, and do the opposite of those they disliked as learners (Cranton & King, 2003; Fink, 2003; Lucas, 2002). Various authors refer to this uninformed teaching as the “teaching as they were taught” mode (Daley, 2003; Gallant, 2000; Layne, Froyd, Simpson, Caso, & Merton, 2004; Lucas), a received model of teaching (Robertson, 1999), mimicking (Brookfield, 2006) or emulation (Fink). As a result, beginning teachers approach their teaching uncritically, and traditional disciplinary practices are followed with lecturing often as the main form of teaching (Fink; Gallant; Lucas; Robertson). In fact, their discipline is a fundamental influence to their teaching practices (Brancato, 2003; Fang, 1996;
Menges, 1991). In a first-person account, Alley (1996) shared how he had learned to teach in a traditional manner by observing his best professors, who had learned by observing their best professors. In this way, the teaching and learning environment has not changed much over the years. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with practicing traditional teaching methods, but that they are being used without thought as to why they are used instead of other teaching methods. The model they are using for teaching has largely been taken for granted (Schön, 1983).

Implicit beliefs about teaching are also born in other ways than only through experiences as students. Throughout their lives, faculty’s socialization in their education, community, and culture develops their habits of mind about the roles of educators and what good teaching looks like (Brookfield, 2006; Cranton & King, 2003; Fang, 1996; Pratt, 1992). They have normative beliefs about what should happen when they walk into a college classroom. Even the classrooms fit their expectations with the desks all in nice, neat rows facing the teacher’s desk at the front of the room. Jaffee (2003) describes the traditional teaching and learning classroom environment as a “pedagogical ecology” in which the physical space and social roles have been institutionalized and the lecture continues to be a common teaching strategy. It is a traditional higher education environment that is commonplace for the instructors and is expected by the students. Within this environment, instructors regard themselves as the content expert, responsible for course delivery (Conrad, 2004). The teacher sits or stands in the front, and the students sit facing the teacher ready to listen and take notes. Having classrooms set up in this arrangement is one way in which the institution itself supports a certain normative culture of teaching with pre-specified faculty roles (Brancato, 2003; Cranton & King; Jaffee). For faculty, it reflects conformity with tradition and a desire to appear legitimate (Jaffee).

The personal experience of teaching further develops faculty’s implicit beliefs about teaching. Their implicit beliefs are related to what they do in problem situations in the classroom (Menges, 1991). When something happens which fails to meet faculty’s expectations, they could
choose to ignore it or to reflect on it. This type of reflection is what Schön (1987) calls either reflection-on-action, when the reflection occurs after the fact, or reflection-in-action, when the reflection occurs during the classroom incident. Faculty may act on insights, instinct, and intuition gained from these experiences in the classroom, trusting their inner voice as they make decisions about what to do in their next class (Brookfield, 2006). Faculty will also consult colleagues and books on teaching to gain new techniques and learn new activities to use in the classroom (Brookfield). It is through their actual teaching experiences that faculty begin to develop a knowledge base of practices that seem to have a positive impact on student learning (Keeton, 2004; Pratt, 1992). In this way, their personal, practical, and craft knowledge about teaching will evolve as their experiences in the classroom either confirm or challenge their beliefs about teaching (Kane et al., 2002; Pratt). As their teaching practices become more repetitive and routine, the opportunities to reflect on one’s practice may decrease (Schön, 1983).

Pratt (1992) explains that the meaning of teaching differs depending on one’s values, beliefs, and intentions. Faculty’s belief systems are the foundation from which their attitudes and practices about teaching develop (Layne et al., 2004). Their meaning-making around teaching and learning develop as new experiences and learning about teaching are interpreted through their current understandings. Information that does not fit might be discounted or ignored, or could initiate changes in their attitudes and practices (Ignelzi, 2000). These beliefs and practices form the basis for their educational philosophy (Tisdell & Taylor, 1999). Their assumptions and beliefs need to be considered and made explicit if faculty development activities are to have lasting changes on teaching practices (Menges, 1991; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001).

This experiential-based teaching combined with colleagues as sources of authority correlates to Kegan’s (1994) third order of consciousness. Within Kegan’s developmental approach to adults’ meaning-making from order one to order five, order three sees adults co-constructing meaning with others (people, books, ideas). In order three, faculty would not have an
identity as teacher apart from others’ expectations or ideas. They would also be limited in their ability to reflect on their teaching experiences. This sounds similar to Daley’s (2003) description of faculty’s advanced beginner and competent stages in which they “begin to recognize the validity of their experiences and become aware of a plan of action” (p. 27). This might explain why, as faculty gain experience teaching, they can become creatures of habit and fall into a comfortable pattern of just going through the motions (Fink, 2003). There is less risk in staying the course with the familiar and faculty find it difficult to try something different and return to the rank of novice (Rutherford, 2002). In fact, Lawler and King (2000) describe faculty as the “guardians of tradition” (p. 12) who typically resist change.

Some adults will progress to Kegan’s (1994) fourth order of consciousness in which self-authorship is a key element. Within order four, faculty’s identity is only partially influenced by others. A sense of self, teacher, and teaching style evolves apart from, and in relation to, others. Reflection can become a part of this process. Daley’s (2003) proficient stage describes faculty as being able to see the larger picture as they develop a more holistic sense of teaching.

Experience alone can be a terrible teacher (Brookfield, 2006). For faculty to grow as educators, they need to reflect on their teaching in order to critically understand their experiences (Brookfield). This type of reflection might occur in Kegan’s (1994) fifth, and highest, level of consciousness. Within this level, faculty would not only become aware of their truer self, but would also initiate change for continual growth. Kegan maintains that very few adults attain this level. Daley’s (2003) expert stage of “commonsense understanding” does not seem to reach to this level. Those faculty ready for level five would seek out new ways of teaching and continuously make changes for improvement (Fink, 2003). Reflection plays a large role in this level.

Faculty’s assumptions, beliefs, and expectations about teaching and learning can limit their ability to change their teaching practices (Sunal et al., 2001). In fact, “some of the most
critical barriers to change in educational processes are personal ones” (Taylor, 2003, p. 76).

Changes in teaching practices must be considered over time with “reflection being the crucial driving force for continued evolution” (Torisi & Davis, 2000, p. 171). However, faculty rarely reflect on their own learning as a way of understanding their teaching beliefs and assumptions (Lawler, 2003; Menges, 1991), often citing the lack of time. Without reflection, the assumptions and beliefs about their teaching practices may remain invisible to them, or may not be connected to their actual practices (Layne et al., 2004). Yet it is this critically self-reflective practice that can open them up to consider alternative perspectives and explore new options for teaching and learning (Fear et al., 2003). It can reveal discrepancies between beliefs and actual practices (Tisdell & Taylor, 1999).

According to Kegan (1994) and Daley (2003), faculty may not be ready developmentally to question their teaching methods or to make drastic changes in their teaching practices. They tend to stay with teaching practices that are comfortable to them (Layne et al., 2004). However, the results of a study conducted by Hinson and LaPrairie (2005) indicated that changes in teaching practices can be initiated through a program of continuous professional development. Continuous is key here, as opposed to a one-time workshop. The ongoing support given by knowledgeable support staff and peers was instrumental in these changes. Other authors agree that colleagues are an important source of intellectual stimulation and support when considering changes in teaching practices (Åkerlind, 2005; Baker, Boggs, & Arabasz, 2003; Covington et al., 2005; Buckley, 2002; Eib & Miller, 2006; Fink, 2003). However, faculty’s professional autonomy and classroom isolation may present barriers to this type of collegial collaboration (Brancato, 2003). Faculty professional development programs can provide these opportunities.

Within the literature on faculty professional development to facilitate changes in teaching perspectives and practices, some of the terminology used seemed rather extreme and positivistic. One author shared a professional development strategy that ‘forced’ faculty to reexamine their
course design and curriculum strategies (Lowes, 2008). This is a dichotomous view of teaching – there is a right way and a wrong way. Often this seemed to translate to teacher-centered teaching as the wrong way, and student-centered teaching as the right way. This is also referred to as ‘sage on the stage’ and ‘guide on the side.’

Another author discussed the results after faculty were ‘forced’ to reflect (Diekelmann, Schuster, & Nosek, 1998). A resistance to change can easily be imagined if support personnel approach faculty with the perspective that everything they have been doing for the past ten or twenty years is “wrong.” Even the suggestion to provide faculty with examples and evidence for a ‘compelling reason’ to change (Anderson, Varnhagen & Campbell, 1998) seemed to reflect this view. I am not comfortable with the idea of ‘forcing’ anyone to do anything. I align myself with those authors who advocate the provision of opportunities for faculty to question their assumptions, beliefs, and values about teaching, and to open up the possibilities for change (e.g., Cranton, 2006a; Meyer, 2004) without dictating what those changes should be.

**Online Teaching as a Catalyst for Changing Teaching Beliefs and Practices**

Research implies that new teaching initiatives related to online teaching are likely to have differences in implementation because of differences in the educational presumptions inherent in them and those of the faculty implementing them (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). Moving to online teaching can cause faculty to rethink their familiar ways of teaching. A change that is noted numerous times in the literature is a shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered instruction (Barker, 2003; Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Gallant, 2000; Hinson & La Prairie, 2005; Jaffee, 2003; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). As faculty learn about alternatives to the transmission model of teaching, they are able to shift their instructional roles to place a greater amount of responsibility for learning on their students (Barker; Gallant) due to the possibilities
for increased student participation in the online environment (Jaffee, 2003). However, one study found the boundary between teaching-centered and learning-centered instruction to be relatively hard and difficult to change, possibly requiring a conceptual change (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). In another research study (Ali et al., 2005) faculty ranked redesigning and rethinking faculty roles as the highest priority to be addressed in professional development sessions to prepare to teach in the online environment. However, it must be noted that classroom teaching is not always teacher-centered and online teaching is not always student-centered; this is a false dichotomy (Markel, 1999). In fact, in some cases faculty simply put their lectures online and call it online teaching. It makes one wonder if a move from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness is the only possible scenario for the types of changes described in the literature.

When moving from classroom practice to distance education, some faculty members might become aware of altered roles (Ali et al., 2005; Barker, 2003; Conceição, 2006; Jaffee, 2003; Lawler, King, & Wilhite, 2004; Lowes, 2008) or have roles reawakened (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Online there exists the possibility to create different teaching and learning roles with a less hierarchical structure (Jaffee). Faculty can move away from their role as deliverers of content to constructivist-based facilitators (Barker; Conrad, 2004; Pedersen & Liu, 2003). New roles as instructional designer and interaction facilitator can also be taken (Morris, Xu, & Finnegan, 2005). Yet another role change evident in online courses is from teacher to designer of interactive materials and student guide (Von Holzen as cited in Dirr, 2003). There is a potential change in faculty roles with the unbundling of curriculum development, content development and delivery, tutoring, student support services, administration, and assessment from the responsibility of one individual faculty member to multiple individuals or departments (Dirr).

In a qualitative study of thirteen online instructors, the faculty’s perceptions of their online roles were compared to what they actually practiced within their online courses (Morris et al., 2005). The three primary roles in the online environment were perceived as course
customization, course facilitation, and grading and assessment. Though most of the study’s faculty perceived themselves to be facilitators in their online courses, their frequency and type of participation online varied widely. The frequency of postings among the three novice online instructors was lower than that of experienced online instructors, ranging from an average of nineteen postings per course for novice instructors to an average of 193 postings per course by experienced instructors. The frequency of postings also varied widely among the ten experienced online instructors ranging from 42 to 480 postings.

In another qualitative study with five online instructors, the role mentioned most often was as deliverer of content and had to do with managerial or technical tasks (Conrad, 2004). They were focused on how much and in what manner they could most effectively transmit their content to their learners. When these instructors talked about their online teaching roles, they connected most of their reflections to their previous face-to-face teaching and used these traditional teaching experiences as reference points. There was an absence of discussion in the study’s interviews about social issues or collaborative learning in the online classroom, with none of the instructors assuming a social role to promote a sense of community.

Several authors mentioned that experienced teachers could find themselves as beginners again in the online environment (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Gallant, 2000; King, 2002; Lawler et al., 2004). Some highly esteemed faculty who consistently receive positive teaching evaluations had difficulty adapting their style for the online environment. They became fearful that their teaching and evaluations would suffer (Clay, 1999). This challenges their self-concept as expert and could even result in resistance to online teaching because of this readjustment or loss of identity (Meyer, 2004). Ali et al. (2005) found that faculty who had not yet taught an online course perceived their online teaching expertise at the novice and advanced beginner levels. This new role as novice or beginner puts them into the role of an adult learner.
It has been noted that “when experimentation generates new problems, puzzles, and confusions” they “can become material for reciprocal reflection” (Schön, 1987, p. 118). However, while changes in their teaching practices may occur in the online classroom, they do not automatically lead to “reflection and identifying and naming the meaning of experiences after they had been lived” (Conrad, 2004, p. 41). Faculty who self-reported benefits to their face-to-face teaching resulting from their online teaching experience did not report a substantial change in their theoretical teaching orientation (Pennington, 2005). Would they have reported differently if reflection had been a part of their transition to online teaching?

If the goals of faculty development remain the dissemination of information or the development of specific skills, then their prior attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions likely will not be challenged. The new information they receive most likely will be assimilated wherever it will fit into their meaning perspectives and, if it does not fit, it could be ignored. Faculty development needs to provide opportunities to reflect, experiment, and probe new learning principles (Buckley, 2002). Without reflective practice to learn new ways of thinking about teaching and learning, they will resort to what they already know and consider familiar, and continue their current practices (Layne et al., 2004). Schön (1987) said that one needs to “learn what you already do in order to be able to choose what you will do” (p. 208). One strategy to make faculty’s attitudes, beliefs, and assumptions visible to them is to have them write their personal philosophy of teaching and then match that against what they actually do in their teaching practices. An even deeper awakening could occur by questioning the origins of their beliefs about teaching.

As we have already seen, teaching online could promote a change in faculty roles. Learning educational technologies for teaching online may be a catalyst for teachers to reflect on and evaluate their current teaching practices as found in a phenomenology study by King (2002). It is a potential opportunity to develop new ideas about teaching and learning (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006), and to restructure traditional classroom roles and relations (Jaffee, 2003). Diekelmann
et al. (1998) found that distance education is a new specialty that promotes rethinking teaching practices by preventing teachers from teaching in their familiar ways. What worked for them in the past in their traditional classroom may no longer be helpful or reliable in their distance education classroom. New views of teaching and learning may need to be cultivated for the online delivery (King).

Charles M. Cook, of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, believes that distance education presents possibilities for a new pedagogy that shifts the attention from teacher to the learner (as cited in Shorr, 2000). Cook also believes that assumptions made about teaching and learning in a traditional classroom cannot all be made about an online course. Conceição (2006) agrees that different ways of teaching are required for the online environment. It has even been suggested that online teaching creates a specialty discipline with different shared practices and common experiences (Diekelmann et al., 1998). Yet many faculty who are teaching online have spent the majority of their years as a learner in a traditional face-to-face classroom (Brookfield, 2006). So which assumptions about teaching and learning will no longer hold true in an online course? Is it not reasonable to expect that this will be experienced differently by individual faculty?

A study of teachers who taught both online and face-to-face reported that 75% of the survey respondents indicated that teaching online had a positive impact on their face-to-face teaching (Lowes, 2008). They noted changes in their course design, fostering better communication, requiring more independent work, and building more reflection time into assignments. Their online teaching also raised their awareness of the issues related to student participation. Another survey reported similar results of instructional transformation (Shea, Pelz, Fredericksen, & Pickett, 2001), but neither of these studies delved into the possibility of perspective transformation.
As faculty prepare to move into online teaching or have their first experiences teaching online, they note that which is unfamiliar, different, or absent. One faculty member reported, “You can’t just bump into somebody. You have to make a deliberate contact” (Diekelmann et al., 1998, p. 6). This faculty member also reported that “every handout you want to give them has to be ready the day class starts” (Diekelmann et al., p. 6) taking away the spontaneity possible in the face-to-face classroom (Conceicao, 2006). When the design, development, and especially the implementation of an online course becomes a team effort of instructional designers, multimedia specialists, and faculty, the spontaneity factor can become problematic. However, faculty can retain authorship of their online courses and bring current events, relevant news, and new content to align with student interests into their live courses during the semester. Faculty who are experienced and comfortable with the online environment do not have to have every detail of their course in place before the start of the semester. Faculty who involve their online students in the course planning build the content throughout the semester.

Other faculty, in a study by Hinson and LaPrairie (2005), report the extensive planning and attention to detail often overlooked in traditional classrooms. The amount of advance preparation and organization equates to more development and design time which gives the online course a distinction of being known as labor-intensive (Conceiao, 2006). Instructors earning a certificate in online teaching reported that learning online placed demands on them that were different from those encountered in the face-to-face classroom (Cowham & Duggleby, 2005). However, no one online course needs to be exactly the same as another online course. Some faculty prefer to have their courses completely prepared in advance, while other faculty prefer to involve their students in the course planning. The amount of advance planning and preparation will differ with each course and with each faculty member.

In the online classroom, faculty cannot see their students. Concerns about the lack of visual cues are reflected by this online instructor’s words, “I don’t have a clue if I’ve connected
with the distance course” (Diekelmann et al., 1998, p. 10). Faculty’s dependence on visual cues is also reflected in this quote: “Online, everybody is a mystery until they disclose something” (Conrad, 2004, p. 35). In fact, a common concern among distance teachers is the loss of face-to-face contact with their students (Diekelmann et al.). In a study of online faculty, a majority who reported negative experiences cited the lack of face-to-face time with their students as the largest factor. One of those faculty reported, “I feel disconnected from the students – I had no way to respond to nonverbal cues that indicate their interest and motivation (or lack of)” (Luck & McQuiggan, 2006).

Evidence exists that distance education is already being held to a higher standard than education in a traditional classroom with the Quality Matters program (MarylandOnline, Inc., 2006). Cook wonders if similar criteria might “be used to challenge the assumptions that underlie traditional classroom experiences” (as cited in Shorr, 2000). He thinks it is possible that holding distance education to higher standards might also raise the standards for all of higher education.

Numerous changes have been highlighted in the faculty experience when preparing to teach online or actually teaching online. It seems that more faculty first-person accounts reveal the effects that the integration of technology had on their thinking about their roles in the classroom and new perspectives on the learning process. Could it be that the process of writing about their experiences for publication provided a unique opportunity for reflection that facilitated these insights? After all, it is not unusual for an interview participant to remark that a question posed by a researcher made him or her consider something anew. In one study, faculty’s survey responses reported less change in their classroom after integrating course Web enhancements than they reported in subsequent interviews (Winguard, 2004). Many of these study participants seemed to be unaware of the changes until they were specifically asked about the impact of their Web enhancements. More needs to be known about how this type of reflective practice could be integrated into faculty development programs.
Faculty Professional Development

Before moving into faculty professional development programs for preparing faculty to teach online, it is important to understand the brief history of faculty professional development, from its simple beginning to its complex structure today. Then faculty development will be placed within the realm of adult education, with the rationale and advantages discussed.

The Evolution of Faculty Professional Development

Faculty professional development has had a brief, but interesting, history. From the mid-1950s to 1960s, the focus was on supporting faculty with their research and helping them stay current in their field of expertise to maintain content mastery (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). Prior to the 1970s, very few higher education institutions offered consistent, formalized faculty development programs (Centra, 1976; Eleser & Chauvin, 1998).

Then, from the late 1960s through the 1970s, faculty support was expanded to include support of their teaching role (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). Faculty reported in a 1971 survey by Eble (as cited in Centra, 1976) that there was a lack of effective professional development programming and few higher education institutions had a dedicated budget for faculty development. In the results from questionnaires on faculty improvement and professional development, Centra found that most of the teaching centers had been in existence for less than four years.

It was during the 1970s that faculty development began to expand from sabbaticals and financial assistance to attending professional meetings that included programming by experienced faculty, instructional assistance from specialists, and assessment of teacher quality (Centra, 1976). A 1981 (Levinson-Rose & Menges) review of the faculty development empirical research
conducted between 1963 and 1980, found workshops and seminars to be the most common type of faculty development activity with the majority structured as short once-and-done events. Most of the topics focused on specific instructional methods and techniques and involved graduate teaching assistants. The evaluations of these programs typically did not go beyond a satisfaction scale or ‘smile sheet,’ therefore not yielding useful data to inform the design of subsequent activities (Centra; Levinson-Rose & Menges). The authors believed that ‘one-shot’ workshops and seminars would be unlikely to produce lasting changes without continued practice and feedback (Levinson-Rose & Menges). A majority of the research reviewed treated faculty participants as an undifferentiated mass with a great lack of attention to their individual differences. This was also found in a review of the literature on faculty professional development in Australia (Cannon, 1983, in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992).

One of primary concerns shared by faculty developers was how to increase faculty participation in their programs, with an underlying implication that a change in teaching practice was needed (Cranton, 2006a). One researcher (Centra) shared exactly this sentiment at the end of his report, sharing that there was poor participation by faculty who needed improvement and wondered how to draw them in to the professional development programs.

The 1980s saw a more holistic approach to faculty professional development as attention was made to support faculty through their career span from new faculty development to retirement planning (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). By the mid 1980s, approximately 60% of America’s colleges and universities had established some type of faculty development program (Centra, 1976).

Many changes took place in the 1990s as faculty professional development centers continued to multiply. The agendas included best practices in teaching, use of technology, integration of multiculturalism, and assessing student learning (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). A 1994 review of the faculty development literature by Weimer and Lenze (as cited in Amundsen et al.,
2005) found results similar to that of the 1981 (Levinson-Rose & Menges) study with some differences. Workshops and seminars were still the most common faculty development program, but the topics and the methods used to teach them were more varied. There was some reporting of interactive methods and collaborative strategies, and follow-up opportunities were offered occasionally. They were more likely to target specific faculty populations, such as new faculty. Evidence of evaluation was still meager, so a determination of workshop effectiveness was not possible. The focus began shifting from faculty function, involving teaching and learning strategies, to faculty value, that included service and involvement in campus life impacting changes across the campus (Lieberman, 2005).

After 1994 and into the 2000s, technology-focused workshops and programs dominated the literature on faculty development. Many of these were a result of top-down institutional pressures to integrate technology into teaching. This is also when we begin to see a switch from a teaching-centered orientation to a push for student-centered instruction. Some decentralization of teaching centers to particular academic facilities was found (Amundsen et al., 2005), for example, splitting a centralized university teaching center into multiple centers housed within specific departments such as math and science or humanities. There was some evidence of faculty development programming designed based on a particular theoretical framework, such as transformative learning or situated cognition. However, Canon (as cited in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992) concluded that the lack of an adequate general theory of professional development was to blame for the ineffectiveness of faculty professional development on the improvement of teaching.

Now, in the new millennium, there are increased expectations for faculty professional development, as higher education responds to the increased demands and challenges of intensified competition (Sorcinelli et al., 2006), changing student populations (Brookfield, 2006; Swail, 2002), increasing globalization (Dirr, 2003; Swail), increased accountability from accrediting agencies (Diamond, 2005), and the rapid growth of the Internet and other
technologies. Faculty development is available from university instructional design staff, online tutorials, and virtual universities (Frayer, 2004), with a large amount of faculty development material available in paper, at conferences, and on the web (Gallant, 2000). However, Cranton (2006a) noticed at a conference focused on faculty professional development that the same concerns voiced in the 1970s were still being expressed, wondering how to “make” faculty come to programs and how to reach those faculty who “most need” faculty development.

Faculty professional development had simple beginnings just a few decades ago when the provision of sabbaticals was the extent of its offerings in the United States, but now the goal of faculty development has been expressed in multiple ways from guiding faculty as they negotiate the challenges impacting institutions in higher education (Langley et al., 2004), to developing the skills of faculty to more effectively teach and inspire students (Hampton et al., 2004). Others believe the goal is for faculty to critically examine their habits of mind about teaching in order to better understand what they do, and what they believe and why, so they can consider alternative ways to think about their teaching (Cranton & King, 2003). Still others share that the overall goal is to improve the quality of education by improving student learning (Sorcinelli et al., 2006; Wright, 2002). Taken collectively, they all provide a common goal for faculty professional development, which is to improve the quality of education and to improve the quality of the teaching experience, both for faculty and for students.

The context in which faculty professional development takes place and the impact of environmental and organizational changes has continued to evolve in its purpose and scope. The interest in adult learning is beginning to have an impact on the design and development of its programming and on the faculty developers themselves. Moving from a one-size-fits-all model to one that recognizes faculty as adult learners and faculty development as adult education is still a work-in-progress. After attending a conference of the Society for Research into Higher Education, Elton shared, “One is left with the impression that staff development in higher
education is many faceted and that it is still looking for a sense of direction” (as cited in Zuber-Skerritt, 1992).

Faculty Professional Development as Adult Education

Faculty professional developers are working with adult faculty, therefore they should view the work they do from an adult learning perspective. While that might seem simple and straightforward, there is little evidence that faculty professional development is actually being designed in that way (King & Lawler, 2003). Few authors explicitly refer to adult learning theory in the faculty development literature.

The trend has changed in faculty professional development’s history in the last fifteen years with authors beginning to recognize faculty as adult learners and faculty development as adult education (Brookfield, 1995; Cranton, 1996; King & Lawler, 2003; Lawler, 2003; Palmer, 1998). Faculty exemplify all six assumptions about the adult learner that Malcolm Knowles advanced in 1980 and 1984 (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007).

Knowles’s (as cited in Merriam et al., 2007) first assumption was that adults’ self-concept develops toward that of a self-directed person. As a developmental process, faculty’s years of training as scholars and researchers have made them self-directed and independent learners (Lawler & King, 2000). Of course, it is possible that they could be self-directed learners within their field of expertise and even within their personal lives but not demonstrate self-directedness within learning for their teaching practices.

The second assumption is that adults accumulate an ever-increasing reservoir of experiences that can be used within their learning. Faculty have spent a large number of hours as students. These past teaching and learning experiences inform their current teaching assumptions, beliefs, and practices (Brookfield, 2006; Cranton & King, 2003; Fink, 2003; Gallant, 2000;
Keeton, 2004; Lucas, 2002; Pratt, 1992; Robertson, 1999). Their experiences could be positive or negative, impacting their perspectives on participation, and motivation to participate, in faculty development activities (Lawler, 2003).

The third assumption is that an adult’s social role and the developmental tasks associated with it impact the readiness of an adult to learn. With the faculty role comes an assumption of life-long learning. A consideration in this assumption might be the career stages of faculty members. Whether they consider themselves to be a novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, or expert faculty could impact their motivation to learn since each progressive stage is said to exhibit more autonomy and creativity, and less reliance on formal structures and rules (Daley, 2003). Novices might uncritically follow the directions of others, while experts are more likely to recognize their specific learning needs (Daley).

The fourth assumption is that adults are more problem-centered than subject-centered in their learning, with a desire to immediately apply what they learn. With the ever-pressing time constraints faced by faculty, if a learning event does not have the promise of filling an immediate need, its usefulness diminishes. They want their learning to make sense and have meaning in order to connect it to present needs, and to be able to integrate it into their daily teaching practices ((Lawler, 2003). They want it to inform the problems, concerns, and issues they are experiencing in their professional lives (Brookfield, 1986).

The fifth assumption is that the power of adults’ internal motivations to learn is greater than those that are external. Weimer (1990) shared, “When motivation to improve is intrinsic, the results are very different. The effects on instruction are more enduring, faculty attitudes are more positive and faculty commitments to continued improvement are stronger” (p. 23). Within the faculty professional development literature, a number of authors agree on the power of internal motivations to pursue instructional improvement and teaching innovations, and to integrate technology into their teaching (Åkerlind, 2005; Maguire, 2005; McKenzie, Mims, Bennett, &
Waugh, 2000). Intrinsically, faculty want to feel competent about their teaching and consequently have a desire for improvement (Collins & Berge, 2003).

The sixth assumption about adult learners is that they need to know why they need to learn something. Its direct relevance to faculty’s discipline and their perception of its immediate usefulness will make the learning worthwhile (Brookfield, 1986; Cranton, 1997; Svinicki, 1996).

Following Knowles’s six assumptions about adult learners, it has been shown that faculty exemplify the characteristics of adult learners. They are self-directed, have a large and diverse reservoir of experience, exhibit the readiness to learn associated with their social role, are problem-centered learners, respond most powerfully to internal motivation, and value relevancy. These characteristics should have an impact on the design and development of faculty professional development programs.

Faculty professional development programs have historically lacked a guiding theoretical framework or developmental model (Cranton, 1996). It is only recently that faculty development has been addressed as adult learning (Cranton, 1994; King, 2002). The value of recognizing faculty development as adult learning is that it places in the hands of the developers all of the theory, research, and literature from the field of adult education and its effective principles, practices, strategies, applications, and experience (Froyd, Fowler, Layne, & Simpson, 2005; Lawler, 2003). Within this adult education framework then, one needs to consider the characteristics of faculty as adult learners and be aware of the pressing problems, concerns, and issues in their professional lives. Faculty bring with them an individual uniqueness based on the diversity of their life experiences, educational experiences, personalities, and learning preferences. This shapes their perspectives on their teaching practices, influences how they will teach in the future, and even influences their motivation to participate in professional development activities (Lawler).
Incorporating an adult learning perspective into faculty professional development can begin by using the six strategies advanced by Lawler and King (2001) as a rubric to guide the design and development of programming. The first strategy recommends that the social and physical environment should reflect a climate of respect in order to allow faculty’s independence and self-directedness to flourish. They need to feel accepted, respected, and supported (Merriam et al., 2007). This includes the recognition of the diversity of their teaching and learning orientations, their discipline’s content, the institutional and departmental context, and their assumptions and beliefs about teaching (Daley, 2003; Pratt, 1998).

The second strategy encourages active participation to engage them in the learning event. This allows faculty to consider their needs and concerns, and plan learning activities and outcomes that are relevant to them. It builds intrinsic motivation for what is to come and respects what they bring to the program (Lawler & King, 2001).

Building on faculty’s varied experiences is the third strategy (Lawler & King, 2001). They begin from what they know or think they know, and move forward from there. This recognizes adults’ rich resource of experience, which should be incorporated into professional development programming as an additional resource for their learning. Case studies can be used to consider actual shared examples as they examine the underlying assumptions and consequences (Cranton & King, 2003). Faculty’s past experiences with professional development can influence their motivation for future participation. Sometimes their past professional development experiences are less than positive. These experiences can be due to a mismatch between teaching and learning styles (Lawler, 2003) or a mismatch between their expectations and the training that was actually offered.

The fourth strategy stresses collaborative inquiry to bring faculty out of their isolated work conditions to investigate issues and concerns that are relevant to them (Lawler & King, 2001). They should all be involved in the setting of their own goals, objectives, and outcomes of
their professional development (Lawler & King, 2000). Additionally, faculty need to examine their past experiences and to consider new ways of thinking. Doing this in a supportive, but challenging, collaborative environment will enable to question their habits and assumptions to open their minds to new ideas and perspectives (Brookfield, 1995). This social process can create new alliances with peers and share the risk-taking associated with change (Buckley, 2002). Collaborative inquiry can take faculty beyond their instrumental knowledge about teaching to learn more about themselves and their peers as people and as educators. It should develop a connected knowing in which they work to understand each other rather than finding fault in others’ reasoning (Cranton, 2006b).

Learning for action and incorporating action plans is the fifth adult learning strategy (Lawler & King, 2001). Faculty come looking for something they can use, so the programming should be designed with application in mind (Lawler & King, 2003). Action plans can help faculty envision how they will implement their learning into their teaching practices. This professional development strategy is also suggested by Cranton and King (2003) to guide the flow of the program and the learning. Combined with reflective activities, faculty have opportunities to practice and model critical reflection on their teaching. Incorporating curriculum development activities is another strategy to operationalized their learning by designing and preparing new material to be used in one of their classes (Cranton & King).

Finally, the sixth strategy recommends empowering the participants for application, to put their learning into action (Lawler & King, 2001). Without this ability, they are likely to revert back to their previous teaching methods. This could include examining the structures and processes currently in place at their institution to support or prevent them from implementing teaching changes, such as recognition (or lack of recognition) toward promotion and tenure, the local teaching culture, and the availability of continuing resources.
Although there is no single best way to design and deliver effective faculty development, strategic planning is necessary (Ali et al., 2005), and Gallant (2000) suggests the use of four action principles that incorporate an adult learning framework and reflect the adult learning principles discussed above. First, she considers responsiveness to the individuality of the faculty member to be essential. This includes their preferences for teaching and learning, prior experiences, and attitudes toward change. Second, training sessions offered only once are not as effective as those offered on an ongoing basis or those that build on each other incrementally. Third, building a community based on collegial sharing provides a necessary support structure. Finally, faculty should experience the teaching and learning conditions they plan to create for their own students through constructive activities, providing an authentic context for their learning.

Discussion and Summary

With faculty development’s goals of improving the quality of the teaching experience for faculty and students, and using adult learning theory to frame the development program, the task to build an effective program is no small feat. Gone are the one-size-fits all programs with one-time workshops offered sporadically throughout the academic year. What is needed now are faculty development programs that recognize faculty’s vast reservoir of experiences as learners and as teachers in the classroom and to use those experiences on which to build their learning. Also needed is recognition of faculty’s teaching needs and concerns to make their learning relevant and increase their motivation for learning. The professional development environment needs to be one in which the faculty feel accepted, respected, and supported. The learning activities need to provide opportunities for active participation, reflection, and collaborative inquiry, all within an authentic context. Finally, an individual action plan is needed to put their
learning into action, with a structure in place for continued support as they enact changes in their teaching. With this general framework in mind, the next section considers a number of faculty professional development models to teach online.

**Faculty Professional Development Models to Teach Online**

Accounting for the uniqueness of each individual faculty member is mentioned repeatedly within the adult learning literature (Ali et al., 2005; Cranton, 2006b; Gallant, 2000; King, 2002). This is reflected in recommendations that have been made for professional development that prepares faculty to teach online. One study (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005) noted the need for faculty to have opportunities to experiment and apply their online skills within the context of their own curriculum. Along those same lines, one author (Barker, 2003) recommended that an instructor should be added to an online course as an observer to gain a better understanding of how online teaching and learning occurs. Another (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006) shared faculty’s preferences for training that could be used right away, provided scaffolded learning, fit into their schedules, matched their learning styles, and included support from their administrators and faculty support staff.

As we approach faculty development from the perspective of the adult learner, we need to take into consideration their characteristics, the context in which their learning is occurring, and the process we plan to use to deliver the education and training (Lawler, 2003). However, most faculty development models are designed as a one-size-fits-all solution. Few development models view faculty as adult learners and typically do not consider their prior knowledge, experiences (Layne et al., 2004), or uniqueness. These attributes will be examined in a review of fourteen faculty development models. The information available on these models varies a great deal due to some models being accessible only through password-protected websites, with others
providing full descriptions, guest access to the actual model, and/or journal articles providing additional rich detail.

**Faculty Development Model Selection**

Seven models were chosen as recipients of the Sloan-C Excellence in Faculty Development for Online Teaching award. This award is given to faculty development programs that have shown exceptional leadership and real success in advancing online education. These models include the State University of New York Learning Network (SLN), Illinois Online Network (ION)’s Making the Virtual Classroom a Reality (MVCR), University of Central Florida’s (UCF) IDL6543, University of Nebraska Lincoln’s (UNL) Summer Institute for Online Teaching, University of Massachusetts Lowell’s (UML) Online Teaching Institute, University of Maryland University College’s (UMUC) CTLA201 Teaching with WebTycho, and University of West Florida’s (UWF) Studioe.

An additional five models were brought to my attention at conference presentations I attended, or through the literature review. These models include the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s (UWM) Distance Education Certificate Program, Penn State’s World Campus (PSU) OL2000, Louisiana State University’s (LSU) Professional Development Model for Online Course Development, University of Calgary’s (UC) Institute, and Sloan-C’s Online Teaching Certificate.

The common features of the twelve models for faculty development for online teaching are described in the next section, including whether the program is mandatory or voluntary, the enrollment type, whether or not a certificate is issued at completion, the length of the program, whether or not participants pay a fee, the delivery mode, the research base or conceptual/theoretical framework employed, the program’s emphases, and whether or not the program is evaluated. Attributes that have already been discussed as being essential in a faculty
development program grounded in adult education (see Appendix A) are compared across the reviewed faculty development programs for online teaching including an individualized plan rather than a one-size-fits-all model, the use of faculty experiences, the recognition of faculty’s needs, concerns and learning goals, a learning environment where faculty feel accepted, respected and supported, opportunities for active participation, reflection, collaborative inquiry, and the observation of an online course, an authentic context in which faculty can experiment and apply their new skills within an environment that mirrors the environment in which they will be teaching online (e.g., the actual course space within their course management system), and an action plan with the provision of ongoing support after the program ends.

Two additional conceptual models are also included for comparison purposes. The Four Quadrant Model for Professional Development (Langley, O’Connor, & Welkener, 2004) offers two dimensions of professional development activities, each with two components that need to be examined and addressed to support faculty’s growth. The Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development (Lawler, 2003) is the only model that is explicitly grounded in adult learning theory, making it relevant for this study.

**Faculty Development Model Review**

Fourteen different faculty models have been compared and contrasted. It should not be assumed that these models are representative of the multitude of faculty development models that exist within colleges and universities. However, they do represent quite a range of feature sets and attributes that are being taken into consideration for the design and development of the faculty development program that is part of this research study.

A comparison of the feature set and of the essential attributes set (refer to Appendix A) was made of the twelve faculty development models for online teaching. All twelve programs
include the essential attributes of active participation and an authentic context. It could not be
determined whether the programs had participants create a future-oriented action plan, although it
seemed as though most did not. Additionally, most of the support seemed to end at the close of
the faculty development program, although some had support continue indirectly simply by the
fact that a support unit was in place. Almost all involved the participants in collaborative inquiry.
It is unknown whether the University of Massachusetts Lowell (UML) program has this essential
attribute, and the University of Wisconsin Madison (UWM) program would only have this in
their cohort enrollment model. Although all twelve programs have a cohort enrollment feature,
several also have self-paced components. I think it is fair to say that the Distance Education
Certificate Program at UWM is a self-paced program with a cohort option based on their
marketing materials. They do offer cohort enrollment for those who prefer that option. The
similarities seem to end with authentic context, collaborative inquiry, and cohort enrollment, and
a lack of action plans and ongoing support.

It is noted that four of the programs are mandatory for faculty who wish to design an
online course and/or teach online (see SLN, UCF, UML, and UMUC). The majority of the
programs are voluntary, including all of the programs that have a fee associated with them.
Although the issue of a program being mandatory or voluntary could certainly impact a faculty
member’s motivation and satisfaction with the learning experience, none of these programs seem
to address this. At least half of the programs offer a certificate at the program’s completion, with
all of the fee-based programs awarding a certificate.

Since the length of the faculty development program could greatly impact the features
and essential attributes contained in them, this feature will drive much of the comparison over the
next few pages. The length of the programs range from three weeks to over one year. Penn State’s
World Campus OL 2000 program is only three-weeks in length and takes place completely
online. However, it is assumed that the faculty who elect to participate in this program have
already developed their online course and are only preparing to teach online for the first time. This short time frame might explain its lack of an individualized plan, reflective activities, the observation of online courses, the formation of a future-oriented action plan, or ongoing support. Additionally, this program is fairly new and still evolving.

This differs from a comprehensive program such as the State University of New York Learning Network’s (SLN) with a mix of online and face-to-face components where the faculty participants are working with multimedia instructional designers (MIDs) to design and develop their online course, prepare to teach online, actually teach online, and then refine their online course prior to its next delivery, extending their faculty development program more than one year. This program was awarded the Sloan-C award in 2001. It seems to include all of the essential attributes, although it could not be determined whether a formalized faculty action plan is included in its program.

Two other short programs lasting only five weeks each are the University of Nebraska Lincoln’s (UNL) Summer Institute and the University of Maryland University College’s (UMUC) Teaching with WebTycho. These programs have very different foci. UNL’s Institute, which received the Sloan-C award in 2004, emphasizes pedagogy and has five modules that include planning and organizing, community and instructor presence, developing online content, assessments, and managing an online course. As the participants plan their online course, they receive feedback from the other participants and the experienced faculty facilitators. The Institute has a mix of online and face-to-face meetings over the five weeks. Essential attributes that seem to be missing include an individualized plan, the recognition of faculty’s needs, concerns, and goals, and reflective activities. It could not be determined whether they used faculty’s own experiences in their program, or whether they created a respectful environment. Although the observation of an online course was included, it was only from the student’s perspective.
In contrast, UMUC’s completely online training course, which received the Sloan-C award in 2006, concentrates on the skills needed to teach online using their course management system, WebTycho. The existence of most of the essential attributes could not be determined.

Illinois Online Network’s (ION) MVCR program, the recipient of the Sloan-C award in 2002, includes courses that last eight weeks and are delivered completely online. The MVCR program is voluntary and requires the completion of four core courses, one elective, and a Practicum to receive a Master Online Teaching Certificate. The first course in the series, “Online Learning: An Overview,” lasts eight weeks and provides an overview of online learning and teaching, and introduces the key elements of their online programs. All of their core required courses each lasts eight weeks, and they also offer advanced online seminars that are four weeks in length. Topics covered in their courses include technology tools, assessment, instructional design, and encouraging communication. ION only includes an individualized plan in its Practicum portion of the program, and only includes online course observation as a student. It is important to note that ION is a large scale faculty development partnership between all of the 48 community colleges in the state of Illinois and the University of Illinois. This makes it somewhat similar to the centralized support structure of SNL in the State University of New York.

In contrast, the University of Massachusetts Lowell’s (UML) Online Teaching Institute, a Sloan-C award recipient in 2005, offers eight online courses related to online teaching and learning. However, two of their courses are mandatory for all UMass Lowell faculty who teach fully online courses. These courses are “Introduction to Online Teaching Strategies,” lasting four weeks with an end product of a revised course syllabus for use in an online course, and “Teaching Online with Intralearn” (their course management system), also lasting four weeks, for a total of eight weeks. A unique component of their program is the Cyber Celebrity videos in which veteran online faculty talk about the successes and challenges they faced teaching online. Most of the
essential attributes could not be determined for their program, although it is noted that participants were able to view pieces of online courses.

The University of Central Florida (UCF) offers “ADL5000” as a completely online course that models how to teach online. The purpose of this course is to prepare faculty to deliver an existing online course, acquiring an understanding of the rationale underlying the course they will be teaching, instructional strategies for teaching online, and administrative strategies for managing an online course. This is a five-week course with two modules completed each week. However, the course for which they were honored by Sloan-C in 2003 is IDL6543 that models how to teach online and uses a combination of face-to-face seminars, labs, consultations, and online instruction over ten weeks. A unique component of this course is the inclusion of “Web Vets” through a panel presentation and interviews. This seems similar to UML’s Cyber Celebrities in that it incorporates the experiences of faculty who have already taught online into the development program. The course ends with a showcase and luncheon. The essential attribute they include in their program is the use of faculty’s own experiences. The inclusion of other essential attributes could not be determined.

As we move to programs that last longer than ten weeks, we can begin to see the increase in their comprehensiveness with less emphasis on technology skills and more emphasis on pedagogy. The University of West Florida’s (UWF) Studioe training series, a Sloan-C award recipient in 2008, begins with a fully online, five day course that immerses the faculty into the online environment as an online student. Then, a semester long, face-to-face, course has the participants plan and develop their online course for implementation within the next academic year. Also available is another fully online course for faculty who are teaching online or have a course ready to deliver online. Finally, another course is focused on updating and/or modifying an existing online course based on student evaluations, peer evaluations, and self-evaluations. They do provide the observation of an online course in their program.
The Sloan-C Online Teaching Certificate is unique within these faculty development programs in that it is not associated with a particular university, college, or system. Participants seem to register for their program due to the recognition of Sloan-C’s ongoing commitment to quality online education, and the community of practice they have established. However, their certificate comes at a price of $2,384 ($1,499 plus $295 for each elective). The only certificate program that is priced higher is the UWM’s program at $2,800. UWM is also recognized as a leader in distance education, has certificate program participants worldwide, and has been offering their certificate program since 1993.

The Sloan-C certificate program consists of a nine-week foundational course and three electives that must be completed within one year. Each elective requires a one week time commitment. The UWM certificate program consists of an orientation course, four core courses, a choice of electives, and a capstone report that summarizes the learning experience. While the average completion time is 12 to 18 months, the certificate program must be completed within two years. The program appears to be mainly self-paced with at least one elective in a print-based format, four as a two-hour audio/web seminar, and others as four-week courses. The value of the Sloan-C and UWM electives is that faculty can select workshops that focus on their specific interests. It is the choice of these electives that provide an individualized plan for participants. Both programs have a wide range of selections from which to choose. Important outcomes of the Sloan-C program are a peer-reviewed online course and an online portfolio that can be made available for promotion and tenure and hiring reviews. The UWM program joins each participant with an advisor who provides consultation and feedback. The Sloan-C program does not seem to provide any reflective components, and the UWM program only seems to provide a reflective activity in the capstone at the end of the program. Sloan-C also provides the observation of online courses, while UWM only makes that provision from a student perspective.
The three programs that last at least one full academic year or longer are Louisiana State University’s (LSU) Professional Development Model for Online Course Development, the University of Calgary’s (UC) Institute, and the SUNY Learning Network’s (SLN) program. LSU’s program was a research study conducted over one year with sixteen community college faculty, divided into four cohorts of four faculty each, to transition them from traditional classroom teaching to enhance their courses with web-based components (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005). Their model included five stages of planning, instruction, implementation, refinement, and evaluation. What is unique about this program compared to the other programs reviewed thus far is that each participant’s individual needs were considered in constructing their own personal objectives for their professional development, an individualized plan. This seemed to be an important factor in the completion of their projects. Then they were divided by content area to share ideas for course development and to link course learning objectives to research-based best practices. In the instruction stage, the faculty participants learned basic skills for online course delivery and developed their first online lesson plan. The implementation stage provided them with opportunities for modeling, coaching, collaborative projects, and group discussions. Participants shared their learning experiences, successes and concerns with each other during the refinement stage. In the final evaluation stage, the focus was on determining the program’s effectiveness by the participants’ growth over time, and identifying areas where the model needed modifications.

The interview findings indicated that the model’s supportive environment, including monthly meetings and biweekly online discussions, allowed the faculty to share ideas and examples which encouraged them to try new things. They noticed their instruction becoming more student-centered as they incorporated more technology components into their courses. Although the context was authentic, the greatest difficulty encountered was trying to develop online course components at the same time as they were teaching the course. This was the
greatest change they noted for future iterations of the model, recommending that course components be developed in the semester prior to their use in a live course (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005).

Positive aspects of this model include the active participation of setting personal objectives, the collaborative activities, and the focus on learning for action as they immediately used what they created in their new online courses. However, there is no evidence that suggests that their reflective activities went deeply enough to question uncritically assimilated assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning. While they changed instructional practices, their beliefs may have expanded rather than changed. Also missing is the plan for continued learning and support. It is unclear whether this model has seen continued use at LSU.

As soon as the faculty participants were divided according to their content area, the possibilities for new perspectives and alternative ways of thinking diminished. Opportunities to collaborate with faculty from other content areas could help them break out from habits and routines, and allow them to build new alliances. There appears to be more value in explaining one’s teaching to colleagues outside one’s discipline (Buckley, 2002).

UC’s Institute, lasting one full academic year, was specifically designed to improve the collegial culture within its Social Work program. However, they suggest that the program could be applied within faculty development for online teaching. Their goal was to reduce faculty’s feelings of isolation, build a community of learners, improve teaching, and build an organizational capacity for blended or completely online courses. They used an inquiry-approach beginning with faculty identifying teaching- and technology-related questions that came from their interests in teaching improvement. This is similar to the needs assessment used in LSU’s model. These questions drove the two and one-half day kickoff, which ended with each participant having developed an individualized plan to implement during that academic year. The kickoff also served to foster and develop a sense of community within the group. Periodic
meetings assessed progress, and provided feedback and support for their continuing implementation. A variety of sessions was available to attend which each participant was able to select based on their personalized agenda. These learning opportunities included teaching/learning sessions including discussions and presentations on best practices, inquiry learning, portfolio use, innovative approaches to assessment, and instructional strategies for blended learning. Technology sessions were offered on their course management system, videoconferencing, video streaming, and other tools. Independent learning stations were also created online, called e-Stations, to explore the use of digital photography, concept-mapping, and classroom assessment and feedback. At the end of the academic year, a closing Institute session provided an opportunity for participants to present their completed projects with time devoted to discussion and reflection, and potential next steps (Eib & Miller, 2006).

The program evaluations found that the faculty most appreciated the opportunities provided to focus on their teaching strategies, with some participants sharing that this had been their first opportunity to really reflect on and discuss their teaching. There was also an appreciation for the community of learners that was established, providing an open and safe environment. A unique aspect of this model is the attention given to the different levels of technology skills the participants possessed. This program went beyond offering simply a smorgasbord of offerings, but actually used the individualized planning to create projects that were a balance of feasibility and challenge for each faculty member. This allowed for learning at different rates and in different ways (Eib & Miller, 2006).

Unfortunately, at the Institute’s closing, no structure was in place to continue the process. It had accomplished its goals. However, they made recommendations to implement their approach in other settings. First they recommended assembling a team to plan and coordinate the program, including skilled facilitators, faculty, and administrators. Administrative support is needed to demonstrate the program’s value. Invitations to participate need to have a marketing
slant while also welcoming, encouraging, and challenging participants in an honest and open fashion. Community building could begin with involving the participants in some aspects of the planning whether it is recognizing their interests and needs, providing options from which to select, negotiating the timeframe, or drafting their own objectives for participation. While they suggested to plan for different levels of participation during the program, they also recommended providing some minimum standards such as due dates. They felt that a mix of deliveries would make the program accessible to more participants, and they suggested activities that encourage critical reflection, discussion, practice and application. The most important element to community development for them was the sharing of projects and learning from each other, providing support, encouragement, and feedback. Synchronous sessions also helped participants connect with each other rather than relying on the facilitator. A culminating event was an important way to celebrate progress and accomplishments. Throughout their program, they believed that “a core criterion for an effective faculty development process is that, through the act of participating, faculty perceive greater connectedness to a community of practice that encourages, engages, and supports them in their teaching practice” (Eib & Miller, 2006, p. 14).

Finally, while I have briefly mentioned the SLN model previously, the program is so comprehensive and has been so widely researched and shared, that it requires additional discussion here. The State University of New York (SUNY) is the largest public university in the country with 64 campuses. Each campus can choose to participate in the SUNY Learning Network (SLN), and 40 of the 64 campuses do so. The SLN is a centralized support unit for the training of the multimedia instructional designers (MIDs) at each campus, and for providing faculty professional development for online teaching. They have a four-stage faculty development process intertwined with a seven-step online course design process, all framed within a Community of Inquiry model. This is notable since very few of the faculty development models reviewed explicitly stated a theoretical framework used to design their program. Except for
Sloan-C and UC who use a Communities of Practice model, all of the other programs either refer to best practices or do not mention a framework at all. Faculty developing a new online course need to participate in this program (Shea, Pelz, Fredericksen, & Pickett, 2001).

The first stage of the faculty development program involves participation in an online conference that mirrors the environment in which they will eventually teach. In this way, they experience first hand what they and their students will do in the online course. This is similar to the beginning course in UWF’s Studio-e program. During this stage, SLN faculty are able to observe exemplar live online courses, making it the only program that makes live online courses available for observation. They have a list of approximately thirty live courses for which they have received permission from the instructor and all students. Two face-to-face meetings follow this online conference, each approximately one month apart. During these meetings, faculty work on beginning to structure their course for online delivery, integrating interaction, and adding authentic assessment. They are provided a detailed faculty developer’s handbook and an extensive website with samples, examples, tips, and best practices as references and guides (Shea et al., 2001).

In stage 2, faculty are given a personalized course shell from a template and assigned a MID. With the MID, they identify course chunks or modules and begin building their course. It is in stage 3 when the faculty transition from course development to delivery. Two more face-to-face meetings are used to prepare them to teach and manage their online course. They meet with experienced online faculty, and their course goes through a formal course review using the same rubrics and checklists used during course development. Finally, they teach online and their MID follows them for the first few weeks for additional support (Shea et al., 2001).

In stage 4, it is time to review, revise and refine. Two additional face-to-face meetings are provided to improve their online course before they teach online again. After teaching online again, they participate in a seventh workshop and contribute to best practices. Training is
available for returning faculty, with the topic changing every semester. This model supports continuous development and works to create a community of practice (Shea et al., 2001).

The model itself demonstrates continuous development and refinement through numerous studies, journal articles and conference presentations. It is held out for the public for scrutiny, and holds itself as an exemplar of faculty development and course design models. Its strengths include the Community of Inquiry framework, which brings a wealth of practices, strategies, and research to inform their work. They also encourage faculty to share questions and concerns, and development a supportive environment in which to do so. The model also provides for ongoing support at least throughout the second iteration of the online course delivery. However, at that point, a number of returning faculty are contributing to best practices, opening their courses for observation, and contributing in other ways to the community of practice. It is one of the few programs to explicitly build in opportunities for faculty to reflect on their learning, which provides the opportunity for lasting change.

One of the areas of this model I question is the template-based course design. Although I am sure that they have a large library of templates from which to choose, it does seem to be a rather lock-step approach to course design. It also seems to be the type of course design where the entire course is developed with everything in its place before the course begins. While this is certainly a scalable model, I wonder about the faculty who want to involve their students in some of the course planning. Is this still possible or must the entire course be preplanned to the last detail? How much flexibility is actually provided?

The other area of the model that could use some refinement is the use of reflection. While this is a component I have searched for in every model, finding very little evidence in most of the models, the SLN model has it built right in. However, the reflective activities seem to stay at a level that allows for course transformation, but possibly not a change in faculty’s beliefs and assumptions about teaching. For example, an early reflection activity involves discussing general
issues about teaching and learning online. This might get to some beliefs and assumptions about teaching, but I doubt that it will dig deeply enough to determine their origin or have faculty wonder why they believe what they do. If their reflections do not move to that stage, then what is the possibility for deep and lasting changes that will also impact teaching back in their face-to-face classrooms? However, in an SLN study conducted within the SUNY system, 94% of faculty respondents agreed with the statement, “Developing and teaching this online course provided me with an opportunity to reflect on how I teach in the classroom” (Shea, Pelz, Frederickson, & Pickett, 2001, p. 13). Additionally, 85% of the faculty answered “Yes” to the question, “Will the experience of developing and teaching an online course improve the way you teach in the classroom?” (Shea et al., p. 13). Do these survey responses tell us that they might decide to add an asynchronous discussion forum since it worked so well in their online course, or does it actually get to their beliefs and assumptions about classroom discussion? Without gathering more information on these reported improvements, it is difficult to determine exactly what has changed. I still believe that the reflective activities need to ask harder questions, but these survey responses seem to indicate that something interesting is happening here.

Now I turn to two additional models that offer frameworks to inform the design of a faculty development program for teaching online. Both are aimed at faculty developers. The first model is the Four Quadrant Model for Professional Development (Langley et al., 2004), and the second model is the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development (Lawler & King, 2001).

The Four Quadrant Model for Professional Development is composed of an individual/public dimension and a reflection/performance dimension that, when connected, result in the four quadrants of individual reflection, public reflection, individual performance, and public performance. The authors suggest that these four quadrants are components that faculty need to examine and address in order to align their beliefs and skills, or adapt, to changes within their institutions, and support continued professional development. Specifically, these
components can be used to engage faculty in transformative learning by designing professional development programs that deliberately address all four components (Langley et al., 2004).

The individual component acknowledges “feelings and beliefs that articulate a faculty member’s identity, sense of accomplishment, and satisfaction; it is the source of commitment and morale” (Langley et al., 2004, p. 148). It sounds as though this component could tie into a faculty members’ authenticity; how their identities as a person and as a teacher are aligned. Combined with the reflection component, this might include reading professional literature on teaching online, reflecting on alternative teaching strategies, or critically reflecting on their assumptions about teaching. Combined with the performance component, this could include learning how to use a course management system, or developing facilitation skills for an asynchronous online discussion.

The public component “is one in which roles, duties, shared agreements, and standards are created and observed” (Langley, 2004, p. 148). Combined with the reflection component, this might include a collegial discussion of online teaching experiences, participating in an online course peer review process, or participating in a community of practice around online teaching. Combined with the performance component, examples could include presenting or publishing on their online teaching experiences.

The Four Quadrant Model suggests that faculty professional development should be designed based on a needs analysis that identifies issues in the individual reflection, public reflection, individual performance, and public performance components. The needs assessment could answer questions such as “What individual assumptions, left unchanged, will hinder this project? What public reflections must be shared and agreed upon through dialogue with the university community? What performance outcomes and evaluations will be used to publicly validate that success?” (Langley, 2004, p. 149). It is noted that each quadrant does not have to have equal emphasis in all cases.
The strengths of this model are its attention to the need for reflection within faculty development to facilitate change, the acknowledgement of the organizational context, and the creation of outcomes that are desired by universities such as conference presentations and journal articles. The model appears to be flexible enough to fit within different faculty development programs and with different program goals. The weakness is its limited use thus far with one university seminar at Indiana State University.

Finally, the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development was reviewed. This model was deliberately designed to incorporate adult learning principles and adult education program planning concepts (Lawler, 2003). It has the four stages of preplanning, planning, delivery, and follow-up. Each stage checks for compatibility between the learning objectives and corresponding activities and adult learning principles. During the preplanning stage, the purpose of the professional development initiative is described along with its fit in the culture, mission, and goals of the organization. Available resources are identified. The faculty development activities are determined in the planning stage, along with who will be involved. This is also when the scheduling, promotion, and program delivery are set. In the delivery stage, planned tasks are reviewed and plans to monitor the program are scheduled. As the program ends the follow-up stage begins, with assurance that the proper processes are in place to support the faculty members’ new skills and learning. Additionally, the faculty developers reflect on their role in the program in order for their own learning to inform their planning for future events. A cornerstone of this model is the faculty participation throughout the planning, delivery, and evaluation stages, and the incorporation of their experiences and needs.

This model addresses the faculty as adult learners, their characteristics, and their motivation to learn and change (Lawler & King, 2001). It acknowledges that faculty’s work does not occur in a vacuum by accounting for the organizational context in the preplanning stage. The model begins with the faculty’s needs and experience and includes their voice throughout all of
the model’s processes. Although some attempt is made to support faculty after the program has been completed, there is little known about how much faculty development efforts actually lead to improved teaching and learning. However, faculty development that encourages reflective practice has the potential to increase these efforts toward improvements (Layne et al., 2004).

Positive aspects of this model that correlate to adult learning principles include the recognition of faculty as adult learners, their active participation in all stages of the model, and the respect and integration of their experiences. Once again, however, the follow-up support is weak and instructional change is the outcome. If teaching strategies are changed without critical reflection on the assumptions and beliefs upon which those changes are based, then how long might those changes last before a critical incident has them falling back on what worked in the past? While this model is a good move in the direction of recognizing faculty as adult learners, their learning is not transformative and probably will not alter their teaching practices in a lasting way.

**Discussion and Summary**

In has been established from an analysis of the literature that a faculty development program should be considered adult education with the faculty participants recognized as adult learners. This brings with it all of the relevant research, literature, and practices associated with adult education in order to develop a professional development program that is not a one-size-fits-all model. A faculty developmental model informed by adult learning theory and transformative learning theory would consider the whole person, consider each person’s individual needs, concerns, and goals, use their own experiences with their learning, provide an environment of respect and support, allow for critical reflection, collegial inquiry, active participation, and an authentic context. Finally, the program would continue through individual action plans and
ongoing support. This seems like a lot to consider as one is preparing to design a faculty professional development program, but a theoretical or conceptual framework can certainly provide the lens and framework to guide it.

Since none of the twelve faculty development programs to teach online used adult learning theory to design their program, I did not expect any to contain all of the essential attributes. It initially appeared that the length of the faculty development program was a major determining factor in which essential attributes were included or excluded, so I resorted the table by length of program. Unfortunately, since a variety of attributes could not be determined in a number of the programs, this suspicion could not be confirmed, although it could have been a contributing factor. As I looked more closely, I wondered whether the absence or presence of a theoretical or conceptual framework was the factor that determined the number of attributes present. Two of the programs showed evidence of eight or more of the eleven attributes. LSU showed evidence of eight of the attributes, and its program was adapted from face-to-face and technology-integration models of faculty development. SLN, which uses a highly developed Community of Inquiry model for its design, showed evidence of ten attributes. The only other faculty development programs that mentioned a theoretical or conceptual framework for their program was UC and Sloan-C which both used Community of Practice. This further reinforces my thinking that a theoretical or conceptual framework is essential in the design of a faculty development program, and the Community of Inquiry model seems to support many of the same attributes as a model based on adult learning theory.

The faculty development model reviews also increased my awareness of different professional development activities that could be used quite effectively in a program of any length. The UML’s Cyber Celebrity videos and UCF’s Web Vets discussions are creative ways to capture experienced faculty’s challenges and successes in moving from face-to-face to online teaching. It recognizes and honors their experiences while providing opportunities to share
collegially with their peers while paying attention to their time constraints. Several programs modeled the environment in which their faculty would eventually be teaching in so they could, at least initially, gain the student’s perspective. A few programs also began the faculty development with an online component to complete some readings of the professional literature, and provide time for reflection and discussion prior to the first face-to-face meeting. Some programs ended with a celebratory luncheon or other type of gathering where participants were able to share their completed projects.

Reviewing the essential attributes list one last time, program components that implemented these attributes and could be included in this research study are as follows:

- **Individualized plan** – A UC facilitator met with each participant prior to the beginning of the program to discuss and refine their project proposal to ensure that they had the right mix of feasibility and challenge. At LSU, participants completed a needs assessment and set personal objectives for themselves. They linked their objectives to current research on best practices.

- **Use of faculty experiences** - At LSU, participants shared ideas, successes, and concerns, benefiting from the insights and experiences of their peers.

- **Recognition of faculty’s needs, concerns, and goals** – LSU’s needs assessment and objective setting was the model for this attribute.

- **Learning environment is one in which faculty feel accepted, respected, and supported** – Although this is difficult to verify without personally experiencing it, SLN offers such rich description of its program that you can almost feel as though you are there. Each faculty receives personal and community support for over one year, and one-on-one attention from an assigned multimedia instructional designer. The variety of discussion activities and face-to-face meetings helps to establish this environment.
• Active participation – All of the programs have outcomes that require active participation from each participant. There is no option for sitting back and passively listening.

• Reflection – UCF includes reflection on faculty’s existing teaching strategies to determine their suitability for inclusion in their online course. SLN also includes reflective activities to determine classroom changes. The Four-Quadrant model is the only one that offers more intentional and varied opportunities for reflection. None seem to reach the critical reflection stage, although the Four-Quadrant model is meant to facilitate transformative learning.

• Collaborative inquiry – SLN uses a Community of Inquiry model and UC uses an inquiry approach, both involving collaboration between the participants and the facilitators.

• Observation of online courses – At UWF, participants view online courses, but at SLN, participants view live online courses.

• Authentic context in which to experiment and apply skills – At UWF, participants first engage as an online student and then work within their own course as an instructor. This is also the case at UMUC.

• Action plan – None of the models had an action plan component for faculty to plan their ongoing professional development. These action plans could be used to determine the needs for their ongoing support.

• Ongoing support – SLN’s program has the most potential for ongoing support since they engage with their faculty participants for over a year, and new training opportunities are available for them each semester.
Synthesis of the Literature Reviewed and Gaps Identified

The purpose of my action research study is to engage higher education faculty members, positioned as adult learners, in a professional development program to prepare them to teach online that could also transform their assumptions and beliefs about teaching and, hence, change their face-to-face teaching practices. Professional development for faculty preparing to teach online presents a unique opportunity to assess previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Since change in previously held assumptions and beliefs is at the heart of transformative learning theory, a comprehensive, constructivist theory of adult learning, a holistic perspective of transformative learning theory provides the theoretical basis for faculty changes in this study.

Critical reflection and critical self-reflection are at the heart of transformative learning theory. Although the faculty development literature lacks strategies to facilitate critical reflection, several strategies were explored for inclusion in this study. Discourse, journaling, the writing of a personal teaching philosophy, and the use of metaphors are all ways in which to engage faculty in critical reflection of their assumptions and beliefs about teaching. The formation of faculty’s assumptions and beliefs about teaching was also explored. It was considered important to understand how deeply their assumptions are embedded from their prior experiences and why they go unquestioned for so long, before attempting to engage them in critically reflective activities. It was also an attempt to understand why faculty might be resistant to confronting their unquestioned assumptions and beliefs.

The brief history of faculty development was reviewed to set the context for its current state of being. The importance of aligning faculty professional development with adult education was substantiated by the amount of research, literature, and strategies it brings to inform our work.
Most faculty professional development programs lack a theoretical or conceptual framework, and this was confirmed in a review of faculty development models for online teaching. These models provided strategies for this study’s faculty development program based on the essential attributes identified from adult learning theory.

This research addresses a gap in the literature on faculty professional development for online teaching. While research has been conducted to note changes faculty report in the online teaching experience (e.g., Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004), no study has explored changes in teaching assumptions, beliefs, and face-to-face teaching practices resulting from faculty’s preparations to teach online. Additionally, while many faculty professional development models exist to prepare faculty to teach online (e.g., Abel, 2005; Chizmar & Williams, 2001; Covington, Petherbridge, & Warren, 2005; Garofoli & Woodell, 2003; Irani, 2001), none include a reflective component to intentionally question faculty’s current assumptions and beliefs about teaching and inform their face-to-face teaching practices. Chapter 3 provides details about my qualitative research paradigm, action research methodology, research design, participant selection, and approaches to data collections and analysis.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Professional development programs preparing faculty to teach online present unique opportunities for faculty to rethink assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and can be a catalyst for teaching changes. The purpose of this qualitative action research study is twofold: one, to explore the impact on face to face teaching as a result of participating in a professional development for teaching online, and two, is to explore transformative learning as a theoretical lens in explaining the potential change in face to face practice. This study was guided by the following questions:

1. Which aspects of a development program preparing faculty to teach online do faculty perceive as being most effective in helping them to reflect on and question their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching?
2. Do faculty experience changes in their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of learning to teach online and, if so, how does transformative learning explain the changes?
3. What impact does learning to teach online have on face-to-face teaching?

These questions require a research paradigm and methodology that try to understand faculty as unique individuals with a variety of assumptions, beliefs, and lived experiences that have informed how they teach.

Given that this is a qualitative action research study, this chapter provides an overview of qualitative research, followed by a more in depth discussion of action research and its relationship to the purpose of this study. Next are a description of the researcher’s background, an explanation for the participants and their selection process, and a discussion of the data collection and analysis
methods. Finally, the chapter concludes with the approaches taken to ensure verification and trustworthiness.

**Qualitative Research Paradigm**

Having already completed a number of survey research studies, I was always frustrated by the quantitative questions and responses that gave me a glimpse into a particular phenomenon but left me wanting to know more. I always found the responses to the surveys’ open-ended questions filled with unexpected insights and the opportunity to hear the respondents’ voices more fully. They provided more context and richness to the quantitative findings. Therefore, as I considered my study of faculty changes in their assumptions and beliefs about teaching and explored the various methodologies that could best address my questions, qualitative research was a logical fit due to a number of its characteristics.

Characteristics of the qualitative research paradigm that will help guide the research questions include its focus on understanding, its dedication to the study of the process of meaning making, its depth and detail of analysis, and its recognition of the researcher as the primary instrument (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002). Qualitative research tries to develop a deep understanding on three levels at the same time: 1) the issue being researched; 2) the research process itself; and, 3) the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection (Kincheloe). It is based on the view that reality is socially constructed by individuals, resulting in multiple realities (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). It allows a researcher to include the participants’ experiences and the meanings they make of their experiences. Numbers are used for generalizations in quantitative research and cannot capture the uniqueness of each faculty member’s individual experiences as they prepare to teach online, or provide a window to underlying meanings or feelings around their assumptions and beliefs about teaching. For
example, the terms teacher and teaching will have different meanings to different faculty, and qualitative research considers the uniqueness of each person’s meaning enabling the collection and understanding of their different perspectives. It goes deeper than simply counting how many times a specific meaning was shared, or what percent of the population shared a similar meaning. At the same time, it encourages the researcher to look deeply at herself and remain open to the possibilities of change and new perspectives.

Qualitative research provides the methodology to study issues in depth and detail (Patton, 2002). There are five additional characteristics of qualitative research that have been considered in this study. One characteristic is qualitative research as a naturalistic inquiry that studies events as they take place in the natural everyday context of practice (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton). The context for this study is a professional development program preparing faculty to teach online while also informing their face-to-face teaching practices. This study involves the professional development events as they occur naturally, and the resulting changes in faculty’s face-to-face teaching within their normal classroom setting.

Another characteristic of qualitative research is its holistic view of experience that includes its complex interdependencies rather than simple cause-effect relationships (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002). Faculty’s prior beliefs about teaching, their lived experiences with teaching, and relationships with their students provide a complex, holistic view of their individual experiences of learning to teach online. Understanding that view, the flexible design of qualitative research allows for responsiveness and adaptability within the research (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002). A flexible design is inherent in action research, a subset of qualitative research, and allows for adaptation as the research progresses.

Another qualitative research characteristic is a concern with lived experience, including the researcher’s, that contains an empathetic dimension (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002). This means that the qualitative design will allow the researcher to look deeply at the faculty’s teaching
beliefs and practices, while also allowing each faculty member, and the researcher herself, to look closely at their own teaching beliefs and practices which are closely tied to their lived experiences with teaching and being taught.

The final characteristic of qualitative research is its purposeful sampling aimed at finding participants who will inform the research question (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002). Most data collection in qualitative research studies occurs through interviews, observation, and the review of documents and artifacts (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). A purposeful sample method will be used in this study in order to select information-rich participants who can provide insights into learning to teach online.

Issues of trustworthiness are important in any research design, and the strategies employed in qualitative research are different from those operating in the positivist realm. Because the researchers are the primary instruments for data collection in qualitative research, the issue of trustworthiness lies almost entirely with their skill and expertise, and the acknowledgement of their subjectivity by attempting to make their biases explicit. The researcher’s closeness to the data represents a strength of qualitative research (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

**Action Research Methodology**

Action research can be traced to the work of Kurt Lewin who believed that in order to gain insight into a process, the researcher needed to create a change and then observe the effects and new dynamics of the change (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). He also believed that effective action would result by involving people in the collection and analysis of data (Marsick & Watkins, 2005).
Enthusiasm for action research rose in the 1940s in education (Kincheloe, 2003). However, its use declined in the 1950s against criticisms from the positivists who valued expert knowledge and the separation of science and practice (Kincheloe). It was rediscovered in England in the 1970s as sentiments against positivism gained momentum in seeking new epistemologies of practice (Kincheloe; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). It has been widely used in adult literacy practice in Australia, England, and North America, as well as in the North American adult education community-based contexts, and corporate settings (Quigley, 2005). Action research has continued its increase in recognition and use ever since the 1970s, although issues still surround the role of the researcher, the credibility of the research itself, and its challenge to traditional research paradigms (Quigley; Smith, 1996, 2001, 2007).

In higher education, teaching is an everyday practice whether it occurs in a classroom or in an online environment. Teachers, through years of being a student, through the culture of their institution and department, and through expectations of their colleagues and students, have uncritically assimilated many teaching practices. With research and publication their priorities, teaching can take a secondary role in importance with faculty unable to find the time to critically evaluate and question what they do in the classroom. Faculty professional development events can provide opportunities for this type of questioning in a challenging but supportive environment with other colleagues also interested in investigating their teaching practices. A move to online teaching is one impetus to take a fresh look at teaching practices and consider new possibilities.

A strength attributed to action research most often is its immediate relevance to practice because it involves practitioners in their actual practice settings (Jacobsen, 1998; Kincheloe, 2003; Kuhne & Quigley, 1997; McNiff, 2002; Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Patton, 2002; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Its problem posing and problem solving engages the practitioners in studying their own problems through a process that can be repeated for continued understanding and improvement (Kuhne & Quigley; Merriam & Simpson; Patton). As such, it has been recognized
as a practical, empowering tool for professional development of adult educators (Kuhne & Quigley). In a study of higher education faculty, action research was used to investigate current teaching practices and associated problems, question assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and create new informed knowledge that was immediately useful in their classrooms (Sunal et al., 2001). It is also a good fit for faculty developers acting as action researchers because it can teach them to heighten awareness of their impact on teaching practices and to view themselves as objects of study (Kincheloe, 2003). For faculty and faculty developers alike, practice and research inform each other through the action research process while leading to new knowledge and informed action (Ziegler, 2001).

A number of authors have linked qualitative methods and action research with professional development, adult education research, and transformative learning (Gravett, 2004; Lange, 2004; McNiff, 2002; Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Quigley, 2005; Taylor, 2007; Ziegler, 2001). Because there is a focus on understanding the experiences of those involved in improving practice, qualitative methods are a better fit than quantitative methods (Merriam & Simpson). Additionally, action research has unique characteristics that make it a good match for faculty professional development. It is the faculty developer and the faculty themselves as practitioner-researchers who control the research process and collaboratively construct new knowledge about, in this case, teaching. They each contribute expertise from their own area and real life experiences, and are able to implement their learning directly into their practice (Ziegler).

Since action research is involved in investigating and bringing about change, it seems to be a natural fit for transformative learning, which is also involved in change (Lange, 2004; Taylor, 2007). For example, a recent action research study focused on fostering transformational learning regarding teaching practice within a professional development program. The study was guided by questions that assisted the faculty and faculty developers deeply question, at a personal level, what they do, how they do it, and how they could do it better (Gravett, 2004).
In another example, the Center for Literacy Studies at the University of Tennessee has used action research for professional development since 1988. This center found that practitioner-researchers report that action research enables them to learn in completely new ways. They became more critically reflective about their practice, gained confidence in their abilities, became more active professionally, made valuable connections with peers, increased their interest in research and, most importantly, transformed their practice. (Ziegler, 2001, p. 4)

The catalyst of learning to teach online provides the opportunity to take a fresh look at faculty professional development practices and teaching practices. It builds on a model of learning where faculty developers and faculty collaboratively challenge and support each other as they investigate new ways of conducting their practice. While the emphasis is on changing practice, the route is personal inquiry, which makes it more meaningful and relevant (McNiff, 2002). It is also a continuing process of reflection that can have future implications for learning and practice.

To better understand action research it is best to explore some of its key assumptions. First, is it assumed that there is an obligation to those being researched as well as to the method of research (McTaggert, 1991; Quigley, 1997). Within this action research study’s context, this refers to the fact that there is an intent of change in the participants’ assumptions and beliefs about teaching and, therefore, there is a moral obligation to conduct the research with their best interests in mind. There needs to be a sensitivity around what happens to them and how it happens.

It is also assumed that practitioners, such as teachers, sustain their field, are key to improving it from within (Quigley & Kuhne, 1997), and can solve problems by studying themselves (Patton, 2002). Finally, it is assumed that knowledge is socially constructed through life experiences and interactions in a context-dependent culture and is not, therefore, generalizable (Jacobsen, 1998).
Action research is a marriage of theory and practice; one informs the other in a cyclical process (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). As the researcher, I am a faculty development practitioner who is conducting research into her own faculty development practice. I used adult education theory, transformative learning theory, and the knowledge of my practice to design an action research study that would further inform my practice which, in turn, also informs the theories used.

The basic elements of an action research model are planning, acting and observing, and reflecting (Kinetcheloe, 2003). Several authors (Gravett, 2004; McNiff, 2002) suggest beginning action research projects with faculty by first having them share their teaching philosophy or practical theories of teaching to begin developing a self-understanding of their practice. The core assumptions and beliefs upon which their practice is based needs to be brought into awareness through critical reflection, especially the ambiguities, contradictions, and tensions implicit between what they think and what they actually do (Gravett; Kinetcheloe). Reflection can bring a sense of clarity to what they are doing and why they are doing it. From this starting point, faculty can begin to construct a more informed theory of teaching so they can move forward based on “a deepened understanding of oneself, one’s responsibility, and one’s capacity to act in the world” (Taylor, 2000, p. 157). This period of critical reflection and self-reflection also sets up the possibility for transformative learning by faculty reformulating and reconstructing the previous meanings that have shaped their teaching practices, and the ambiguity in their ways of knowing (Kinetcheloe).

**Planning Phase**

In the planning phase of action research, the first step is problem identification. This study’s problem was identified through a literature review, my own previous research, and dialogue with faculty who considered changes to their face-to-face teaching after teaching online.
The problem is that faculty prepare to teach online as an activity completely separate from, and with no apparent relationship, to their face-to-face teaching. However, by viewing learning to teach online as an opportunity to also inform their face-to-face teaching practices, their assumptions and beliefs about teaching need to be critically questioned.

The second step is defining the details of the action research project including intervention strategies, when and how to begin, and how to involve the participants. These details were determined through a review of multiple faculty development programs to teach online, by incorporating the essential attributes needed in a faculty professional development program that is framed within adult education, and by integrating intervention strategies that could facilitate transformative learning. The intervention strategies need to provide opportunities for faculty to critically reflect on and discuss their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, individually and collectively. These strategies included individual pre- and post-interviews, and journal writing.

Working within the faculty’s academic calendar, the major portion of this research study was implemented during one six-week summer session while faculty typically have fewer classroom teaching responsibilities. The project began with individual interviews that involved the faculty by having them share their needs and concerns around online teaching. These were addressed within the program. They were given access to a public online discussion forum to ask questions, and a personal online journal with a beginning reflective activity. They also received several readings related to online teaching to be completed prior to the first face-to-face meeting.

Determining the evaluation measures is completed in the third step, as well as deciding how long the study should run, and how the action and change will be observed and documented (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997). Faculty were asked to share their perception of the value of the reflective activities, and to offer suggestions for changes to the faculty professional development program. They were asked to relate their learning about online teaching to their face-to-face teaching to determine if there were any changes. There were additional journal activities to
capture ongoing reflections. While the major portion of the study ended with the conclusion of the summer session, two other important activities were completed during the subsequent fall semester: a classroom observation, and the post-interview. What emerged from this first phase was a plan of how to reach the objective and the choice of the first action step (Smith, 2007).

**Acting and Observing Phase**

Some authors separate action and observation into two separate phases, but since they are conducted at the same time I combined them into a second phase of acting and observing. During this phase of the project, the action was implemented and data was collected. At least three different methods are suggested for comparison in order for triangulation. The methods of collection in this study included individual interviews, reflective journaling, researcher’s journal and field notes, and classroom observations. Questions asked during this phase included: Am I staying true to the initial plan? Am I systematically collecting data and keeping close track of it? (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997). Data collection methods are detailed in a future section.

**Reflecting Phase**

Reflecting is the main focus of the third phase of the action research project. During this phase, results are evaluated and outcomes are reflected upon. The data are analyzed for patterns and insights (Kincheloe, 2003). Some questions to ask include: What do the data reveal about the problem and the intervention? Did the project produce promising results? Did the changes observed reflect what actually happened? How could this work better in another cycle of action? Answers to these questions assist in making decisions about the direction of another cycle of action (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997). In this study, each data collection and evaluation period
provided an opportunity to determine whether faculty had an opportunity to reflect on their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching. When little or no reflection occurred, the researcher planned for a new cycle of action research with a different activity or approach to provide a new reflection opportunity for faculty. Alternatively, when reflection did occur, then the possibility of repeating that action in the next cycle of research remained. As changes were made based on the learning from the research, new questions arose and a new phase of research began (Kincheloe).

This process of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting was done in repeated cycles so new action could lead to new reflection, which could lead to more action, which could lead to more reflection, and so on, with each new cycle providing more learning about the problem and interventions (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997; Peters, 1997). Of course, the more cycle iterations, the more learning opportunities (Peters).

There is great flexibility in the design of an action research project. The design has even been described as a work of art that emerges over time through each repeated cycle (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Even though the research design is outlined at the start of the project, it is not completely predetermined allowing for modification during the study (Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Quigley, 2005). Additionally, one action research project will not look like another, as different problems lend themselves to different strategies and will also vary based on the researcher and the circumstances (Peters, 1997; Quigley & Kuhne, 1997).

**Background of the Researcher**

With practical action research, the researcher acts in a Socratic role, encouraging participation and self-reflection (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). The role has also been described as that of a facilitator for problem solving and can also act as a catalyst between research findings and the
participants (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). Typically, action research challenges the traditional role of the researcher as a neutral bystander objectively observing others by making and including the researcher as an integral part of the study (Peters, 1997; Quigley, 2005).

Because of the researcher’s integral role within action research, the researcher needs to examine and be explicit to the readers and to those they are researching about their own values, knowledge, and intentions about the research topic and its possible impact on the research findings and resulting actions (Jacobsen, 1998; Kincheloe, 2003; Peters, 1997). This ‘confession’ of subjectivity reveals the researcher’s lens and can illuminate possible outside influences (Kincheloe). Awareness of the researcher’s voice and unique understandings satisfy the primary ‘rule’ in action research to be aware of the choices one is making and their consequences (Bradbury & Reason, 2001).

Acting as a faculty developer is not a new role for me. It is what I study, and what I do for a living. Over time, I have developed a better ear for listening to what faculty are telling me, or choosing not to tell me, a more compassionate heart to empathize with their challenges, and a better understanding of teaching to be constantly open to multiple perspectives. I do not believe that there is one right way to teach, but I do believe in congruency between who faculty are as a person and a teacher and how they teach. I believe that learning to teach online, and actually teaching online, is a catalyst for changing our assumptions and beliefs about teaching and considering new possibilities for teaching and learning.

I shared with the study’s participants my belief that professional development preparing for online teaching presents a unique opportunity to rethink our assumptions and beliefs about traditional classroom teaching. The activities were designed with the facilitation of these changes in mind. I invited the faculty to join me in opening ourselves to new possibilities about teaching as I helped them prepare to teach online.
Because I was planning for and expecting changes in faculty’s core assumptions and beliefs about teaching, I had an ethical responsibility to support them throughout this study, and even after the study ended. I continue to be responsible for keeping the dialogue open between the participants and me, and between each of the participants, so the entire group is involved in support of one another. With change can come surprise, and I needed to remain open, aware, and flexible enough to respond to any surprises. Because new insights and changes can continue after the study ended, I have a mechanism in place to have the group support continue for as long as the participants want it.

Participant Selection

Qualitative research facilitates the study of issues in detail, yielding in-depth understandings. Typically, in a purposeful sample, research participants are selected strategically and purposefully in order to provide information-rich cases “from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 2002, p. 46). “There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” (Patton, p. 244), but considerations include the research purpose and questions being studied, what will be useful and have credibility, and the researcher’s available time and resources. Because this study involved higher education faculty, an additional consideration is the time demand put on the research participants. With these considerations in mind then, a sample size between six and ten participants was considered for this study.

The first criterion for participant selection in this purposeful sample is that they were faculty currently employed by The Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg. Because of the six week time commitment needed for participation in this study, potential tenure-track faculty volunteers each needed to make a well-informed personal decision about maintaining their
research and publication schedule while participating in this study. Additionally, faculty needed to have been teaching at the university level for at least two years. The years of teaching at the university level assured some accumulation of assumptions and beliefs about teaching in higher education that were called into question during the study.

Another criterion for participant selection was to have had no, or limited, prior experience either teaching online or being a student online. For the purpose of this study, this meant that they could have supplemented their classes with online materials and assignments, but they had not substituted or replaced a face-to-face class session with a completely online class session. It also meant that they had not completed a totally online program as a student. This assured that the experience of teaching online was relatively new for all participants.

The participants needed to be scheduled to teach at least one face-to-face course during the semester immediately following the study’s professional development activities. They also needed to be scheduled to teach either a portion of a course or an entire course online in the semester immediately following the study’s professional development activities. This criterion provided the actual teaching experiences in which changes resulting from the action research could be implemented, observed, and reflected upon.

Finally, the participants needed to be interested in participating in this study, able to devote the time required, and willing to engage reflectively, creatively, and collectively in the professional development activities that were a part of the study. For the most part, these criteria were determined through the recruitment process.

There were no gender, ethnic, or departmental criteria for participant selection. While it was hoped that the sample would generally mirror the faculty population at Penn State Harrisburg in order to gain in depth understandings of a broader range of faculty, this was not the focus of participant selection since generalization is not an intent of qualitative research. Because I was
already employed in a faculty support position at Penn State Harrisburg, it was very likely that the participants already knew me.

After creating a list of all tenured, tenure-track, and fixed-term faculty at Penn State Harrisburg who were scheduled to teach in the semester immediately following the study, an email recruiting potential participants was sent. Those who responded were individually contacted by email to assure that they met the criteria for the study, and to give them an opportunity to ask questions about the research.

Data Collection

This action research study was conducted as a six-week professional development program during Summer 2009 to prepare faculty to teach online. All face-to-face professional development sessions were held on the Penn State Harrisburg campus, with additional sessions held online within an authentic context created in the University’s course management system, ANGEL. The study continued through the fall semester with one face-to-face class observation per participant. The professional development program activities and the resulting data collection methods are described in the following paragraphs.

There is not just one way to do action research, and it is recommended to use several different collection methods in order to provide data triangulation, which strengthens a study (Kincheloe, 2003; Patton, 2002; Peters, 1997; Winter, 1996; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). In this study, individual interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed, participants’ reflective journaling activities, researcher’s journal and field notes, and classroom observations were used to collect data. Each method is explained in the following paragraphs.
Individual Interviews

The action research process involves implementing an action and observing the results (Kuhne et al., 1997). The process began with activities to bring faculty’s assumptions and beliefs about teaching into focus for reflection and discussion. Individual interviews were conducted prior to the start of the faculty development program to gain initial background information, and to put faculty into a reflective mode. In addition, faculty were encouraged to share their needs and concerns around online teaching. While it was expected that each interview would last approximately one hour, the average length was actually thirty-eight minutes. Permission from the participants was sought to record the interviews for later transcription, and to avoid the need to take lengthy notes during the interviews. I recorded my own reflections at the conclusion of each interview session to capture the atmosphere and general feelings. Guided prompts and questions for the interviews included:

1) Tell me how you came to the field of teaching (their subject area) in higher education.
2) What are the events and experiences in your life that have made you the teacher you are today?
3) Tell me about your students.
4) Tell me about your teaching practices.
5) Tell me how you feel about teaching online.

These questions were meant to bring awareness to the assumptions and beliefs upon which their teaching practices were based. It was hoped that their answers might bring a sense of clarity to what they were doing and why, and would provide a path to a deeper exploration into who they are as teacher. Post-interviews were conducted at the conclusion of the faculty
development program to document changes in their assumptions and beliefs from the pre-interviews.

**Journals and Field Notes**

Critical reflection and self-reflection are inherent to action research (Kemmis, 1991). Therefore, each faculty participant was provided an online reflection journal throughout the study. The journals had access limited to the journal’s owner and the researcher. They were aware of the use of their journals as a data collection method, and were encouraged to write in their journals after every session through the provision of writing prompts. The use of journals was a way for the participants to keep track of their thoughts, practices, and understandings. It was a way for faculty to investigate and improve their teaching (Pereira, 1999) by pausing to open up to multiple perspectives, actively processing their thoughts, and examining their closely held beliefs, goals, and practices. Journal writing could enhance their ability to act upon their reflections (Kincheloe, 2003).

Since the purpose of action research is to promote change with the results intended for immediate application and use (Merriam & Simpson, 2000), the participants were involved in their first shared journaling activity of reflecting on the pre-interview. This activity was provided to bring the assumptions and beliefs upon which their teaching practices were based into awareness for critical reflection.

For their first personal, individual journal writing prompt, the participants were asked the following:

Reflect on our one-on-one meeting, and write about your thoughts on the things you shared with me: how you became a teacher, the events and experiences that have made you the kind of teacher you are today, your students, your teaching practices, and how you feel about teaching online. Are there any things that
conversation brought to light? Any new insights? Anything you have been thinking about since then that might add to what you initially shared?

After every subsequent professional development group session and activity, one or two general prompts were given that asked the participants to record their reflections, to share something they learned about themselves as a teacher and/or about their teaching practices, and, based on what they learned about teaching online, to consider how it might impact their face-to-face teaching.

The second journaling activity asked for reflections resulting from our group face-to-face meeting. At this meeting, where the participants met and got to know each other, they engaged in discussion and hands-on activities to begin their preparations to teach online. The reflection prompt asked:

Reflect on our first face-to-face meeting. At what time during our session together did you feel most engaged? At what time during our session together did you feel most distanced/disengaged? What new insights do you have about your teaching and redesigning your course for hybrid delivery? What was the most significant learning for you? Were there any surprises?

Two additional reflection prompts were provided during the six weeks of the professional development program. After the synchronous Adobe Connect session some of the participants attended, this reflection prompt was provided:

Incorporating your readings and the Adobe Connect session, what new insights do you have about your teaching and redesigning your course for hybrid delivery? What was the most significant learning for you? Were there any surprises? Post your action plan progress - what's done and what still needs to happen?

Prior to the end of the six weeks of the professional development program, a fourth prompt was provided:

Look over your previous postings, and think about your progress so far with your hybrid course design. Is there anything you have read, heard, or done, that has given you pause to rethink any of your face-to-face teaching practices? What are the possibilities for change?
As the researcher, I took field notes during and after each interview, and during and after every face-to-face session to capture the atmosphere and interactions that occurred. Additionally, I also kept a research journal to capture my reflections, understandings, and emerging insights as the study progressed.

**Observation**

During the semester immediately following the professional development activities to teach online, I observed each participant’s face-to-face class once. Prior to the class, I used the pre-interview data to prepare a summary of the teaching activities and interactions I expected to observe based on what had previously been shared by each participant. During their class, I sat in the back of the room and noted the teaching activities and types of interactions actually taking place in the classroom. I then compared the two summaries to note what remained and what appeared to be new or altered teaching activities. I noted how their teaching practices matched or differed from what they had shared during the pre-interview. Immediately after each class, I also added to my field notes describing the general environment, and overall impressions of the faculty’s interactions with the students.

**Data Analysis**

In qualitative research analysis, the attempt is made to discover patterns and insights from the data. With so much data generated, determining which data are significant is the most difficult task (Kincheloe, 2003). All efforts were taken to fairly represent the data from the individual interviews, journals, and classroom observations, and analyze it based on the purpose of this study (Patton, 2002).
The data analysis began as soon as the first interview was completed. Miles and Huberman (1994) break qualitative data analysis down into the three primary steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Following these steps, transcribed accounts were coded by emerging themes and initial insights were recorded in my field notes. Participants’ core assumptions and beliefs about teaching were the major focus, for was from this basis that I was looking for change as we moved through the professional development activities to prepare them to teach online.

Moving through each successive professional development activity chronologically, data was collected from the journals to look for any kind of change in teaching assumptions and beliefs associated with specific action research activities, searching for categories, patterns and themes. Comments that suggested a change were coded as to the type of change taking place (assumption, belief, practice, etc.), the activity that preceded/recorded the change, and when it occurred chronologically. As categories emerged, I compared the data within each category, and constantly worked and reworked the categories throughout the analysis, to finally reduce them to a smaller number of categories. This reduction process was captured and became part of the study’s audit trail. The categories were named using words from the participants’ data, and rich descriptions including quotes directly from the participants were used to fully illustrate each category’s meaning.

Keeping true to the action research process, I reviewed the data gathered from the participants each week, and reflected after each professional development activity to determine the next action. In my analysis of the weekly data, I considered what was happening with the participants’ beliefs about teaching and why it was happening. Whether change was noted or not, I analyzed the data to try to determine how and why change/no change was happening and used that information to inform my next steps. This reflection stage determined which professional development activities needed to be included or modified before moving to the next action phase.
For example, when a synchronous Adobe Connect session with an experienced online colleague gave them a different perspective to consider and had them thinking about possible changes in their teaching, I tried to provide another similar session, and also gave them online access to another colleague’s online course.

**Verification and Trustworthiness**

Within qualitative research, researchers employ a number of strategies to promote verification, or truthfulness, of the conclusions reached. They include confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability. The strategies for verification and trustworthiness employed in this research study are described in the following paragraphs.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is the degree to which others can confirm a study’s results. It is the “relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher biases – at the minimum, explicitness about the inevitable biases that exist” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). In other words, it is trying to limit the researcher’s bias in interpretation. While a researcher cannot remain completely objective, there are strategies to reduce researcher bias. In this study, an audit trail was provided which includes the raw data collected, researcher analysis notes, data reduction notes, field notes, and preliminary conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During data analysis and interpretation, alternate conclusions were fully considered. Bringing multiple types of data sources (interviews, journals, field notes, observations) together in a similar interpretation provided data triangulation, strengthening its confirmability over an interpretation using only one method of data collection (Winter, 1996).
Credibility

Credibility is about striving to make the research interpretations as accurate as possible as determined by the researcher and the research participants (Patton, 2002). In addition to triangulation, other strategies used by this study to ensure credibility included member checks and researcher field notes. A member check occurred through the use of clarifying questions used during the pre- and post-interviews in order to reduce researcher bias in the interpretation. The researcher kept a field journal in which to record emerging understandings, which provided a level of reflexivity. This reminded the researcher to keep a high level of awareness during the study, and to continually try to understand what she knew about the participants’ assumptions and beliefs about teaching and how she knew it. Finally, the research study engaged the researcher and participants for an extended period of time. This provided time for a trusting relationship to develop between the researcher and participants, and also reduced the effect of any unexpected events related to the teaching context.

Dependability

Dependability strategies, also referred to as internal validity, ensure that the “results are consistent with the data collected” (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 102). Because the researcher is the primary research instrument in qualitative research, she is literally closer to the reality of the research situation than in quantitative methods using other measuring instruments. However, this means that the interpretation of the data collected (the participants’ reality) is constructed by the researcher (Merriam & Simpson). So, to be sure that the researcher is getting as close to the participants’ reality as possible several strategies were used in this study. Through the use of the audit trail, described in an earlier paragraph, this study used a systematic process of data
collection and analysis and provided a dense description of the process to increase its dependability. In doing so, the attempt was made to provide enough transparency to determine the closeness of the interpretation to reality.

**Transferability**

While qualitative research is not meant to be generalized to a population because of its context-specific nature, this study employed purposeful sampling, and provided a dense description of the study’s context and rich descriptive data that could prove useful to faculty developers or faculty in a similar situation of preparing to teach online. With enough information provided, readers can determine how closely their context matches this research context and whether the findings can be transferred to a similar practice setting (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). At the least, the findings can raise questions and present possibilities for interested colleagues in other institutions or in other areas of the same institution (Kincheloe, 2003; Winter, 1996). It allows others to learn more effectively from the successes gleaned from action research projects (Kuhne & Quigley). Additionally, others can use the research process used, including the faculty professional development model developed for this research project. If education is to be understood in all its complexity and unpredictability, then generalizations must be avoided in order to legitimize each individual teacher’s contextual experience.

**Summary**

There is a lack of research on the influence of faculty’s beliefs on the integration of alternative teaching methods shared within faculty professional development programs and on the
design of faculty development programming to address beliefs and practices (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001).

This chapter provided a description of the qualitative research paradigm and action research methodology, including its fit to the purpose of this research study. The background of the researcher was discussed, followed by the details of the participant selection criteria. Data collection methods of interviews, journals, and observations were described, along with the data analysis methods planned. Finally, processes planned to increase the study’s verification and trustworthiness were shared.
Chapter 4

First Action Research Cycle

The purpose of this study was to explore how faculty learn to teach online and how that may influence their face-to-face teaching. This was done by engaging faculty in a professional development program preparing them to teach online by developing a course for hybrid delivery. The entire faculty professional development program was embedded within an action research design process. Action research is composed of iterative cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting. Three cycles of action research were completed in this study, and a chapter has been devoted to sharing the findings of each cycle. Therefore, this chapter looks at the first action research cycle. The participants are introduced, then the initial interview findings that informed the planning process is shared, followed by the action and observation that occurred during the group face-to-face session and the Module 1 journal entries, and finally the reflection that led to the next cycle of action research. Chapter 5 will describe the second action research cycle, and Chapter 6 will describe the third and final cycle.

Planning: Initial Interviews

The first action research cycle’s planning occurred prior to and during the initial interviews. During the planning stage, the framework for the faculty professional development program was built in ANGEL. The participants were invited and interview questions were designed to elicit responses that would try to uncover their underlying assumptions about teaching. The purposes of these questions were to learn about participants’ assumptions and beliefs about teaching, learn about their teaching practices so I might determine changes later on,
and to plan for the group face-to-face session by gathering information similar to a needs assessment.

After completing the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C), each initial interview began with the question, “Tell me how you came to the field of teaching in higher education,” that explored the context, motivations, and assumptions that led them to this career. The second question, “What are the events and experiences in your life that made you the teacher you are today,” explored the various influences on their teaching practices. Next, they were asked to “Tell me about your students” and then to “Tell me about your teaching practices” to learn more about their assumptions and beliefs regarding teaching and to gain a baseline understanding of their current teaching methods. Finally, the participants were asked to “Tell me how you feel about teaching online” to learn of their concerns and learning needs related to online teaching. By listening for common needs, I was able to prepare for the group face-to-face session.

The participants’ initial interview responses gathered the baseline data to eventually inform two of the research questions: “Do faculty experience changes in their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of learning to teach online and, if so, how does transformative learning explain the changes?” and “What impact does learning to teach online have on face-to-face teaching practices?” The interview questions were asked to give the faculty participants an opportunity to talk about their teaching in a way that might bring some awareness to the assumptions and beliefs upon which their teaching practices are based. I wanted to learn why they taught in the way that they did without specifically asking that question, hoping it would free them to share more than their instrumental acts and not have them feel as though they needed to defend their teaching methods. Capturing their assumptions and beliefs about teaching at the beginning of the faculty professional development program provided a baseline from which to document any changes at the end of the program as they shared again in the post-interviews.

Already positioned in a support role for faculty prior to this research project seemed to
enable the establishment of a rapport with the participants almost immediately during the initial interviews. Many of the sessions were very open and free flowing. In most cases the participants shared much more information than would have been needed to answer the questions, and their willingness to share showed a level of trust and recognition of my expertise. Being a visible part of the College, and being seen positively as a support resource, was a benefit. The initial interview sessions ranged from 13 minutes with an adjunct instructor I didn’t know as well as the others, and who ended her participation in the program when her course was dropped due to low enrollment, to 61 minutes with a professor who shared her concerns about teaching. The average length for all 14 initial interviews was 38 minutes.

In this section, the seven participants who continued throughout the entire research study are introduced, providing a summary of their place in the University, a quick synopsis of their course, their initial intent for participating in the faculty professional development program, their teaching practices, and their assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Table 1 (below) provides a summary of each participant’s title at the time of the interview, teaching discipline, and course level for the course each planned to prepare for a hybrid delivery.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Title</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mick *</td>
<td>Adjunct Instructor</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lou</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Teaching &amp; Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kay</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although one of the desired criterion was that the participant be a full-time faculty member, this participant had been teaching the same course at the College once a year for a number of years and met all other requirements for the study.
All participants are full-time faculty with the exception of Mick who is an adjunct faculty member, but has been teaching the same course for a number of years. The two assistant professors, Mary and Beth, are on the tenure-track, and the associate professors have already been tenured. Although there are a variety of disciplines represented, the majority of participants teach within the same school of Behavioral Sciences and Education. The only participants who teach outside of that school are Mick, in Public Affairs, and John, in Engineering. The “Level” table category indicates the level of the course the participants developed and taught in a hybrid delivery. Five out of the seven participants chose an undergraduate course, although John and Kay also teach graduate level courses. Ralph and Mary each chose a graduate level course, although Mary also teaches undergraduate courses. Each of these faculty participants are introduced individually in the following pages to gain a better understanding of who they are as teachers. I conclude each introduction with initial thoughts from my field journal. Then their teaching practices and assumptions and beliefs about teaching are described.

Mick

Mick ended up being the only part-time instructor in the study. He was included because he has been teaching the same course once a year for a number of years. He was so very interested in making his class a good learning experience, but was unsure if his goal for the course was acceptable to the school for whom he teaches, making it seem as though no one has talked to him about the course for quite some time. He doesn’t use a textbook, but rather provides University training materials in its place. Over the years he has changed from worrying about what his students would think of him to only being concerned with their learning. His focus has changed from himself to his students. I noticed that he refers to his students as “people.”

Although all students come to their classes with varying abilities, in his skills-based class,
their abilities are readily apparent. Mick starts the first day of class by having students make a list of what they want to learn. Often students know how to do what they have always done, and are amazed at the other capabilities of the software applications of which they were never aware. To explain the focus of his course he says,

> They not only have to use the application but they have to give a presentation in class. Each of those little applications ends with some kind of a project to demonstrate that they have some proficiency. I don't do any tests, or anything like that but, as far as I'm concerned, if they can demonstrate proficiency that is the whole goal of the course.

His motivation for participating in the faculty professional development program is the realization that students learn in different ways and at different speeds. For the purposes of learning software applications, do they need to come to every class? Even though he wants to believe that there is some value to coming to class, he is interested in having them maximize their time when they are there. He came to the faculty development program for new ideas, and he even took notes during the initial interview as we discussed different ideas for his hybrid course.

His main interest is definitely in differentiating instruction for his students who come with very different technological abilities, and allowing for flexibility so each can progress past what they came in the classroom door knowing. He is proposing a variation of the hybrid model to use it to individualize learning for students. In this way, the module for each computer application would be online, but all students would not necessarily be doing all of their learning online.

**Mick’s Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching**

When Mick started teaching, he was quite teacher-centered, with his focus on himself and what he needed to do. He taught his course the same way every year with students learning the same skills for the same applications. He shared,
I think early on I was so worried about what they might think of me or how I might do this. Now I have relaxed my thinking, and it is about them. Whatever happens and whatever I can do to make it happen for them is really what it’s all about.

Over the years teaching this same course, his focus has turned toward his students and he is asking what he can do to make his course a good learning experience for them. He has realized that “people learn different ways and at different speeds, and is it really necessary for someone to physically come to every class to get the benefit for themselves, whatever that is, out of this class.” He wants each student to be able to demonstrate proficiency in each application they study.

He struggles with students participating in discussion and said, “I try to encourage discussion after each presentation, but I get nothing. Nobody wants to criticize somebody else’s work.” So, the assumption here is that students are not participating in discussion because they don’t want to criticize their classmates’ work.

Mick also shared that “it has been a pretty traditional, typical classroom.” By this, he means that most of his students are juniors and speak English. They are equally divided between men and women and there are a proportionate number of minority students. He hasn’t had any disabled students. So, although he is making a number of generalizations here that may or may not be accurate, he has already shown that he is beginning to look at his students more as individuals, which was his motivation for participating in the faculty professional development program. Even though the students may look alike on the outside, he is recognizing their differences regarding learning.

**Mick’s Teaching Practices**

Mick’s class meets three times a week in a computer lab. He described a typical class as
one in which, “I will do a little bit of demonstrating certain features that I want to expose them to. I might spend fifteen or twenty minutes demonstrating what I want them to be sensitive to, and then I’ll let them work on things for the other twenty minutes of class.” He walks around the computer lab and students interact with him and ask questions. He uses his personal website for class, and does not use ANGEL. He finds it too “cumbersome to jump back and forth” from his website to ANGEL, so he does everything from this website. He has his students email him assignments as attachments, but it is time consuming to keep track of what he has received and what still needs to be turned in. He says that, “They can always resubmit a project or submit an assignment that they missed or didn’t turn it.” However, this creates a problem as he tries to keep track of who has completed what.

During the semester’s first class, he uses the computer to project each application they will study in turn, and tries to engage them in discussion about features they want to learn. He finds it difficult to get them to respond, and realizes that some students might not know enough about the applications to know what it is they want to learn.

Field Notes on Mick

Mick was my first initial interview and, after listening to the audio recording, I realized that I talked too much. I really enjoyed talking with Mick, and I appreciated his concern for providing his students with the best learning experience possible. While his idea of “hybrid” is not exactly what I had in mind, I was interested in seeing what he could do with it. I was surprised that he is not as current with technology as I expected him to be (e.g., Google docs), considering the course he is teaching, however he is interested in using some of ANGEL’s tools that will help him do course management tasks in less time, such as keeping track of students’ homework submissions in a dropbox rather than having them attached to emails.
Lou

Speaking with Lou, an associate professor of education, it was quite obvious how much he loves his area of expertise, especially how inclusive it is of so many topics. He wants to impart this understanding and love of his discipline area to his students and he said, “I want people to be proud of their culture.”

In Lou’s classes, he doesn’t stand in front of the students and lecture, but has “different classroom presentations, projects, exams, classroom participation, and group work all put together.” He thinks teaching should be practical, interesting, and fun. He conveyed his constructivist philosophy by saying,

I don’t think that students come to class without anything in their head; I know they have a lot. I also have something to share with them, so it’s more of a dialogue. Talk and chalk. We share ideas. I tell them that everybody is a teacher in my class. I teach you and you teach me.

He talked at length describing how he tries to establish a classroom atmosphere in which students feel safe to share their views. Lou also shared a philosophy of caring in that, “If you teach with care, students will also care.” His one challenge is that “everyone wants to get an A.” That’s fine with him, but “to get an A you have to earn it.”

Discussing his intent for participation in the faculty development program, Lou described himself as “technologically challenged.” I noticed that he was very tentative online and in ANGEL. It was just a year or two ago that I got him started with PowerPoint for an external presentation he needed to make. His main motivation to participate in this program seemed to be primarily getting caught up with technology. He even has hopes of retiring some day and teaching courses online.
Lou models his teaching after one of his teachers who made learning practical, interesting, and fun. That teacher also had a philosophy of caring. However, Lou struggles with students’ grade expectations. When I asked him if his students were willing to work for A’s he said, “Some will come with stories, and I listen to the stories. I look at the problems, at their appearance, if they are working, if they have family problems, work issues, or multiple issues. I take everything into consideration, but to get an A, you have to earn it.” This seemed to me that Lou wants to believe that because he is teaching with care, his students also care. However, it also seemed that he has some students who want to get an A without necessarily earning the grade. Perhaps teaching with care impacts students differently.

Discussion is a main activity in Lou’s classes. He shares the importance of discussion by saying,

I hope to help them to open up. Some will be quiet, but by the end of the semester, they say the best part was, ‘I enjoyed because you encouraged me to say something.’ I involve them. If you say, ‘Okay, (student), what do you think about this or that?’ You try to build up their confidence and self esteem so they feel they can say something. In class, they are part of the teaching process because of their dialog. They all have control of their own classroom and don’t feel intimidated to talk in a classroom where everyone can share their views.

I do not know if community-building is something that Lou works on at the beginning of his classes, or what other activities he does to make the classroom feel safe for all students to talk. Do all students talk? It seems that those who do talk find it helpful. Also, it seems that he wants his students to have control. Will involving them in discussion balance control?

It seemed that Lou’s students are engaged during class because he says, “if you listen to the students and meet them halfway, you find a way to keep their focus and concentration.” With his caring nature and interest in involving all students in discussion, it seemed that Lou’s classroom must feel quite inviting and comfortable. It seemed that he puts a lot of energy into
each class session to engage each student, and I wondered how that might translate to the online environment.

Lou’s Teaching Practices

He shared a document he has in ANGEL for his students that seems to be a comprehensive outline of the course, basically telling them what it is they need to know as though only memorization is required. However, this is the exact opposite of the words he used to share his teaching strategies with me. Lou also has “different classroom presentations, projects, exams, classroom participation, and group work all put together.” He doesn’t lecture, and thinks it is more fun if his students come up with ideas and talk. He has them read a chapter in the textbook, and then they discuss the reading in class and view a related video.

He also shared that he tries “to encourage students to be themselves, and we can agree to disagree provided you are not too emotional.” He likes students to back up their statements with facts, not just opinions. Lou encourages his students to learn about the world from different sources, and they share what they learn in each class.

Field Notes on Lou

Lou is quiet, reserved, and apologetic for his lack of technology skills, but really wants to improve in that area. He is very tentative with technology, but so passionate about his discipline area. This would take some work on both of our parts – for him to persevere and seek the assistance he needs, and for me to be open and available enough to him to provide the support he desires at his time of need.
John

John is a tenured associate professor of engineering who really enjoys his interaction with his students. His initial interview also gave me glimpses of a caring attitude toward his students and his desire to see them succeed. However, he sees a big difference between students who are in college for an education, and those who “basically want to be spoon-fed.” While he tries to be thorough and make sure his students understand what is being taught, he needs to see extra effort in order for them to earn an “A.” He has found that “A” students “do above and beyond what is required” and that this also carries over into their other activities outside of the classroom. He finds the less motivated students “very bitter because of what they expect” which seems to be able to receive an “A” for meeting minimal requirements.

For his learning in the faculty development program, John shared that he is interested in “trying to get a better handle as far as what the online can do differently from what I am doing now.” He wanted to know more about different teaching techniques that could be used in a hybrid or completely online environment. Another consideration was that he might be overseas and need to teach the course from a distance. He envisioned moving the information delivery portion of the course online, and having students submit assignments electronically. Class time might be spent on activities that would be more difficult to do online, such as viewing films and giving student presentations.

John’s Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching

John’s mother was a well-loved nursery school teacher whose students still stay in contact with her. It has been a wonderful experience for her to watch them grow up and become successful. John seemed to be working toward that same kind of experience. The parts of
teaching he enjoys the most are “the interaction with the students” and “helping students understand the process.” He showed concern for his students and was “very interested in making sure the students understood what was being taught.” He also prided himself on being thorough which might explain his reliance on lectures, which he calls “giving information.”

There seemed to be a disconnection between John’s expectations and his students’ expectations. While some of his students were obviously there for an education, he has some who “basically want to be spoon-fed.” He rarely saw them change, and they seemed to grow bitter “because of what they expect.” John’s students seem to be expecting to be given all the information they need in the lectures, and John is expecting them to be creative thinkers. Since lectures typically do not prepare students for thinking outside the box, I had to wonder how John prepared them for creative thinking.

**John’s Teaching Practices**

John’s classes consist mainly of lectures and doing exercises. His typical class includes a lecture in which he gives “them information as far as PowerPoints, handouts, follow along” and then gives them in-class and out-of-class exercises. His engineering discipline expects students to know how to work in teams and be an active participant, so they have a number of team activities throughout the semester. He said, “They have to work as teams. . . be an active participant. . . be a team player.” He needs to see evidence of extra effort from students in order for them to earn an A.

**Field Notes on John**

John was short and to the point. He offered very brief responses to my questions, and
almost never elaborated beyond his short answer. I felt as though he had questions he wasn’t asking, and hesitated to share more. Although he has stepped into the Faculty Center on occasion for quick answers, I think this was the first time that we have sat down and talked one-on-one. He did not seem comfortable, and I could not tell whether this was his normal demeanor or not. I realized that I would need to build a higher level of trust with him.

Mary

Mary, an assistant professor of education and on the tenure track, laughs – a lot! It seems to be part of her open and friendly nature. The one thing that really stood out to me is the high standards she has for herself and others, and the low tolerance for “poor” teaching. Her motivation for becoming a teacher was seeing students needing good learning experiences but stuck with poor teachers, and she knew she could do a better job. She has a great interest in the impact of culture on students’ learning experiences born of her extensive international teaching experiences.

With a socio-constructivist philosophy of teaching, Mary’s classes are full of reflection and dialogue. Mary sees and hears students co-constructing meaning in her classes. She shies away from a lot of “orchestrated activities” because she feels they usually result in the exact outcome the teacher wanted rather than being “something that actually teaches you and helps you to learn.”

She has seen professors move what they normally do in the classroom to the online environment and, in the process, add more busy work because they don’t know how to do enough with dialogue. She was also concerned about the mechanics of the technology working well enough to not become a distraction to learning. It was obvious that she had thought about this and had been trying to figure it out for a long time.
Mary’s Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching

One of Mary’s core beliefs is that “kids need good learning experiences to make it in life.” When she worked in K-12, she realized that having children from 9:00am to 3:00pm wasn’t enough and that you “need to be able to impact kids 24/7.” During her international quest to have an impact on students’ learning, she learned the importance of embedding concepts of diversity in education and “how people approach things differently, and how the worldviews of people are so intriguing.” She continued, “How people see each other and their world and their role and identity all play into how they approach learning and what their behavior is in the classroom.”

Now teaching in central Pennsylvania, she has students who have “been born and raised and work in a similar environment . . . teach in the schools they grew up in” resulting in a “small-world perspective.” She thinks that white, Caucasian, central-Pennsylvanian students “don’t get diversity” and that it “pushes their comfort zone.” She is trying to teach them about culture’s impact on learning, and make them aware of the cultural stereotypes they hold.

Mary teaches a number of graduate courses, and has been surprised to find that her students “are very honest.” Most of them are teachers and come to campus for their graduate classes in the evening. She feels that her students “are very much practitioners” who “have locked into a master’s where they just want the degree, not necessarily for a lot of discomfort or work. They tend to want the professional development model. If it is not practical, it’s not worth anything.”

During class, Mary is continually asking her students questions, having them reframe things from their experiences, turning to a neighbor and discussing, addressing each other rather than Mary, and fitting theory into their practices. For this reason, she thinks it is difficult for students to learn from orchestrated activities, because she feels those types of activities are more about leading students directly to the outcomes the teacher wants rather than genuine learning.
She is having a difficult time imagining how her classroom’s group dialogue and learning could happen online. She believes that you have to change your pedagogical understanding to teach online. If you are really going to use that online culture the way it is and let ‘it’ be the context, you are not teaching like it is a classroom. I think as soon as you teach it like a classroom you have missed the point of online learning.

Mary believes that you can’t do online what you’re used to doing in the classroom, and thinks that most online teaching “is a sequence of behaviors with no learning taking place.” Based on what she has seen with a colleague’s experience, she also believes that interacting online will “take every waking hour to get it right.” Getting it “right” by Mary’s standards could be a difficult challenge, but one certainly worth attaining.

**Mary’s Teaching Practices**

Mary described her philosophy of teaching by saying that the burden is not on me to tie it in, because every one of you in this class comes from a different context so if I try to tie it in, two things could happen. . . You say one connection, and you either isolated other people from the class, or you’ve actually stereotyped someone in that class. You have to allow, as a teacher, for personal connections to be made. So, you have to allow for a lot of dialogue and a lot of reflection, personal reflection, collegial reflection, and group reflection. You’ve got to allow for that interaction to be taking place constantly or it becomes content on the side, disconnected, or I made the connections.

In her teaching, Mary remembers to “always consider the complexity of context, both the complexity system, context of the student and myself, and that co-construction of meaning is going to take place inside that classroom.” She does a lot of turning to your neighbor, a lot of stop for a minute, and okay, what did I just say, and how does that relate or disconnect for you? What are you thinking right now? How do you put this together? Draw me something that shows me how you are putting together your last thirty minutes and what we have been talking about here. Okay, get into groups . . . and I want you to talk about this theory as it relates to the learner, and show me one example in one of your classes where it plays out.
She tries to have her students’ learning both reflective from their own perspective and from that of their classmates.

**Field Notes on Mary**

I wondered what Mary’s laughter was hiding. At times I thought it might disguise her disagreement or discomfort, although in all other ways she seemed quite genuine. I wondered if that is what makes it difficult for her students to read her. She has some serious concerns about teaching online and I appreciated her critical questions. It will make me think more critically about what I’m asking faculty to do, and look more deeply at the greater meanings underlying online teaching and learning.

**Kay**

Kay is an associate, tenured professor teaching in the social sciences. By the time she got to graduate school, she knew she wanted to be a professor. She was motivated by the “whole package” of teaching, research, and writing, and she said that “producing knowledge, not just transmitting it,” was important.

When Kay talked about her students, you could hear the concern she has for them when she said, “I think they are very lost.” She sees her students as using their degree as a means to getting a job and not being “really interested in learning for learning sake.” In addition, a number of her students are returning adults with many of them challenged by having to juggle work and family. She is concerned that “most of them don’t really work at being students hard enough.” While her students have more, and a different set of, technological skills than she had as a student, Kay is concerned about their poor writing abilities. Many seem unable to write a
grammatically correct sentence, make a transition, or organize an essay. She shared, “Writing is essential in my disciplinary area to getting a good grade. If you can’t write, you can’t communicate.” She believes this is tied to their low reading comprehension as she has found over the years that “students who do well on multiple choice tests also have a tendency to do well in their writing assignments.”

In discussing how to combat her students’ deficiencies, Kay feels hampered by the short amount of class time she has with them. Reading, writing, and asking questions are all important skills students need to develop in Kay’s discipline of sociology. She sees the possibility of online courses in developing students’ reading and writing abilities through the use of discussion forums, but is concerned about the amount of instructor time it takes to teach online. Her husband has been using online discussion forums with his students, and has taught a hybrid course. He is her role model for the move to online teaching, and she was anxious to try some of the online discussion activities he has used and get up to speed with some other online technologies.

**Kay’s Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching**

Kay is concerned about the learning deficits students are bringing to college. She believes that “students should have good reading comprehension and writing skills before coming to college – we can’t teach all that in two and one-half hours.” She continued, “Our problem as teachers is to figure out how to engage these students. . . how do we get them to read.” She’s whittled down the amount of required reading and doesn’t “know that I should or could whittle it down any more.” This seemed like another case of mismatched expectations.

She thought that the online discussion forum holds some promise to enable “the development of writing.” In class, “Discussion is only as good as students in the class come prepared to discuss.” She hoped that all students would participate online with more time for
reflective writing. She said that the “important thing is learning to ask questions” and that it involves the students and teacher working together. However, Kay was concerned with the amount of time it would take write and read students responses online and believed that “running online courses is actually more work.” She was also concerned with online cheating and saw it as a large-scale problem. She believed that students who do well online are disciplined and motivated, and need the flexibility, while “some students hate online,” are “not motivated enough,” and need the “structure of coming to class.”

Kay’s Teaching Practices

Kay’s goal for her students is that she wants them to read and “to think about what it is they are learning, and how to get there.” She continued, “I don’t want them to say to me, ‘Tell me what I need to know.’” Her “style is that I want you to be able to learn to ask the questions and to discover.” In sociology, Kay said “it is also about asking the question and trying to figure some stuff out for yourself.” She uses lectures to supplement what she’s asked them to read, and she doesn’t summarize what she’s asked them to read because that is what students are supposed to do. She continues to test so they’ll do the reading.

Field Notes on Kay

It seemed that Kay’s husband is her source of all information she has about online teaching. She holds him as her model to follow. I wished they had decided to participate in this program together, and I wondered how Kay’s learning might influence her husband. While Kay’s motivation for participating in this program was to become more current with the technology, she also wanted to learn how to use the technology to engage her students. My interview with Kay
was the longest of all of the interviews by eleven minutes, lasting 61 minutes, during which she expressed a passionate concern for her students. She seemed to be looking for a better, more effective way of teaching. I hoped this faculty professional development path would lead her to something that works for her and her students.

Beth

Beth is an assistant professor on the tenure track in elementary education. She has always wanted to be a college professor, which was considered “one of the most prestigious positions” in her country. She has had some minimal online experience as a teaching assistant and as a student in two separate online graduate courses, but did not like the way the courses were developed because they were not interactive.

It was interesting to listen to her talk about teaching students in the elementary school, and then transition to talking about teaching her pre-service students in her University courses. With the elementary students, she talked about the importance of “reaching out and meeting the students who are there” and starting from a “strength-based perspective” which asks “What is it that they can do, and where do we want to go so that we can build them to reach where we want to go, and not focus too much or be swayed by the negatives.” She also emphasized that “if they learn that you care about them, if you take time to get to know them well, then it makes a whole difference, and it makes your work easier as a teacher also.”

When talking about the future teachers she has in the elementary education program, she mentioned her constructivist philosophy “where you really want them to be involved and wrapped up in the material.” She also acknowledged that she has to have “a balance of activities where you are going to be able to address the different styles in my classroom.”

Beth hoped that a hybrid course format would give her students “more time to spend with
Beth’s Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching

Beth teaches a specialty field within education and felt as though she had too much content to cover and not enough time to get it all done. This situation forces her into the lecture mode more often than she is comfortable doing because it goes against her constructivist philosophy. She believed that a hybrid course format would give students “more time to spend and read the material and reflect on it and incorporate what they learned in the classroom.” This would allow her to reduce the amount of lecture and provide more time to do other activities during the classroom time.

Online courses she has experienced as a teaching assistant and student were not interactive at all. She didn’t like that and thought that online students who live too far from campus to visit are at a disadvantage. She shared, “Sometimes you just need to talk to somebody.” She believed the only way that can happen is by having students come to campus for at least some of their classes. However, the advantage of her pre-service students using ANGEL and other online tools is that it “prepares them for the real world” so they will be able to use the technology tools expected by their principal.

Beth’s Teaching Practices

In Beth’s classes her classroom activities include group activities, case studies, video clips of interventions or instructional strategies and discussion. She has students “reflect on how
they would implement that strategy in that setting.” Even though she includes many different learning activities including group activities, case studies, viewing of video clips, and discussion in her classes, she still finds herself with a need to lecture because of the time constraints and the amount of foundational information she has to share with her students. This presents a dilemma for her because she does not consider lecture a good practice.

Illustrating her constructivist philosophy where she wants her students “to be involved and wrapped up in the material,” she described a typical case study she assigns which is a semester long project that keeps building on itself incrementally. She tries to have a “balance of activities where you are going to be able to address the different styles in my classroom.”

**Field Notes on Beth**

Beth expressed so much passion for the K-12 student community her discipline serves. She truly wants to make a positive impact on their lives by teaching her pre-service teachers how to teach this population of students. She felt some frustration with the lack of interest her students seem to have in engaging in this topic. It seemed that they do not quite realize the need or relevance it will have once they are teaching in their own classrooms. This presented a challenge for Beth to make it relevant and help them to learn about the real need classroom teachers face in this regard.

**Ralph**

Ralph is an associate professor teaching graduate courses in education. He started teaching as part of an assistantship in graduate school when they gave him a textbook and said, “Go teach your class.” He figured he could simply “read through the book and regurgitate it back
to them” and that’s how his teaching career began. At that time, his classes consisted mainly of lectures, although he tried to offer activities now and then that met with different rates of success. From presenting his research at national conferences, he gained confidence and is now able to be “more flexible and relaxed when it comes to teaching.”

In thinking about teaching online, Ralph expected to begin by providing information and readings online to supplement the textbook, and reduce the amount of lectures. He also thought he could have the students do searches for information relevant to the course that could lead to questions to discuss in class. He hoped that this would reduce the number of lectures. He was interested in learning about the possibilities online teaching held for his courses.

*Ralph’s Assumptions and Beliefs about Teaching*

There was a noticeable difference in expectations between Ralph and his graduate students. Most of his students work full-time, go to graduate school part-time, and have family commitments. He wants to keep his standards high so a Penn State degree means something, but not all of his students have the “skills or the capabilities at this point in their lives” to earn a master’s degree. He believes that “it doesn’t matter what I do, what I said, they are going to struggle.” He also has a struggle to maintain high standards and still have his students succeed.

Most of his students have some relevant work experiences that he tries to incorporate into his classes. This is one way in which he is able to engage them in class discussions, as they like to share their work experiences as it relates to the topic they are studying. However, Ralph didn’t view this type of learning as important as his lectures. He shared, “If I don’t lecture about it, how do you learn about it?” Ralph believes that the lecture is an important learning component of his courses.
Ralph’s Teaching Practices

He started teaching as part of an assistantship in graduate school, and his only teaching strategy at that time was lecture. His courses are still predominantly lectures and consist of “sixty percent lecture and forty percent of the time I will have some sort of activity that will allow them to connect to something we discussed in class.” Although his students complain that he lectures too much, he felt that in some of his classes “the content doesn’t allow for too much activity . . . or group discussion.” He felt that he needed to lecture about it for students to learn about it.

Field Notes on Ralph

Ralph was very friendly, open, and honest. He shared his beginnings with teaching all the way through to how he teaches today and why. I thought that the way he described himself was the closest I had heard to what one might call “sage on the stage” although he does try to incorporate student discussion in his classes. From his presentations at national conferences, he relaxed into what felt like acting to him. He gained confidence that he knew what he was talking about, which he would share in his classes. Since he believed that students needed to be in the classroom to learn, it was interesting to see how his plan for online teaching progressed, and what changes happened as a result.

Summary of Findings from Initial Interviews

In getting to know more about each of the faculty participants during the initial interviews, I was moved by the amount of care for their students and passion for their area of study that was demonstrated. Over and over again, they shared how they focused on their students, wanted them to succeed, worried about their busy lives and about making their course a
good learning experience for them. They often mentioned the importance of their subject matter in the lives of their students whether it related to better understanding their culture, becoming better writers in order to communicate effectively, learning to ask questions as a function of learning, or being able to demonstrate technology proficiency.

Each participant also indicated a motivation of change for participating in the faculty professional development program. Mick wanted to differentiate his instruction, Lou wanted to build his skills in teaching with technology, John wanted to learn what he could do differently, Mary wondered how her pedagogical understanding would need to change to teach online, Kay wanted to change from classroom discussion to online discussion forums to give her students more time to reflect and improve their writing skills, and Ralph and Beth wanted to reduce the amount of lecturing they currently do.

Finally, it is interesting to point out that the three faculty participants who were students of education and are now faculty in education, Lou, Mary, and Beth, all mentioned their constructivist philosophy of teaching during the initial interviews even though they were never asked to share that information. None of the other participants mentioned a specific philosophy of teaching.

Planning: Preparing for the Group Face-to-Face Session

While the literature review gave me insights into numerous faculty development programs and exposed me to relevant articles on teaching online, the initial interviews were crucial in providing me with each participant’s individual learning interests, concerns, and needs regarding their preparations to teach online. To fit within the essential attributes of faculty professional development programs that are aligned with adult learning theory, I knew that the group face-to-face session needed to recognize and address the participants’ individual learning
goals, use their prior teaching and technology experiences, and allow for active participation. The planning process to prepare for the group face-to-face session is described in this section, including the information gleaned from the initial interviews, and the numerous group emails sent and received.

**Initial Interviews**

Fourteen faculty initially expressed interest in participating in the study, signed the Informed Consent Form, and completed their initial interviews, but seven did not continue through the entire study. As suspected from the discussions during the initial interviews, the faculty participants had vacations planned, would be out of town for various other reasons, had research commitments to fulfill, and did not plan to check their email as often as during the regular academic year. While they all seemed to want to participate, they would need a great deal of flexibility to fit this professional development program into their summer schedules.

During the initial interviews, I worried about the program’s schedule and whether it should be more structured or remain flexible and, if flexible, how flexible? I built a structure in ANGEL, providing four basic modules: (1) Reflection & Conceptualization, (2) Interaction & Collaboration in Your Online Course, (3) Activities & Assessment in Your Online Course, and (4) Teaching & Managing Your Online Course. However, there were no clear beginning or end dates due to the continuing challenge of fitting this program into faculty’s very busy summer schedules, especially since they did not have a lot of notice to plan around it. Another challenge was selecting a beginning date that fit the schedule of all fourteen participants, and it proved impossible to select a date and time that could even accommodate the majority. It seemed as though I had to choose whose schedule I would accommodate, and I found myself favoring those whose motivations seemed highest to complete the program. Another challenge was having the
participants together for a number of hours. Finally, it seemed that two hours was the largest slot of time that could accommodate the most participants. Based on the needs shared in the initial interviews, I knew that two hours would not be enough time and so I had to analyze their initial interviews carefully to be sure I chose activities for the group face-to-face that would have the greatest impact and fit their common learning needs.

Out of 14 initial participants, seven left the faculty professional development program prior to its completion. For three participants, Janet, Dee, and Janae, time constraints associated with their writing, research, or meeting commitments were the largest barriers to continuation. One tenure-track participant, Will, was counseled to drop out of the program by his program coordinator who was concerned about the time commitment that he viewed as possibly detrimental to progress toward tenure. Two other participants, Mark and Cathy, dropped out of the program after the course they were going to prepare for hybrid delivery was eliminated from the course schedule due to low enrollment. One participant, Jim, never engaged past the initial interview. Because the data from all 14 interviews was used to design the group face-to-face session, they are only included in this portion of the findings in this chapter, and are excluded from all other findings.

The following table (see Table 2) provides a summary of each participant’s interests, gathered during from all 14 interviews, which were used in the development and planning of the group face-to-face session.

Table 2

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<th>Needs Assessment of Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mick</td>
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Lou: Navigating online; ANGEL tools including the discussion forum.
John: Teaching techniques and online tools within ANGEL or Adobe Connect Pro.
Mary: Blogs and wikis; strategies that allow students to co-construct meaning online.
Kay: Oral evaluation with webcams; ANGEL discussion forum; Live Question Tool.
Beth: Online interactive discussion; blogs for reflection; embed YouTube videos in discussion forums; online quizzing.
Ralph: Online activities; locating additional resources including videos; online discussion.
Janet*: Tools to connect with students online.
Dee*: Learning more about teaching online; Adobe Connect Pro; ANGEL discussion forum.
Janae*: ANGEL dropbox and discussion forum; Skype, Adobe Connect, chat; videos of using manipulatives; tool for online concept mapping.
Will*: ANGEL’s discussion forum or Live Question Tool to capture students’ questions.
Mark*: Tool to collect and compile data online.
Cathy*: ANGEL discussion forum and drop box.
Jim*: Tools that would allow him to duplicate the classroom experience.

* These participants did not continue through the entire program and the findings associated with them are only included in the first cycle of the action research for the development and planning of the group face-to-face session, and the first reflection phase.

The majority of participants were more focused on the technological aspects of online teaching than the pedagogical aspects as illustrated in the table. Twelve out of the fourteen mentioned ANGEL either generally, or specifically in regards to its gradebook (1), dropbox (3), quizzes (1), and/or discussion forum (10). Engaging students online through discussion was a high interest, with a few also interested in synchronous online interaction through Adobe Connect Pro (6), or other tools such as Skype (http://www.skype.com/) for free long distance calls via the
internet, and chat (1) for real-time conversations via text messages. Two participants were interested in integrating student use of blogs and wikis in their courses, and three showed an interest in the Live Question Tool (http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/questions/create.php) that allows students to compose questions and post them online for their classmates to vote on their importance for the teacher to address in class. There was also individual interest in locating online resources, and learning how to navigate online, make videos, embed YouTube videos into discussion forums, do collaborative concept mapping, and collecting and compiling data online. Certainly, the clear technology tool front-runners for the face-to-face group session were ANGEL discussion forums and Adobe Connect Pro.

The last question of the initial interview, “Tell me how you feel about teaching online,” also brought other learning interests into focus. A number of participants indicated an interest in changing something they were currently doing either because it wasn’t working or because they thought there might a better way. For example, Mick realized that “people learn different ways and at different speeds” and had an interest in individualizing his instruction so not every student would have to attend every class. Mary believed that “you have to change your pedagogical understanding to teach online.” Those who taught graduate students were looking for a way to engage them while also acknowledging their very busy schedules. Kay was concerned by her students’ poor writing skills and thought that the use of discussion forums would give them more practice. Ralph thought he might be able to have his students go online and search for the information themselves instead of having him give them the information in his PowerPoint lectures. Two participants, Mary and Beth, had previous experiences with online teaching and learning and both talked very negatively about their experiences because of the lack of interactivity and the technological problems. They both wanted the online experience they created to just the opposite – interactive and as free of technical glitches as possible.
A concern that was mentioned by over half of the initial 14 participants concerned the amount of time that would be involved in online teaching. Kay shared, “I wish administration would understand that running online courses is actually more work. I think it’s more work, because of the amount of time you are spending reading student material.” Lou was more concerned about “having time and having the patience and the courage to know that I can do this” to become comfortable with the technology. Mary shared what she had seen with a colleague’s experience teaching an online course, “She is on the computer 24/7. I mean her whole life gets totally taken over by that one course.” Since the concerns about faculty workload and the time spent preparing an online course and teaching it was a popular topic in the initial interviews as well as in the current literature, this was considered to be a good topic to include in the beginning activities of the professional development program.

Finally, there was interest in learning about different teaching techniques for online teaching and learning. Engaging students in discussion, both in and out of the classroom, was mentioned multiple times by the participants. Mary wondered what kinds of activities would allow students to co-construct meaning online as well as it currently happens in her classroom. John shared that, “I am trying to get a better handle as far as what the online can do differently from what I am doing now.” Most participants seemed quite open to discovering the possibilities online teaching holds for them, rather than somehow duplicating their current classroom teaching practices online.

Analyzing the initial interviews to discern the participants learning needs for online teaching resulted in a few common interests. Engaging students in discussion and using ANGEL’s discussion forums as an asynchronous tool and using Adobe Connect Pro as a synchronous tool were top interests. Considering changes and new possibilities for different teaching techniques was another common interest. Finally, learning more about the faculty workload and time management issues often associated with developing and teaching an online
course is a priority. The group face-to-face session was planned after compiling their learning needs and interests as shared in the initial interviews, and is described in a later section.

**Group Email Communications**

With most faculty participants off-campus for the remainder of the summer semester, email was the tool used for setting schedules, sending meeting reminders, and encouraging completion of the professional development activities. After the initial interviews had been underway for a week with eight completed, I emailed the participants on June 30th to set a date and time for our group face-to-face meeting and to introduce them to our faculty development space in ANGEL. I referenced their reflection journals and suggested that they write their first post after their interview was complete, and then proceed to Module 1 to prepare for our group meeting. Knowing that I had to move quickly to fit the majority of the professional development activities into their summer schedules, I emailed the group again on July 2nd and suggested a date and time, July 7th from 1:00-3:00, based on responses already received from half of the participants. I asked them to let me know of any scheduling conflicts, and reminded them to bring their course syllabus and course calendar to the face-to-face meeting. I also reminded them that we would discuss the two required readings, discuss individual course ideas, review some course planning tools, review ANGEL tools based on needs discussed in the initial interviews, and plan our next steps. Since I received several replies with questions, I sent another group email on July 4th to clarify the exact steps they needed to take to navigate to the Getting Started folder and Module 1 in our professional development course in ANGEL in order to prepare for the group meeting. I sent one last group email on July 6th, providing them with our meeting location and thanking the three participants, Mick, John, and Cathy, who had completed the introduction activity.
Some additional planning occurred after the group face-to-face session since I still had six participants who were not able to attend (Will had already dropped out of the program). I sent an email to those six participants to try to schedule a time to meet as a group. At the same time, I encouraged them to work their way through the Getting Started folder and the Module 1 folder in our ANGEL course.

A day before the group session, Mick posted a question to the Technical Support Discussion Forum. He wondered whether there was a way to increase the size of the text in ANGEL for people who have difficulty reading tiny print. I responded right away with the six steps he needed to take to select an ANGEL theme that would provide a larger text size.

**Acting and Observing: Group Face-to-Face Session**

The group face-to-face session was held on July 7th from 1:00-3:00pm in a computer lab on campus. Although nine faculty thought they might be able to attend, only seven participants actually came: Mick, Lou, John, Kay, Beth, Ralph, and Mark (who discontinued his participation in the program after learning that the course he was developing for a hybrid delivery was dropped due to low enrollment). Of the 14 who began the program, this group represented six of the seven participants who completed the entire program. Mary was the only other participant who completed the program, and she was not able to attend the group session. We started with introductions that included their place in the University, and their motivations and planned outcomes of participation in the faculty development program.

After introductions, we reviewed the contents of the folder I provided each of them as they arrived at the session. It contained the following handouts: ANGEL 7.3 New Features, Discussion Forum Views, Subscribe to a Discussion Forum, Move Discussion Forum Messages, Rate Discussion Forum Posts, Use Advanced Message Options in a Discussion Forum,
Pedagogical Uses of Discussion Forums, ANGELshorts: Five Things You Should Know about the Course Mail Tool, ANGELshorts: Five Things You Should Know about the New HTML Editor, ANGELshorts: Five Things You Should Know about Discussion Forums, Content Delivery Decision Rubric, Faculty Workload Estimates, Tentative Course Schedule worksheet, and a Course Plan worksheet. Then we navigated to ANGEL to take advantage of our face-to-face time together and get comfortable with the technology they would be using for their courses. The challenge here was to balance the knowledge and experience of some of the participants with the learning needs of all. Therefore, even when we explored tools and features that I expected to already be familiar to some faculty, I tried to add new information and stretch their thinking regarding its use.

I began by explaining the compatible browsers to use with ANGEL and showed them where to reference this information in ANGEL’s Help section. Then we paused at ANGEL’s logon page to review the Public Announcements and the newer System Check component that checks their web browser for compatibility. After logging into ANGEL, we navigated to our “Preparing to Teach Online” course space.

I highlighted the different areas of our course space so they would be comfortable navigating through it on their own. We paused at the selection of readings they were supposed to have completed prior to our face-to-face session. Three out of the seven had read the articles I provided as pre-session “homework,” but those who read them found them very helpful in getting their mind wrapped around the possibilities of online teaching. It is interesting to hear faculty wonder what they might do to motivate their students to read their assigned texts, and here I found myself wondering the same thing about them! Some introspection on both of our parts would have been helpful here. Perhaps the three faculty who read the articles and shared the most interesting things they learned and the questions the readings raised for them, motivated the others to also read.
Next we navigated to the “Let’s get to know each other!” discussion forum since this was a common interest expressed among most of the participants during their initial interviews. After reviewing the various settings available, including the various views and the HTML editor, I referred to the relevant handouts in their folders and demonstrated how to make an original post and how to reply to another’s post. Those who had not yet posted their introduction were encouraged to do so. Those who had already posted their introduction replied to someone else’s introduction. A lot of interest was expressed in the discussion forum. Questions were asked concerning how to get students started, grade and monitor, determine best discussion group size, and what the various uses were for using a discussion forum. Once again, I referenced the handouts as we discussed the questions raised. I offered to provide a how-to document for students that they could download and use in their courses, and examples of rubrics to use for discussion assignments.

Finally, we reviewed what was in the “Module 1: Reflection & Conceptualization” folder and in the “Module 2: Interaction & Collaboration in Your Online Course” folder. We shared expectations and I asked about their learning needs and support to move forward. All were interested in one-on-one sessions with me to discuss their specific learning needs and gain additional hands-on time with the specific instructional technology tools they might use. Additionally, all were interested in seeing what a hybrid and/or online course looked like, talking to an instructor who was teaching a hybrid or online course, and learning more about Adobe Connect Pro to explore its use for synchronous class sessions or online office hours. I was surprised that, overall, they were more interested in the how-to of online teaching than in reflecting on what this could mean for their teaching and their students’ learning. Perhaps this is because they had already considered those implications and their participation in the faculty development program was due to their decision to move forward and act. Our two hours together flew by with a few participants rushing off to other commitments. The event that had taken
Reflecting

The last phase of an action research cycle is reflecting. During this phase, I evaluated the results of the group face-to-face session in light of all I had learned during the initial interviews, and reflected on the outcomes, keeping my research questions in mind. I considered whether the group face-to-face session had produced promising results, whether I had observed any changes in the participants’ thinking about teaching, and what it all meant for the next cycle of action research.

My field notes captured my feelings immediately after the group face-to-face session, “Just lost all the wind in my sails. It wasn’t nearly enough time.” The majority of time was spent in ANGEL getting valuable hands-on time with the tools they would be using in their online classes and gaining confidence in their use. I had hoped for more time for each of them to discuss their initial thoughts about their courses, the concerns they had, and hopes for their participation in the program. However, afterwards, as I read the participants’ postings to their personal reflection journals, I realized that not all was lost.

After each initial interview, I enrolled the participants in the “Preparing to Teach Online” course in ANGEL, told them about the articles to read prior to our group face-to-face session, and encouraged them to post to their personal reflection journal in ANGEL. Although they could write anything they wished, this writing prompt was provided to help them get started:

Reflect on our one-on-one meeting, and write about your thoughts on the things you shared with me: how you became a teacher, the events and experiences that have made you the kind of teacher you are today, your students, your teaching practices, and how you feel about teaching online. Are there any things that conversation brought to light? Any new insights? Anything you have been thinking about since then that might add to what you initially shared?
Four of the seven participants who completed the entire program posted to their reflection journal with two posting one day prior to the face-to-face session on July 6th, and two posting on the same day as the face-to-face session on July 7th. At this point, I did not know that any participants would not be able to continue on, so the other two participants who posted, Cathy and Mark, are also included because their reflections were considered in this action research phase of reflection. Cathy posted on July 6th, and Mark posted on July 7th. Their thoughts are shared here in chronological order.

First Reflection Postings

Mick was the first to post on July 6th, two weeks after his initial interview and one day before the group face-to-face session. He shared his initial thoughts, “As I have thought about and began preparations for this course – I have had a chance to reflect on the technology a bit and how to interact with it.” Although Mick had not been using ANGEL previously, he realized that he was already using different systems that matched with his other work, so he thought it was natural “to make efficient and effective use of the academic system I will learn Angel.” His motivation was to “ultimately reduce the time I spend doing busy work and focus on the students needs.” He shared his excitement to begin the faculty professional development program and hoped “to learn many new things.” With the type of applications he teaches in this course changing so rapidly now, I wondered whether it was just as important for his students to become proficient with these applications as it was to discover how they learn these new applications the best – video tutorials, hands-on trial and error, or paper or online manual. This could better prepare them to keep current as these applications change. I was concerned that he closed with a note to me, “I also hope that I will be able to keep up with the pace of the course and not slow you down too much,” meaning that this “Personal Reflection Journal” did not feel all that
personal to him and he was acutely aware of my access to it. I wondered how this might impact his continuing use of the journal, and how much he might be willing to share. Until that point, I had not realized how present I was in the online course and how much of their writing might be directed to me instead of written as a true personal reflection.

John, who did not share too much during the initial interview, was just as brief in his first reflection, posted on July 6th, one week after his initial interview. He seemed to state the obvious facts, repeating what he had shared in the interview, and did not seem too reflective. John shared, “I stated at our first class meeting, I enjoy teaching and helping students in their educational goals. Each student learns differently and the ‘on-line’ delivery system could be an effective resource so the student can gain the information. This system also allows a student to get ahead in their classes prior to arriving on campus.” It is interesting that he did not mention students learning differently during the initial interview. Yet, even after acknowledging that students learn differently, he mentions gaining information as an effective use of ANGEL. I wish he had talked or written more about this because I am not sure what he means – different pacing, or providing different ways to learn?

Cathy posted twice on the same day, July 6th, one week after her initial interview – once as a beginning reflection and again to comment on one of the articles I had provided as a pre-reading to the group face-to-face session. She described a feeling of relief being a part of the program because teaching adults and teaching online was “something that was literally dropped into my lap” and she had felt “unprepared for the work.” She felt that teaching online could go one of two ways – a “cut and dried” version that had no interaction and consisted of readings and tests, or a course that would “include many discussion boards, journal entries and e-mails” which could be “labor intensive for the students and the instructor.” She also felt that “on-line learning is designed for a very specific type of learner” and that those who are visual learners would do better than verbal learners. Cathy considered her biggest challenge in online teaching to make the
course relevant for her students and “worth their time.”

Beth’s reflection, posted on July 7th, four days after her initial interview and on the same day as the group face-to-face session, was quite interesting in that she shared that she “had never taken time to purposefully reflect on the extent to which past events and experiences influence what I do in my classroom today.” I must admit that I almost did a cartwheel when I read that because this was the type of reflection and realization I had hoped my initial interview questions might precipitate. She shared in her reflection post, as she did in the initial interview, that most of her students come to her course “with very wide gaps in the foundational knowledge they are expected to have prior to taking the course.” In the past, this has presented her with the challenge of providing them with too many resources, resulting in information overload. Her new “plan is to explore ways to limit required readings and incorporate more activities that promote active learning – requiring students to collaborate with peers and take charge of their learning.” The pre-readings also impacted her thinking and she considered different ways to get all students involved in analyzing/thinking deeper about issues. I am already thinking about ways to revise/merge some assignments in a way that students will be actively involved in co-constructing knowledge and meaning i.e., last semester they interviewed a teacher in the field using a list of questions I provided – my plan is to provide some guidelines and then have students collaborate with peers using one of technology tools to develop a list of questions. This may give them some sense of ownership and will ensure that they all understand the objective of the action research project and they will also have an idea of the nature of information they are looking for.

So, just from the initial interview and pre-readings, Beth was actively considering changes in her course, with more involvement of the students in their own learning rather than providing all the information for them.

It was obvious that Ralph also reflected after the initial interview because his post, submitted on July 7th, four days after his initial interview, mentioned his path to becoming a college professor as one in which “I got no instruction on how to teach other than here is the textbook, copy of the quizzes/tests, and some possible handouts and activities for the class.” He
shared that knowing a course’s content and teaching it and engaging students in it were two very different things. He said,

It seems like just because you have a Ph.D. there is an assumption that you can teach. While the lecturing technique worked for the most part with undergraduate students, it was not the same with graduate students as they demanded more from me as a faculty member with some ‘knowledge’ and ‘expertise.’

During his years of teaching, he has “learned to adjust to teach graduate students” by encouraging them to share their work experiences “in order to create a better learning environment for all the students in the class.” He also allows his students to submit drafts of their term papers so he can “provide them as much feedback as possible.” He repeated his high standards and his struggle to avoid “compromising the quality and requirements of the course and the program.” Ralph also repeated the busy lives his students lead with his class probably not being their first priority. He concluded his post by wondering how his participation in this program might change his teaching style, what challenges he might encounter, and how it would impact his students.

Mark’s reflections, posted July 7th, of the initial interview four days prior, were bittersweet. He was surprised that he had so much to say in the initial interview and shared that he had “been thinking about teaching, with mixed feelings, for quite some time now.” Teaching is all he has ever done, and he has been doing it throughout a long career. As he comes toward the end of his career, he seemed to be holding some concerns as he shared,

I wonder about the “meaning of it all,” including what I’m accomplishing and what the students are learning. How much “waste” is going on, in the sense that they don’t understand what I’m saying, or if they do understand it, they forget it in 48 hours anyway? Are they feeling about school more or less the same way I felt (a long time) ago (both idealistic and cynical feelings), or have things changed so much in that time that now they and I are in two different worlds? Am I increasingly irrelevant, in other words, or are they increasingly witless?

Finally, he wondered whether online teaching would make him more relevant and them more engaged. In this sense, online teaching seemed to hold a much higher meaning for Mark – it
could be something that recharged his teaching career or something that finally ended it, and not necessarily on a high note.

Second Reflection Postings

The second reflection journal post was meant to happen after our group face-to-face meeting. Two of the participants, Beth and Ralph, posted to their reflection journals a second time, approximately one week after the group face-to-face session. The reflection writing prompt provided in their online journal said,

Reflect on our first face-to-face meeting. At what time during our session together did you feel most engaged? At what time during our session together did you feel most distanced/disengaged? What new insights do you have about your teaching and redesigning your course for hybrid delivery? What was the most significant learning for you? Were there any surprises?

The two participants’ second reflections are provided again in chronological order.

Beth’s second reflection, posted on July 13th, focused on her learning during the group face-to-face session, which had occurred one week prior. She shared that the discussion “provided the opportunity to reflectively think through why I teach the way I do.” She felt engaged throughout the session except for the moments when she stopped to “think of some reasons why I teach the way I do.” Beth realized, “I occasionally find myself resorting to some less effective strategies that were modeled to me as a graduate student.” She was surprised by the number of different tools available “to facilitate student engagement with the activities and in the learning process.” Her previous experiences with online teaching and learning had been negative because they “did not encourage dialogue/discussion with peers or instructor. The one-way communication promoted by these activities did not facilitate prompt feedback or response to questions which in turn lowered my interest/motivation level in online courses.” To avoid repeating her negative online experiences, her “plan is to incorporate technology tools that will
present opportunities for prompt feedback and ongoing interaction with my students.” One last surprise from the face-to-face session that she shared is “that there are many people. . . who are not very conversant with the different types of new technology.”

Ralph, who posted on July 14th, also reflected on the group face-to-face session in a favorable way, although at times he felt overwhelmed “with the amount of information/issues/technology to consider when developing a hybrid/online course.” However, by taking it “one step at a time and only use some/few of the available resources, I will be able to manage.” He felt engaged during the hands-on time with the discussion forum, but felt disengaged when some participants asked basic questions about ANGEL functions with which he already had familiarity. He was thinking “carefully” about his course, considering “what activities I can do online vs. in the class? What topic can I use for my discussion forums? What questions should I develop to lead the discussion on line?” It was obvious that Ralph was actively planning his next steps.

Summary of Findings from First Cycle of Action Research

Through my planning and observations during the first cycle of the action research process and by analyzing the reflection journal posts made by the participants, I decided that they would benefit most from being able to talk to a colleague who had experience teaching online and would be able to take them on a tour of his online course, sharing the design decisions he made and the rationale for those decisions. Specifically, the initial interviews revealed an interest in the use of ANGEL discussion forums for asynchronous interactions, which were included in the group face-to-face session, and Adobe Connect Pro for synchronous class meetings, which had not been demonstrated.

Most had mentioned an interest in potential changes and the new possibilities online
teaching and learning could provide them. John illustrated this well by saying, “I am trying to get a better handle as far as what the online can do differently from what I am doing now.” Mary felt that she would have to change her “pedagogical understanding to teach online.” The initial interview session and reflection provided Beth her first time to “purposefully reflect on the extent to which past events and experiences influence what I do in my classroom today.” She was considering changes that might generate more student self-involvement in their learning and reducing the amount of information she provided them through lecture.

Even after the face-to-face session, the time commitment and resulting workload of an online course continued to be a concern for the faculty participants. Speaking with a colleague who could directly address these issues based on his own experiences seemed to be a logical next step. This next step should also focus on the “how-to” of online teaching since this is what most were interested in during the group session.

**Chapter Summary**

The first cycle of the action research process included periods for planning, acting and observing, and reflecting. Planning included pre-interviews with the faculty participants that gave me insights into their assumptions and beliefs about teaching and their teaching practices. The interviews also highlighted their needs and concerns about online teaching. Some of their reflection journal posts after the interviews shared a questioning of the reasons they teach the way that they do, and a movement toward considering changes.

Using the essential elements for faculty professional development based on adult learning theory, and the insights gained through the initial interviews and reflection posts, I prepared for the group face-to-face session. While the group session provided the participants with hands-on time in a computer lab to become familiar with some of the technology tools in which they had
the most interest, which included ANGEL and its discussion forums, it was too short to be comprehensive enough to incorporate all of their interests. The reflection journal postings after the group session revealed more questions, especially around next steps. All of the information gleaned during the first round of action research informed the second cycle, described in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5

SECOND ACTION RESEARCH CYCLE

The first round of action research described in chapter 4 included comprehensive planning for the start of the research project, the pre-interviews, and the group face-to-face session. Acting and observing formally occurred during the group session, after which some participants posted to their reflection journals. Throughout the first cycle, I reviewed the data gathered during the pre-interviews, the group session, reflection journal postings, and email correspondence and came to realize that action research is a messy process. The number of action research cycles, and the beginning and ending dates of each cycle were not predetermined. Rather, the design emerged as the study continued. I had to review the data as it was happening since the process did not pause to provide me with any length of time for reflection, and I was continually thinking on my feet to keep the process moving forward. In reality, planning, acting and observing, and reflecting happened on a continual basis after the group face-to-face session, overlapped and intertwined with each other. Almost before the group session concluded, I seemed to intuitively know what the participants would need next in the professional development program. It was as though I could hear them say, “Show me!” They needed to look at the structure of an actual hybrid course in ANGEL, and talk to a colleague who could share relevant experiences with teaching online. Thus began the second cycle of action research, described in this chapter, in which I planned for a synchronous activity in Adobe Connect Pro, a web conferencing tool highlighted during the participants’ needs assessment. This cycle began shortly after the group face-to-face session held on July 7th, and ended as classes for the fall semester began on August 24th.
This chapter details the email communications between the participants and me, and my decision on and communications with the presenter for the Adobe Connect session. Also included are descriptions of the individual consultations held with the participants, and their reflection journal postings.

Planning: Group Email Communications and Individual Consultations

On July 9th, two days after the group face-to-face session, I added ANGEL discussion forum instructions and examples of online discussion rubrics to our group’s ANGEL course based on needs shared during the session, and provided the faculty participants with details on how to locate these resources within our ANGEL course. I also provided participants with the first two reflective writing prompts again, and reminded them to complete their reflection journal postings. Finally, I reminded them of the two discussion forums available in our ANGEL course in which they could post questions. For those who were unable to attend the group session, I sent an email asking for their available dates to schedule a group face-to-face session for them.

Lou met with me on July 9th to discuss the possibilities for his online course sessions. Prior to our meeting, he read the articles that had been posted in our ANGEL professional development course and found them to be “very insightful and eye-opening.” One article in particular really boosted his interest in a hybrid course delivery “because the authors clearly articulated how to go about hybrid course, citing concrete examples from others who have made use of hybrid delivery in their courses.” This helped me understand faculty’s need to hear from their experienced online colleagues and to see examples of their courses.

During our meeting, Lou shared his syllabus and course schedule with me. I asked questions about what happened in class, what activities the students completed, and which students activities Lou felt had to be completed in class and which could be completed online.
Then we discussed which activities had him wishing for a better outcome. That is when it became clear that his community service assignment was not delivering the outcomes he had desired. His students were not being as reflective as he had hoped, so we discussed how we could redesign this assignment for the online environment while, at the same time, make it more effective in helping his students reach the desired outcomes. I helped Lou design the types of questions to ask for the discussion forum, built the discussion forum in his course in ANGEL, and then post the actual assignment. We both felt as though we had accomplished a lot, and Lou seemed very excited about the new design of the assignment.

Based on the data gathered from the needs assessment during the pre-interviews and the group face-to-face session, I planned to provide the faculty participants with an opportunity to view a colleague’s hybrid course and discuss online teaching. Knowing I needed a quick turnaround, I looked internally at our University’s faculty for an experienced expert. I was aware of a faculty member from another campus who had conducted online seminars about his courses, discussing the key elements of blended learning. I contacted him, shared the faculty’s interest in hearing how he decided what happened online, what happened face-to-face, and how he bridged the two. He expressed his interest to meet with the participants in Adobe Connect Pro the following week. This seemed perfect because it would not only provide the faculty with an experienced colleague’s example, but it would also give them hands-on experience with Adobe Connect, something in which six participants had expressed an interest during the pre-interviews. I hoped that the quick scheduling would help to keep up the faculty’s momentum in their hybrid course planning.

One week after the group face-to-face session, on July 13th, I sent the entire group an email asking for their availability on the afternoon of Monday, July 20th, and shared details of the next activity, the Adobe Connect Pro session with a colleague expert. I also offered participants an opportunity to test drive Adobe Connect with me prior to the online session. I again
encouraged the participants to post to their reflection journals and post any questions that remained from the group face-to-face session.

On the same day, I had an individual consultation with Mary. Sometimes she seemed open to learning something new about teaching and learning, and at other times she seemed as though she already knew all there was to know about it. However, she did mention going through her doctoral program and realizing how much she still didn’t know. Also, she admitted that she liked control and she might have to give up some of that control online. We really concentrated on the wiki and blog tools during this consultation. She believed that tools like these, meant for collaboration and reflection, would be the best fit for her social constructivist beliefs about teaching and learning. I realized how much of an expert I would have to become with these tools to properly support Mary and her students.

The following day, after working with the faculty presenter on the logistics of presenting his courses to the faculty participants in Adobe Connect, I provided the entire group with an update and more information on the session. The session was to be held on July 20th from 2:00-3:00pm, and I provided an email link to the online meeting room. I also provided a link to test the computer they would be using for the online session, and suggested that they schedule time with me to give Adobe Connect a test run on the computer they would be using for Monday’s session. I explained that after the faculty presenter showed them his hybrid ANGEL courses, he would answer their questions. I had already informed the presenter that the faculty were interested in hearing how he decided what went online and what remained face-to-face, how to bridge the online and the face-to-face class sessions, and how to determine how much time students spent online, making sure it wasn’t too much or too little time. The presenter gave me permission to record the session, so I also informed the participants that I would be able to provide them a link to the recorded session after it had ended. I encouraged them to contact me with any questions about using Adobe Connect or any other questions they might have, and reminded them to let me
know if they planned to attend the online session.

On July 16th, I had an interesting consultation with Beth. Although she is just as interested in covering the content as other faculty with whom I work, she also seems to have more motivation to make an affective change in her students. She really works to help her students see their students as individuals. She prefers that they focus on what abilities students have rather than what they are unable to do. Beth is also focused on making sure that her students have a better online learning experience than she had. This meant that she would incorporate online interaction in her course through discussion forums. We worked on the logistics of the discussion forums, and the type of instructions students would need, and the type of questions Beth could pose to elicit thoughtful responses.

One week later and on the same day as the faculty expert online session, July 20th, I sent participants a final reminder with the connection information for Adobe Connect Pro. I also provided the link to test their computer prior to logging into our session. Only two faculty who planned to participate in the online session spent time with me learning how to use Adobe Connect prior to the actual session. One of those faculty, Beth, completed the entire professional development program.

Summary

In the three weeks between the group face-to-face session and the Adobe Connect session, I sent four group emails and had three one-on-one consultations with faculty participants. The group emails conveyed information about added resources to the ANGEL course, encouraged posting to the reflection journals, asked for availability for the Adobe Connect session, provided updated information about the session, and finally, reminded them of the session. It is interesting to note that after sending out those four group emails, except for
responses to availability for the Adobe Connect session, I only received five other replies. Two replies requested time for learning how to use Adobe Connect, and three were requests for consultations.

The consultations during this time all signaled a start of the planning of the online sessions of the courses. I worked with Lou on designing for better student learning outcomes in his community service assignment, with Mary on student collaboration and reflection in wikis and blogs, and with Beth on incorporating student interactivity through online discussion forums. The one-on-one time was perfect to discuss the participants’ specific courses and to provide hands-on time with the tools they wanted to use. This allowed me to recognize their individual needs, concerns, and goals, and made our time together relevant to their courses. I was also able to demonstrate the kind of support they could expect throughout the faculty development program.

During this time, preparations were made for the Adobe Connect session with an experienced faculty expert. We tested the system, making sure that we had the interface set up properly, the participants would be able to enter easily, the audio worked, and we could display the presenter’s desktop. We decided to give the participants presenter rights within the session so they could choose to speak with the presenter rather than be limited only to text chat. I contacted support people at the presenter’s campus to ensure a trouble-free session. We felt prepared.

**Acting and Observing**

An Adobe Connect session seemed like the perfect solution to fulfill two needs for the faculty participants. First, during the pre-interviews, six participants had expressed an interest in synchronous online class meetings and/or office hours. Second, while the participants had been exposed to some of the online teaching and learning literature in the first module of the
professional development program, they had not had an opportunity to talk to a faculty colleague who had experience teaching online or see example of colleagues’ online courses. A synchronous online session with an experienced colleague was planned for two weeks after the group face-to-face session. This section describes that session, and the group emails and individual consultations that followed.

Adobe Connect Session

Seven faculty attended the Adobe Connect session. Of those participants who completed the entire professional development program, this included Beth, John, Ralph, and Mary. Mick, Lou, and Kay were not able to attend. I greeted the participants as they arrived in the online session by typing in the chat section and by speaking through my microphone to make sure their audio was working. Mary was not able to hear, so I had to ask her to run the audio setup wizard by following the directions I had already posted in a notes pod within the session.

Although the presenter and I practiced in Adobe Connect prior to the online session and planned for multiple contingencies, it seemed as though whatever could go wrong did go wrong. The session started out really well and the presenter was quite personable and interesting. He seemed anxious to explain his course design and show the participants his courses. After approximately ten to fifteen minutes though, I realized that my definition of blended/hybrid and his definition were not the same. His courses still had the same number of face-to-face sessions and added web enhancements to better engage his students in his courses. The faculty participants began to realize that his course was not a hybrid course after all with one participant asking, “Do all classes take place synchronously?” I finally asked the presenter to pause so I could share Penn State’s definitions of online, hybrid, blended, and web-enhanced courses, and then also explain that the presenter’s course fit the definition of web-enhanced. This seemed to clear up the
participants’ confusion over the language being used. However, fifteen minutes into the session, Ralph asked, “So is this class a self-learning course? Can you clarify?” I shared that “the online portion is like priming the pump” prior to the face-to-face classes, and the presenter agreed.

The presenter gave a great tour of his course, explaining his rationale along the way. Participants seemed most interested in what the students did online and face-to-face. They were also very interested in how he had structured his course content in ANGEL. Ralph asked, “So each folder contains what you will need for each class period?” The presenter affirmed Ralph’s assumption. Then the presenter’s screen sharing and audio froze. He lost his connection, and I had to fill in the silence as he worked to rejoin the online session. One participant wondered, “Is this when the students go crazy till the teacher returns?” Another participant asked if “the students get bored and begin daydreaming?” When he didn’t reappear, I had to search for his phone number to give him a call and help to troubleshoot, reminding myself that I should always have alternate contact information available at my fingertips during a live event. Luckily, the presenter was finally able to reconnect and continue his presentation.

Some of the faculty participants started leaving the online session due to other commitments. Another participant, John, kept resizing the pods within the online session, not realizing that it changed the view for all participants. He had not taken advantage of the practice sessions I had offered, and was testing every feature during the actual live session!

I was quite relieved when the session came to an end, assuming that it had failed miserably. However, a number of participants considered it a valuable learning experience and thanked me for the opportunity. One participant shared, “Thank you, this has given me many new thoughts. Back to the syllabus and ANGEL!”
Group Emails and Individual Consultations

Later on the same day as the Adobe Connect session, I emailed the group the link to the recording of the online session and reminded them that the session was a good experience to realize the good and bad that can happen in a live, synchronous web conference. I reiterated the University’s definition of a hybrid course, comparing it to the faculty expert’s web-enhanced course, and shared the value in talking with him. I asked the group to post about the day’s online session, and encouraged them to post any remaining questions from the session to the Module 1 Discussion Forum. Finally, I told them that Module 2 on interaction and collaboration was open with suggested readings and a discussion forum to post questions for their colleagues and to share interaction/collaboration strategies that have been successful for them. I encouraged them to be in touch as they worked on their courses and prepared themselves for online teaching.

My group emails typically included a reminder to post to their reflection journals. It seemed as though they were more likely to post after a reminder was sent. However, I really disliked just sending them an email reminder, so I tried to include some new information and/or ask a related question. Four days after the online session, on July 24th, I read a Chronicle article that I thought might interest the participants, so I emailed them the link and gave them a quick synopsis. The article was about actively engaging students in classrooms by moving information delivery online and reserving classroom time for learning activities. I thought this was a good follow-up to the Adobe Connect session and would give the participants some ideas about what they could do online in their courses, and what they might reserve for their face-to-face time in the classroom. Once again, I closed with a reminder to post to their reflection journal and encouraged them to be in touch as they worked on their hybrid course.

Mary met with me on July 28th to answer her questions on her use of blogs with students. There were some settings we needed to review, and we discussed the logistics of how to capture
each student’s posting on one screen, how to provide feedback, and how to tag for easy aggregation. My work with Mary, in particular, was making me become an expert on blogs. She consistently asked the most difficult questions, and pushed my expertise in the use of blogs for teaching and learning further with every meeting. Her questions always provided me with a fresh perspective on the kinds of decisions faculty have to make when considering the use of blogs in their courses. It was not a simple proposition. There were decisions on peer comments, private instructor feedback and grading, linking to educational standards, and more. I was sure that the blog help desk support thought we were intentionally trying to stump them with our questions!

At the end of the month, July 29th, I sent the group two emails. In the first email, I shared a book recommendation on teaching online and provided them with the link to its companion website. I also added this link to our resources folder in ANGEL. I told them that I considered us halfway through the program and would open Module 3, “Activities and Assessment in Your Online Course,” the following week. As always, I encouraged them to post to their reflection journal and to be in touch with any needs and/or questions they might have. Later that same day I emailed them again because a professor with whom I had worked to design an online course had granted the participants permission to be added to his course in ANGEL. After adding everyone to the online course, I wanted them to know that they now had access and could enter the course and look around.

On August 4th, I received a reply from Lou. He had returned from a summer trip and wanted to meet with me the next day to discuss his reflective prompts. He had drafted postings, but wanted to make sure that what he had written fell within what I wanted. This concerned me. I really did not want the participants to give me a “right” answer, but rather speak from the heart. I couldn’t imagine a “wrong” answer, and was concerned how much “truth” would be included in Lou’s posts. I had hoped that he would post what he was doing, thinking, and feeling, and leave me out of the equation entirely. In our meeting the next day, I learned the real reason Lou had not
yet posted – he didn’t know how to do it. We entered the ANGEL course together and I walked him through the steps to copy and paste his posts into his reflection journal. This was not an intuitive process for him, and he was not comfortable exploring the tools and figuring it out for himself. I was again reminded of his tentativeness and discomfort with technology, and believed that his journey to online teaching would be a long one relative to the other participants in the program.

A little over a week later, on August 9th, it had been a week and a half since I had emailed everyone and I had not received any replies. As I geared up for the return of faculty on August 17th to begin the fall semester, I knew I needed to try to nudge the participants one more time before my workweek became much busier. I emailed the group to inform them that we were coming closer to the end of the program, and invited them to contact me with any support needs. I provided them with the fourth and final reflective writing prompt:

Look over your previous postings, and think about your progress so far with your hybrid course design. Is there anything you have read, heard, or done, that has given you pause to rethink any of your face-to-face teaching practices? What are the possibilities for change?

Since the participants had deemed the online Adobe Connect session a success, I asked them if they had any interest in talking to a colleague who teaches a completely online course. I offered to make arrangements for a meeting face-to-face or through Adobe Connect, and encouraged them to let me know of their interest.

Beth was the only one to reply to the group email. She did not refer to any of the email’s content but scheduled a consultation with me on the 11th. At that meeting, we discussed her use of ANGEL quizzes and discussion forums. We also took another look at the use of blogs, and I helped her work through their settings and the process her students would go through to create their own. She explained the schedule she was planning, and it sounds as though the hybrid schedule will be a perfect fit for her students because of their time off campus due to program
requirements for in-service hours.

A week later, on August 15th, I opened the final module, “Teaching and Managing Your Online Course,” and informed everyone via a group email. Although a few of the participants had been in touch with me over the summer, there were some from whom I had not heard a thing. I asked those who had been using the resources in ANGEL and/or planning to use a hybrid model for their course in fall to please be in touch with me. I explained that I was very interested in knowing of their progress, or lack thereof, and of the factors involved. I told them that I would be in touch with each of them during the semester to discuss their online class session(s) and to wrap up the professional development program. Also of interest were the types of support they desired to move forward with their online course plans. I again encouraged them to post to their personal journal as they had time over the next few weeks.

Mick, the only participant to use our ANGEL course’s discussion forums, posted a question on the Technical Support Discussion Forum on August 18th. Since he was going to teach a cross-listed course, each section was listed as a separate course in ANGEL. He had begun to add course materials to one of the courses when he decided to merge the two sections into one course. Now he was wondering how to get those materials into the newly created merged section. I replied the next day with detailed instructions for importing course materials from one course section to another. Mick followed up with another question asking whether his students would automatically see the merged course when they logged into ANGEL. He also shared that he expected to have some questions about the gradebook after he figured out how the drop boxes work. I replied with an answer to the viewing question and offered my assistance with the gradebook when he was ready for that.

I met individually with Beth and Ralph on August 20th. Both were making final preparations for their courses and wanted to review what they had done with me to make sure everything was ready. We checked settings, discussed the logistics of the discussion forums and
gradebooks, and I offered continued support and reassurance. Beth seemed very excited, while Ralph seemed more apprehensive. Both planned to follow through on their online teaching plans.

**Summary**

One month had passed from the date of the Adobe Connect session to the beginning of the fall semester. During that time, I sent six group emails, met with Lou, Mary, Beth, and Ralph in one-on-one consultations, and answered Mick’s questions via email. I did not meet with Mick, Kay, or John during this time. In fact, the only communications I had with Mick or Kay were through emails, and John attended the Adobe Connect session. So, while I had fairly intimate knowledge of the online teaching plans for four of the participants, I knew very little about what the other three had planned, if anything. There was one thing of which I was certain, and that was that it wasn’t for the lack of emails!

The Adobe Connect session seemed to spur some interest in the structure of course content in ANGEL. Almost all of my consultations concentrated on hands-on time with instructional technology tools such as blogs, wikis, and discussion forums, with a little time also spent on setting up gradebooks in ANGEL and writing clear directions for students for their use of the different technology tools.

**Reflecting**

In every group email I sent, I always included a gentle reminder for the participants to post to their reflection journals. Perhaps after ten group emails over ten weeks, the message wasn’t as gentle as I had intended. With so many group emails, it was difficult to really correlate the email with a reflective posting activity. The problem for me was that the individual
consultations were so tool-oriented that I really had no idea what else the participants were thinking beyond, “How does this tool work?” I was relying on the reflection journal posts to understand more about their thinking and planning for online teaching.

Participants’ Reflection Journal Posts

Mary posted her first and second reflections on the same day, July 20th. In response to the first writing prompt, she found the recounting of her path to college teaching during the initial interview to be

a good reminder of my philosophy of and passion for facilitating learning both in myself and in others. For me, living is learning. It’s about always moving forward – always opening new doors and windows to thoughts and insights that impact how we move about and contribute to this world in which we live. It’s a social and connected process – not individual and isolated (as much of directed instruction).

She railed against the behaviorists and wondered how to make the online space “a learning space, not just an activity space, for all.” She wanted to explore the online environment as “a space of educational/intellectual conversation.” Mary didn’t just want to engage her students online; she wanted to “facilitate cognitive and then behavioral change.”

Mary was not able to attend the group face-to-face session, but had a one-on-one session with me in its place. She wrote her second reflection post afterwards, sharing that she found our time together “very helpful and productive.” She had a very different motivation for participating in the program, which she shared in her goal, “Get a portion of each of my courses online for the fall semester.” In addition, Mary came prepared to make some progress,

I looked through my courses, considered what projects and/or lessons could be best placed online for the fall, and came in with some ideas. The one-on-one time gave me the tools to not only explain the ideas I brought to the table but also provided time to actually begin to build these ideas.

She acknowledged that her new challenge would be to remember what she learned and
continue to make progress with her courses, especially with the wikis.

The next day, Mary posted her third reflection and wrote about the Adobe Connect session and her plan for online teaching. She said that seeing and hearing what that faculty member had done with his courses reinforced two issues that she has been contemplating as she considers placing more of her courses online. First, “technology is good at introducing glitches and with busy students this can add to their frustration in a way that may seem unnecessary to them.” Her second issue was that “the up-front work necessary to make the online work go well is a bit overwhelming.” With these two issues in mind, Mary posted her online teaching plan for three of her courses. In one course, she planned to have students use a blog for weekly learning reflections, and then have the students end with a final summary. She also wanted to find a creative way for students to present their group research without using class time for their presentations. YouTube was one tool she considered. For another course, she planned to use an online tool for students to share papers for peer review. Finally, she planned to use a wiki for students to collaboratively create an annotated bibliography. The online Adobe Connect session seemed to help Mary focus her thinking on an action plan and the steps she needed to take to prepare for teaching online.

Ralph also posted his third reflection on July 21st, and referred to the Adobe Connect online session. He used the presenter’s course as an example against which to compare his course and shared that his next step was “the need to re-organize the course by class period or topic as it will make the transition to online/hybrid much easier.” Seeing a colleague’s course seemed to provide Ralph with his next steps.

Beth posted her third reflection on July 31st. The first thing she mentioned was the helpfulness of the online Adobe Connect session with an experienced faculty member. She tied together her learning from the readings and the online session as she shared
the layout/format was very organized and easy to navigate. The course layout was an excellent example of ways in which an instructor can demonstrate cognitive and teaching presence in a course. In addition, his face to face meetings provide an excellent opportunity for students to connect with each other as they solve problems and construct meaning of the content collaboratively with their peers.

Beth also shared that she was “exploring the option of starting a facebook group for my course to promote formal and informal interaction.” She thought this might be easier for students who were less “technologically savvy” and she knew a few faculty members who “have effectively used facebook to promote interaction within their courses.” An advantage of Facebook that she was considering is that students’ membership would continue after graduation and would help them keep in touch with their peers.

Beth was also planning to “use discussion forums at the end of each module to provide an opportunity for students to apply what they have learnt as they solve case studies and also to reflect on how they will apply the concepts within their classroom.” One thing she seemed to be struggling with was how to encourage her students “to reflect before contributing to the discussion. In the past I have had a few students who struggle and always wait until last minute to post – resulting into very shallow contributions despite clear guidelines and expectations that have been provided.”

This third reflection post from Beth showed the usefulness of the online session in providing her with an example of a user-friendly course structure in ANGEL that helped her to visualize how her course might be organized. The readings gave her insights into cognitive, teaching, and social presence for which she found examples in the demonstrated course. She was already moving beyond the structure and logistics, beginning to wonder about the challenges she might encounter with her students.

Kay did not post until August 2nd, over a month after our initial interview. She apologized for being “tardy” and shared that “the summer has been too busy and I have had very little time to
even think about this project.” However, with the start of the fall semester only a few weeks away, she realized that she had “to get the syllabus for the fall course in order and this is where some serious consideration to how to incorporate the on-line component is pressing on me.”

Then, I expected to read more of her thoughts on how she might go about this, but instead realized that something briefly mentioned in the group face-to-face session, almost a month prior, had been bothering her. She shared,

One thing I have to get off my chest from the group session we had at the start was that I think the ratings of posts is problematic. This is largely because we haven’t a clue of what those ratings mean. Stars or points or whatever without explanation is meaningless. So it’s not a feature that I plan to incorporate in my course. If someone wants to convince me of the worthiness of such ratings, please do.

I remembered mentioning the availability of student ratings as being a new feature in ANGEL discussion forums, but certainly did not remember any discussion beyond that. I was surprised that, with all we discussed that day and with all the readings and other resources available, that she put so much importance into that one feature of a single ANGEL tool. Something was going on here, and I wondered if this was a display of resistance to online teaching and learning. I considered it to be an example of the group face-to-face session not being long enough for faculty to digest what they had just seen and heard and to consider the questions it raised for them. However, I did file this in the back of mind and replied to her concern to assure her that this was not a feature to be used without some teaching and modeling of peer review.

On August 5th, Lou met with me for an individual consultation. I had been concerned that Lou had not yet posted to his reflection journal. I realized that whenever I sent him an email, he usually came to my office to give me his personal reply. The only email I had received from Lou was the reply I received the day before asking to meet with me to discuss his reflective prompts. I wondered whether the technology continued to be a barrier for him to post. When we met, I asked him if he needed help posting to the reflection journal, and he handed me a portable jump drive
that contained a Word document of his posts. We sat down together and copied his posts in his personal reflection journal in ANGEL.

In Lou’s first reflective post he described his initial interview with me as “fascinating, exploratory and very informal.” Then he provided a summary of our discussion that day – how he became a teacher, experiences that have made him the teacher he is today, his teaching philosophy, and then his thoughts on teaching online. The only difference I noticed between the initial interview and his reflection post was that in the post he called himself a “pragmatist.” He added that he gives “students space to become creative, and then put them through their paces, challenging their ideas, by asking probing questions, engaging in sympathetic introspection, by getting close to my students and thus making them feel comfortable with me.” I was surprised he shared that during the initial interview he “was not sure whether he really wanted to go that route,” meaning teaching online, even though he had shared thoughts of retiring and doing just that. He acknowledged that there are challenges and barriers involved, especially his use of technology. In closing, he shared what “came to light” since that first meeting, “I learned that my course will be enriched and more engaging if I could blend my face-to-face course with some online activities in a form of a hybrid delivery.”

In Lou’s second reflective posting, he recounted the beginning activities from the group face-to-face session, and then shared that he became more involved when I walked them “through some activities like when to post, how to post, how to reply, how to check for new post.” His interest was fully captured at the end of the session when he “learned that the discussion forum could be such an effective interactive mechanism for students to engage in academic discourses, exchanging, critiquing ideas among themselves. This activity ties in well with my educational philosophy.”

Lou also shared his third reflective posting at the same time. His post was simply a note that he was not able to attend the Adobe Connect session because he had been out of town. He
also posted a question that simply read, “Service Learning Reflective Paper (on line?).” I wondered about having this posed as a question because I thought Lou had already decided to move forward with this as an online assignment.

Just before the fall semester was about to begin, Ralph posted a fourth reflection on August 20th. He said,

As I begin this semester, I am excited about the possibilities of what online teaching provides. I am planning to incorporate four online sessions for my graduate students in [my] course. I am planning to use the discussion forums as a way to increase critical thinking and class participation among the students. Yet, I find myself thinking about how much time I need to spend in this course and how much I have to do to make this class successful. How would the students react to the online assignment? Would they find it productive and beneficial? My meeting with Carol today was not only productive, but reassuring that I can do this. Time will tell.

His post showed the kind of leap of faith it must take some faculty to make the move to online teaching. He showed concern for the time commitment, his students’ reaction, and the online assignments’ overall success. Moving four of his fifteen class sessions online was not a minor change to him. In some small way, he seemed to be anticipating failure.

My Reflections

My group emails tended to have a different impact than I had expected. They seemed to remind the participants that they needed to do something, but I had no idea whether they even read the email’s message. Most replies I received had absolutely nothing to do with the content of the message. For instance, after sending the group email in which I was trying to gauge interest in a faculty presentation of a completely online course, the only reply I received was from Beth requesting to meet with me to discuss her course. To me, it seemed as though she saw the email from me and it reminded her of something she needed to do – contact me to set up a meeting. She made no mention of the email’s content.
As I neared the end of July, I had sent ten group emails to the participants and had received very few, and more often, no replies. This method of communicating with the participants was very ineffective in promoting dialogue. However, with most participants off campus during the summer months or, at least, not visiting campus on a regular basis, email seemed to be the only method to communicate with them. Based on this observation of the ineffectiveness of group emails, I decided to begin my next cycle of action research by sending individual emails to the participants, even if the messages being communicated were identical.

The lack of responses to my group emails made me wonder if I was experiencing the way faculty feel when they teach online for the first time. Without any interaction, I had no idea how the professional development program was going. At least I had the luxury of having met and already knowing everyone participating in the program. Online faculty typically do not know their online students in this way. These thoughts had the unstructured format of the faculty professional development program weighing on my mind. Now I felt as though the program should have had a clear start and end date, with some negotiated dates for deliverables. That would have given faculty some clear deadlines which they seemed to need, and it would have given me some peace of mind knowing more about their progress, or lack thereof. However, was it really necessary for me to continually orchestrate every step of the faculty’s preparations to teach online? Would a more organic process allow the “music” to continue after the research project ends? Although the program felt like a failure to me at times, usually due to the silence after sending a group email, the individual consultations revealed faculty’s progress to me at times when they were ready to ask questions or take another step; they were following their personal schedule, and not mine. I was continuing to work on feeling comfortable with an open, unstructured, and messy process.
Summary of Findings from Second Cycle of Action Research

Faculty valued the one-on-one consultations as a time to discuss specific courses and provide hands-on time with the tools each planned to use. It was a time to recognize their individual needs, concerns, and goals, and to make their learning directly relevant to their courses. Mary shared that the one-on-one consultations gave her time to explain her ideas and then to begin to actually build them into her course.

For the most part, the participants’ reflection journal postings gave me insights into their progress differently than what the one-on-one consultations provided. The consultations concentrated on specific tools while the reflections revealed a little more about their choice of tools. Perhaps just as important, the reflections gave more meaning to the hands-on work we did at the computer, learning how to structure blog assignments and determining which settings to select on discussion forums. For instance, Mary wasn’t simply choosing to include blogging in her course to engage her students online; she wanted to “facilitate cognitive and then behavioral change.”

The reflection postings also provided me with additional feedback about the Adobe Connect session. Mary, Ralph and Beth mentioned it in their posts and how it informed their online course plans. The opportunity to have an experienced colleague explain his course design decisions and to see the actual course structure in ANGEL seemed to be valuable for those who participated in the session.

I was reminded during both the consultations and from the reflection postings that deciding to teach online was a leap of faith for many of the participants. A number of them were anticipating failure in one shape or another. A few were most concerned about the amount of time teaching online would require, and others were concerned about their students’ reaction to the online coursework.
Chapter Summary

The second cycle of the action research process, once again, included periods for planning, acting and observing, and reflecting. Planning included group email communications and individual consultations with the faculty participants that finally led to the Adobe Connect session. This session was part of the acting and observing period, which included additional group emails and individual consultations. While the group emails did not seem especially effective in eliciting responses or reflection journal posts, the individual consultations provided a detailed look into the participants’ preparations for their online classes. The reflection journal postings provided a wider lens with which to understand their preparations, and to hear which aspects of the program had been helpful, specifically the one-on-one consultations, some of the readings, and the Adobe Connect session. The data collected in the second cycle of action research informed the third and final cycle described in chapter 6 in which classroom observations took place and post-interviews were conducted.
Chapter 6

Final Action Research Cycle

The second round of action research described in chapter 5 included planning for a synchronous online activity in Adobe Connect Pro, a web conferencing tool highlighted during the participants’ needs assessment. The second cycle began shortly after the group face-to-face session held on July 7th and ended as classes for the fall semester began on August 24th. The acting and observing and reflecting in the second round led me to make a change in my communications with the participants from group emails to individual email messages.

This chapter describes the third and final cycle of action research, beginning August 24th and ending December 18th, progressing throughout the entire fall semester. It details the email communications between the participants and me, individual consultations, classroom observations that took place during October and November, and the post-interviews that took place during December.

As I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, the action research processes of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting overlapped and intertwined so much so that it was difficult to really say when one process ended and another began. This third cycle was no exception. As much as the email communications were a part of planning, they were also a part of acting and observing. The emails helped me determine and plan what actions were needed, and typically the replies from the participants provided insights similar to an observation. Their replies were tiny windows providing me a glimpse into what the participants were thinking and/or doing. They often gave me pause for reflection too. So, with compassion for the reader, I included the email communications and the consultations within the planning section, and reserved the acting and observing section of this chapter for the classroom observations and the post-
interviews. The recounting and descriptions of these activities are in a fairly chronological order.

Planning: Individual Email Communications and Consultations

The first section of this chapter begins with the planning that took place through almost the entire first three months of the semester, and included preparations for the classroom observations and, especially, the post-interviews. Determinations were made on who was still participating in the hybrid course development and delivery activities, emails were sent, support was provided as it was requested, and dates were secured for the observations and interviews. Questions for the post-interviews were refined.

Mary arranged to have me work with her students on August 31st to get them started with their own blogs and learn about the resources available in the college’s Media Commons to use to create their research project. We met in a computer lab and I was assisted by one of the University’s Media Commons representatives. Every student was able to set up their blog and get their questions answered.

By September 9th, we were already a few weeks into the fall semester and I had heard nothing from Mick, John, or Kay for a month, except for a quick technology question Mick had posted in the Technology Support Discussion Forum in our ANGEL course. I sent them individual emails, simply checking in with them and asking how their plans for their hybrid courses were working out. I asked if they had integrated any of the changes they had been considering, and expressed my interest in hearing about what they had done. I closed by offering my support.

John responded in twelve hours. This was the first communication I had had with him since the Adobe Connect session on July 20th. He shared that he had lectured for his first three weeks of class, and that the next three weeks would be online. He continued,
They already have the topics and book chapters related to those class sessions. I will be sending them reading and exercise assignments for the entire week on Sundays which they must read, complete and submit to me by the following Saturday. I hope to give them feedback by the earlier part of the week. The assignments require them to write short answers so it will be hard to just copy someone else’s answers. If you have any other suggestions on the assignments, let me know. There is a mid-term test in week seven, and I will lecture for three more weeks, on-line for three weeks, and finish the class with lectures. If you have any thoughts about the class, let me know.

Well, I thought, now was not the best time to ask me for thoughts about the class. The semester was well under way, and I hardly knew enough about the course to suggest changes. I felt that any plan of study he had already shared with his students should be followed. Major changes at this point would not be good. I needed to really think through my reply and be supportive without asking him why he hadn’t come to me sooner to talk this through, although I imagined he had probably been constrained by the lack of time.

Mick and Kay also replied the very next day, September 10th. Mick shared, “So far I am only using the ANGEL dropbox as the new feature for the class. I made available some online resources for them but that is something I have always done.” Kay’s response confirmed that she had moved ahead with her plans for a hybrid course. She offered to share her syllabus with me, mentioned that she needed to provide clarification and different requirements for the online discussions, shared her enjoyment of reading her students’ posts, and exclaimed that it took more time. It would take almost a week until I had a chance to reply to them.

I received an email from Beth on September 14th. It seemed that the quiz macro I sent her back in the middle of August wasn’t working. I guess a month went by before she had tried to use it. I didn’t have a quick answer and needed to research the problem. Two days later, I was able to send her steps to enable the macro, and I also included steps to import quiz questions from Microsoft Word into ANGEL.

On September 15th, I received an email from Ralph. He had just graded a discussion forum and the grades didn’t show up in ANGEL’s gradebook. I knew the probable cause, and
sent him the steps for the easy fix.

On September 16\textsuperscript{th}, I finally replied to John, Mick, and Kay’s emails from the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th}. In my reply to John’s email, I shared that I really didn’t know enough about his course to have any new thoughts on it. I explained that to really understand his course, I would need to know the course objectives, which I typically use to design learning activities and assessments. I told him that his description of the course plan made it sound as though his students needed to memorize information and then apply it in practice exercises. I wondered how essential the lecture was if they were able to learn without it for the online portion of the course, which was half of the course. Perhaps we had different definitions of lecture. I did not recommend any drastic changes at this point since the course had already begun, and students’ expectations were probably set. However, I did express interest in reading his course objectives and then meeting to discuss learning activities. He never responded to my reply.

In my reply to Mick, I asked if he had shared the lynda.com video tutorial information with his students, which we had discussed during his pre-interview. I also asked if he had given his students an option for not attending all of the classes. As a side note, Mick had made a surprise appearance at an ANGEL workshop I had held earlier in the week. He sat at a computer in the front row right next to me, took notes, and really got involved. During the demonstration of the dropbox, he found a setting he needed to change in his course. He left immediately after the workshop, and we did not discuss his hybrid course plans, although I now had confirmation he was using the dropbox. He wrote to me again on September 14\textsuperscript{th} and asked how to make a survey anonymous. I sent him the steps to do just that.

When I sent my email reply to Kay, she immediately replied. We must have both been sitting in front of our computers at the same time, and we got a bit of a dialogue going, almost in real time. In my reply to Kay, I first shared that I would enjoy reading her syllabus. I acknowledged that a course redesign can take more time initially, and offered my assistance. I
asked her how she was doing with the online discussion requirements, and encouraged her to stay in touch. Her immediate reply indicated that some students were “ignoring” the online discussion forum posts, and this had her puzzled because there were grade points associated with it.

I responded to Kay again and mentioned the importance of the assignment being perceived as a vital course component for students’ learning. I also suggested that she learn whether her students had any technology barriers to using the discussion forums. I recommended that she make the discussion forum posts part of her next class, referring to some of the posts made and mentioning points to demonstrate the importance of the online discussion to the course. Finally, I recommended asking her students how the online discussion was different than the in-class discussion, and to share how much she enjoyed reading their posts, and why. Kay’s final reply shared that she had been projecting the discussion forums in class and using them as a basis for in-class discussion even though she had a PowerPoint prepared. She said,

    Today, for example, although I had prepared a power point, I felt that it’d be better if we started with their comments and questions. I liked that format better. Now, when students are concerned with what they are going to be tested on, they may not appreciate ‘discussion’ as opposed to ‘lecture.’ We’ll see.

    My final response expressed interest in this change, and suggested that she could still provide her students with the PowerPoint file by uploading it to their course space in ANGEL. I shared my curiosity about some students not posting to the discussion forums.

    It is interesting to note that at the end of September, there were still three faculty, Mark, Cathy, and Jim, who had originally signed up for the faculty professional development program but I was, as yet, uncertain as to whether they were still participating. All three had completed the pre-interview, Mark had participated in the group face-to-face session, and Cathy had participated in the Adobe Connect session. There had been a few email exchanges, but no indications that they were actually delivering a hybrid course and teaching some class sessions online. This issue of communication had been an ongoing challenge throughout the faculty development program. As I
would later learn, none of the three had moved forward with the hybrid course for various reasons. Mark’s course and Cathy’s course had been cancelled due to low enrollment, and Jim simply never engaged beyond sending me reasons why he shouldn’t teach online.

In an email exchange with Beth on October 1\textsuperscript{st}, I was happy to hear that she had definitely moved forward with her online teaching plans. She needed some help with an online quiz. Since our schedules did not allow us to meet in person, she provided me with editor access to her course in ANGEL. I entered her course, investigated the problem she was experiencing, fixed the settings, and then emailed her the steps I took so she would be able to fix it herself in the future.

On October 7\textsuperscript{th}, I met with Kay to work with a plagiarism detection application, but we talked about another issue first. In her hybrid course, a “guest” had appeared in a discussion forum. She had emailed ANGEL support and had not yet received an adequate explanation on how that had happened. However, this had raised an issue for her: If her teaching became more public through online delivery, how might that change her teaching? I countered her question with a question of my own: How would it change your students’ learning if it was more public? Kay thought this might be an interesting issue to address in her reflection journal. I hoped that she would do just that.

Also on October 7\textsuperscript{th}, I individually emailed each participant to schedule the classroom observations for the end of the semester. I had made a list of those classes I definitely needed to visit (Beth, Lou, Ralph, Mary, Kay, and John), those I probably needed to visit (Mark), those I might need to visit, but wasn’t sure (Mick and Cathy), and those I definitely did not need to visit (Janet, Dee, Janae, and Jim). Their replies finally provided me with my final list of seven participants: Beth, Lou, Ralph, Mary, Kay, John, and Mick. I was able to schedule the observation of Mick’s class in October, Lou, Beth, Ralph and Mary in November, and John and Kay in the first two days of December. My conference plans and a stint at jury duty, and their
schedule of face-to-face and online classes provided a scheduling challenge, but we got it done. On November 27th, I sent the final individual classroom observations reminders to Mary, John, and Kay, and a request to all participants to schedule their post-interviews in December.

**Summary**

Throughout this planning cycle, communication with the participants was on my mind often. I continued to consider the inadequacies of email, and wondered about better alternatives. Without scheduled meetings or deliverables, it took months until I knew for certain which faculty were still participating in the faculty development program. That became a clear obstacle during this phase, and email communication was not sufficient to solve it easily. Once again, my struggle with more structure versus less structure in the faculty development program surfaced and I wished I had scheduled a meeting of all participants to update each other on their progress, and to address questions. Perhaps this could be suggested as a future improvement to the program.

**Acting and Observing**

Finally, I was entering the last stretch of my research project. Classroom observations were scheduled, and I reviewed the transcripts from the initial interviews prior to stepping into each classroom to get a feel for what I might expect to observe. I always arrived prior to the class starting time, stayed for the entire length of the class with the exception of Ralph’s three-hour class, and tried to sit in a back corner of the room when those seats were available. Sometimes the instructor introduced me and explained my presence, but others did not. I never participated in any of the class sessions. I made an intentional effort to maintain a friendly appearance, but did not acknowledge anything the instructors or students did in either a positive or negative way. I
simply observed and took notes using paper and pen. I have arranged this section in the same
order as the pre-interviews in Chapter 4.

**Classroom Observations**

The classroom observations were planned as a way for me to see what actually happened
in the participants’ face-to-face classes. However, I realized that just one classroom observation
for each participant would not be enough time to tell the whole story. I would have the benefit of
a quick glimpse of only a fraction of the entire semester. Would their teaching practices match the
assumptions and beliefs about teaching they shared during their pre-interview? Would my
observations match the teaching practices they had described to me back in June and July? If I
observed any changes, would they be able to be explained by their online teaching experiences
and/or transformative learning? I knew that I would probably have to wait until the post-
interviews to better understand the impact of online teaching on any changes I observed. The
answers would directly inform my research questions.

*Mick*

The first classroom observation took place on October 9th in Mick’s class. Mick is an
adjunct instructor in public affairs. Six students were already in the classroom, which had groups
of desktop computers arranged in circles and a teacher’s computer station at the front of the room,
when I arrived five minutes before the class was to begin. One student arrived just before class
began. This was a class presentation day, when a student was to share what he had completed for
one of the project assignments. Mick closed the classroom door at the class starting time of
9:00am and had the student presenter begin his presentation, right on time.
Two students entered two minutes later, and one spent a lot of time with the cell phone on her lap, texting, and not looking at the student presenter. During the presentation, another student was busy working on the computer and not paying too much attention to what was going on in the front of the room. At the five-minute presentation limit, Mick stopped the student and asked for applause. He then asked if anyone had any questions, giving no time for replies, and asked his own questions about the presentation’s content. He again asked for any other comments or questions, but again, did not pause for responses. The presenter was asked for his own evaluative comments. Mick’s comments about the student’s presentation were focused on going over the time limit and on the content of the presentation, but not on the use of PowerPoint, which I had understood to be the application being learned.

Two more students arrived eleven minutes after class had started, and this was only a fifty-minute class! A few other students had their PowerPoint presentations due, but were not present when Mick called out their names.

Next, students were given time to work on their web development projects. Mick asked, “What kind of problems are you experiencing with your web sites?” One student shared a problem with links and Mick worked with him to troubleshoot. Another student entered fourteen minutes late. Each time a student entered, Mick made no acknowledgement.

Mick provided some demonstrations. A few students watched, but most were looking at their own computer, continuing to work. Two students were busy in a conversation with each other, one with her back to Mick, but pointing at her screen. The student who had done his presentation at the start of class was working on emails, moved to Facebook, checked his web page work for one minute, and then went back to Facebook and email. Ten minutes before the class ending time, he logged off of his computer and left.

After Mick’s demonstration, he moved to the back of the room and asked the remaining students for questions and then went back to helping the same student with his links. Another
student asked about accessing his web folder from home. Mick didn’t know the answer, but said he would find out and let him know. He remained in the back of the room until two minutes before the end of class, and wished them all a good weekend. Two students left immediately, and one more shortly after. Seven students continued to work and Mick took another student to go scan some articles for his website. I was concerned about copyright, and hoped that had already been discussed.

Comparison of observation with pre-interview

The assumptions and beliefs about teaching I had understood from Mick’s pre-interview were that he assumed that his students didn’t participate in discussion because they didn’t want to criticize their classmates’ work, he recognized his students as individuals with each learning in different ways and at different speeds, and he believed it might not be necessary for each student to physically come to every class to get the benefit of learning for themselves. His goals seemed to be to make the course a good learning experience for each of them by differentiating instruction and providing flexibility. In the end, he wanted to make sure that each student could demonstrate proficiency with each computer application.

My class observation saw students who didn’t interact a lot with each other. I wondered how comfortable they felt with each other, and whether any trust had been established. I also wondered if any guidelines for constructive feedback on student presentations had been shared. There were definitely students absent that day, and even some students who had been expected to present their PowerPoint projects. Perhaps they had been provided too much flexibility? While Mick wanted to provide a good learning experience for each student, there were obviously students in class who had no intent of learning anything in class that morning. There seemed to be a mismatch of expectations between Mick and his students.

The teaching practices Mick had shared during his pre-interview seemed to match fairly
well with what I observed that day. After the student presentation, he did demonstrate a few features of the application on which they were currently working, and the students spent the majority of the class time working on their projects at the computer. Mick walked around the room, or was seated nearby, and was available to answer student questions, which he did. While there was no mention of ANGEL during the class, I knew from email communications that Mick was using some of its tools, which was a change from previous years. I hoped its use was helping him keep better track of students’ homework assignments.

Lou

Lou, an associate professor of education, had shared that he begins each class period with current events, and that is how he began this class session. He called it a “wake up exercise” and tried to get as many students as possible involved. I noted that fifteen students were in the class as it began, and two arrived late. They were seated around four tables. Lou asked one student to put aside the newspaper he was reading, and he complied immediately and engaged in the current event discussion. Lou seemed to know most students’ names, but not all.

The activity for the class period was a presentation by two student teams. The class had a rubric to use to provide feedback on the presentations. The first student team went to the front of class, read their PowerPoint slides, and then led the class in a sing-along. They used the SmartBoard in the room only as a screen to project the PowerPoint and did not take advantage of any of its interactive capabilities. Next, they had the class do a labeling and coloring activity, followed by time for questions and student critiques of their presentation. I noticed that if students didn’t raise their hands to participate, Lou would call on them. This was a bit awkward at times because he couldn’t remember all of their names.

The second team presentation also used the SmartBoard to project their PowerPoint
slides, and they used the SmartBoard to advance their slides. This team also read their slides, and one student chewed gum during the entire presentation. Lou sat at one of the tables, took notes, and watched. No comments were made on their use of the technology, or the gum chewing, which seemed unprofessional for pre-service teachers.

**Comparison of observation with pre-interview**

One of the assumptions and beliefs about teaching I had understood from Lou’s pre-interview was that he had a philosophy of caring in which he believed that if he taught with care, then his students would also care. Another belief involved the students’ role in the classroom. He said that he wanted his students to have control of the classroom so they would not “feel intimidated to talk” and all could “share their views.” He considered classroom discussion to be vital because of its role in making students part of the teaching process. Finally, he believed that if he listened to his students and would “meet them halfway,” he would be able to “keep their focus and concentration.” This meant that he would involve them in many different aspects, including presentations, projects, and group work. Actively working together, instructor and students, seems to sum up Lou’s beliefs about teaching.

My classroom observation seemed to be a study in contrasts. Knowing that Lou wanted his students to have control of their classroom, it was interesting to see Lou’s control demonstrated throughout the class session, first when he had a student put away the newspaper he was reading, and again when Lou called on students to participate in a class discussion. I am fairly certain that he was not aware of the amount of control he retained in the classroom. Another contrast was in Lou’s philosophy of caring which didn’t match up against his inability to recall all seventeen students’ names. While I do not think an instructor needs to know every student’s name in order to demonstrate care, in a class of this size, I feel that it might illustrate a lack of personal connections that could impact the level of care demonstrated. It could also impact students’
perceptions of an instructor’s care.

Given the contrasts, I also saw matches between the pre-interview and the classroom observation. Lou did begin his class with attention given to current events. He also had a mix of activities during the class session with discussion and group presentations, and did not lecture at all. He encouraged every student to participate in the discussions, although the students who were called on to participate might not classify it as “encouragement.”

One last note I need to make about Lou’s classroom observation is that he seemed the least comfortable with my presence. While he welcomed me, I felt that my presence made him nervous, and I wondered whether I was getting a true picture of a typical class session because of it. He often refers to me as his “teacher,” and I wonder whether his elevated perception of my role in his professional development was a cause for his nervousness. I wished that I had had an opportunity to put him more at ease prior to my visit. My presence might have prevented me from observing a “typical” class session.

John

John, an associate professor of engineering, had a class start time of 6:15pm. He walked into the classroom to turn on the lights, left, and didn’t return until one minute prior to the class’s start time. He plugged in his flash drive and had trouble logging onto the computer. He called a student by name, and asked him to come to the front and help him. The student was able to log onto the computer for John, and class began. This immediately puzzled me and I wondered how John could be having difficulty logging into the classroom computer this late into the semester.

John announced that he had quizzes and assignments to return and asked if there were any questions. He reminded them of an assignment due and, if they had not already turned it in, suggested that they do so that night. By 6:20, the computer projector was on and his PowerPoint
presentation was displayed. The title displayed the topic for the night’s lesson. John asked his students what the title meant. Two students offered an answer. John provided a complete explanation. Most students had paper and pencil to take notes, but not all notebooks were open, and only a few actually took notes.

John shared the value of the night’s lesson, and explained the types of jobs that used the analysis they would be learning. His voice started very softly and was hard to hear in the back of the room where I was sitting, but then raised to a good level. John told them questions to ask which were things he wanted them to discover during the in-class assignment. He asked them another question, and three students answered. John seemed to know some names, but not all. The class had just over twenty students in it.

His PowerPoint presentation was full of text with complete sentences. He read some of the slides verbatim. Then John handed out an example of the form for their analysis topic, and it used a situation with which most, if not all, of the students would have already had some experience – painting a room. He paired them up to write the steps needed to paint the walls of their classroom. In response to a student request, he said that he would post the PowerPoint file and the two handouts he provided in their course in ANGEL.

As the students worked, John walked around the room, checked on their progress, and made some comments. As they continued to work, he returned their papers, but needed help locating some of the students. Students had some confusion over whether they were to only list the steps needed to paint the room, or to also include hazards. Since they were to include hazards, John gave them an extra five minutes to do so. I had heard John assign steps, but then he shared that some do this assignment by first listing steps and then going back and adding hazards, while others list the steps and hazards at the same time. He never really said that they were to also list hazards; it was implied. The students were engaged in discussion over what steps and hazards were needed, and seemed to be enjoying the task.
John began a review of the in-class assignment by first asking the pairs how many steps each had. There was quite a variance in answers, which got the students’ attention. Some pairs had included great detail, while others only included the major steps. John had the pair with the most steps begin to share their list, and I observed other pairs scrambling to add more detail to their own job lists. John collected this class exercise, and then distributed another handout.

The class was divided into four groups to complete a similar assignment out of class. The full assignment was available in ANGEL, and they were allowed to email him their completed assignment, or print it and place it in his office mailbox, or do a paper/pencil version and place it in his office mailbox. John gave the students the rest of the class time to work on the assignment and he said that he would stay in the classroom to be available to help.

**Comparison of observation with pre-interview**

The assumptions and beliefs about teaching I had understood from John’s pre-interview were that his teaching role was to help his students understand the information he was providing, and his thoroughness in delivering information to students was important. There seemed to be a mismatch between his belief that his students needed to be creative thinkers and his reliance on lectures, since I did not consider lectures to be typically conducive to creative thinking. At the time of the pre-interview, I was anxious to learn how creative thinking was nurtured in his classroom. Finally, from the example of his mother as a pre-school teacher, John seemed to want to nurture the same kind of care and connection with his students that kept his mother’s students in touch with her many years later.

The class I observed included lecture and an in-class exercise that involved students working in pairs or small groups, which matched what John had shared in the pre-interview. While John did ask a few questions during the short lecture, students’ answers were followed by John’s complete, or what appeared to me to be his “correct,” answer. So, although opportunities
for creative thinking were not apparent during the lecture, the in-class exercise did provide room for variations in solutions. However, as thorough as John seemed to be in his lecture, there was confusion over the directions for the in-class assignment and the requirements seemed to change as students asked questions. As with my observation in Lou’s class, I also wondered about John’s intent of care when he had difficulty with some students’ names.

Once again, a single observation could not provide me with all of the answers. It is quite possible that John engaged his students in creative thinking exercises during other class sessions. It is also possible that my presence impacted what I was able to observe. It was becoming quite obvious to me that one observation could only suggest the possibility of changes, but would not be able to prove changes.

**Mary**

Mary, an assistant professor of education, had a class of students who had their books and notebooks open with pens in their hands. This was already beginning to prove to be very different from my three previous classroom observations. Mary shared that they were going to first tie up the previous week’s unit of study with an activity, and she provided directions for them to get started. Students paired themselves up, and one student was given a small jigsaw puzzle with the picture of the completed puzzle and their partner had to put the pieces together without the picture. The student with the picture was allowed to offer verbal guidance, but was not allowed to assist in completing the puzzle. This was meant to illustrate the difference between novice and experts. After the puzzles were completed, students began discussion in pairs, linking their completed activity to the theory they had studied the previous week. Then the student pairs reported out, and Mary led them toward the components of the theory. After the discussion had completed, Mary showed them the bulleted PowerPoint slide with a list of the theory’s
components, which they had just extracted from their hands-on activity and discussion.

Next, Mary was ready to get started on a new unit on motivation. They began by viewing a three-minute video clip. Then Mary directed them to talk to a neighbor about how they felt about what they had just seen, and then talk about how it related to motivation. Students immediately became engaged in discussion with each other. Mary sat at the front of the classroom watching and listening. Then she asked to have the discussion opened up to the entire classroom, and encouraged the students to direct their “conversations” to each other, not to her. Mary continued to listen closely and take notes. She was not smiling or nodding, but simply listening.

Mary had her students transition by saying, “Now use your conversation and tie it to the components of motivation in Chapter 11.” This discussion was again done with neighbors. Mary walked around the room, and listened in on the discussions. Students were using their books and taking notes. Then Mary asked, “What were you talking about?” Mary wrote a heading on the board, “Motivators,” and added students’ responses. She had the students tie their responses to the students with whom they worked, and their personal experiences. She used their discussion to ask more questions. She would periodically ask for clarification by saying, “What does that look like?” As she brought the class time to a close, she had the discussion wrap up and had them come together by asking, “What are you thinking?”

During one of the neighbor discussions, Mary came over to me and shared a concern she had about online teaching. She wondered how she could do this type of co-construction of learning online. She wasn’t sure how to get this discussion, feedback, questions, reporting out, diagramming on the board, happen as effectively online. She asked, “How could that happen?”

**Comparison of observation with pre-interview**

The assumptions and beliefs about teaching I had understood from Mary’s pre-interview were all underpinned by her socio-constructivist philosophy of teaching. She believed that
students learned best through reflection and dialogue rather than through orchestrated activities that led them directly toward the teacher’s desired outcome. Through reflection and dialogue, she believed that students could co-construct meaning together, tying theory to practice.

However, during the classroom observation, she did begin with a type of orchestrated activity. After completing the puzzle activity, the students debriefed, relating their experiences as novice and expert to the theory they were learning. Mary extracted the components of the theory as they talked, and then displayed the PowerPoint slide with the theory’s components displayed in a neatly bulleted list. It appeared that she had led them to the exact outcome she had wanted. However, I didn’t even realize this until I reflected on the classroom observation afterwards. Could the debriefing have gone in a different direction than Mary had planned? I’m not sure.

During the remainder of the class, in which the next theory was introduced, the activities seemed to be more closely aligned to Mary’s beliefs and assumptions. After viewing the short video, the discussion on motivation seemed like the best example of socio-constructionism I had ever witnessed. With twenty students talking to each other, the energy was palpable as they fit the theory into their own practices. Even when Mary had them turn the discussion back to the larger group, she had them address each other rather than her. Not only were they making connections to their own experiences, but also to their classmates’ experiences. It seemed that what Mary had described in the pre-interview was in very close alignment to my observation in her classroom.

**Kay**

When I entered Kay’s room, the seats were already arranged in a semi-circle, but there were two students seated whose desks remained in their original row location at the front of the room. The students seemed friendly with each other, talking in pairs or groups. As Kay began class, all of the students had their textbooks and/or notebooks open.
Kay, an associate professor of social science, had already told me that their use of the online discussion forums had provided more “meat” than their face-to-face discussions ever had. She was now using the online discussions as a “springboard” for class discussion. Kay projected the online discussion forum posts on the screen at the front of the room, and shared themes she found in them. She wrote “glass escalator” on the blackboard and asked students to define what it meant. After the students offered meanings, Kay added to it. Some students were taking notes. Kay listened to students’ comments and questions, and made sure she understood. She knew her students’ names and used them.

Kay spent most of her time talking to the students. Sometimes she would say, “This question is for all of us,” and then end up answering it herself. She included “stories from the battlefronts,” mentioned authors’ names, theorists’ names, and wrote on the board. She asked questions and often referred back to the article they were to have read for class. About half of the nineteen students contributed to the class discussion with single comments or questions. The two men in the class didn’t speak. Kay used the end of class time to share information on the end-of-semester assignments. Then she handed back their tests and asked students to return them to her before they left the classroom.

**Comparison of observation with pre-interview**

During the pre-interview, Kay shared her belief that students come to college with learning deficits in reading comprehension and writing skills. She holds concerns for her students that arise from her beliefs that they are lost, not interested in learning except as an avenue to graduate, have challenges from job and family responsibilities, and have poor reading and writing skills. She feels that it is her responsibility to get them to read. For good classroom discussion to occur, she believes that her students need to come prepared, which means that they have completed their reading assignment and have considered questions raised by thinking about their
Also from the pre-interview, Kay had described a typical classroom session as one in which many questions were considered. This is because she considered learning to ask questions an important skill within her discipline. She said that she used lecture to supplement students’ reading. She hoped that the use of discussion forums would advance students’ writing abilities and engage them in the readings.

While my classroom observation did recognize many questions being considered, most of the questions were actually asked and answered by Kay. When students commented or asked questions, she listened carefully and made sure she understood what was being asked. She tried to draw students into the discussion by projecting the online discussion forum onto the big screen in front of the room. However, she is the one who shared the themes found within those online discussions, and I thought theme generation might have been a wonderful online group activity at the conclusion of the online discussion and prior to the next face-to-face class. Even though the online discussion forum was projected during the entire class, it wasn’t referenced that often and Kay wasn’t scrolling through to illustrate or refer back to many different comments in the forum. It did show to the students that she was paying attention to the forum, and that she considered it integral to the class. It also bridged the online activity to the face-to-face class.

Kay had expressed concern for her students during the pre-interview and, during the classroom observation, I found myself wondering about the two students who had not joined their desks to the semi-circle formed by the other students. Why weren’t they part of the semi-circle? Were they part of the semi-circle during the other class sessions? Did they participate in the online discussions? I also wondered why the two men in the class never made a comment or asked a question during class. Was this typical behavior for them? Did they participate online? Something else seemed to be going on, and I was not able to determine what it was during only one class session observation.
Beth

Beth, an assistant professor of elementary education, had a class of fifteen students seated in a “C” shape. She opened the class holding pages of questions with one question per page. As she read a question, students responded. I realized that her students were sitting in teams prepared to answer. After each team response, she shared additional information.

An article had been given to read as homework, and Beth projected a PowerPoint slide at the front of the room with five questions on the article. The student teams were asked to discuss the answers to the questions. As the five teams of three students each discussed the answers, Beth stayed in the front of the room. She gave a time warning, and checked to see if the teams needed more discussion time. She added information to the discussion from her recent experience at a conference she attended, and from her knowledge about the topic within Pennsylvania. The last question to be discussed was how the article had influenced their thinking on the topic at hand.

The student teams had interviewed different people, and shared the responses they had gathered. One team had interviewed a paraprofessional, and another team had interviewed a parent. Beth seemed to know all of the students’ names.

Comparison of observation with pre-interview

In the pre-interview, Beth shared her belief in a constructivist philosophy of teaching in which the students could get “involved and wrapped up in the material.” While she believed in using a balance of classroom activities, including group activities, case studies, videos, and discussion, to address all of her students’ learning styles, she felt forced into lecturing because of the amount of content she needed to cover. She hoped that a hybrid delivery mode would allow her to reduce her lecture time by giving her students “more time to spend and read the material and reflect on it and incorporate what they learn.” She also wanted to be sure that her students would understand the need and relevance of the course content to their future work in the
elementary classroom.

The classroom observation showed that Beth had, in fact, been able to reduce her lecture time. The only time she talked was to ask questions or add information to the students’ discussion, tying it to current happenings at a recent conference and within the state of Pennsylvania, certainly making a case for its relevance. It seemed as though Beth had been able to find ways for students to spend more time with the course material and to reflect on their learning. She was definitely using team activities, and had her students doing interviews to gather information beyond the textbook, which also added relevance to the course topics.

**Ralph**

I arrived in Ralph’s graduate evening class five minutes prior to its start time, and he was already there. The computer and projector were already turned on, and Ralph, an associate professor of education, was standing, engaged in a conversation with a student. They all seemed comfortable and friendly to each other, and it was obvious that he knew all of them by name.

The class started by Ralph reviewing the online assignment coming up and asked if they had any questions. He answered all questions, and asked if there were any other questions. Then he dimmed the lights and projected his PowerPoint presentation on the screen. He related the information to an article he was writing and how he needed to break down a demographic profile. He told them the specific demographic profiles to consider, and I wondered how it might have been different if he had shown a picture of a group of people and asked the students to share what they thought should be considered instead of providing them with the list. Then he talked about cultural values and asked students whether they fell into a non-Western category or a Western category. I noted that the students had the PowerPoint handout and were not taking notes.

Two more students drifted in during the first 45 minutes of class. I noticed two women
talking to each other even when Ralph was talking. They were also the ones who spoke up the most when Ralph asked questions. Not all had the textbook with them, even though Ralph referred to it.

The PowerPoint presentation continued with Ralph showing them five slides of recommendations. Once again, I wondered how this might have been different if he had the students generate these recommendations instead of giving it to them. I think it could have generated an interesting discussion and tied in their reading into a relevant activity.

During the class, it was obvious that Ralph had knowledge he wanted to share. He presented himself as the expert, but did try to engage and interest the students with personal examples from his experience. He also encouraged the students to share their own personal examples.

Ralph gave the students a break to visit the coffee shop before it closed. After the break, he planned to have students break into discussion groups to talk about the case study they had been assigned. I decided not to stay for the last activity, since he had suggested several times that there was no need for me to stay.

**Comparison of observation with pre-interview**

During the pre-interview, Ralph had expressed his desire to reduce the number of lectures in his classes and increase the number of activities. However, in direct contrast, he also shared that, “If I don’t lecture about it, how do you learn about it?” This illustrated how important lecture actually was to his course. He said that his classes consisted of about 60% lecture and 40% activities. He also shared that he tries to integrate his students’ work experiences into the class and their discussions.

I realized that there was some similarity between Kay and Ralph regarding their concerns about their students, but Kay was teaching undergraduates and Ralph was teaching graduates.
Both seemed to be operating from a deficit view of their students and focusing on what they did not know and could not do.

Ralph had shared in the pre-interview that he had grown to be confident, flexible, and relaxed in his teaching. This was evident during my observation. He appeared to be quite comfortable in the classroom, engaging students in conversation before class began. Ralph shared personal examples as he had explained in the pre-interview, and his students also shared their work examples. While Ralph had expressed his wish to reduce the number of lectures, the first half of his three-hour class was predominantly lecture. However, I observed at least two opportunities for him to replace lecture with an activity. One was his list of demographic profiles, and the other was his three-slide list of recommendations. Both of these could have been generated through small group work and/or class discussions. The second half of his class was not observed, but it was planned for group work on their case study projects.

Summary

The purpose of the classroom observations was to have an opportunity to provide context and visual cues in determining how each participant’s teaching practices matched their assumptions and beliefs about teaching shared during the pre-interviews. In the same way, I wanted to determine how well the teaching practices they shared in the pre-interviews matched what actually happened in their classrooms. If I observed any differences, I would try to determine whether or not their online teaching experiences and/or transformative learning could explain these changes, realizing that only one observation would not provide proof of change, but only evidence of possible change.

When I considered each participant’s assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and compared them to my classroom observations, I was reminded of how difficult teaching really is.
Practicing what you believe is not as easy as it might sound. For instance, Mick believed that his students did not participate in discussion because they did not want to criticize each other’s presentation, yet there was no evidence that any measure of trust had been established in the classroom, and there seemed to be no guidelines for providing constructive feedback. In contrast, Lou’s class had more of an open feeling for discussion, and his students had a rubric in hand during group presentations to use for feedback. Still, Lou’s philosophy of caring and sharing control of the classroom did not quite match my observation of his class. He stumbled over students’ names, and it was obvious that he retained control in the classroom, although I am sure he did not realize to what extent that was true. John also seemed to express a philosophy of caring, but stumbled on students’ names.

A reliance on lecture provided both a conflict with teaching beliefs and, in a few cases, a change in the classroom. John wanted his students to be creative thinkers, yet his use of lecture created passive learners during the first part of his class. Ralph believed that he needed to lecture in order for his students to learn, yet he was concerned about their lack of skill in reading comprehension and writing. Kay also held Ralph’s concerns about her students, but she had decreased the amount of time she spent lecturing and relying on PowerPoint presentations to move toward more classroom and online discussion. The addition of online discussion had also decreased the amount of lecture in Beth’s classroom. The pressure to cover the content through lecture was lessened by an increase in learning outside of the classroom.

Mary seemed to stand alone somehow. Her socio-constructivist philosophy of teaching was illustrated quite well in her classroom. This was the class in which students were most engaged, and rich discussion filled the class time. While she certainly had learning objectives for the class, the meaning students constructed for themselves was done collaboratively and directly linked to their teaching practices and the learning theories they had studied. It was almost magical, and I could empathize with her concern for possibly losing this type of interaction and
co-construction of meaning by moving it online. Another point I noticed with Mary’s class was that, although she had shared a disbelief in the use of orchestrated activities, it did not mean that she didn’t use them.

While there was some mismatch between the assumptions and beliefs shared during the pre-interviews and my classroom observations, the teaching practices that had been described to me were very close to what I experienced. The two classes in which I saw changes were Kay’s and Beth’s. Kay and Beth used to rely heavily on PowerPoint presentations and lectures. When I observed their class sessions, neither used lecture, and both used PowerPoint only briefly. Kay had her PowerPoint presentation prepared, but only referred to a slide or two to make a point. Beth used a PowerPoint slide to project the questions the student teams were to answer. In both cases, the online discussion activities they had added directly impacted what happened in the classroom.

The next section details the post-interviews conducted at the end of my action research project. The questions asked and the answers provided explained some of the changes I saw in the classrooms, and helped me better understand the role of the faculty development program in those changes.

**Post-Interviews**

The post-interviews were all conducted during December between the 7\textsuperscript{th} and the 15\textsuperscript{th}, just prior to the final exam week. The interviews ranged in length from fourteen minutes for Mick to fifty-eight minutes for Mary, almost identical to the range for the pre-interviews. The average length for all 7 interviews was approximately thirty-four minutes, also similar to the pre-interviews.

I was unaware of technical difficulties with two of the audio files until I tried to
transcribe them six months later. For Ralph’s interview, the audio file recording began at the end of his interview, indicating that I must have actually turned the recorder off when the interview began and turned it back on when the interview was over. For Lou’s interview, the audio file was empty. Even though I had taken notes during both of the interviews, I had lost the ability to directly quote with their own words. I decided to contact them and request a second attempt at the post-interview. Both agreed. They were concerned that they would not be able to replicate what they had initially shared, but I assured them that a replication was not my intent. I wanted them to feel at ease in answering the questions as best as they could with what they remembered from the prior fall semester. This reminded me that even with what I had considered to be a strong expertise with technology, my expertise only went as far as the technology would allow. I had failed to double and triple check the equipment, and this error cost me the original audio files for both post-interviews. Lesson learned, although it was learned at a very inopportune time!

The post-interview questions were designed to elicit answers that might explain which aspects of the professional development program were most effective in helping the participants reflect on their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, to document changes in the participants’ assumption and beliefs in teaching since the pre-interviews were conducted, to try to recognize whether any changes could be attributed to their online teaching experiences, and if there were changes, to determine how transformative learning might explain those changes. These purposes of the post-interview questions tied directly to the research questions. Here is the list of the questions used in all of the post-interviews:

- Tell me about your preparations to teach online. What did you do?
- Tell me about teaching online. Was your experience different than what you expected? How?
- Did adding the online components change what happened in the classroom?
- Thinking about the faculty development program, what did you find most helpful? Do you
have any suggestions for its next offering?

- The reflection journal had varied use. What are your thoughts on the use of a journal for reflection?

- Consider your experiences with online teaching this semester. Using an amusement park’s rides and activities, choose a metaphor that reflects you as teaching. Teaching is . . . or I am . . . Would this metaphor have been the same or different at the beginning of the semester?

- Did your prior beliefs or assumptions about teaching and learning change at all from your online teaching experience?

The participants are listed in this section in the same order as they were in the pre-interview section and in the classroom observation section.

Mick

Preparations to teach online

Mick’s initial interview with me helped to prompt him to think about “some new things” which included “more thinking about challenging the students than I had in the past.” One new activity he used to prepare for this year was to visit with each of the faculty in his discipline and ask them to

Tell me the kinds of things that you’re doing and/or give me some ideas on assignments that I could give that would help or be in concert with the kinds of things that you’re asking the students to do so that there’s a little relationship there.

In theory, he thought this was a great idea. However, in practice, the faculty “really didn’t have any significant contributions although I got to know each of them a little bit better just having some interaction and learned a little bit more about what they cover.” He was “still left
with trying to come up with that on my own, and that continues to be a challenge.” He felt that the best thing for him to do would be to “lock myself away in a room and really give some deep thought to it or something, I don’t know.” He concluded by saying “So I need to do that each semester, regardless of whether you’re doing your project, I need to come and chat with you. You helped, your creativity helps spur some ideas.”

**Teaching online**

Next, I asked Mick about teaching online and what he actually did with his course. What he did differently is that he did not require a textbook but, instead, found primers for each of the applications online through the University and made them available in his course in ANGEL. Throughout the semester, he encouraged his students early in the learning of each application to review those materials. He felt good that he had saved them money by not requiring a textbook purchase and locating sufficient learning materials for free. He also provided the links to lynda.com for each application, which provided video tutorials provided free through a University license. He never used these resources as a “stand-alone online” but “really used it more as a supplement to the in-class.”

Mick expected that all of the students would take full advantage of these online resources. He found that “some students took advantage of that and they wouldn’t come to class for a period of time until they got to a point where they just needed some interaction or help from me.” He seemed surprised, however, that “other students, they just showed up every class, I mean, regardless of whether it was online.” By “online” he meant that he had offered two or three specific classes when he told them there would be no in-class schedule, but that he would be there in the computer lab in case they needed help. Sure enough, “four or five would show up in class.” He wasn’t sure if it was because “they just weren’t comfortable with doing things online and learning on their own” or if “they just needed somebody to tell them how to do it.” He wondered
if he just needed “to say I’m not going to be there and force them to look at the material online.”

Now, the four or five who came to those classes always had questions for him and needed some assistance. He wondered that there might be “certain learners that are like that.” For the next offering of this course, Mick wondered whether he should make the online sessions mandatory and “force them to figure out” how to use these applications on their own.

A few questions remained for him. He didn’t know how to tell whether his students had even used the materials he provided online for each application. Did they access the handouts or use the links to the video tutorials? And, if they did use the online materials, did they benefit from them? He wondered, “Were they able to learn something from that over and above either what they already knew, or over and above what I gave them in class?” Understanding the resources’ effectiveness remained to be a challenge for him that he might have to look at for the next semester he teaches this course.

Changes in the classroom

Mick felt that adding the online components changed what happened in the classroom in that he thought he had less students attend class. I’m sure my eyes grew wide with that comment, because I felt a bit of trepidation about what was to come next. However, Mick did not have a problem with that and shared, “If they were getting it, and they were able to do all of the assignments and do their projects and they didn’t show up but once every two weeks, that’s fine with me. Just sitting in the room doesn’t do anything for anybody.” The other change was that there seemed to be “a lot of one-on-one this semester, probably more so than in earlier years,” and “the ones who were always there were the ones who needed their hands held.”

Helpful aspects of faculty development program

I grew concerned again when I asked Mick what he found most helpful about the faculty development program, and he had to clarify if I meant “the one that we did over the summer.” Oh
my! I quickly wondered what else there had been that might have him confused. However, he did find that it was “that whole process is really what has challenged me to think more creatively and more thoughtfully about how I present things to the students, and what I want those students to get out of the material, and I think that’s been very good.”

It seemed that Mick had a remaining challenge with “engaging them.” He was referring to those students who were able to learn independently using his online resources and “didn’t have to come too often.” With those students, he “didn’t really feel like they were engaged or contributing anything to class discussion or interaction. It sounded as though he hadn’t quite thought through how he might want the students who were completing the course requirements online to still contribute to the class discussion and, perhaps, communicate with him. That’s an element of the class that I still don’t feel really, really good about.” He still hoped to improve that, and had “jotted some things down as a result of this semester.” One thing on his list was a discussion forum. He had tried to incorporate it with his course, but it “didn’t really go anywhere. Maybe I didn’t model it or I didn’t somehow present it appropriately enough to engage them, so I have to do some work there.”

I asked Mick for any suggestions he could offer to improve the faculty development program. After a long pause, he suggested to add “a time for brainstorming with other faculty.” He recognized that it’s hard to get faculty all together at the same time especially over the summer, we’re rushing here and there, but if it’s possible to allow, and maybe it’s at the end of the in-person sessions, allow a half hour time for those that are interested to sit and do some brainstorming with each other and say, “Hey can I bounce some ideas” and get a reaction from the group.

He was very interested in opening up something like that so they could have a “kind of a free flowing discussion.”
Use of reflection journal

Mick had posted to his reflection journal in ANGEL once during the program, so I was very interested in his thoughts on its value in a faculty professional development program. He found value in that

I think it forced me to think about those issues and, when you’re so busy and pulled in so many different directions, if you just have a mechanism that forces you to say, “Okay, I’ve got to stop, I’ve got to give some thought to this, and I’ve got to put it down on paper,” that was a useful tool for me.

When asked how he felt about having it online, he shared, “I mean I probably didn’t do it as much as I should have, but the times that I did it, it was good.” I don’t think he realized that he had only posted once, but I’m glad he thought it was helpful.

Metaphor

Mick laughed when I asked him to consider his experiences with online teaching and to choose an amusement park’s rides and activities for a metaphor that reflected him as teacher. However, he was very quick to consider a

weightlessness module where you’re kind of floating along and you’re not always sure that you’re rooted in reality on the ground, but you do see things from this floating around and you can kind of move effortlessly, because with the online stuff it’s much more flexible. You know, you can instantly add a resource, you can make corrections to things. I found myself having to make some minor changes, but boom! Ya get in, change it, and it’s done. You send a little note to everybody, “Hey, here’s a new writeup or whatever.” So that may be an appropriate metaphor.

I imagined this as the ride that makes it seems as though you’re flying above waterfalls, through canyons, and under oceans.

Changes in prior beliefs or assumptions

Finally, I asked Mick if his prior beliefs or assumptions about teaching and learning had changed at all from his online teaching experiences. He wasn’t “sure it changed as much as it reinforced and strengthened this notion of constantly evaluating what you do and the impact on
students. I think it just heightened that awareness and sensitivity to that.” As I ended our interview, Mick pulled out his list of ANGEL questions.

Lou

Preparations to teach online

To prepare to teach online, Lou attended the face-to-face workshop, and “came to you for guidelines, which was very helpful. You walked me through the hoops, and so when I put things online, it was really smooth to go.” The fact that it was “smooth” was really a surprise to him because he had expected it to be “threatening.”

Teaching online

It was during this part of the post-interview that I came to realize that Lou hadn’t actually replaced a face-to-face class session with an online session. Instead, he had placed an assignment online and maintained all face-to-face class sessions. Although I was quite surprised, and wondered how we could have miscommunicated to this extent, I was not able to hold my disappointment very long because of Lou’s apparent excitement over the success of the project.

First, there was success on Lou’s part. He felt that he had been able to add “a repertoire to my style of teaching” and, being what he described as “technologically challenged,” had “removed that phobia about technology.” He was so very proud of himself and the success of the project he had put online. The project was a service learning assignment that students had traditionally completed, writing a report on what they had done, and handing it in for a grade. Lou had felt that students’ learning resulting from this assignment was not as reflective as he had hoped. By moving the submission of the assignment online, Lou was able to open each student’s work to the entire class. He required each student to read and comment on a classmate’s service
learning project report within a discussion forum.

Another aspect of success shared by Lou came from his students. He expected them to be resistant to the idea of the online assignment, but they “welcomed the idea whole-heartedly” and “it wasn’t anything extraordinary to them as I thought it was going to be.” It seemed that the added advantage for the students was that “reading other people’s work gave them the other side of the story.” They were able to “learn from each other.” Lou referred to it as “buy one and get one free!” In other words, each student completed their own service-learning project, but then by reading through another student’s project, was able to learn about different ways to give back to the community and how that work had impacted their classmate. It made them aware of additional volunteer opportunities.

Changes in the classroom

After learning that no face-to-face class sessions had been replaced by online sessions, I didn’t expect Lou to report on any changes in the classroom. However, he felt that the online assignment “complemented” what happened in the classroom, and made it “more holistic” and “very friendly for the students.” By opening up their service-learning work to each other online, they were able to learn from each other and it seemed to make them more open in the classroom. Lou said that it “brought in the horizon about <what> service-learning is all about” and “they got extra, extra ideas from their colleagues.”

Helpful aspects of faculty development program

Lou immediately recalled the hands-on portion of the face-to-face workshop as being essential to adding the online assignment to his course. Without the workshop, he “wouldn’t have done it.” Providing hands-on practice in the workshop made him “more relaxed” and he shared, “I felt more comfortable and you had patience, which was very good.” He also thought that I had “encouraged cooperative work among those who were there.”
Another aspect he found helpful was the one-on-one opportunities he had with me. Sitting together at the computer and building his online assignment together was essential in making it a reality.

Use of reflection journal

Lou thought that the use of the reflection journal “was good because it at least kept us on our toes.” He also thought that it provided “checks and balances.” He continued, “it challenged us to think and so it promoted critical thinking skills, it promoted the use of technology, and also it made us conscious about what we were doing.”

Metaphor

This activity took Lou a while to decide on something that made sense for him. Finally, after a long pause, he decided that he was “arriving” and moving toward the target. He said that he couldn’t “say if I have arrived yet, because it’s the process.” He felt that he was “ready to face the challenge.” I asked him if it felt more like staring at a roller coaster and deciding to get on, or whether something like a sky ride or monorail that took people on a journey would best fit his situation. He really liked the idea of a journey, because he felt that he was still “working on my journey.”

He did not think that the metaphor would have been the same at the beginning of the semester because, at that time, he “didn’t know how the students were going to react” to the online assignment. I got the feeling that if his students had been resistant to the idea, he might have reverted back to his old method of assignment submission. However, since his students were quite receptive, his journey was able to begin and now “the journey continues.”

Changes in prior beliefs or assumptions

The changes noted by Lou were that the online assignment wasn’t as time consuming as he had expected, it was more rewarding than anticipated, and he found his students to be more
objective online. He thought that the online environment was “non-threatening” which made his students “able to write whatever they feel.” It was rewarding because they were “able to connect with each other, able to extract ideas from their colleagues.” Even though each student was only able to participate in one service-learning project, they were still able to learn from others’ experiences. For instance, one student might visit a homeless shelter and report on how friendly the people were there. Another student who might have held a fear about visiting a homeless shelter now lessens their anxiety about it. Lou felt that this was a way to also reduce anxiety about working in an urban area which some of his pre-service teachers might have to do someday. The learning was broader and had a greater impact on his students’ initial ideas about urban areas than he had initially anticipated.

John

Preparations to teach online

To begin his preparations to teach online, John looked at the topics that we were going to cover and which one would be more applicable to it being online and maybe to be taught in a classroom environment. I looked at that and then I also looked at trying to break it up where it is not totally online, where they met with me for a period of time, and then they went online, and then they came back.

The online portions of the class included viewing PowerPoint presentations, completing reading assignments, doing research and submitting the results. He wasn’t concerned if the students worked together, and felt it was more important that they knew the material so when they were tested on it, they would understand it. John “wanted those last classes to be in the classroom.”
Teaching online

Teaching online for the first time, John “could see the benefits down the road.” He felt as though he just needed to do it the first time, and now could see where he “might be able to improve on it.” One thing he was interested in trying in the future was Adobe Connect, based on the session he had experienced during the faculty development program. However, he explained that he was “walking, not running” and was going to take his time trying different things.

John didn’t really experience any surprises teaching online, and “found it enjoyable.” He thought students performed online the same as they would have in the classroom with some being much more involved than others. When he asked for student feedback in the middle of the semester, about 90% of the responses were favorable toward the online sessions. They seemed to like the extra time they had “to prepare or do their research,” and they liked being able to do the work “at their pace.”

Changes in the classroom

It didn’t seem that John had changed anything that happened in the classroom based on his preparations to teach online. The only change he noted was that he didn’t cover material in class that he had provided online. He “assumed they had done it.” It was covered on the midterm and final exams, and John considered his students “responsible for that material.”

Helpful aspects of the faculty development program

When asked about what portions of the faculty development program he found to be most helpful, John shared that “talking to my colleagues about what they were doing and their experiences – what worked, what didn’t work, suggestions” was “very beneficial to start planning.” He also referenced the Adobe Connect session with an experienced faculty member to be “very good.” The challenge was “just trying to do that as well as my other things I have to do as far as classes and administrative and stuff like that; it just got to be a time constraint.” Because
of his time constraints, he appreciated the ANGEL course “where we could see stuff and get material on that.” He liked having resources available that he could “tap into” as he had time. John also apologized and explained that he didn’t think he was “fair to the program” because he was so preoccupied with an accreditation visit, and that’s where he put all of his “time and effort.”

Even with John describing his online experience as enjoyable, and admitting that he didn’t have as much time to put into the planning as he had hoped, he admitted that he had been “discouraging faculty that are going on seeking tenure from pursuing this, because the time they are going to put into it versus the benefits in their process, I don’t see it, and I’m not the only one.” For him, it was the time spent versus the benefit that was a concern, and he didn’t think faculty’s time spent in development of an online course would be recognized for tenure purposes.

**Use of reflection journal**

When I asked John about the use of the reflection journal, he shared, “I guess I’m not a big one on writing big journals, just notes and bullets about things that I remember myself for the next time around.” So, notes on what worked and what he might want to do differently were considered beneficial.

**Metaphor**

I asked John to consider his experiences with online teaching that semester and to consider an amusement park’s rides and activities as a metaphor that would reflect him as a teacher. Immediately, John knew that he was not a roller coaster, but was “the steady ride providing the information.” He made “sure students have what they need to know.” I asked if he was thinking of something more like a train or roller coaster, and he referenced “a lift rider where you go across the park.” I questioned him further, asking if he meant a ride that hung from a cable. He explained his choice.
You are secure, but you basically are trying to give them some flexibility, some openness, so they can think about that, but they don’t have to worry that the cable is going to break, and they are going to get from one point to the other point. They are going to get to see different things just like in a cable they get to experience different things as they go through that process. That is what we are showing them.

He felt that this is the same metaphor he would have chosen at the beginning of the semester.

**Changes in prior beliefs and assumptions**

When I asked John whether he thought his prior beliefs or assumptions about teaching and learning had changed at all from his online teaching experience, he only spoke about the effectiveness of online courses. He shared

I’m not still convinced on a total online course. I like the hybrids. I like the interacting with the students. I think there is a benefit when they interact with each other, and that is why we were talking about the camera and communication. I think that is one of the things, if I was going to do more online, I would see that interacting as beneficial to students.

This was another reference to the Adobe Connect session we had held back in July. I wondered if we had had a colleague speak about effective online discussion forum assignments, his thoughts on online interaction might be different. However, the only model he had experienced was synchronous online through Adobe Connect. I asked him if he would consider asynchronous interaction with a discussion forum, rather than something synchronous online or face-to-face, and he replied, “I don’t know. If they could just pull stuff online in, and I could respond to it and all that, that might be something, just observe and see how that works. I don’t know what it would do for the students.” He explained that “most engineering students don’t have online courses” except for, perhaps, a few general education courses.

John ended the post-interview by sharing that “I think you have been very helpful to us in answering our questions and assisting us.” I was surprised, because he was the participant with whom I had had the least contact during the program. He had not asked any questions outside of
the group face-to-face session and the Adobe Connect session. Still, I guess that was the most contact we had ever had together.

Mary

Preparations to teach online

When I asked Mary to tell me about her preparations to teach online, she made sure I understood that she did not teach the whole class online, but just sections of it. In one of her courses, she used blogs. We had worked together to create the blog space and figure out all of the logistics, including how to make and use tags. She shared that the biggest surprise to her was that “the worst part of the blogging was their getting the tag right!” The students struggled to get “the letters in the right order for the tag.” Admittedly, it was a rather long tag, but identified the course, the semester, and the year.

For her other class she had planned to use a wiki, and we had also worked together to create that space. As it turned out, she never used it. She explained, “I think the reason I didn’t do it was partially the group I had. There were, unfortunately, a lot of beginners in this class and they are not supposed to be in this class.” Out of a class of twenty, she had six students whom she referenced as “beginners,” and “three returning students who had never used computers before, or used them very little.” Getting their access accounts activated and started in ANGEL took four weeks. With half of the students already feeling overwhelmed with the content, Mary decided it best “not to give them one more computer strategy that they needed to try and figure out.” I thought she sounded a bit disappointed over that and, at the end of the semester, she actually talked to the group about her plans to use the wiki and asked them “what this would have looked like.” She explained,
So I just asked them what they would do if we had done a wikispace. They were very open to it, but they said they felt like they struggled through so much information, they are not sure if they would have been ready by the end of the semester to do that.

Then she explained what she was thinking about possible future plans with the wiki idea.

I’m contemplating what to do with that because I really want that to happen. I’m not sure where to do that. There is a part of me that says, “As soon as I get tenure, I can do a sequel class, either in qualitative or quantitative methods.” That is really what they need is a next class, and then the wiki would be right up front. It would work really well.

**Teaching online**

She continued to describe what she had done online.

I get frustrated with the lack of teachable moments that you get with online stuff. What I had to do, because they didn’t all have the speed for the computer at home, I had to do an asynchronous approach so I did interactive PowerPoints, which are okay. You know, “Stop right now and consider this and write it.” Then they turn in a Word document with all that interaction.

She really didn’t know how to do that class online because the content was overwhelming. It presents the students with a new vocabulary, and they express a lot of fear. She felt it is important to take time to build a relationship of trust with them before she would move them to the online environment. However, her students are not comfortable enough with the technology to do all of their learning online, and the other faculty really don’t have the time to keep up with the new technology either. Mary considered the secret to be getting into “a routine of always keeping up with the latest. . . If you have to try to catch up, it looks a lot more overwhelming than if you are just at the moment.”

Mary shared another tool she had found – Prezi – that she would like to try during the next semester.

I think that might actually be a better tool for online teaching than a linear PowerPoint for me. First of all, teachers are very familiar with SmartBoards. They are kind of familiar with PowerPoint, but in a wrong way really. That’s the problem. They are used to SmartBoards, and they have been taught appropriately on SmartBoards in contrast to PowerPoint, so they do understand that whole
thing of grouping of categories where you just touch and zoom in on different things.

She liked the thought of getting away from a linear tool. It would give her the ability to zoom in on what was being discussed at that moment instead of having to scroll through a linear set of slides.

Mary shared her dislike of discussion forums. She felt that teachers “tend to be really product and hoop jumping in orientation, so their discussion, I feel, tends to be rather plastic and short, and insincere, and just a hoop-jumping process. It is just one more thing they have to do.” What Mary really wanted was a “mechanism where somehow they can talk to each other, without high-speed computers.” I suggested a web-based tool called VoiceThread as a possibility. She agreed that she had been wondering about that as a better possibility, because teachers love to talk. However, “as soon as they have to write, it is a product, and they are trying to please somebody, and they are trying to see if it is right, and what grade are they going to get.”

I asked Mary if her online experience was different than she had expected. She exclaimed, “The blogs, absolutely!” Not only was it a positive experience for her, but the blogs “actually had better quality than I was expecting. On paper it was awful.” She explained that she used exactly the same assignment, and wished she had kept the paper ones from the previous semester as a contrast. The quality even extended to the feedback they gave each other. She had waited until they were halfway through the semester until they really got to know each other. I divided them into groups before they started giving feedback, so they were working in groups in the classroom. So they got to know each other because there were thirty-three of them. They had to feel comfortable with each other first.

At first, she just asked the students to comment on each other’s blog post. Then she added a piece to the assignment to encourage richer feedback by asking them to comment and then to “give one other connection.” She explained the blog assignment
the whole point of the reflection was they have a paragraph that talks about one piece of the content out of the week that really struck them – whatever it was. The second paragraph was a connection that they make with that to their real life, and they had to have some visual that went along with that. What I asked the feedback to be was, you can comment on theirs, but then you need to add another connection to the concept they described. That turned out to be really good. The person who wrote it now has actually two connections, and the one who was writing the feedback had to think through the concept that was being described by that person at their own concept, because many times it was different.

Looking ahead to next fall, she is a bit concerned that the students’ work is public and the next cohort of students “can literally plagiarize all of those.”

Changes in the classroom

I asked Mary whether adding the online components changed what happened in the classroom. In her graduate course, “they were just more thankful they could be in the classroom. It was kind of nice. They were like, ‘Oh good, you’re here!’ I thought that was a nice response.” In her undergraduate course in which the blogs were used, she felt that the online components gave them something to talk about. I thought she meant that it had changed the social atmosphere in the class. She responded, “Some of their final reflections said that they felt they connected more with other students – more than they ever had. They thought maybe the blogs were part of that and working in groups. Maybe it was the combination.” However, that wasn’t what she had meant. “I was just thinking more on the substance of the conversation in class was a little more connected.” She even had one student make a comment on her reflection paper that went something like this, “This is the first class I took where they actually saw that everything had a purpose, and you had to pay attention all the time.”

Helpful aspects of faculty development program

When I asked Mary to share what she had found most helpful about the faculty development program, she asked, “The computer stuff?” So I had to explain that the program also included a group face-to-face session, readings, an Adobe Connect session, reflective writing, and
one-on-one consultations. Mary explained that “One-on-one is always going to be the best for me, because I need hands on. I need to be able to see it and hear it, and we did it more than once obviously.”

Then Mary shared a conversation she had with “a World Campus gal.” They had started to talk about online teaching, and she felt she had what is key to all of the conversation. The question that needs to be asked, but isn’t, is, “How is your pedagogy having to change in order to effectively work with learning and students online?” Mary said that she has been told, “Here, start teaching this online. You can do it. It is very much like what you are doing.” She has responded, “No, it is not like what I am doing, and I can’t do that. It doesn’t make any sense to me yet.” She said it reminded her of the time when Apple computers were brought into the elementary classrooms and they were used to make electronic worksheets. She continued,

I don’t hear good models of any kinds of transformative thinking on that. I really don’t . . . somebody needs to be saying there is a transformation of philosophy that has to occur in order to teach in an online environment.

She finished with, “Bottom line is online teaching is all about facilitating learning using this platform. How do you do that effectively?”

So Mary felt strongly that one’s philosophy of teaching had to change in order to be able to teach online. However, for herself, she was “still sitting on the sidelines basically watching. I am dabbling in it in different ways, but my philosophy of learning and this particular platform don’t seem to match as yet.” She was still trying to learn how to do co-construction of meaning online and had “seen very bad online platform models.”

Then Mary referenced a Faculty Senate event in which they had a panel of faculty sharing how they taught online. It turned out that “what we saw were four white men who, and I am saying that very intentionally, all the same age, [except for one], had all done the electronic worksheet.” She considered that a poor showcase and wished they had asked me to design the panel. She thought one out of the panelists was great except that he said “online teaching is 24/7;
enjoy it.” That scared her, and she does not want “to be in an online environment where they
expect you to be there all the time.” She is concerned that if one colleague does that, then it
changes the expectations for all of the other faculty in that program.

Mary mentioned another risk she sees in online teaching.

You become your own entity, and you forget your community of colleagues. You
are not in the office when you are doing online teaching. I see it with my
colleagues who are doing online teaching. They are never around, so they
become their own little island.

She considered that a major risk in an online program within a school that had a mix of
residential and online programs. I asked Mary if she thought an online community of faculty was
a possibility to bring all faculty together. She thought that would only be possible in “an ideal
world.” She felt strongly that

They still need to have the expectation of being physically a part of a community,
and they also need to mentally remember that what they do sets the pace for the
entire program and community of professors. Not just them, and not just for their
SRTEs.

She could see this creating “some basic animosity between online people and non-online
people.

Use of reflection journal

While I found our discussion very enlightening, I needed to get us back on track with the
post-interview. I asked Mary if she thought the use of the reflection journal was an important part
of the faculty development program and whether I should continue to use it. She felt it needed
deadlines. “I think it might have been helpful, but I’m like my students. If you don’t give me a
deadline, it goes to the bottom of the urgency pile. It doesn’t bubble up to urgent without a
deadline.” I was surprised to hear that she would have preferred to talk it. As a teacher, she
would have much rather been able to reflect by just sitting down and talking
about it, than trying to write something. Also, on tenure track, every time you sit
down to write, you feel like you have to publish. Who is reading it, how are they
reading it, who is going to edit it, it becomes a syndrome I think.
I had never considered that as an option, and wondered how I could have made that choice possible.

Metaphor

Then I asked Mary to consider her experiences with the online teaching components over the semester and, using an amusement park’s rides and activities, to choose a metaphor that reflected her as teacher. The first thing she thought of was “cotton candy.” She explained:

I think it is because it is something enjoyable and it sticks to you. So it is almost like as soon as you touch it, you are never going to get away from it, kind of thing. As soon as you start to grapple in it, it is now a part of you. It is not something you are going to walk away from. I think about growing up, cotton candy was always stuck to my fingers, to my hair, to my face, to my teeth, but oh it was so much fun. So that is one side of the coin. The other thing that comes to mind is those arcades where you have to take like a basketball and have to make it through a hoop that is really far away, but it is not really far away, but it looks really far away. And, it is at a different height than you expected, and the ball is a little different shape, so you think you are just going to play basketball. But there are enough differences that if you are not paying attention to those differences, you are not going to ever succeed.

She remembered watching young men with obviously years of experience in sports get furious trying to get the ball in the basket and not being able to do it. Then a middle schooler would walk up and get the ball in every single time.

I’ve watched that happen, and it is interesting how the guy that isn’t getting it in, doesn’t ask the middle-schooler what he did differently. He just keeps trying to do it. I see online learning like that. You have to be the middle-schooler. You’ve gotta like contextualize and figure out, “Ok, what’s different. It looks the same, but it’s not the same.” So, what’s different? What do I have to do to adjust to make this really effective?

She continued the metaphor just a little further and finished by saying, “I remember seeing one guy give the ball to a middle-schooler and saying, “Can you get one for me?” And he did. That’s not so bad either. Defer to the ones that are ubiquitous. It is just intuitive, right?

Then I asked whether she thought her metaphors of cotton candy and a basketball arcade were the same she would have used in the beginning of the semester. She thought she
probably would have been more traditional at the beginning of the semester. I think I would have said, “Roller coasters.” I was thinking probably not the big ones too. I do like the baby roller coasters. There has never been the thrill of going down at a high speed.

Changes in prior beliefs or assumptions

Finally, even though we had already discussed the need for a change in teaching philosophy, I asked Mary whether her prior beliefs or assumptions about teaching and learning had changed at all from her online teaching experience. She responded,

So, again I think the question still holds, ‘Who am I inside of this new platform as a teacher whose whole goal is to facilitate learning?’ I think I still have that question. I have been able to explore that question seeing all of the different ways, the tools you can use online, but I am still grappling with that question. I think it is the key question.

Mary has spoken with a colleague in her program who does everything online, and asked her how she gets her online students to produce the same things Mary’s students produce in the face-to-face classroom. Her colleague had to admit that they “just go into the mode of getting it done, checking it off, getting it done, checking it off.” But Mary gets her students into a processing mode where there is no ending. She wants to be able to do that online too.

I told Mary that she was creating a picture in my head that looked like a discussion forum that worked more like a concept map. Mary agreed, saying,

Yes, and that is how I see life. But multidimensional concept map. So it is more like a SmartBoard with the different layers that you can zoom in on at any point, and you can keep creating, right? A different layer.

Then Mary related all of this to the concept of flow.

Bottom line is that is where we are trying to get our students. We will never get that, but we are certainly trying to give them the environment where they actually immerse themselves in some of this stuff, and it just becomes a part of everything. So, they don’t care if there is an end or no end, if there is a grade or no grade, it is just that whole satisfaction of being in this.

In wrapping up, Mary shared that she wants to continue “dabbling” in the online environment.
I want to keep trying new things. I don’t want to derail my classes in the processes, you know. I want it to be always an enhancement to their learning. But I have found, now here is something interesting, I have found that being very explicit about the intentionality and purpose behind something that you are doing, whatever it happens to be, tends to just provide an opportunity for ownership. It doesn’t necessarily dictate ownership with some of your grad students, it’s a graduate level, but it definitely gives them an opportunity to own it, because you have been as explicit as possible on the intention and purpose behind what you are doing.

She shared the “huge success” of being explicit with her undergraduate students too.

I was explicit with absolutely every single thing I was doing. What they said at the end of the semester was, “I wish my high school teachers had done that. I would have learned this a lot quicker.” Like study skills, things they should have known but didn’t. So, we were learning how to learn basically. And what blogs look like in a learning environment instead of texting environment. So the first couple of blogs, by the way, were a little dicey, because they were thinking of it more like a live text environment, instead of a more academic, “Oh, I have to say something of content.” But I modeled it. It took a ton of work, but I did feedback on every single one of the first five.

**Kay**

**Preparations to teach online**

As Kay described her preparations to teach online, I realized that she was, perhaps, the participant least engaged in the faculty development program. Although she had attended the group face-to-face session, she admitted, “it was the only session I went to. I never went back to the ANGEL group.” She used her husband, who had been using discussion forums for a while in his courses, as a model and her main resource of information. So her preparations to teach online really focused only on her use of discussion forums because she wanted her students “to be doing the reading and engaging with the reading.”

**Teaching online**

Kay liked using discussion forums because she “was able to see more of what they were thinking about, which is not something you get, even when you are having classroom discussion,
because unless I point to everyone and ask them to say something, they won’t, or they may even decline to say something.” She did have one student concerned that others in the class would judge her by what she wrote. Kay felt that it was a “fear of putting your voice out there.” Other students shared that the discussion forums were helpful for understanding some of the course content, and Kay found that to be a positive. Her concern, however, was that some students would voice their discontent with the discussion forum as a “forced writing tool” on the end-of-course teaching evaluations. She thought this might have been something her husband had shared with her.

Changes in the classroom

The use of the online discussion forums changed what happened in class. Kay used the students’ online posts “as a jumping off point, so it allows the discussion to be a little bit more student-driven I think, which I think is a good thing.” Instead of just hearing from her, she felt that it gave students a bit more ownership of the course and they had to do some of the processing themselves rather than having her tell them everything by only using her PowerPoint presentations. She also hoped “that seeing other people’s perspectives helped them and gave them those tools for thinking about their own perspectives.” Kay felt that “the students who participate in class are the ones who participate online more” and thought that most of those who did not participate in class did post online when required to do so, which she thought was “a benefit for them.” She had weighted the three discussion forums as 10% of the overall class grade, but had not yet graded any of them.

I asked Kay about her involvement in the discussion forums, and she was a bit elusive. She didn’t respond to everybody, but did “respond to some of the comments that were made.” She seemed concerned about being “judgmental” in her comments, and worried about “how people are reading what it is you are saying, especially when it is coming from the instructor, the
authority in the classroom.” She wanted to encourage conversation and not “shutdown a student,” but, at the same time, felt it important to “correct misconceptions.” One thing she did not do was to correct their grammar and spelling. Kay had not been able to spend much time on preparing for her online course components over the summer, and now it seemed rather obvious that she had not fully considered her role in facilitating online discussions.

Somehow our conversation took a turn from discussion forums to the range of students Kay had in her class, from second-year students to graduate students, and some with very poor writing skills. From poor writing skills, she moved to online courses being more appropriate for motivated students, and then to share that in the future, “Online education will be for the masses.”

The conversation took another twist, and Kay said, “I hear too many tales of people who essentially cheat. They purchase a degree, because they have somebody else do the work in an online class for them.” She wondered what employers would think when they get our graduates who have purchased their degree and cannot write. This led to Kay mentioning that we are “increasingly a society where we are constantly under surveillance” and she said that we allow it “because we can’t trust people to be honest.” Whew! My head was spinning, but this turn in conversation certainly revealed the many misgivings Kay held about online teaching and learning. It was truly a wonder that she had given it a try at all!

Trying to get back on track, I asked Kay if teaching online was different than she had expected. She shared that not meeting in class was a downside and “produced a little anxiety for me, because I do feel that there was something that was missing, for me, when I don’t see students in the classroom. It might be for them too.” Students were not in contact with her during the online portions of the class except to ask questions about things that had been addressed in the syllabus, such as whether assignments should be submitted to a drop box. This seemed to frustrate her, although she admitted that it was the same problem “that we encounter even when we are in the classroom.”
Helpful aspects of faculty development program

Thinking about the faculty development program, Kay “found that the meeting with you and then the meeting with the group was helpful.” She also thought that some of the email exchanges were helpful, but she really didn’t use the ANGEL course resources saying, “Maybe it was just because of time constraints, but I didn’t think about it. If something is not immediately there, you don’t think about going to use that.”

Our conversation moved to one of Kay’s colleagues who was using podcasts, but she wondered about making additional demands on students’ time. I explained that the podcasts took the lecture time out of class so he could do different activities with his students in class in which they used the information delivered in the podcast. Kay wondered if listening to the podcast would be “at the expense of doing the reading.” She was still expressing her feeling of loss from her three online class sessions “because I know that there was more material that I might have done in a PowerPoint that I didn’t get to because we weren’t meeting.” It wasn’t that she didn’t feel that couldn’t have uploaded the PowerPoint file for her students to view outside of class, just as her colleague was using a podcast. It was more about having her “students talk about what they were seeing” and to “engage them in talking about what it is that they are seeing.” She felt that the podcast, and even the discussion forum to some extent, had this “downside” about not knowing when things weren’t clear to the students.

Use of reflection journal

I asked Kay about her thoughts on the value of having the reflection journal in the faculty development program. She thought, if she had the time, that opportunities to talk through things would have more value for her. It was not that she didn’t find value to writing, because she has used that in the past when she wanted to process something and needed to “put my thoughts down.” So, while she thought reflection journals were a useful tool, her time constraints are what
prevented her from using it. She concluded, “All lives are complicated.”

Talking about time constraints and complicated lives seemed to remind Kay about another facet of her course. This semester she noticed that “students were really, really stressed out a lot” so she made concessions in her course that she had never done. She found herself giving them more time to get assignments done, and more choices on whether to do the third writing assignment. While she didn’t see herself as a rigid person, she felt there was a value to deadlines, part of which was to help faculty “manage our workload.” Her students’ stress seemed to be weighing on her mind.

**Metaphor**

Kay did not like my request to consider her experiences with online teaching this semester and to choose a metaphor using an amusement park’s rides and activities. She felt it wasn’t a fair question “because I am thinking about the kind of rides I am comfortable with.” She knew it would not be a wild ride, because “that is not my style.” She considered the Ferris wheel and the merry-go-round because she was most comfortable with those rides. However, she seemed to feel a bit defensive about those choices and her reason because she immediately shared,

I am not uncomfortable with doing something new like this. If I learn the tools, I am willing to try anything and be reflective about what I am doing. I think I am not the sort of person who sees downsides, only the downsides, to everything, but I sort of try to shift and sway.

I suggested that perhaps she chose those rides because they were safer and she would know what to expect. She thought maybe she chose them because they are steady but keep going. She was beginning to like the thought of carousel better because it had the steadiness, but also the highs and lows of the horses.
Changes in prior beliefs or assumptions

Kay didn’t think that her prior beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning had changed from her online teaching experiences. This was because “I see students who are engaged in the normal classroom are very often the same ones who are engaged in online learning. They are already motivated.”

Beth

Preparations to teach online

I asked Beth to tell me about her preparations to teach online. She shared, “I spent time looking at my course assignments and learning activities, and what I did was figure out which one would be appropriate for an online format and which one I needed to continue offering during the face-to-face session.” Then she shared her decision to move her quizzes from the classroom to the online class,

From the beginning of the training, I knew definitely I wanted to do the quizzes online, because that was taking too much time spending a whole entire class session to write a quiz when I could easily have it online, and it could just basically solve the same problems. So the first quiz did not necessarily go as well as I had anticipated, but by the time the students took the second quiz, they were more comfortable, they knew what to expect, and things like that.

Beth also shared her decision-making process on how to handle the learning activities,

Once I decided which ones were appropriate for an online format, I had to make a decision, given the many different options we were introduced to during the training, and figure which ones would work best, and which technology tools was I comfortable with because I could only go ahead and explore the ones I was comfortable with. I didn’t want to really take major risks with the ones that I have never used before. So, basically, that took quite a bit of time. Also, just some of the templates you provided to us during the training, just using them for developing, laying out the course, the assignments, the activities, and things like that.

She shared changes she made in the organization of her course content, which sounded
similar to what she observed during the Adobe Connect session

The other thing I also did was to kind of chunk my topics in different modules, so I went from a full semester course to having like four modules that were kind of summarized around specific content, key concepts that needed to be addressed. It was much easier organizing activities under the different modules, and student knew when each module was beginning and the relationship between the content or concepts covered under the different modules.

She had moved five face-to-face class sessions online and also moved two quizzes online, leaving her with eleven face-to-face classes during the semester.

**Teaching online**

Beth spoke extensively about her online teaching experience, and was quite animated in describing it. It was obvious that the experience had been exciting for her. First she shared her experience with the online quizzes.

The quiz experience was very different. To me, it was a very efficient way of administering a quiz, because once the questions were developed and uploaded, then also for the short answer sessions, it was very fast. Even grading the quizzes was so fast compared to the amount of time I would have spent traditionally to grade a paper quiz. So, quizzes, definitely. I don’t think I will ever do a paper quiz again. It just has to be online.

She left no doubt in my mind that online quizzing had saved her time, and she had regained precious classroom time for other kinds of learning activities.

Then Beth shared her experience, and her students’ experience, with an online discussion forum.

The discussion forum, the first one that the students did, really went well I would say, because I gave them very specific instructions, and they had the opportunity to ask questions. . . I had some overachieving students who really took advantage of the opportunity to explore the discussion forum and how it works, and they really did well. A few students definitely, it was obvious, were strugglers, struggling with technology. They were not really very comfortable with the discussion forum but, because it was part of the classroom expectations, they still had to do it.

Another online component Beth added were two learning modules developed by another university with funding that made the modules available to others. The modules had video clips,
text, specific questions to which students needed to respond, and experts speaking about the topics. These modules provided Beth with “a very easy way for me to address two major topics that I would have struggled with finding time to address in class.” The modules’ questions and the students’ answers became part of a classroom discussion at their next face-to-face meeting.

Beth also had her students submit their assignments electronically. Then she graded them and gave them feedback, returning their assignments as email attachments. This was new to a lot of her students since “they were used to bringing a piece of paper to class,” but they realized its efficiency.

Beth provided an open discussion forum where her students “would post if they had a problem.” It was used the most at the beginning of the semester, and she “thought it was very effective because when they posted their question, many times one of their peers had already responded even before I went in.” Then Beth would simply confirm the answer that had been posted. Its use seemed to fall “by the wayside” as the semester got busier.

Changes in the classroom

Next, Beth shared how adding the online components changed what happened in the classroom. Besides being able to include more content then she “would traditionally have covered if it were face-to-face,” they also “had an opportunity to talk about everything they wanted to talk about.” Back in class together, they would debrief “based on what had happened online.” She continued to share some teachable moments.

So you see, it gave me an opportunity to highlight some things if there were some ideas or concepts that were misrepresented during the discussion forum. It would give me an opportunity to address them in the classroom. And then, also, many teachable moments occurred as a result of just being able to be in the discussion forum. Some of them were very comfortable sharing some of their experiences from their field placement, and things like that. I think adding the online component was a big plus, because everybody got an opportunity to share their perspective with regards to this controversial topic I am trying to teach them, which traditionally, they would not have had the opportunity.
Beth continued to share about the opportunities for participation that the online components of her class provided, and the new perspective it gave her on their learning and thinking.

You know, during a face-to-face class session, it is very easy to slide by without even calling on some students to talk, but everybody got to talk in my class this semester, and even share their perspective with regards to the topic. It kind of gave me an idea where my students were coming from and, also, gave me very useful insight in refocusing some of my class activities.

This changed what happened in the classroom quite dramatically.

Even in the classroom, because of the fact that a student had shared something online, it gave me the idea to ask very specific questions based on what the student had shared. . . If it was just me posing questions to them in the classroom without knowing any background or how they felt about a certain topic, or what kinds of experiences they had in the classroom, I would have not known. I would have just been asking generic questions. But, this way, I was able to focus my questions on specific topics and issues that needed to be addressed.

Beth, again, addressed the teachable moments and how even her students recognized them, and she also described the value of having an electronic record of her students’ work rather than having it all on paper.

They thought there were a lot of teachable moments that occurred and, most of the time, I would tailor them based on what they shared on the discussion forum or even when they did their reflection. They had to do a pre-class reflection, and now, in a week’s time, they are going to do a post-class reflection. Because their assignment was submitted electronically, the record is right there. I can still go back. It is an excellent record for me.

She found the online submission of assignments had helped her record-keeping. Now she knew “where to go and look.”

**Helpful aspects of faculty development program**

Beth found the faculty development program to be quite helpful in that it provided an excellent opportunity to explore many different tools. It gave me a chance also to hear other people’s perspectives and what they were doing. I was able to, like they say *borrow, beg and steal*, from what other people were doing and figure out how it fits into my course, which I don’t think would have happened traditionally if the professional development was not there. And even
just a sample that you shared with us of a class that is being offered 100% online gave me some insight and got me thinking about some things that would definitely fit with my class and things that do not fit my class. It gave me extra ideas and things to think about as ways of refining them.

Other than John, I had not realized that any of the participants had actually looked at the online course to which I had provided access, so I was pleased to hear that Beth had found it helpful.

I asked for suggestions for the faculty development program’s next offering. Beth referenced faculty’s busy schedules and lack of time, but suggested that one thing that might be helpful would be to have an ending face-to-face meeting as an opportunity for people to share specific changes that they are going to make and get insights from their peers on different ways. I may be thinking of doing something a certain way, and when I share it with members of the group, they can give me some useful insights to help me revise or kind of tighten up my course.

She even thought this might work in an electronic fashion where they could post their plans online and get feedback from their peers. She thought the best way to do this would be to talk about it at the beginning of the program so the participants would be aware of it and could work towards it.

**Use of reflection journal**

Beth found great personal value in the use of the reflection journal, which she partially attributed to her background as a teacher educator.

I think it is important because, believe it or not, even in the middle of this semester, there were times I went back and looked at some of the reflections I did throughout the summer sessions and figured out, “What did I say, and did anything I say in my reflections impact what I am doing now?” So I was able to go back and because it was electronic, it was right there. If it was a piece of paper, it would probably be lost.

At the least, she thought that a pre- and post-reflection were very important. She also appreciated the writing prompts to “focus your reflection.”
Metaphor

In considering a metaphor as a result of her online teaching over the semester, Beth said, “Teaching is an adventure.” She explained her choice.

When I set off at the beginning of the semester, I didn’t know what direction everything was going to take, but as the semester unfolded, and as my students worked on different assignments, it just took all kinds of different directions, but eventually what was important to me was the end product, for them to demonstrate some level of learning.

She thought she would have chosen a different metaphor at the beginning of the semester because she “was set and I expected things to be done in a certain way.” She was not expecting an adventure! It seemed that the discussion forums, especially, impacted the changes she made to her class because students “talked about many different things that were not necessarily related to their prompt, but it was useful information that I needed to know.” Even though not all students opened up as much as the others,

the few sentences that they shared gave me an opportunity to probe them further in the class and figure out, and it also gave me the opportunity from the initial pre-class reflection, I was able to tailor and refine some assignments along the way to ensure that some bits and pieces were addressed.

So, from having things set and planned for the semester, Beth found herself being more “open and flexible to making adjustments here and there, which I don’t think traditionally I would have made if I would have not tried to explore some of these online tools.”

Changes in prior beliefs and assumptions

When I asked Beth if she thought her prior beliefs or assumptions about teaching and learning had changed from her online teaching experience, she wasn’t sure. I probed a little more and asked about the change she mentioned of being more open and flexible. She responded that she “went into it more open-minded and just ready to learn alongside of the students. I think I am now more willing to explore many other things that I would have probably, traditionally, not have explored.” She felt that “now I am more open and more flexible to exploring and experimenting
with different things, which probably in the past I would have been more rigid, not willing, and reluctant to try.” Beth also thought that her experience with online teaching and learning gave her the comfort that she would not have to worry about campus closings or personal emergencies because her “students would continue learning without any interruptions.”

Ralph

Preparations to teach online

To prepare to teach online, Ralph attended the summer face-to-face workshop. He considered “what to put online and in what format.” Using the templates I had provided, he “developed every single discussion forum, every single instruction.” He said that it took him “a long time just to think about what questions I wanted to do, what format I wanted to do, what kind of things I wanted to have in place, the links I wanted to provide for the students.” Regarding the discussion forums, he wondered what he should emphasize, what questions to ask, how to structure it as far as points to assign, how often and when to require postings and replies. After that, he spent even more time as he “would go back and look at it, thinking do I have everything that I need to have there or am I missing something.” It was obvious that Ralph had spent quite a bit of time thinking and preparing to teach online.

Teaching online

Ralph had decided that discussion forums would work best for the online portion of his class “because we do a lot of discussion in class.” Since not everyone participated in the face-to-face classroom, “having the online discussion forum was a way to really get everybody’s input into the topic.”

His experience online was different than he had expected, “in the sense that since I was
not in class I was not sure what to expect.” In the beginning, he did a lot of checking into the discussion forums to “monitor who was answering and when they were going in there to place a post.” He needed “to make sure that things were going as they were supposed to go because that was the first time looking at it and then I wasn’t sure the student was going to really understand what they needed to do.” It turned out the students were fine, and he would send those who were late in posting reminder emails, and he “did a lot of replying to their posts right away.” Towards the end of the course, he “didn’t follow as carefully as I was doing the first two or three assignments.” He subscribed to the discussion forums so he was able to read the posts in his email as they were posted. This eliminated repeated checks of the discussion forum.

Online, he found that students could take their time and find sources to support what they were saying. He was surprised to realize that learning was taking place online. Students “appreciate the opportunity to have more discussion about and knowing what all their students are saying about” the discussion topic. Additionally, “you know what other people’s opinions are about whatever the topics might be and they seem to bring a different level of interaction that the class, you know, face-to-face, doesn’t have.” He seemed excited that sometimes students would even go back to the discussion forum and reply to the replies, which was above the initial-post-and-reply requirement. Ralph referred to this as “icing on the cake.” He considered this to be “a different level of learning because they are pulling together what they read from the book, from the resources that I have online, all that together to what they have to discuss in the discussion forum.”

With the asynchronous nature of discussion forums, Ralph also thought that his students “appreciate that they have time to think about it.” Some students had shared that in class, sometimes they didn’t participate in discussion “because by the time I think about it we’re already moving on to something else.” The online discussion forum was different because “I have a chance to read, to conference with somebody, think about it, and then go post a comment to it.”
He felt that this was giving his students “that other extra component of critical thinking.” He also liked that the discussion forum “brought different points of view.”

Ralph experienced another surprise in the online discussion forums. He found that students were very willing to bring “some kind of a personal component to it like here’s what happened to me, or in my job, this is how it is.” He “was surprised at some of the things that they would share in the discussion online that they probably wouldn’t have shared in class.” Ralph didn’t think they would “have been as open in class as they did online.”

Changes in the classroom

In the classroom, Ralph tried “to bring back the discussion that they have online to the following session when we come back to class.” He pointed out interesting points and surprises from the discussion, and students had an opportunity to add to what they had shared online. They tried to “tie it to whatever the next topic might be.”

Helpful aspects of faculty development program

Ralph found the step-by-step instructions, samples, workshop discussion, and the visuals provided by the online course example to be the most helpful aspects of the faculty development program. He shared, “If I would’ve had to start from scratch, I would’ve had nothing, no clue where to go or what.” He thought that the course example was the most helpful, and appreciated being able to browse around another faculty member’s course within the course management system he would also be using.

Considering possible changes to the faculty professional development program, one thing he continues to struggle with is “how do you get the professor, the instructor, still into the class when they’re online and you’re not really there. . . How do you get involved in the conversation without saying too much, or manipulating what they’re saying.” He thought a helpful addition to the program would be having a faculty member come and talk about their online course,
including “what they have done, what kind of challenges they have faced, what kind of things they see different from being online.” In this way, Ralph thought that they “would know a little more about it before getting into it.” In regards to the face-to-face workshop, he thought it would have been helpful to create something by the end of the session.

Use of reflection journal

Ralph thought the reflection journal was valuable because “it forced you to think about the process that we were going through and . . . put it in some kind of perspective.” He felt that he really had “to think about it rather than I’m just going to do it and move on.” The journal “allowed for more of a personal assessment.” He admitted that he would not have done it if it hadn’t been part of the program. However, he also thought its use could have been reduced to simply a pre- and post-reflection, rather the number that had been required.

Metaphor

A carousel is what came to mind for Ralph as his metaphor, because of its cyclical nature. It seemed to apply because every single online assignment for that particular class was pretty much the same format. Go in, here’s your reading materials, here’s the task that you need to complete, you have this deadline by this Friday to do this, and then you have the following Tuesday to go back and respond to your classmates’ comments.

He felt that “once the students get used to that, it’s easy to go through the second time around, the third time around, and so on.” Additionally, he placed the online sessions two to three weeks apart, so that even seemed to have a cyclical nature to it.

At the beginning of the semester, he thought he might have chosen a roller coaster as his metaphor instead. He hates roller coasters, and avoids them. That’s how he remembers feeling at the beginning of the semester, being unsure “what was going to happen.” He feared, “if this doesn’t work, then I’m going to be going down the hill real fast and this will collapse on me and I
have no idea what to do next!” Luckily, it turned out to be “more of a smooth ride.”

Changes in prior beliefs or assumptions

Ralph shared that a few of his prior beliefs and assumptions had changed. First, he assumed that “there would be more work, you’re probably going to spend more time online, trying to be available 24/7 and so on.” However, he chose “not to be that kind of online person” and was able to determine a schedule that worked well for him and his students. He required his students to use ANGEL’s mail system to contact him. Then he set his discussion deadlines and used them to determine when he needed to be online. He “set up the first deadline to be on a Friday and then the second deadline for the following Tuesday.” This meant that he was a little busier on Fridays and Tuesdays. He also subscribed to the discussion forums so each new post was sent to his email. He thought that made it easy because he could read it and delete it, knowing that the posts were still available in the discussion forum for him to “go back and read it again if I have to.”

The other belief that changed was that he thought his students had to be in class to learn but, in fact, there was more soft learning online than in the classroom. He had been surprised by how well they made connections between the readings, online resources, and their own experiences. He was also surprised by how much they shared online compared to the classroom. Of course, there were a few students who would make their initial post but then never go back and reply to a classmate’s posting. However, most of his students found the online assignment to be helpful even though it was more work, and “appreciated the interaction with the other students.”
Summary of Findings from Final Cycle of Action Research

Preparations to teach online

It was obvious from the post-interviews that some faculty had spent much more time preparing to teach online than others. A number of them mentioned attending the group face-to-face workshop and/or the Adobe Connect session, meeting with me one-on-one to consult on their online course session ideas and learn how to use some new technology tools, and browsing through the online course that had been provided as an example. A few mentioned returning to our faculty professional development ANGEL course to use the templates, instructions, and samples provided there. Mick also mentioned the pre-interview as being helpful in prompting him to think about new things. Kay relied on her husband as a model for online teaching, and her main resource of information. She never re-entered our course in ANGEL after the group face-to-face session.

John, Beth, and Ralph all talked about reviewing their course and considering what might be best suited for online and what would be more appropriate for the face-to-face sessions. John and Ralph tried to schedule the online sessions evenly throughout the semester, while Beth did the same but also had to consider her pre-teacher field experience schedules.

Many of the faculty needed to learn how to use new tools in order to teach online. A number of them learned how to use a discussion forum, including Mick, Lou, Kay, Beth, and Ralph. Mick had to familiarize himself with other ANGEL tools including mail, drop boxes, and the grade book. Lou learned how to make pages in ANGEL. Mary learned how to create blogs and wikis, although it turned out that she did not use the wiki. Beth moved her quizzes online. Each made decisions on tools based on what they thought would work best for their class, or what would best support the kind of learning they wanted in their students. Others, such as Mick and Beth were also considering efficiencies they could create by using some of ANGEL’s tools.
From my observations, journal postings, and communications, it seems that Beth and Ralph spent the most time engaging in the professional development program’s activities and using the resources provided in the ANGEL course to prepare for online teaching. Mary and Mick spent time in one-on-one consultations with me, but I don’t know that they engaged in the program’s resources as much as Beth and Ralph, or reflected as often. Kay, John, and Lou seemed to have spent the least amount of time engaged in the program, and the least amount of time preparing for online teaching. I mention this now so I can refer back to it as I discuss the other findings.

**Teaching online**

All of the participants decided on different schedules for the online portions of their classes, and two did not replace any face-to-face sessions with online sessions. Ralph used extensive online resources to provide his students with some flexibility in deciding whether or not they needed to come to campus for two or three of his classes. Students could choose to work independently or come to class for one-on-one assistance from him. Similarly, Lou did not replace a class session, but placed an assignment online, which was a big step for him, technologically speaking.

John made sure that he had face-to-face sessions at the beginning and end of the semester, and alternated online sessions during mid-semester. Mary set her online schedule based on different constraints. Kay had several online discussions in place of face-to-face class sessions. Beth moved five class sessions online, and Ralph moved four or five class sessions online, alternating every two to three weeks.

With six participants learning how to use the discussion forum, this was an activity used by many, but it was employed differently. Mick used it more as a place for students to pose questions about the computer applications they were learning. Lou used it for one online
assignment so students could post their service-learning project and comment on each other’s learning. Neither Mick nor Lou used the discussion forum as a replacement for a class session.

Kay, Beth, and Ralph used the discussion forum in a fairly similar fashion to pose questions for their students to answer, and then reply to a classmate’s posting. Kay’s purpose for the discussion forum was to have her students “reading and engaging with the reading,” while Ralph’s purpose was to gain everyone’s participation. All three were pleased with the discussion forums’ use. Kay felt that she “was able to see more of what they were thinking about” and Beth similarly felt that she gained better insights into her students’ understanding about the sensitive topics they were studying. Ralph noticed a different level of interaction than in class and a different level of learning. He felt that the online discussion forum provided his students with time to think before discussing, and they were able to pull together their learning from the readings, online resources, and personal experiences into the discussion. He noticed that they shared more personal components online than in the classroom.

Beth’s use of the online quizzes created an efficiency with faster grading, and she regained valuable class time for other learning activities. Another efficiency was the dropbox, which she used to have students submit assignments electronically, and she also used it for grading and providing feedback.

Mary was quite pleased with her students’ use of their blogs, which actually surprised her. She felt that their writing had better quality than her previous semester’s students’ writing using paper. Mary also used interactive PowerPoint presentations online in which she provided slides with prompts asking students to stop and do a writing, which they would then submit.

Changes in the classroom

There was quite a variance in changes the faculty noticed in their classrooms. The three faculty with no changes or only slight changes were John, Mick, and Lou. John noticed no
changes except that he did not cover material in class that he had provided online. The changes Mick noticed were subtle in that less students attended class, which had seemed to be his intent, and he spent more one-on-one time with the students who attended. Even though Lou did not replace any of his class sessions with online classes, he thought that his students were more open with each other in the classroom after sharing with each other online.

It is interesting to note that the four faculty who had heavy use of the discussion forums or blogs are the ones who noticed some changes in the classroom. Mary felt that her students’ use of the blogs made their class conversation seem more connected. Also, students reported that they felt more connected with other students as a result from the blogs and from working in groups. In class, Kay used the online discussion forums “as a jumping off point” for classroom discussion which became more student-driven. Beth reported something very similar in that the online discussions gave her “useful insights in refocusing some of my class activities.” Ralph tied the online discussion to the next topic in class.

Helpful aspects of the faculty development program

The group face-to-face workshop was mentioned by most of the participants who attended. Lou said that the opportunity to work with the tools hands-on made him feel more relaxed and comfortable with the technology. Kay also mentioned the group workshop, but didn’t mention any specifics. Beth appreciated the chance to work with different tools, and to hear other’s perspectives. Ralph suggested that faculty should create something by the end of the workshop to use in their online class.

Hearing from other faculty was mentioned several times as being a helpful aspect. John appreciated “talking to my colleagues about what they were doing and their experiences.” Mary also talked to colleagues. Ralph thought that more opportunities for experienced faculty to come and talk to them about their online course would have been helpful. Mick echoed this wish and
suggested adding “a time for brainstorming with other faculty” for “a kind of free flowing discussion.” Beth suggested an ending face-to-face group meeting where all of the participants could share their course changes and useful insights. Acknowledging their busy schedules and lack of time, she also thought this might be able to occur online.

One-on-one consultations with me were also mentioned in their responses. Lou said that working with me was essential in making his online assignment a reality. Mary shared that the one-on-one meetings we had were helpful because she needed the additional hands-on time with the blogs and wikis, being able to see it and hear it. John thanked me for being helpful answering questions and assisting him. Since I did not meet with him beyond the group face-to-face meeting, I assumed that he was referring to our email exchanges. Kay also mentioned the email exchanges as being helpful, and she was another participant with whom I did not work one-on-one.

Other aspects the participants found helpful were the Adobe Connect session and the provision of a sample online course. Ralph and Beth also appreciated the resources in our ANGEL course.

**Use of reflection journal**

Since the reflection journal had seen varied use, I was interested in the participants’ perception of its usefulness. Notice that no one mentioned it as a helpful aspect of the faculty development program. Most recognized its value, but also shared excuses of lack of time, lack of deadlines, and complicated lives for not using it more than they did. Those who shared its value said that it challenged them to think about what they were doing and why, and provided a reference to refer back to. Beth and Ralph suggested reducing the number of reflections to just a pre- and post-reflection. Kay and Mary would have preferred an opportunity to talk things through rather than write it down.
It is interesting to note that Beth and Ralph are the two participants who responded to all four reflection prompts. They are the same two who I perceived as being most engaged in the faculty development program. Their journal postings were more than a restatement of facts. Beth questioned why she taught the way that she did, and Ralph shared that his reflection posts helped him to understand the process he was going through as he prepared to teach online. Kay, John, and Mick only responded to one reflection prompt.

Metaphor

The metaphor activity was a new strategy for me. I adapted a sample metaphor exercise from Gillis and Johnson (2002) with the hope that their structure would make it an effective question and increase my confidence in its use. Even so, not all participants were comfortable with this exercise. There were long pauses, laughter, and Kay even considered it to be an unfair question. However, everyone finally was able to provide a metaphor for their online teaching. Mick suggested “weightlessness” since he felt as though he was “floating along.” Lou considered himself to be “arriving” and working on a “journey” of moving toward the target of using technology. John thought of himself as a “lift rider” where you cross high above the amusement park, secure, flexible, open, and able to see different things. He was the “steady ride” that provided information. Mary considered herself to be “cotton candy” and also a “basketball arcade.” Cotton candy is “enjoyable and it sticks to you.” In a basketball arcade, you have to pay attention to the differences in order to be effective. Kay and Ralph both selected a “carousel.” Kay said that the carousel provided steadiness along with highs and lows, while Ralph mentioned the ride’s cyclical nature, similar to his course with the same format for each online session. At the beginning of the semester, Ralph thought he might have chosen the “roller coaster” because he feared going down hill fast! Beth simply chose an “adventure” because she had set off at the beginning of the semester without knowing what direction things were going to take. She also
would have chosen a different metaphor at the beginning of the semester because she was all set and expected things to be done in a certain way.

Changes in prior beliefs and assumptions

Not all faculty thought that they had experienced changes in their prior beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning. Mick did not think anything had changed “as much as it reinforced and strengthened this notion of constantly evaluating what you do and the impact on students.” John also did not notice any changes. He felt that he still needed face-to-face time for interacting with his students, and was willing to consider a synchronous online tool such as Adobe Connect for this. Mary really didn’t think she experienced any changes either, although she did believe that one’s philosophy of teaching must change to teach online. However, she still had many questions that needed answering including, “Who am I inside of this new platform as a teacher whose whole goal is to facilitate learning?” She wanted to continue “dabbling” in the online environment. She had experienced successes online and was impressed with the work her students created.

Kay felt that she had not experienced any changes either. I felt that she was the faculty member who had prepared the least for her online sessions, and relied only on one person for all of her information. She really hadn’t taken time to think through how she was going to facilitate the online discussions, and not seeing her students in class had produced some “anxiety.” She said that participation online was the same as in class; those students engaged in class were also those engaged online. However, Kay had previously shared how she had changed what she did in the classroom by using the online discussion forums as her starting point for a more student-driven in class discussion. She felt that the online discussion had given students more ownership of the course and opportunities to “do some processing themselves.” Perhaps this wasn’t so much a change in her beliefs, but a strategy to finally operationalize her previously held beliefs.
Lou was surprised that the online assignment wasn’t as time consuming as he had expected, and it was more rewarding than he had anticipated. He was also surprised by his students’ lack of resistance, and thought that they were more objective online. He also thought students learning through the online assignment was broader and had a greater impact on their initial ideas about urban areas than he had expected.

Beth was immediately aware of the changes she had experienced. In the past, she had been “more rigid, not willing, and reluctant to try” anything new. She would have her lesson plans set for the course at the beginning of the semester and that’s what she would follow. Now she was “more open and more flexible to exploring and experimenting.” She allowed herself to refocus some of her class activities to respond to the insights she gained through reading her students’ discussion forum posts, and was able to take advantage of “many teachable moments.” Students had opportunities “to talk about everything they wanted to talk about” and “everybody got an opportunity to share.”

Ralph thought teaching online would mean more work and being available 24/7. However, he made a conscious decision not to be like that, and set a schedule that would work for him and his students. Originally, he thought that his students had to be in class to learn. In fact, he said, “If I don’t lecture about it, how will they learn it?” Through the online discussions, he found that his students experienced more soft learning, were able to make connections between their readings, online resources, and their own experiences, and shared more personal aspects of their life than they did in class.

Summary of Findings from Final Cycle of Action Research

During the third action research cycle, the open, unstructured, and general messiness of the process was feeling like a complete failure to me at times. However, I realized that progress
was being made, and good things were happening. I had to learn to let go a little, be flexible, and allow the process to be a bit more organic. Dealing with the inadequacies of email, sending individual rather than group emails seemed to be effective since they elicited responses almost immediately. I don’t know if it had anything to do with the timing, or if the appearance of a message being personal is what made the difference.

Classroom observations provided visual cues to determine possible matches between the participants’ assumptions and beliefs about teaching and the teaching practices shared during the pre-interviews. Of course, the observations were just a glimpse of the entire semester, and other changes could have occurred that were not observed. I was convinced that practicing what you believe becomes harder to do once you are in the classroom. Some faculty still held a firm belief that lectures were required to provide students with the information they need. However, even they had moved some of their information sharing online and out of the classroom, making room for other learning activities. There was an almost universal feeling of care and concern for students demonstrated by the faculty. Although there was some mismatch between assumptions and beliefs and the classroom observations, most descriptions of teaching practices shared during the pre-interviews matched what I observed in the classroom.

The post-interviews provided an opportunity to learn more about faculty’s perceptions of the faculty development program, to determine whether they had experienced any changes in their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and the impact learning to teach online had on their face-to-face teaching. While learning to teach online was the catalyst to bring the participants to the faculty development program, the program provided the process for them to begin rethinking what they were doing in the classroom and why.

A number of the faculty development aspects were considered helpful, but talking to their colleagues, seeing examples of online courses, and responding to reflection prompts seemed to be most effective in helping them rethink their teaching activities in order to provide an online
experience for their class. While they did not display an obvious questioning of assumptions and beliefs, they learned new things about themselves and about their students.

Learning to teach online and then actually teaching online were the reasons for changes, and transformative learning can explain some of these. What actually happened online was different than what they expected to happen. However, the preparation and support provided through the faculty development program made positive experiences possible, which opened new possibilities for the participants, expanding their worldviews. Something that had previously been unavailable to them, online teaching, was now a new skill they had developed and used, spurring new ideas and trying new tools.

Changes were noticed in some of the classrooms as a result of online teaching. Faculty reported more openness and connectedness among the students. There was a move to more learner-centered classes and less reliance on lecture. Students had more opportunities to participate in discussions, and everyone got an opportunity to share. Because of this, faculty reported understanding more about their students’ learning, and the creation of teachable moments.

The next chapter provides an overview of the major findings, and relates them to the literature. Implications for future faculty professional development and future research are discussed. Finally, concluding thoughts are shared along with the significance of this study.
Chapter 7

Discussion and Recommendations for Practice

This chapter presents the primary research findings in relation to the literature, shares my personal learning as a result of this research project, explores the implications of the findings for the practice of faculty professional development and future research, and concludes with a summary of the significance of this study’s findings. In order to frame the discussion and recommendations, the gaps in the literature from which this research arose, the purpose and objectives of the study, and the theoretical lens through which the study was conducted, will be briefly restated.

A gap was recognized in the literature for faculty professional development for online teaching. While there were a number of studies that noted faculty’s reported changes in their online teaching experience (e.g., Conceicao, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrissi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004), no study had explored changes in faculty’s teaching assumptions, beliefs, and face-to-face teaching practices resulting from their preparations to teach online. Additionally, none of the faculty professional development models reviewed contained a reflective component to intentionally question faculty’s assumptions and beliefs about teaching and inform their face-to-face teaching practices. All seemed to hold face-to-face teaching and online teaching as completely separate events.

Therefore, the purpose of this action research study was to explore how faculty learn to teach online and how that may influence their face-to-face teaching. The research questions were:

1. Which aspects of the professional development activities do faculty perceive as being most effective in helping them to reflect on and question their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching?
2. Do faculty experience changes in their previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching as a result of learning to teach online and, if so, how does transformative learning explain the change?

3. What impact does learning to teach online have on face-to-face teaching practices?

These questions were framed with the recognition of faculty as adult learners. The theoretical basis for faculty changes was provided by a holistic perspective of transformative learning theory, which has at its heart change in previously held assumptions and beliefs. The next section delves into each of six key findings related to the research questions. The literature from online teaching, professional development to prepare faculty to teach online, adult learning and transformative learning are related to these findings.

**Findings and the Literature**

The literature review described in Chapter 2 explored transformative learning theory as a theoretical basis for faculty changes, the nature of online teaching and faculty’s experiences teaching online, the concept of faculty as adult learners within professional development programs, and the role of those professional development programs to prepare faculty to teach online. Additionally, the empirical literature examining a number of faculty professional development models was reviewed. Based on my understanding from the literature review and the results of this action research study, there are six key findings.
Finding 1: Connections

Within the faculty professional development program, opportunities for faculty to talk to experienced online colleagues, explore examples of online courses, and reflect on their preparations to teach online were perceived by the faculty participants to be most effective in supporting change.

If the goal of faculty’s professional development is to improve one’s practice through changing the ways in which one does or thinks about their work (Eisin, 2001), then being aware of the aspects of professional development that support those changes is quite important. The aspects of the faculty professional development program to prepare to teach online that faculty found most helpful were the opportunities to talk to experienced online colleagues, explore examples of online courses, work one-on-one with an instructional designer, and reflect on their preparations to teach online. During this study, these experiences were provided by a group face-to-face workshop held in a computer lab, a synchronous online Adobe Connect session with an experienced colleague who explained and gave a virtual tour of his course, and access to a completely online course that resided within the course management system the participants were using. A number of the participants met with me individually during their preparations to teach online, and continued to communicate with me via email or face-to-face meetings throughout the study. Reflection journal writing prompts provided opportunities to consider what they were doing and why. While the literature confirms the importance of dialogue, access to examples, and reflection within professional development programs, the participants in this study also recognized them as effective in supporting the changes they made for teaching online.

Regarding dialogue, this is one way in which faculty can “learn about teaching by talking about their experiences, becoming aware of the assumptions and expectations they have, questioning these assumptions, and possibly revising their perspectives” (Cranton, 1996, p. 2). It
is this talking about teaching that helps faculty consider their “views in a new light” and to also consider alternative perspectives (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 289). It can serve to validate or question an assumption or belief. In fact, it typically requires the help of others for us to see and articulate our assumptions (Cranton, 1996). During the post-interviews as faculty shared their thoughts on talking with their colleagues, they used terms that included “bounce some ideas,” “hear other people’s perspectives,” “figure out how it fits into my course,” and “things they see differently from being online.” The value of dialogue in considering alternate perspectives and trying them on was evident in these conversations.

Participating in discussion with colleagues can generate an interest in new approaches (Baker, Boggs, & Arabasiz, 2003), and dramatically increase the possibility of finding new and richer meanings (Fink, 2003). John found talking with his colleagues beneficial to his beginning planning. Beth had shared during the post-interview that she would have valued an opportunity to talk with faculty again at the end of the professional development program as a way to share the changes they had planned and to get constructive feedback. Mick also wished for an end-of-program opportunity to participate in “kind of a free flowing discussion” where he could “bounce some ideas and get a reaction from the group.”

Dialogue can even be considered a public form of reflection (Langley, O’Connor & Welkener, 2004). In fact, both Mary and Kay shared that they would have preferred talking rather than writing about their thoughts. Mary said that she “would have much rather been able to reflect by just sitting down and talking about it.” Kay thought that opportunities to talk through things would have had more value for her. For Beth, the face-to-face discussion provided in the group workshop “provided the opportunity to reflectively think through why I teach the way I do.” She realized that she was resorting to teaching strategies that had been modeled to her as a graduate student but that were not effective and did not match with her current beliefs about teaching and learning.
Brookfield (2006) has shared that while planning an online course, it is helpful for faculty to have access to similar courses taught by experienced online instructors to see examples of course organization and teaching activities. Ralph, John, and Beth actually based their own course organization on examples provided in this study’s professional development program. Ralph appreciated being able to browse around another faculty member’s online course. For Beth, seeing examples provided her with new insights, new ideas, and changes to consider. However, even though Mary needed “to be able to see it and hear it,” she also expressed her need to see different examples, especially from a faculty member more like herself who was using a similar socio-constructivist philosophy of teaching.

Reflection has been widely recognized as having an important role in faculty’s growth (Brancato, 2003; Brookfield, 2005; Cranton, 1996; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Cranton & King, 2003; Fink, 2003; Hampton, Morrow, Bechtel, & Carroll, 2004; King & Kitchener, 2004; Kreber, 2004; Langley, O’Connor, & Welkener, 2004). Mick thought that his use of the reflection journal provided him opportunities to stop and think about his course differently than he had in the past. Lou also felt that the reflection activities challenged him to think and become more conscious about the changes he was making. This act of being mindful about what they were doing as they prepared to teach online was also shared by Ralph. Beth even returned to her reflection journal writing to reread it in order to understand how her thinking was impacting what she was doing.

**Finding 2: Preparation through Reflection and Discourse**

*Reflective writing and discourse about preparing to teach online and teaching online provide the possibility for changes in previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching.*

Transformative learning is the “process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more
inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7-8). In this faculty professional development program, reflective writing and dialogue about preparing to teach online, and teaching online, were used to create awareness of and to question previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Reflective activities around preparing to teach online and teaching online opened up the possibility for changes in previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching.

Beth’s first reflection post responding to a writing prompt asking about the pre-interview illustrated her openness to change, sharing that it was the first time she had “taken time to purposefully reflect on the extent to which past events and experiences influence what I do in my classroom today.” Ralph’s first reflection post showed an openness to change with his initial questions, “As I consider teaching a hybrid/online course, I am wondering how would my teaching style change, what challenges would I encounter, would my students be able to perform and learn…the answers to these questions are yet to come.” For this process to actually be transformative, the “reflection has to involve and lead to some fundamental change in perspective” (Cranton, 1996, p. 79-80). This process was most evident with Beth and Ralph, although other participants showed some level of questioning and an openness to change.

Beth believed that she had no option but to lecture to her students because “most students come to me with very wide gaps in the foundational knowledge they are expected to have prior to taking this course.” However, preparing to teach online and teaching online was a new perspective from which she was able to examine her long-held beliefs about teaching. She realized that she had provided too many resources to her students resulting in information overload. She shared her excitement at the new possibilities available to her through online teaching and the related tools. She was already engaged in revising assignments to more actively involve her students in the co-construction of knowledge and meaning.
Ralph believed that his students had to be in the classroom to learn, but here he was in a program to prepare his course for a hybrid delivery in which students would be expected to also learn online. A change in his assumptions and beliefs was necessary for this to be a positive experience for both himself and his students. As it turned out, his students were able to learn online and Ralph was surprised at how much more open they were with each other, and how they were able to relate what they were learning more readily to their work experiences.

Mezirow (2000) wrote, “A mindful transformative learning experience requires that the learner make an informed and reflective decision to act on his or her reflective insight” (pp. 23-24). Not only were Beth and Ralph engaged in reflective thought and writing, they were also open and willing to change. They wanted to learn how to teach online, and were willing to make changes to their existing teaching practices. “If educators are to develop their practice, a process including both personal and professional growth, then critical reflection on practice will be central to the learning” (Cranton, 1996, p. 76).

Mezirow (2000) also wrote that “The more reflective and open we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be” (p. 20). Beth’s eyes and mind were wide open to new possibilities. After the Adobe Connect session with an experienced online colleague, her journal entry captured her new thinking around her course layout and the use of face-to-face time for collaborative problem solving. John also wondered what he could do differently, also showing an openness to change.

Mary was actively questioning her understandings of pedagogy, and wondering how it might have to change in a move to online teaching. As Ralph considered ways to improve his teaching, he was also questioning how he had been teaching in the past and wondering what would have to change online. The examples provided by Beth, Ralph, Mary, and John, show that by experiencing something unexpected, such as online teaching, and taking advantage of opportunities to write and/or talk about it, we might call into question our previous beliefs and
can revise our perspectives based on our new experiences. In this way, transformative learning can explain changes faculty experience.

Since our experiences are filtered through our old habits of mind, when there is a mismatch, we can either reject that experience as an anomaly or question its fit with our beliefs. This questioning requires some critical reflection and/or dialogue to come to terms with a revision of our assumptions and beliefs. This questioning can provide new ways of looking at teaching practices, revising assumptions and beliefs, and acting differently based on new perspectives. Critical reflection and discourse foster this process of change (Sokol & Cranton, 1998).

**Finding 3: Reflections on Assumptions**

*Reflective writing and talking about classroom changes resulting from online teaching help faculty become aware of changes in previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching.*

Faculty may be unaware of their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, even though it is those very assumptions and beliefs that guide the teaching decisions they make in the classroom (Pedersen & Liu, 2003). They may not have had opportunities to reflect on them, or to connect their practices to their beliefs (Layne et al, 2004). It is this lack of reflection that often find faculty unaware of changes in their classroom until they are specifically asked about the impact of online teaching on their practices (Winguard, 2004). Without the intention of reflective writing, there is only the possibility of an accidental pedagogy with the rethinking and restructuring of their courses and their teaching as a side effect rather than as a direct result (Morgan, 2003). Introspection provides an opportunity to explore new options for understanding and action (Fear, Dober et al, 2003). Reflective activities around classroom changes resulting from online teaching helped faculty become aware of changes.

Ralph shared that the reflective writing made him think about what he was doing and
why. Schön (1987) explained, “Learn what you already do in order to be able to choose what you will do” (p. 208). Mick, Lou, John, and Beth also expressed this. They all found themselves thinking about what they were doing rather than mindlessly following the same steps they took in a previous semester.

Transformative learning helps to frame our understanding of the changes faculty experience in their perspectives and practices of teaching after learning to teach online and actually teaching online. “If the process of reflection leads to an awareness of an invalid, underdeveloped, or distorted meaning scheme or perspective; if that scheme or perspective is then revised; and if the educator acts on the revised belief, the development has been transformative” (Cranton, 1996, p. 113). Once again I return to Beth to illustrate. She believed that she should not be lecturing as much as she was, but she had been unable to change her practice. Her practice was not fitting her belief. By learning to teach online, she had become more open to different possibilities. She realized that previously she had the entire semester planned before it even began, and strictly followed her lesson plans with very little deviance. Now Beth found herself being more open and flexible than she would have been if she had not engaged in this faculty professional development program. I consider this to be transformative learning because she was able to revise a problematic perspective, the need to lecture, to change the way she taught to a method that better matched her constructive teaching philosophy. Preparing to teach online was the catalyst for Beth to reflect on and evaluate her teaching practices.

Finding 4: Changes to Face-to-Face Teaching Practices

*Learning to teach online with an intent of change impacts face-to-face teaching practices.*

Faculty lean heavily on their past experiences in the face-to-face classroom (Conrad, 2004). Therefore, a number of authors view the move from teaching face-to-face to online as an
opportunity for change (Bender, 2003; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Jaffee, 2003; Lowes, 2008; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw et al, 2004; Winguard, 2004). It is recognized that online technologies require different ways of teaching (Conceicao, 2006). It is also recognized that when moving from face-to-face teaching to online teaching, teaching styles can change (Gallant, 2000; Jaffee), and there is a tendency for instruction to become more student-centered (Barker, 2003; Conrad, 2004; Hinson & LaPrairie). Other changes noted in the move to online teaching include enhanced interaction and greater learner responsibility (Barker; Gallant; Jaffee). However, these reported changes do not describe resulting changes in face-to-face teaching practices, which are typically missing in the literature on online teaching and faculty professional development for online teaching. Learning to teach online and actually teaching online can impact face-to-face teaching practices. There seemed to be a move from teacher-centered to more learned-centered teaching with less reliance on lecture. Faculty learned more about their students’ understanding and were able to change what happened in the classroom as a result.

A recent Department of Education study observed that the advantage of blended and online learning is a product of redesigning the learning experience (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Some authors also suspect that this higher level of effort in developing an online course could offer opportunities for reflection that would also have a positive impact on face-to-face teaching (Shea, Pelz, Frederickson, & Pickett, 2001). In their study, over eighty percent of faculty respondents reported that the development of an online course had a positive impact on their classroom teaching.

Since online teaching is not a qualitatively different form of practice, online teaching and face-to-face teaching should be able to inform each other (Brookfield, 2006). This seems to have been the case with instructors who worked with Bender (2003). Some reported that having specific training in online pedagogy made them more thoughtful about teaching and communication, and also shared that teaching online made them better classroom teachers.
Additionally, it has also been reported that it is the actual teaching of the online course that can lead to a reexamination of the differences between instructors’ practices online and face-to-face (Lowes, 2008). Other researchers have found that as instructors changed their teaching practices to accommodate a new technology tool, they also made changes to their teaching identities (West et al, 2007).

To summarize, a move from face-to-face teaching to online teaching requires change, and a number of changes have been noted above. Anecdotally, there has also been mention of an impact on face-to-face teaching practices. This study extends and addresses a gap in the literature by showing that faculty professional development to teach online that has an intent for change to classroom teaching as an important part of its focus, can lead to changes in the classroom. It is an opportunity for faculty to reconsider practice (West et al, 2007). For some faculty, developing an online course can become a disorienting dilemma or trigger point to challenge their assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning which then prompts them to reflect on their practices (Whitelaw, 2004), and to start thinking differently about content delivery and the implications for student learning (Lawler, King, & Wilhite, 2004).

In this study, faculty reported more openness and connectedness among the students. There was a move to more learner-centered classes and less reliance on lecture. It has been noted that the boundary between teacher-centeredness and student-centeredness may require a conceptual change to cross it (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001), and the move to teaching online may provide the bridge needed. Kay, Beth, and Ralph felt that their students had more opportunities to participate in discussions, and everyone got an opportunity to share. Because of this, Beth reported understanding more about her students’ learning, and the creation of teachable moments. Feeling prepared for online teaching and open to new possibilities creates a wider opportunity for change in the classroom.
Finding 5: Time and Level of Engagement in Professional Development and Reflection

Faculty’s amount of time and engagement in professional development activities that include focused reflection may be proportional to their movement toward transformative learning and resultant changes in teaching practices.

Faculty face a number of obstacles when moving to online teaching that include unfamiliar technology that they need to learn well enough to use and support their students’ use, lack of knowledge around online teaching and possibilities available for teaching and learning, and the time to learn. Additionally, a lack of time has been cited numerous times as a barrier to faculty participation in professional development activities (Anderson et al, 1998; Donovan & Macklin, 1998; Fink, 2003; Frantz, Beebe, Horvath, Canales, Sevee, 2005; Maguire, 2005; Markel, 1999). Anderson et al (1998) reported conflicting demands on faculty time and resources. It has been recognized that faculty are working longer and harder than ever before with a larger course load, more advisees, committee service, meetings, research, and publications (Brookfield, 2005; King, 2003). Authors also report on faculty complaints about the increased amount of time required to prepare and deliver online courses (Bender, 2003; Conceicao, 2006; McKenzie, Mims, Bennett, & Waugh, 2000). Therefore, it was no surprise that some faculty in this study reported a lack of time as a barrier to participate more fully in the professional development program. Lack of time continues to be one of the greatest barriers to faculty’s participation in professional development and, therefore, also a barrier to change. When faculty perceive a lack of time to engage in professional development for teaching, they also lose the opportunity to reflect on their teaching or make changes in the way they teach in the classroom. In this study, time was the constraint that prevented a number of participants from fully engaging in their preparations to teach online which also prevented the possibility of transformative learning.

Two faculty, in particular, who participated the least in the program, shared their lack of
time as their major constraint. John felt challenged to participate in the faculty professional development program by the time needed for his classes, administrative duties, and preparations for an accreditation site visit. Kay also mentioned her time constraints as the reason for not accessing the program’s resources or using the reflection journal. She shared in her only reflection journal post that she had been too busy to think about the faculty development program and her course changes.

Faculty can be creatures of habit, going through the motions of teaching mindlessly and following comfortable and familiar patterns (Fink, 2003). Continuing to do what you have been doing takes very little time. Sener (2005) wrote about a desire to become a better teacher and a willingness to change, and I have wondered whether a lack of time was really Kay’s barrier or whether she was not ready for or willing to change her teaching approach. John, at least, had participated in parts of the faculty development program, and had used the online resources. Kay had not engaged beyond the first group face-to-face workshop. I saw in her the same feelings of bewilderment and being overwhelmed that were evident in Alley’s (1996) first-person account of a move to online teaching. If “all lives are complicated,” as Kay shared, then why were most faculty able to find time to engage in the program? Was time really the issue, or was it a lack of a willingness to change, lack of motivation, fear, or something else that prevents faculty’s full participation?

While I recognize a lack of time as a real barrier, and do not want to diminish its reality, “Educators need time to reexamine their teaching practices and the underlying assumptions in order to strive for deeper learning, adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas, and techniques, and develop greater competency as teachers” (Brancato, 2003, p. 62). This, of course, includes the move to online teaching. Without time to consider changes, Kay’s online experience was not all positive. She had felt anxious during the online portions of her course, and felt that something was missing when she could not see her students. She was not prepared for the online discussions,
did not provide her students with timely feedback, and simply had not thought through how it was all going to work. Remember that Kay considered her students from a deficit perspective, and felt that they had poor reading comprehension and writing skills. She seemed to be trying to use the online environment as a way to “fix” these deficits without giving any real examination to her teaching practices, or by learning new strategies, all of which would take more time, of course.

On the other hand, Beth and Ralph seemed to be the most active participants in the faculty professional development program and were the only two to respond to all four reflective writing prompts. It is possible that the time they spent engaged in the program, and the assumptions and beliefs considered in their reflective writings, contributed to making the greatest impact on the changes to their face-to-face teaching practices. When faculty consciously reflect on their teaching practices, it helps them to understand what they do and why (Cranton & King, 2003). This was most evident with Beth. In her first reflective writing post, she shared that she had never before taken the time to “purposefully reflect on the extent to which past events and experiences influence what I do in my classroom today.” Ralph also wanted to reduce his number of lectures, but was concerned that his students would not learn if he did not lecture. Both actively considered changes, reflected on them, engaged in the readings, used the program’s resources, met with me in one-on-one consultations, and spent the time to prepare to teach online. It resulted in changed habits of mind for both of them, no longer believing that they had to lecture for their students to learn.

Moving to an online environment is going to take some time, whether it is spent in a faculty professional development program learning new tools, learning new teaching strategies, rethinking old practices, examining assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning, or simply talking to colleagues, etc. Time is needed. Perhaps a commitment to a time requirement is needed before becoming part of a professional development program, or perhaps a willingness and openness to change needs to be articulated. Either way, faculty must consider the need for
Finding 6: Design of Faculty Professional Development Programs

Faculty professional development programs for online teaching should be designed to intentionally inform and change faculty’s face-to-face teaching practices.

“Passion, hope, doubt, fear, exhilaration, weariness, colleagueship, loneliness, glorious defeats, hollow victories, and above all, the certainties of surprise and ambiguity – how can one begin to capture the reality of teaching in a single word or phrase” (Brookfield, 1990, p. 1). Brookfield goes on to describe the “idiosyncratic messiness of classroom reality.” You really cannot learn to teach from a how-to book without actually experiencing teaching yourself. When we add instructional technology and online classes to the mix, if faculty had not yet admitted that teaching was difficult, then this was a new opportunity. Although it seemed that it is often difficult for faculty to put their teaching beliefs into practice in the classroom, the move to online teaching provided them with new opportunities. Exploring different tools and strategies gave them a chance to step away from the old “tried and true” teaching strategies that they may have experienced during their years as a student, and their earliest years as a faculty member.

When I think about Kay, I wonder how differently her outcomes might have been if she had engaged in the faculty development program. She knew something had to change to help her students learn differently and better, and she really seemed to hope that online teaching held the key. Schön (1983) noted that “as a practice becomes more repetitive and routine, an as knowing-in-practice becomes increasingly tacit and spontaneous, the practitioner may miss important opportunities to think about what he is doing” (p. 61). A repetitive, routine practice could become a pattern of errors that is difficult to correct (Schön). With online teaching providing an experience “outside the range of ordinary expectations” (Schön, p. 68), Kay felt anxious. If she
had allowed herself the time to reflect on her teaching, her students’ learning, and on her prior understandings implicit in her behaviors, perhaps a new understanding would have been born.

Integrating technology into teaching practices can provide an opportunity to question deeply held personal beliefs, question assumptions, and renew attention to student learning (Whitelaw, 2004; Winguard, 2004). It has implications for how teaching happens (Koehler & Mishra, 2005). A survey respondent in a study by Sorcinelli et al (1996) replied, “Technology integration is one of the most pervasive forces influencing the field of faculty development and is inviting (forcing) higher education faculty to examine their past, present, and future pedagogies” (p. 133). It follows that if something is not working in the face-to-face classroom, integrating technology by moving classes online is a time for change. It is a time for rethinking and recreating the classroom. It is a time for making teaching beliefs congruent with practice.

Since faculty’s personal experiences in the classroom impact their beliefs about teaching (Kane, Sandretto, & Heath, 2002), would it not follow that their personal experiences teaching online would also impact their teaching beliefs? Consider Ralph. He believed that he had to lecture to his students for them to learn. However, his online teaching experiences changed his belief by realizing that his students were learning online too. I wonder how much more this will impact his teaching practices in the long-term.

Brookfield (2006) writes about the importance of responsiveness in contributing to the success of discussion-based online classes, and this is what I saw happen with Beth’s class. One of the advantages realized with discussion forums in Beth’s class was that all students had an equal opportunity to contribute and have more time to compose thoughtful responses (Brookfield, 2006; Fink, 2003). She had a new opportunity to understand more about each student’s learning and respond to that learning in the classroom.
My Personal Learning: Rethinking Faculty Development

Not only am I rethinking the faculty professional development program, but learning throughout the study also impacted my performance. Recording the interviews heightened my awareness of what I say, how much I say, and how well I listen during consultations. I have become a much better listener, giving more importance to what the faculty member is sharing instead of feeling that I must share everything I know about the subject at hand.

Email communication was another area in which I learned to be more effective. Group emails typically elicited no response, or a response completely unrelated to the reason for the original email. However, individual emails, even when they carried the exact message, were quite effective in prompting quick responses.

The action research process was messy and I wasn’t able to pre-plan much of the development program. In the future, I want to pre-schedule venues in which faculty can come together to share and trade experiences. Tied to this, I also want to create a repository of syllabus and module templates, tools, and modules shared by the faculty. Some of these might be suggested for specific teaching strategies, such as discussion, presentation, etc. I should also capture faculty testimonials about the effectiveness of the program for communicating next offerings.

It takes a lot of energy and stamina to keep an initiative going, and I think it takes even more when there is less structure as there was with the action research study. Would more structure have provided more activity and outcomes? Less structure had me practically chasing faculty (virtually) to determine progress. The structure should not be about content because I would still want faculty to determine some of that based on their interests and needs. The structure should be more on what they’re going to do and by when. With that in mind, the program needed a clear start and end date with some negotiated deliverables and deadlines. This
could be accomplished by having the faculty participants write their personal goals for the program either at the pre-interview or at the group face-to-face session. I also should have had them create a personal action plan with deliverables and dates. This would have given both of us milestone dates on which to communicate and stay abreast of their progress, or lack thereof. Also considering start and end dates, future offerings of the program will have all modules open at the start and will not use progressive reveal which prevented faculty from seeing all four modules at the beginning. My intent with progressive reveal was to avoid having them feel overwhelmed, but now I believe it is more important for faculty to be aware of all of the learning and resources available from the start. This is a balance that will continue to be explored.

**Implications for practice**

When I think about faculty’s preparations for online teaching, I whole-heartedly agree with Torisi and Davis (2000) that it must be conceptualized as a process of transformation rather than simply translation. Not only is the magic in the redesign (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), but there is even more magic when faculty themselves are open to change and can devote some portion of their time to seriously consider these changes. Beth came to the faculty development program open to change and spent a lot of time on rethinking her teaching. Mary was also open to change, and developed a number of important questions to consider. Mick was also questioning his teaching strategies, and Lou was taking his first tentative step toward change.

An important aspect of faculty development involves reflection on teaching experiences (Hampton, Morrow, Bechtel, & Carroll, 2004), and this is an important component in a process of transformation that must be included in a faculty development program for online teaching. It was in the reflecting that Beth and Ralph recognized their changes. However, not all faculty are willing to reflect on their beliefs and practices (Menges, 1991), and there is a time barrier to
participation. Time must be intentionally built into the professional development agenda for reflection to provide the opportunity for faculty willing to do so.

In a perfect world, my next faculty professional development program for online teaching will more closely heed Cranton’s (1996) conditions for faculty’s transformative learning about teaching practices:

- The old ways of seeing practice simply do not work;
- A “disorienting dilemma” exists;
- The origin of beliefs is critically examined;
- There are others with whom discourse can be held;
- The educator is ready for change;
- Freedom from constraints can be achieved;
- Support is available;
- An alternative way of being is possible (p. 114).

Addressing these conditions within an adult learning framework, I believe that moving to online teaching provides a new way of seeing practice, and often becomes the disorienting dilemma. While the pre-interview questions tried to get to the origin of faculty’s beliefs about teaching, their origin was not critically examined. However, I do believe that just bringing those origins into their consciousness was a good start. Opportunities for discourse were given but need to be increased among the participants and with experienced online colleagues. An assumption was made that by agreeing to participate in the faculty development program, the participants were ready for change, but that condition might have to be made more explicit for faculty. With time as a constraint, I am aware that I cannot free faculty from all of their barriers. Support was and continues to be available. And, finally, the online classroom provides an alternative way of being that can be extended to the face-to-face classroom.

Ettling (2006) recognized that more work was needed to provide educators with strategies for putting transformative learning into practice, and Taylor (2000) called existing publications “obtuse, overly academic, difficult to access” (p. 321). This publication was written for other faculty professional development practitioners in a language that can be widely understood. It offers a model that can be replicated in, and adapted for, other higher education venues. I will be using the model again and refining it based on my learning in this study.
Implications for future research

Throughout this study, I became aware of what was working well and what I might want to change if I were to repeat the study in the future. My field notes were helpful in distilling the study’s strengths, concerns, and suggestions for future research. These are described below.

**Strengths**

Action research is a perfect match for a study trying to enact change. Through iterative cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting, I was able to focus on what was happening and why, and to make changes in the next cycle. Because the faculty professional development program was not completely pre-determined, additions based on faculty’s interests and needs were able to be made, including the Adobe Connect session with an experienced colleague. Things that worked well could be repeated, such as one-on-one consultations and observance of online courses, and things that did not work well could be changed, such as eliminating group emails in favor of individual emails.

Because action research is involved in investigating and bringing about change, it was also a natural fit for transformative learning, which is also involved in change (Lange, 2004; Taylor, 2007). As a theory of adult learning, it also fit well for this study with faculty, and placed it firmly within an adult learning framework which brought with it all of the research and literature to inform my efforts. Using transformative learning allowed me to have an intent of teaching change without naming what that change would be, because the change occurs in the individual faculty member’s assumptions and beliefs about teaching. What that might mean could be different for each faculty member and, indeed, it was.
Adult learning and transformative learning also helped me frame the essential characteristics for faculty professional development programs through a review of faculty professional development programs to teach online. The essential elements include recognition of faculty’s needs, concerns, and goals; an individualized plan; use of faculty’s experiences; a learning environment in which faculty feel supported, respected, and accepted; active participation; reflection; collaborative inquiry; observation; authentic context; action plan; ongoing support; and evaluation and revision. These essential elements were woven into the faculty development program, and will become even stronger and more evident in the next revision.

A triangulation of collection methods was used in this study that provided multiple ways to review the data. Individual interviews which were audio-recorded and transcribed, participants’ reflective journaling activities, researcher’s journal and field notes, email communications, and classroom observations were used to collect data. These multiple methods strengthened the study by providing different ways to consider and study the data. Each informed the other and provided additional insights.

This study showed the importance of creating faculty’s awareness and understanding of how they currently teach face-to-face and to intentionally connect it to their learning about teaching online. In this way, their learning about teaching online also informs and changes their face-to-face teaching. For some participants, it was the first time they had talked to anyone about how they had come to teach in higher education, and provided their first moment of reflection in the program.

This study also showed how the move from face-to-face teaching to online teaching provides an opportunity for change. Framing it as an opportunity for change also provides the context for transformation rather than translation. Without the move towards online teaching,
these faculty participants probably would have continued teaching as they had in the past. Instead, preparing to teach online provided an avenue to rethink what they were doing and why.

**Concerns**

It is a challenge to tell whether participants have truly experienced transformative learning. A researcher cannot simply ask participants whether or not they have experienced transformative learning since that leads them to the answer the researcher wants to hear. Rather, the data needs to show that a participant has critically questioned their assumptions and beliefs, changed their assumptions and beliefs, become more open and inclusive in their thinking, or made a fundamental change in their practices.

Within the context of a study, another challenge is determining how much time is needed for transformative learning to occur. This study spanned almost six months. While it seemed to be enough time for some participants to display evidence of transformative learning, it was not enough time to tell if those changes were lasting. For this study, six months seemed like a minimum amount of time needed to determine whether transformative learning had occurred. Continuing through at least one more semester of teaching or more would have been even better.

**Future**

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the more superior method for teaching and learning, comparing face-to-face, hybrid, and online contexts. Many look to affirm or dispute the “No Significant Difference Phenomenon” (Russell, 1999) popular in much of the literature. However, knowing that teaching in higher education has not changed very much in spite of our changing population, booming technologies and Internet growth, and increasing
pressures from our stakeholders, I am reluctant to hold traditional face-to-face teaching as the superior model on which to base all other comparisons. Additionally, I believe that there are more important questions to ask, such as how do our students learn best no matter the delivery method. What kind of affordances does the online context provide that could make learning even more effective? How are faculty prepared for online teaching? What kind of professional development and ongoing support are provided?

Future research might consider faculty’s prior experiences in new media use, attitudes toward technology, or the role they envision for technology within their classroom to determine how that impacts their willingness to engage in professional development for teaching in the online environment, and how that impacts their transformational learning. Another possibility would be to consider differences within disciplines. I would also recommend a longitudinal study to determine how lasting the changes are and whether changes continue and what those changes constitute. Finally, during the post interviews, a few faculty described changes they had noted in their students as being more open or knowing more about each other. These changes or student perspectives could also be explored.

**Implications for Adult Education Theory**

Professional development to prepare faculty to teach online has been recognized as a necessary endeavor (e.g., Ko & Rossen, 1998; Palloff & Pratt, 2001; Yang & Cornelius, 2005). However, faculty professional development has only recently been recognized as adult learning (Cranton, 1994; King, 2002), and there is little evidence of the use of adult learning theory and research in designing faculty development programs. This study explicitly used adult learning theory and research to design and develop a professional development program to prepare faculty
to teach online. By doing so, it added to the adult education literature and has provided new insights into how faculty learn to teach online.

While changes in instructional practices have been noted in the literature (e.g., Conceicao, 2006; Diekelmann, 1998; Gallant, 2000, Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005), to date, no studies have been conducted that provided faculty with professional development activities for online teaching designed specifically to foster transformative learning to bring about changes in their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and change their face-to-face teaching practices. Therefore, this study addressed a gap in the literature by using the preparation to teach online as a catalyst for change in beliefs about teaching and actual teaching changes in the traditional classroom. By using reflective activities and discourse intentionally designed to shed light on uncritically assimilated assumptions and beliefs about teaching, faculty’s preparations to teach online informed their face-to-face teaching practices.

This study provided new insights as to how faculty change teaching practices and what changes occur. The applicability of action research in a faculty professional development program provided insights into its use in this different context.

**Implications for Transformative Learning Theory**

For the purposes of this research study, transformational learning was considered to be a deep fundamental shift in a faculty member’s underlying assumptions and beliefs about teaching, with a potential change in their face-to-face teaching practices. Cranton (196) described the conditions for faculty’s transformative learning about their teaching practices as the following: their old ways of practice no longer work, they experience a “disorienting dilemma,” they critically examine the origin of their teaching beliefs, they engage in discourse, they are ready for change, they have freedom from constraints, support is available, and it is possible for them to
have an alternative way of being. I will address each of these in order to consider which conditions were present for each participant.

Each participant came to the faculty professional development program with an intent of change, either because the old ways of practice no longer worked or they were searching for something different or better. Mick came for new ideas and wanted to learn new things. For many years he had taught the same course the same way with his students learning the same skills for the same software applications. He thought there might be better ways to teach his class, and had come to recognize that “people learn different ways and at different speeds.” Lou felt “technologically challenged” and wanted to get caught up with instructional technology. He also had his eye on retirement and the possibility of teaching online. John was also looking for change and wanted to “get a better handle as far as what the online can do differently from what I am doing now.” Mary thought that she would “have to change [her] pedagogical understanding to teach online.” Kay had seen her husband use online discussion activities in his hybrid courses, and she wanted to give it a try to combat her students’ deficiencies in reading, writing, and asking questions. She also wanted to become more current with online technologies. Beth felt that her classroom time constraints forced her to lecture, and she wanted to move away from lectures and give her students more time to read and reflect. Ralph also wanted to reduce the number of lectures and recognized that his move to the online environment would change his teaching style.

The move to teaching online provided the “disorienting dilemma” in that it was completely new for most, and it required learning new tools for all of the participants. All of their previous teaching practices from the classroom could not be simply translated to the online environment. A few of the faculty felt a bit anxious about the move to online teaching, and some were even anticipating failure. Ralph’s fourth reflection post illustrated this as he said, “I find myself thinking about how much time I need to spend in this course and how much I have to do to make this class successful. How would the students react to the online assignment? Would they
find it productive and beneficial?” Lou also worried about his students’ reaction to the new online assignment and expected resistance. Time was a worry for Mary and Kay who had both heard horror stories about the amount of time some faculty spent facilitating their online courses. Incorporating the online components were a concern for Kay, Beth, and Ralph. Beth and Ralph used the program’s resources to figure this out, but Kay was constrained by a lack of time to think about it.

Only Beth and Ralph examined the origin of their beliefs, and Beth was the only one to critically reflect. In a reflection post, she wondered why she taught the way that she did and realized that she was resorting to less effective teaching strategies that were modeled to her when she was a graduate student. Ralph more simply recounted how he had never intended to become a professor, shared the journey to how he became the teacher he was, and recalled his first teaching experience in which the only instructions on how to teach were being handed the textbook, a copy of the quizzes/tests, some handouts and activities he could use. Mary wrote in her reflection journal, “Recounting my professional journey to the present spot was a good reminder of my philosophy of and passion for facilitating learning.” She seemed to confirm her beliefs more than examine them.

The faculty professional development program provided several opportunities for discourse and, in retrospect, I wish there had been more opportunities. The first opportunity was the group face-to-face session. Beth, Mick, Lou, John, Kay, and Ralph attended and Mary did not. The second opportunity was the Adobe Connect session. Beth, John, Ralph, and Mary attended, and Mick, Lou, and Kay did not. Those who attended both were Beth, John, and Ralph. The other opportunities for discourse were the one-on-one consultations with me. The only participants who did not meet with me were John and Kay.

Being ready for change is another condition for transformative learning. Although each faculty member expressed an interest in change as his or her motivation for participating in the
program, this does not necessarily mean that each was ready for change. The difference in being interested and actually being ready for change might explain some of the variations in changes to teaching practices. If all it took were a desire for change, we would all keep our New Year’s resolutions! Perhaps those who did not permit themselves time to fully engage in the program were not as ready for change as they initially thought. However, this is simply a conjecture on my part, and I have way of really knowing its truth.

Faculty must also be free from constraints and I have already written about the impact the constraint of time had on Kay and John regarding their involvement in the program. I provided Beth and Ralph as a contrast because of the amount of time they devoted to their preparations to teach online.

Support was constantly available for all participants. Most took advantage of communicating with me via email or phone, and also met with me for one-on-one consultations. Those who did not were Kay and John. So, although support was available, everyone did not use it.

Finally, faculty need to have an alternate way of being possible for transformative learning to occur. Online teaching provided the avenue for a new way of being. Once again I wonder about degrees. Is there a fine line between having an alternate way of being possible and taking the steps to make it happen. Perhaps having the possibility available is not enough. This might be coupled with being ready for change.

So, reviewing the conditions for faculty’s transformative learning about teaching practices, we can see where some faculty had all conditions present, and where others were lacking. Starting with the conditions that were available for all, I can list that the old ways no longer worked or at least were problematic, online teaching was the “disorienting dilemma” and there seemed to be degrees of anxiety, everyone had multiple opportunities for discourse, the only constraint seemed to be a lack of time which is common to all faculty, support was always
available, and an alternative way of being was possible. What seemed to be missing for some was a critical examination of the origin of their beliefs, and a readiness for change.

Throughout the last four chapters I often used Beth and Ralph as my examples of transformative learning, and John and Kay as the two participants who seemed least engaged in the program. Beth and Ralph met all of the conditions suggested by Cranton, including examining their beliefs about teaching and being ready for change. Beth especially examined the origins of her assumptions and beliefs about teaching, and was fully committed to learning how to teach online. The possibilities excited her, and she immediately engaged in the program. Ralph did not examine his teaching origins as closely as Beth, but did recount his journey from his graduate assistant days to the present. With his graduate students working full-time and traveling a distance to campus, Ralph saw online teaching as a solution to provide them more flexibility and to reduce his number of lectures. He also seemed committed to change.

John and Kay were the two participants “missing-in-action.” The conditions missing for them included the lack of a critical examination of the origin of their teaching beliefs, missed opportunities for discourse, and a strong time constraint. John mentioned administrative duties and preparation for an accreditation visit as reasons for a lack of time. Kay mentioned several trips that had kept her from her preparations. While John attended both the group face-to-face session and the Adobe Connect session, Kay attended only the group face-to-face session. They are the only two who did not take advantage of a one-on-one consultation with me. Additionally, they did not communicate with me via email or phone.

While Lou met a majority of the conditions, he did not actually teach online. His creation and use of an online assignment was an important first step for him in his quest to become an online teacher. He still needs to develop his technology skills and feel comfortable navigating the online environment on his own. Perhaps time was a constraint for Lou too. His learning curve is still steep and a commitment of time will be needed.
Mick was approaching online teaching in a different way. His intent was change, but the change he wanted was to differentiate instruction for his students. He wondered whether every student needed to come to every class if he provided learning resources online. So, although every class session was still held, some students elected to use the online time to learn the applications and complete projects rather than attend the class. The “disorienting dilemma” might actually have been missing for him since he still kept all of his class sessions. Mick learned new tools in ANGEL for this change, but there were still some teaching strategies that seemed to need refinement. There was also a lack of critical reflection on his beliefs. He didn’t attend the Adobe Connect session, but did participate in the group face-to-face session. He also met with me to learn the ANGEL tools he planned to use, and was comfortable contacting me via email when he had questions. His alternative way of being was more of an adjustment than a real change.

Mary was very interesting in that she had already thought long and hard about online teaching, and was convinced that she would have to change her teaching philosophy in order to teach online. Yet she seemed to have strong feelings about her teaching beliefs, and I wasn’t sure that she would be able to change them or even should change them. She almost seemed to be making online teaching harder than it needed to be. While what she did in the classroom would be difficult to duplicate in an asynchronous classroom, it didn’t mean that co-construction of meaning couldn’t happen. It simply meant that it would have to happen in a different way. She had so many important questions for which there were no simple answers. The move to online really seemed to be a disorienting dilemma for her because she almost seemed to believe that it couldn’t work as well as learning in the face-to-face classroom. However, she was quite pleased with the results from her students’ learning from their blog posts, which I believe will motivate her to continue her investigations into more online teaching. She confirmed, rather than examined her teaching beliefs, and wasn’t able to attend the group face-to-face session. However, she did take advantage of several one-on-one consultations with me, which she considered to be quite
productive. I believe that Mary has begun a transformative learning journey, because she is questioning her habits of mind. She is still searching for the answers, and I believe more time talking with colleagues, reflecting on her questions, and teaching online will bring her clarity and new realizations about teaching and learning.

King (2009) has suggested a transformational journey that can be compared to Mezirow’s stages of perspective transformation. She begins the journey with fear and uncertainty. Most faculty members expressed anxiety at the start of the program. Ralph was anticipating failure, and Lou expected student resistance. Mary and Kay were concerned about the time online teaching would require, and almost all were concerned about incorporating the online sessions into their course.

The second part of the journey involves testing and exploring. This is where I believe the lack of time for John and Kay really impacted their transformational journey. They did not spend much time critically assessing their assumptions, engaging with others in discourse, or exploring their options for change. They also did not spend much preparation time for affirming and connecting, which is the third part of the journey. Instead, I believe this had to be done as the course was taught. Kay especially had to learn on-the-job and had to scramble to create how-tos and other support documentation for her students as the semester rolled along. She did not have the luxury of building competence and self-confidence and seemed to experience a lot of anxiety when she did not have her students in class.

The final part of King’s transformation journey is new perspectives, which is a reintegration of a new perspective into one’s life. Beth is, once again, my example of someone who fully embraced the changes made to her teaching. While Ralph, Mary, and Lou were pleased with their experiences, it was Beth who showed a “personal, qualitative change” (King, 2009, p. 15).
In summary, Beth is the participant who became more open and flexible in her teaching practices. I believe she experienced transformative learning. Ralph changed his habit of mind as he realized that students did not have to be in class to learn. Kay’s class seemed to become more student-centered which also seemed to illustrate a change in her point of view or habit of mind. While she still drove the classroom discussion, she was beginning to make changes and see the results. Mary also began her transformative learning journey with her deepening questions and a positive online experience that enabled her to see new possibilities. I believe that Ralph, Kay, Mary, Mick, John, and Lou are still testing and exploring, but the possibility exists for transformative learning in their future.

**Conclusion**

The quote that defined my study and gave it deeper personal meaning from the beginning is translated from the writings of Marcel Proust, “The only real voyage of discovery... consists not in seeing new landscapes but in having new eyes...” This is how I view the opportunity online teaching gives all of us. It is a new landscape, different from our physically rooted classrooms, although many seem to try to simply move what happens in that classroom to the online environment. To that I ask why? The internet brings us new resources, new tools, new ways of being together, new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity to look at education through new eyes, to envision new possibilities, deeper and more effective learning, personalized learning, enriched and meaningful teaching experiences, and to provide wider access learning.

The magic is in the redesign of learning experiences, including faculty professional development programs. Let this be the end of one-size-fits-all programs, and may all future programs be rooted within an adult learning framework, providing faculty with learning
experiences that honor them as adults, use their past experiences, provide multiple opportunities for reflection and active participation, include collaborative inquiry and observations of online course examples, link them with experienced online faculty, and extend support of their action plans. This will require administrative support because this type of faculty professional development program cannot be accomplished in one or two weeks, but will probably involve at least a semester of engagement. While lecture-style online teaching and learning can be accomplished will much less investment of time and effort, what do we gain? There’s no magic there. There are no new eyes, simply a different landscape.

An alliance of administrators, faculty, faculty development specialists, instructional designers, multimedia technologists, students, and more is needed to come together to provide a comprehensive change in the way we see education. Let’s use our new eyes to see the opportunities for change in our move from face-to-face to online teaching.
Appendix A

Essential Attributes of Faculty Professional Development Programs

1. Recognition of faculty's needs, concerns, goals (needs assessment and objective setting) - Contact each faculty participant prior to the faculty professional development event and ask them to share a short explanation of their interest in the event, whether it is for their personal/professional use, or for their students' use, what they hope to learn during the event, and what they want to be able to do after the event. This should impact each event’s content and scope.

2. Individualized plan - This should not be a one-size-fits-all program, but one that addresses an individualized plan for each participant. Their needs assessment begins to build their individualized plan which will be further refined in their action plan (see 10 below).

3. Use of faculty experience - Provide opportunities during the professional development event for faculty to share relevant ideas, successes, and concerns. Everyone benefits from insights and experiences of their peers.

4. Learning environment in which faculty feel supported, respected, and accepted – The most important factor here is listening.

5. Active participation - No sitting back and passively listening :-( Provide opportunities for active participation.

6. Reflection - How will what they came to learn change what they currently do? This could be part of a small group discussion that is then shared with the larger group, or incorporated into the ending of the event as they bring their work to some closure and define their action plan, or part of the follow up after the event. Another point of reflection is the program evaluation. How well did the program support their individualized plan?

7. Collaborative inquiry – Provide opportunities for collaboration between the participants and with the facilitators. This is about asking questions and discovering their own answers.

8. Observation – Provide opportunities for observation of relevant work by other faculty (and perhaps students).

9. Authentic context – Provide an authentic context in which to experiment and apply skills. A low risk context might be a practice course instead of a live course.

10. Action plan - Leaving the event, participants have a plan to move forward. This informs the next essential element of ongoing support. Using their action plans, we'll know what additional workshops, training opportunities, or other types of support might be needed in the future.

11. Ongoing support – Ongoing support will be needed especially in support of their action plans, and following up with the participants in a month or so and asking what they've been able to do and whether they have questions or needs related to the professional development event.

12. Evaluation and revision – Consider it a continuous loop of offer, evaluate, and revise.
Appendix B

Interview Guides

**Pre-Interview**

- Tell me how you came to the field of teaching in higher education.
- What are the events and experiences in your life that have made you the teacher you are today?
- Tell me about your students.
- Tell me about your teaching practices.
- Tell me how you feel about teaching online.

**Post-Interview**

- Tell me about your preparations to teach online. What did you do?
- Tell me about teaching online. Was your experience different than what you expected? How?
- Did adding the online components change what happened in the classroom?
- Thinking about the faculty development program, what did you find most helpful? Do you have any suggestions for its next offering?
- The reflection journal had varied use. What are your thoughts on the use of a journal for reflection?
Consider your experiences with online teaching this semester. Using an amusement park’s rides and activities, choose a metaphor that reflects you as teacher. Teaching is . . . or I am . . . Would this metaphor have been the same or different at the beginning of the semester?

Did your prior beliefs or assumptions about teaching and learning change at all from your online teaching experience?
 Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Preparing to Teach Online as Transformative Faculty Development

Principal Investigator:
Carol McQuiggan
W203 Olmsted Building, Middletown, PA 17057
cam240@psu.edu / 717-948-6542

Other Investigator(s):
Patricia Cranton, W331 Olmsted Building, pac23@psu.edu, 717-948-6405

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to explore transformative learning among full-time Penn State Harrisburg faculty as a result of participating in professional development activities to prepare them to teach online, and the impact on their face-to-face teaching practices. The information collected in this project will be used to inform future faculty professional development for preparation to teach online.

2. Procedures to be followed: If you agree to take part in this research, you are giving the researcher permission to audio tape your interviews, access your journal entries and discussions in ANGEL, and observe one class of a traditional face-to-face fall course and use them for research purposes. This information will be used to evaluate changes in assumptions and beliefs about teaching resulting from learning to teach online, and how it impacts your face-to-face teaching.

3. Benefits: The benefits to you include learning more about yourself as an educator and more about the validity of your assumptions and beliefs about teaching. You will be prepared to be an effective online educator, and you will also be more aware of how and why you teach as you do in the face-to-face classroom. You could also develop new skills in critical self-reflection to gain new insights to continually improve your teaching practices, and you could learn new technology skills for teaching. The benefits to society include new insights as to how faculty change teaching practices and what changes occur in their assumptions and beliefs about teaching as they prepare to teach online. It could inform faculty development practices, and it could improve face-to-face teaching.

4. Duration/Time: The faculty development program will run for six consecutive weeks beginning July 1, 2009, and ending August 12, 2009, with an interview conducted prior to the
program and another interview conducted after the program’s conclusion. One classroom observation will take place during the fall semester.

5. Statement of Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is confidential. Only the person in charge will know your identity. The data, including audio recordings, will be stored and secured at W203 Olmsted Building in a locked office and/or password-protected electronic file. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Only the principal investigator listed above will have access to personally identifiable information and audio recordings. The personally identifiable information and audio recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study, anticipated to be Spring 2011. All identifying information will be removed prior to data analysis. For data collected online, your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

6. Right to Ask Questions: You can ask questions about this research. Contact Carol McQuiggan at 717-948-6542 with questions. You can also call this number if you have complaints or concerns about this research.

7. Voluntary Participation: Your decision to participate in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

______________________________________  ___________________
Participant signature                      Date

______________________________________  ___________________
Principal investigator                    Date
References


Irani, Tracy. (2001). *Going the distance: Developing a model distance education faculty training*


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Vita

CAROL MCQUIGGAN

Formal Education

2002    M.Ed. Training and Development, Pennsylvania State University
1977    B. S. Business Administration, Pennsylvania State University

Professional Experience

2004 to present Senior Instructional Designer
Penn State Harrisburg
Plan and implement symposia, workshops, and other opportunities for faculty professional development. Design and develop hybrid and online courses, and provide support and leadership in those efforts. Engage in current research and literature for faculty development and instructional design, especially for online teaching and learning. Provide leadership in investigating existing and emerging instructional technologies and pedagogies; evaluate and assess their applicability to University needs; determine resources needed for potential pilot.

2001 to 2004 eLearning Support Specialist
Penn State Harrisburg

1992 to 2000 Elementary Computer Facilitator
Elizabethtown Area School District

Publications

McQuiggan, C. (Fall 2007). The Role of Faculty Development in Online Teaching’s Potential to Question Teaching Beliefs and Assumptions. Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 10(3). Available online at http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/fall103/mcquiggan103.htm

Grants Awarded

Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence Regional Colloquy Grant, 2010
Integrating Diversity into the Curriculum, 2008
HP Tablet PC Leadership Grant, 2008
HP Technology for Teaching Grant, 2007

Current Memberships

Commission for Women, current chair
Pennsylvania American Council on Education (PA ACE)
Pi Lambda Theta
Women in Higher Education Network