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Summer 2021

## Online Faculty Development: Disorienting Dilemmas In Learning To Teach Online

Katalin Wargo

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ONLINE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:  
DISORIENTING DILEMMAS IN LEARNING TO TEACH ONLINE

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A Dissertation

Presented to the

Faculty of the School of Education

William and Mary in Virginia

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In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Katalin K. Wargo

March 9, 2021

ONLINE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:  
DISORIENTING DILEMMAS IN LEARNING TO TEACH ONLINE

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## **Dedication**

To Andrew, who makes me believe I can achieve anything. And to my beautiful girls,  
may you always persist.

## Acknowledgements

This accomplishment could not have been achieved without the continual support and encouragement from those individuals I am fortunate to have in my life.

Mark Hofer: Thank you for your humor, your kindness, and for being a mentor and advocate above anything else.

Lindy Johnson: Thank you for being an empowered woman who empowers other women, and your guidance and generosity since before I even began my doctoral journey.

Pamela Eddy: Thank you for supporting me in trying something different.

The STLI team: Thank you for making this juggling act between dissertation, full-time work, being a mom, and pandemic easier through your constant support and humor.

The FDS participants: Thank you for entrusting me with your stories and for being such phenomenal colleagues.

Amanda Morris: For that walk at Warhill Sports Complex where you helped me see that *one* day could begin *today*.

My parents: For cultivating a love of learning.

My friends: For listening, encouraging, and giving me much needed reprieve from the work.

Lorraine Wargo: For your unrelenting positivity.

Andrew Wargo: For having my back, for the laundry, the grocery shopping, the cleaning, being a true partner, and for making me feel loved through it all.

Grace and Eva: For all the hugs and laughter that rejuvenate my soul.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores how faculty development for online teaching in higher education might facilitate transformative learning and the transfer of instructional practices across teaching modalities. The first manuscript examines how the essential constructs of transformative learning are promoted in online faculty development and which elements of faculty development help to foster transformative learning. The second manuscript describes a case study that emerged from a university faculty development seminar to prepare instructors to teach online. The purpose of this study was to examine how, if at all, the Online Faculty Development Seminar changed five participants' perspectives of teaching. This study found written reflection activities, combined with dialogue with colleagues, and having experienced instructors come in to tour their courses and discuss lessons learned contributed to perspective transformation. The third manuscript examines whether instructional practices introduced in the seminar would transfer to instructors' in-person teaching and how faculty development and the experience of teaching online may have facilitated that transfer. The study found participants experienced perspective transformations that affected how they perceived their role as instructors, and they transferred some online course design and instructional practices to their in-person teaching. These practices included incorporating more digital tools to in-person courses, communicating clearly and transparently, designing courses with intentionality, and paying forward the lessons they learned to assist colleagues transitioning to teaching remotely in Spring 2020. Findings suggest that a structured course design process, self-reflection activities, opportunities to dialogue with colleagues, and course tours from colleagues aided in transfer of practices across modalities.

ONLINE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:  
DISORIENTING DILEMMAS IN LEARNING TO TEACH ONLINE

## **Rationale for the Three Article Dissertation Approach**

Given how swiftly technology is changing the landscape of our lives, it is no surprise that online learning is rapidly growing in popularity in higher education. The expeditious development of online programs poses new opportunities for educational practice and research but the fast pace of change causes challenges for educators and educational researchers as they struggle to keep up. Knowledge dissemination is the fabric of the academic world yet the speed with which findings are communicated is especially important in online learning as shifts are constantly occurring. Doctoral candidates who choose the traditional monograph dissertation format in educational technology-related fields may not get a chance to translate those findings into publishable manuscripts in sufficient time to maintain currency and relevance. As educational researchers, we have a responsibility to publish our findings promptly to contribute meaningfully to the research base and to educational practice as it unfolds. The three-article dissertation format allows for publication of research as it develops in more manageable chunks. By organizing the work into journal publications, this decreases the amount of time that elapses between the research being conducted and the findings being disseminated.

The three-article format also poses benefits for the researcher. It allows the student to break the thesis into manageable segments, which is particularly beneficial for individuals studying part-time. It also allows for professional critique and feedback from journal reviewers in earlier stages of the work in addition to committee feedback, which can lead to a stronger end-product. The resulting three articles can help to build the researcher's research portfolio leading to a head start on publishing from the dissertation thesis and meaningful contributions to the field. In addition to writing for publication, the three-article dissertation requires the researcher

to demonstrate a variety of research skills across several studies, reflecting more the reality of life as an academic.

This dissertation loosely follows the organizational format of a traditional monograph. Chapter 1 acts as the introduction; Chapter 2 is a literature review; Chapters 3 and 4 are written as journal articles; and Chapter 5 is a chapter that synthesizes Chapters 2, 3, and 4, including a summary of findings, implications for practice, recommendations for research and a conclusion. Additionally, as a doctoral candidate in the Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership program, this final chapter provides connections to educational policy, planning, and leadership.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the last 30 years, online instruction has moved from the fringes of experimental forms of teaching and learning to the mainstream (Legon & Garrett, 2018; Osika et al., 2009). More than 1 in 4 post-secondary students now takes one or more online courses (Allen & Seamen, 2016). The growing trend towards higher education institutions offering more online courses creates opportunities to invigorate teaching as instructors who may be exposed to new pedagogies and technologies are encouraged to rethink what it means to teach. Given the shift in instructor roles and a move towards more student-centered pedagogies that may occur during online course development, this has the potential to have a profound effect on instructors' traditional teaching (Lowes, 2008).

Many instructors have spent most of their careers teaching in the face-to-face classroom where they perceive themselves as the content expert (Conrad, 2004), typically using pedagogies that replicate the ways in which they were taught (Gallant, 2000; Layne et al., 2004). Despite the wealth of research on effective teaching, many university instructors use lectures and tests as the primary instructional delivery and assessment methods (Hartman et al., 2007). This is to be expected, since faculty at many research-intensive universities are typically hired for their expertise in a particular field, with tenure tied more closely to research and publishing rather than measures of teaching effectiveness. For new university faculty, there is limited formal pedagogical instruction, with little reward in the tenure process for teaching well, which is



compounded by the cycle of instructors teaching the way they were traditionally taught (Britzman, 1991; Hartman et al., 2007).

To transition to teaching online, instructors must understand the complex interplay between technology, content knowledge, and pedagogy (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). In contrast to most face-to-face college instructional programs, many online programs now require faculty to go through course development programs that cover strategies for teaching online, such as how to facilitate collaboration and discussion in online environments or how to create varied assessments to measure student learning (Cobb, 2014). Recent research has begun to suggest that as instructors go through the process of learning online instructional strategies and subsequently teach online, they often rethink their classroom-based teaching (Terras, 2017). Many studies have shown that the move to online teaching often requires a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction (Barker, 2003; Conceição, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Gallant, 2000; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Jaffee, 2003; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). This requires that the role of instructor change to accommodate more opportunities for student participation, interaction, and opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning (Barker, 2003; Gallant, 2000). Sometimes this shift can cause even experienced instructors to question previously held notions regarding teaching, making them feel as uncertain as they did when they were novice instructors (Barker, 2003; King, 2002; Lawler et al., 2004).

Although attention has been paid to how online instruction can change the way faculty conceptualize their teaching (Lowe, 2008; McQuiggan, 2007; Shea et al., 2002), little research has addressed how professional learning opportunities can encourage faculty to examine their notions of effective teaching intentionally and critically or how they can transfer what they learn to their face-to-face instruction. To teach effectively online, instructors must consider their

current teaching practices which is an opportunity to critically interrogate their assumptions and beliefs regarding teaching. Limited studies have shown that this dissonance between familiar pedagogies and new online pedagogies can have a domino effect on instructors' face-to-face instruction, changing not only the way instructors think about teaching online but also affecting their practice in the classroom (Lowes, 2008; McQuiggan, 2012; Shea et al., 2002). Professional development for online teaching is a potential opportunity to catalyze faculty to reflect upon and critically evaluate their current teaching practices as they learn student-centered pedagogies involving dialogue and collaboration between students and as their roles in the classroom shift (McQuiggan, 2012).

### **Statement of the Problem**

As instructors participate in learning about online course design and pedagogy, many of their assumptions and beliefs about teaching may be challenged. Transitioning from face-to-face to online instruction can present a disorienting dilemma as instructors navigate an entirely new teaching landscape. King (2001) suggested that it is not enough to simply guide faculty technology usage; rather, faculty developers must strive to understand the transformation that faculty experience as they learn and incorporate new practices into their teaching. Faculty developers can learn from the changes that instructors experience as they learn about online teaching and as they transition between modalities. Facilitators designing these kinds of faculty learning experiences can use this knowledge, combined with theory, to intentionally design professional learning experiences that foster transformative learning. Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) is an adult learning theory that encapsulates the kinds of disorienting experiences that cause one to reflect upon, critically examine, and revise perspectives.

Many studies have been conducted that investigate the changes faculty experience as they transition to teaching in the online environment—such as changes in instructional roles, instructional methods, and teaching experiences (Conceição, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw et al., 2004). However, limited research has been conducted with online instructors that explores which professional development activities could help facilitate transformative learning and how that learning may influence changes when instructors transition back to the face-to-face classroom. Although there is great potential here, little has been published on how faculty developers can engage online faculty in critically examining their assumptions and the resulting teaching practices.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study draws on Transformative (or Transformational) Learning Theory (TLT), grounded in Mezirow's (1991) work on the transformative dimensions of adult learning. TLT's use by researchers and practitioners alike has grown exponentially since the 1990s, overshadowing andragogy in the field of adult learning (Howie & Bagnall, 2013). As an adult learning theory, andragogy outlines a distinct set of assumptions about adult learning compared to that of child learning, referred to in education as pedagogy. Knowles (1980) outlines five assumptions of the adult learner. In Knowles's framework, the adult learner:

- has an independent self-concept and can direct his or her own learning,
- has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning,
- has learning needs closely related to changing social roles,
- is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and
- is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors.

Similar to andragogy, TLT was first established in the late 1970s in the adult education field through books and dissertations, becoming more substantively researched and critiqued through peer reviewed publications starting in the 1990s (E.W. Taylor, 1997). TLT is rooted in both humanism and constructivism, with a focus on individual growth and development (Merriam & Brocket, 1997) as well as self-direction and individual and social construction of meaning through experience (Dewey, 1938/1963; Piaget & Cook, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). Clark (1993) defines transformative learning as that which “shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize” (p. 47). Whereas childhood learning is more formative in nature, as knowledge is commonly derived from sources of authority like a teacher, adult learning is more transformative in that adults are more able to problematize their own beliefs, feelings, and attitudes (Mezirow, 2000). Mezirow (1991) defines transformative learning as:

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)

If we conceptualize learning as both *what we know* and *how we know*, transformational learning pertains to making meaning from experience and changing *how we know*.

### ***Learning as Transformation***

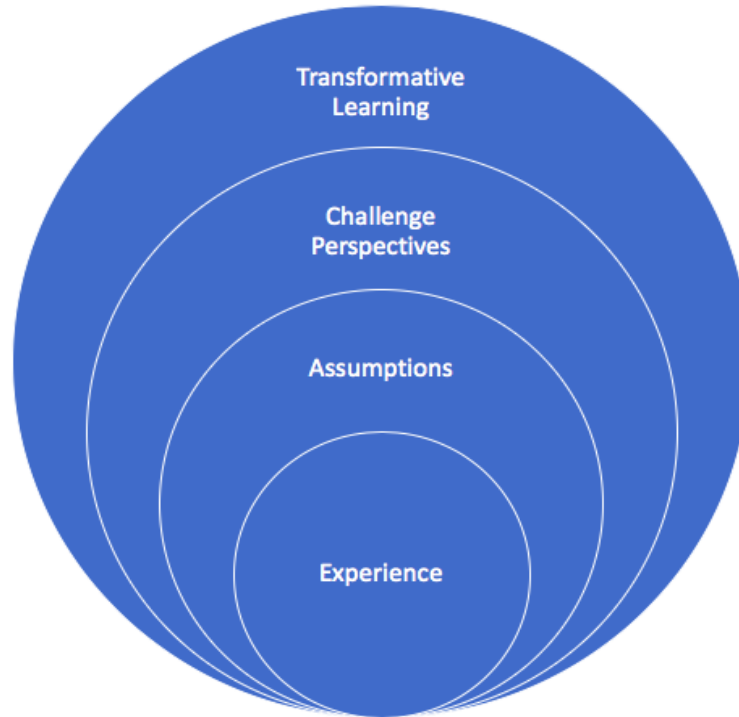
Mezirow (2000) defined learning as “the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (p. 5). Learning may be intentional (in that it is actively sought out), incidental (as it

occurs as unintentional byproduct) or assimilated. Langer (1997) defines mindful learning as the continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information, and an implicit awareness of multiple perspectives. In contrast, mindlessness requires holding on to previously established patterns. According to Mezirow (2000), transformation requires movement through time to reconceptualize meaning by altering dominant narratives. Mezirow argues that in adulthood, informed decision making occurs through critical reflection of the source and context of our knowledge, values, and feelings that questions the validity of assumptions. This can result in a shift in disposition or frames of reference as individuals critically reflect on beliefs and assumptions. Mezirow posits that transformative learning is a cognitive process whereby individuals critically reflect upon assumptions that leads to the following four kinds of transformation: expanding upon existing frames of reference, learning new frames of reference, transforming points of view, and transforming habits of mind.

For the purposes of understanding how transformative learning may occur in practice, Nerstrom (2014) suggests breaking the transformative learning process into experience, assumptions, challenge perspectives, and transformative learning.

## Figure 1

### *Transformative Learning Model*



### ***Experience***

Learning is situated and grounded in individual experiences, from which beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about the world emerge. People justify their values and attitudes through the biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of their experiences. These beliefs are both cognitive and affective. Dirkx (1997) highlights “learning through the soul” which occurs through “a focus on the interface where the social emotional and the intellectual world meet, where the inner and outer worlds converge” (p. 85). Experience forms frames of reference, the ways in which people view the world and take meaning from life experiences. These frames through which people see the world can be distorted, however, requiring reflection upon and

identification of assumptions undergirding those ideas to reframe them. Frames of reference are habits of mind and points of view which feed into and inform our assumptions about the world.

### *Assumptions*

Through our experience, people assimilate and form assumptions rooted in their values and beliefs that become a lens through which they view our world. Habits of mind are broad assumptions that filter these experiences; these filters are varied and may include morality, social norms, philosophies, world views, and individual preferences (Mezirow, 2000).

Transforming habits of mind requires questioning the validity of our assumptions and can happen suddenly or gradually over time. These habits of mind are expressed as our point of view, which is individually situated and sometimes founded upon problematic values and beliefs. A point of view is made up of an array of meaning schemes—these are immediate beliefs, feelings, and attitudes that shape interpretations, *what* people perceive and *how* they perceive things (Mezirow, 2000). These meaning schemes are important because they automatically drive our actions unless stalled by critical reflection. Mezirow (2000) posits that becoming critically aware of our assumptions and how they inform our meaning making and interpretations of the world leads to transformation.

Transforming points of view requires perspective taking by critically examining our own points of view in relation to others', which can help to offset problematically narrow points of view. This may initially challenge our sense of identity, requiring the ability to question our own points of view; an openness to alternative points of view; and a willingness to dialogue with others, reflect upon, and reconstruct our own narratives (Mezirow, 2000). For instance, when teaching students online for the first time, instructors might assume things about teaching online that are grounded in their experience as a face-to-face instructor. To illustrate,

an online instructor may wonder why students in the class do not engage in the online discussion board like they do in her face-to-face classes. She might assume online discussion just does not pose the same possibilities for rich and rewarding discussion and eliminate the discussion board; or she might critically reflect on her point of view, challenging her own assumptions regarding students' apathy, thus transforming her point of view as an online instructor. She might question her assumptions by asking if the discussion prompts promote deep thought, whether she has provided sufficient modelling to illustrate how she would like them to participate, or if her own involvement in the discussion forum could be augmented to lead to more positive outcomes. Instead of believing she has no power to engage students in meaningful online discussion—her point of view—because students are too lazy or just do not like online discussion, she starts to understand her role as the facilitator of active, thoughtful discussion—her habit of mind.

### ***Challenging Perspectives***

Both cognitive and affective new experiences combined with reflective discourse and critical reflection may challenge our assumptions and cause us to question our current frames of reference. Reflective discourse involves considering and welcoming other points of view, and throughout the process “identifying the common in the contradictory, tolerating the anxiety implicit in paradox, searching for synthesis, and reframing” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 13). This requires an immense measure of open mindedness, which Bruner (1990) defines as “a willingness to construe knowledge and values from multiple perspectives without loss of commitment to one’s own values” (p. 30). Mezirow (2000) outlines conditions that must exist for individuals to fully participate in reflective discourse:

1. More accurate and complete information.



2. Freedom from coercion and distorting self-deception.
3. Openness to alternative points of view: empathy and concern about how others think and feel.
4. The ability to weigh evidence and assess arguments objectively.
5. Greater awareness of the context of ideas and more critically, reflectiveness of assumptions, including their own.
6. An equal opportunity to participate in various roles of discourse.
7. Willingness to seek understanding and agreement and to accept the resulting best judgement as a test of validity until new perspectives, evidence, or arguments are encountered and validated through discourse as yielding a better judgement. (p. 13)

Critical reflection targets three kinds of assumptions: paradigmatic assumptions that lead to categorization of things in the world, prescriptive assumptions that guide our notions of how things should happen, and causal assumptions about how the world works (Brookfield, 1995). According to Mezirow (1991), critical reflection upon these various kinds of assumptions can involve *content reflection*—reflection on what individuals perceive, think, feel, or act upon; *process reflection*—the examination of how individuals perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting, and *premise reflection*—why individuals perceive, think, feel, or act as they do (pp. 107–108). Of the three, premise reflection is the only one that leads to a change in perspective because it targets the root of our assumptions.

### ***Transformative Learning***

Transformative learning occurs when the lens through which people view the world becomes broader, causing them to act in new ways because of that change in perspective.

According to Mezirow (2000), transformation often takes form through variations of phases of meaning making (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Mezirow's Phases of Meaning Making Applied to Online Faculty Development*

<b>Mezirow's Phase</b>	<b>Application to Online Faculty Development</b>
A disorienting dilemma	A new instructor to online learning feels disoriented and out of her element as she faces creating a course in a different modality.
Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame	She feels overwhelmed by the process or frustrated by being pushed to conceptualize her course differently than how she has taught it previously in a face-to-face classroom.
A critical assessment of assumptions	She begins to use what she learns from the readings and instructional videos, as well as the seminar reflections and discussion activities to critically reflect upon her pedagogical assumptions. These reflections lead her towards the perspective that she should include more opportunities for establishing human presence in her course.
Recognition that discontent and the process of transformation are shared	She begins to understand that questioning her assumptions may lead to a better overall course design. She understands that feeling overwhelmed or frustrated by the process is a problem to be worked through.
Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions	She tries to look at course design from the student perspective. She seeks other veteran instructors to ask for their perspectives.
Planning a course of action	She decides to implement new key strategies, such as discussion boards and online office hours in her summer online course to establish human presence in the course.
Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing plans	She seeks instruction and advice on how to best implement these strategies online.
Provisional trying of new roles	She teaches the course for the first time, integrating what she has learned and adapting along the way.
Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	As she progresses throughout the 5-week course, she begins to feel confident facilitating the discussion board or eliciting student feedback during online office hours to make positive changes during the course.
Reintegration into one's life based on conditions dictated by a new perspective.	Through this process she starts to see her role as an instructor online differently than she initially perceived, more as a facilitator of learning. She even sees her perspective has changed about her role as an instructor in the face-to-face classroom. She applies what she learned throughout her experience to the next iteration of the course or transfers some of that learning into the face-to-face classroom.

Learning can be messy and meaning making occurs in a variety of ways depending upon the individual. What may result in transformational learning for one person may not for another.

These phases help to address moments throughout the transformational experience that might have led to transformation for particular individuals given their situated contexts.

### ***Faculty Development and TLT***

According to Google Scholar, Mezirow's (1991) *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* has been cited 11,838 times. Kasworm and Bowles (2012) found that the most studied classroom setting for transformative learning is in higher education. In their review of 250 published reports, the authors highlight the inherent transformative nature of higher education in that "ideally, higher education offers an invitation to think, to be, and to act in new and enhanced ways...These learning environments sometimes challenge individuals to move beyond their comfort zone of the known, of self and others" (p. 389). Online faculty at the university are uniquely situated in this way as they negotiate their own professional learning as they teach in a new modality, which has the potential to cause them to reflect upon and change their familiar ways of teaching.

In an ERIC search, using the phrase "faculty development online teaching transformative learning" for peer-reviewed resources, the search hit upon 14,640 results. Using the terms "transformative learning" and "faculty development" as filters narrowed the search down to 210 results in the last 20 years. Although many of these sources did not relate directly to online faculty development, a fair number did use TLT to examine faculty experiences in learning to teach online. For instance, Ali and Wright (2017) conducted a study of 32 online courses that examined the extent to which the use of an industry-standard, quality assurance rubric for online course evaluation generated transformation in the instructional practices of college faculty members. Their findings suggested that using this type of standardized assessment tool could be a worthy first step for faculty development, but that the rubric alone did not produce significant,

transformational changes in online teaching practices. The authors suggest professional development that incorporates critical reflection on the design, development, and delivery of a course to transform instructional practice, a key element in transformational learning.

McQuiggan (2012) conducted an action-research study that explored the change in face-to-face teaching practices because of faculty professional development for online teaching. She found that connections with colleagues, preparation through reflection and discourse, and reflection on assumptions about preparing to teach online provided the possibility for changes in previously held assumptions and beliefs about teaching, for instance, that lecture is not the only way to convey content to students. Andrews Graham's (2019) phenomenological study delved into the experiences of 12 higher education faculty members at an Historically Black College or University who transitioned from face-to-face teaching to online instruction and subsequently returned to the face-to-face classroom. Many participants transferred the following practices from online to their face-to-face classes: weekly modules, clear and concise expectations, additional practice samples, and online discussions and web-conferencing. The researcher also found that participants reduced lecture-centric assignments and moved towards assessment models that leveraged peer-based learning techniques and assignments that foster independent thinking. Although the number of articles using TLT within this context is limited, it is clear from the research that has been conducted using the theory that it offers a valuable lens for exploring the disorientation faculty often feel and any subsequent changes in thinking or practice that may occur when transitioning between face-to-face and online modalities.

### ***Progressing the Theory***

Despite the prolific usage of TLT, Taylor and Cranton (2013) criticize the body of research on transformational learning for not adding anything new to the point of stagnation,

with much research in the field simply replicating studies using the same qualitative methods within situated contexts. Given this stasis, it is important to look to methodological design that move the theory forward. Researchers suggest the following design features: (a) using multiple collection points in order to show how transformation occurs through time (Bushell & Goto, 2011; MacKenzie et al., 2010; Perez et al., 2010); (b) a focus on the essential constructs—critical reflection, dialogue, experience, and *empathy* (Taylor & Cranton, 2013); and (c) use of primary research in the field rather than drawing upon secondary sources (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Collard & Law, 1989; Freire, 1970; Hart, 1990; Merriam, 2004; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). This study integrates these suggestions to build upon the research in the field.

Additionally, given the three constructs outlined by Mezirow (1991) as central to TLT—experience, critical dialogue, and critical reflection—Taylor and Cranton (2013) suggest an additional core component—empathy—which is defined as the ability to “subjectively experience and share in another psychological state or intrinsic feelings” (Morse et al., 1992, p. 274). They suggest the need for more clearly defined and in-depth discussion regarding empathy as significant to transformative learning, specifically how empathy relates to the other three constructs. This reflects Mezirow’s (2003) notions of critical-dialectical discourse of “having an open mind, learning to listen empathetically, ‘bracketing’ prejudgment, and seeking common ground” (p. 60). To expand upon the theory, it is worth exploring the relationships between empathy and Mezirow’s three original constructs. Participant interview questions will target this notion of empathy.

## Research Questions

The overarching goal of this study was multi-faceted:

1. Examine how, if at all, transformative learning occurs in online teaching faculty development and what facilitates this kind of learning in this context.
2. Explore how, if at all, faculty development combined with transitioning to teaching online might help to shape how online instructors think differently about their teaching.
3. Investigate the possible impact(s) of faculty development and teaching online on instructors' face-to-face course design.

These three facets shed light on what the current research on online faculty development has to say about facilitating transformational learning, how online faculty development might contribute to changes in how instructors think about their teaching, and how those potential changes in thinking might then transfer to practice outside of online instruction. This provided three different vantage points from which to view transformational learning in online faculty development. Therefore, my dissertation is structured as three articles, each of which addresses one of the following research questions related to online instructor learning.

1. How, if at all, does transformative learning occur in a faculty development program for online teaching and what facilitates this kind of learning in this context?
2. How did online instructors think differently, if at all, about their teaching after going through the Online Faculty Development Seminar and after teaching their newly developed online courses?
3. What impact(s), if any, did going through the seminar and teaching online have on instructor's face-to-face course design?

Possible publication outlets include: *Journal of Faculty Development*, *International Journal on E-Learning*, *Online Learning*, *Innovate Journal of Online Education*, *Teaching in Higher Education*, *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, and the *Journal of Transformative Learning*.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study was designed to shed light upon how, if at all, faculty development provided to online instructors might benefit teaching and learning within online programs as well as more broadly throughout their teaching practice. This is particularly important given the limited formal pedagogical training many faculty receive. With special emphasis paid to providing instructors with opportunities to build the knowledge and skills needed for effective online course design and instruction, it is important to understand how faculty developers might leverage this kind of faculty development and any learning that results to greatest effect. As such, the study was designed to understand what may trigger transformative learning throughout this kind of experience, paying specific attention to the phases of transformation (Mezirow, 2000) as well as the essential constructs—critical reflection, dialogue, experience (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Collard & Law, 1989; Freire, 1970; Hart, 1990; Merriam, 2004; Mezirow, 1991, 2000) and empathy as suggested by Taylor and Cranton (2013).

### **METHODS**

My dissertation, a case study with embedded cases, includes three articles, each one pertaining to one of my three individual research questions. Case study is ideal for examining data that emerge within a bounded system, bounded by time and place. This bounded system becomes the unit of analysis, which can be examined through multiple sources—interviews, observations, documents—all providing rich, detailed, and in-depth data from which to analyze

the case (Yin, 2018). Case studies are great for answering research questions that ask how a phenomenon may be occurring. The bounded larger case of the fall 2019 Online Faculty Development Seminar cohort was well suited to the purpose of this research because it provided a context to explore how transformational learning may be facilitated within a specific online faculty development program that was redesigned for fall 2019. The purpose of this research was not simply to understand transformational learning as a phenomenon but what about the context of online faculty development may contribute to individuals experiencing that phenomenon. Yin (2018) suggests the use of embedded cases when a single case study may involve sub-units of analysis. Therefore, individual participants selected from the fall 2019 cohort of this program acted as the embedded cases. This study examined both the programmatic and individual implications of transformational learning as it pertains to online faculty development.

Different data sets were generated and analyzed for each of the three research questions. Article 1 is framed as a literature review and examined articles that explore transformative learning in online teaching faculty development. Article 2 examined how the Online Faculty Development Seminar changed participants' perspectives of teaching. Article 3 examined how the learning that occurred throughout the seminar and while teaching online changed participants' actual practice in the traditional classroom.

### **Site of Research**

This research took place within the College of Arts & Sciences in the context of the online and hybrid course development seminar offered at a mid-sized liberal Arts and Sciences institution in the Southeastern United States. Five hybrid and 24 fully online instructors currently teach all online and hybrid offerings, although the number of instructors having taught online or hybrid at some point is greater than this. Online courses are conducted fully online, while hybrid



courses run 4 weeks online and 1 week in person. The courses taught represent a wide range of disciplines across the Arts & Sciences curriculum including Chemistry, Linguistics, Kinesiology, Philosophy, and Government.

### **Context**

No matter their prior experience teaching online, all new online/hybrid instructors within the College of Arts & Sciences must participate in the Online Faculty Development Seminar (FDS). The FDS is a semester-long seminar where participants work face-to-face and online to cultivate online teaching skills while creating an online/hybrid course that runs the following summer session. Using cycles of *learn*, *do*, *reflect*, and *extend*, the seminar supports instructors in developing four overlapping and integrated domains of knowledge and practice within the online instructional development ecosystem: personal, pedagogy, content, and technology (Palloff & Pratt, 2011).

The seminar consists of five synchronous modules, covering the span of 5 weeks at the start of the seminar, including both online and face-to-face activities geared towards creating the course shell and all module entry pages, and entirely fleshing out the first module of the course within the learning management system. Weeks 6-10 occur asynchronously and are structured to assist faculty in developing the rest of the modules for the course with assistance from the production team and an instructional designer. Courses are expected to be completely designed by the end of the 10-week period.

As part of the FDS, the learning is structured to focus on course design as a means to cultivating dynamic faculty-student and student-student relationships. Human connection of this nature requires intentional design and implementation to achieve, which is a large focus of the seminar. The seminar modules interweave elements of the Community of Inquiry framework

such as cognitive, social, and instructor presence which research demonstrates can aid in cultivating connections online (Garrison et al., 2000). These notions of online presence may contradict new online instructors' preconceptions about online learning and challenge their initial approaches to online course design.

## **Participants**

Within the larger case of the FDS, five embedded individual cases were developed. All five participants who took part in the fall 2019 FDS agreed to participate in the study. Bounding the cases in this way helped to ensure that each participant had relatively similar experiences in the seminar. Given that the spring 2020 participant instructors had to shift abruptly to remote teaching mid-semester as a result of COVID-19 social distancing measures, the experiences of the two groups were vastly different. Of the five participants from the fall 2020 cohort, two had already taught online at different institutions prior to the FDS and three were completely new to online teaching. Additionally, there was a wide range of teaching experience as well as a range of disciplines including Chemistry, Film and Media Studies, Public Policy, History, and Psychology. There were also three instructors who had taught versions of these online courses in the traditional, face-to-face format.

## **Article 1**

The purpose of this article was to examine what the current research in the field of online faculty development revealed about facilitating transformational learning. The research question for Article 1 is: How, if at all, does transformative learning occur in a faculty development program for online teaching and what facilitates this kind of learning in this context?

## Data Generation

Data generation began with a search for the literature using the phrase “faculty development online teaching transformative learning” for peer-reviewed resources. Filters such as “transformative learning” and “faculty development” were used to narrow the search down and find articles that related directly to online faculty development, as well as those that used TLT to examine faculty experiences in learning to teach online. Using these articles as a starting point, the citation trail was followed to locate other articles that discuss transformational learning related to online faculty development.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was organized using a spreadsheet and began with qualitative coding, looking specifically for links to Mezirow’s 10-part schema to determine how transformational learning occurred and how it was facilitated across studies. Coding of words and phrases combined with category construction and constant comparative method was used to establish themes. Table 2 shows the data collection and analytical methods for this article.

**Table 2**

*Article 1 Data Generation and Analytical Methods*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Method</b>
How, if at all, does transformative learning occur in a faculty development program for online teaching and what facilitates this kind of learning in this context?	ERIC database & citation lists	Qualitative coding

### Article 2

The purpose of this article was to examine any changes in thinking about teaching that occurred through instructor online faculty development and as instructors taught online after that learning experience. The research questions were:

1. How did online instructors think differently, if at all, about teaching after going through the Online Faculty Development Seminar? What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in thinking?
2. How did online instructors think differently about teaching, if at all, after teaching their newly developed online courses? What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in thinking?

### **Data Generation**

A variety of data were generated during summer 2020. The primary data source was two semi-structured interviews. Zoom-recordings of the interviews were made and transcribed verbatim to prepare them for analysis—once after completion of the seminar and once after teaching summer online. These interviews were augmented with reflections that participants completed during the FDS—one for each module completed. Finally, email exchanges and notes from instructional design meetings were the final form of data generated for this article.

### **Data Analysis**

Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed methods data analysis computer application, was used to manage and analyze the data set. Article 2 analysis began with inductive analysis using open coding processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to identify themes throughout the interviews and reflections, specifically looking for patterns and inconsistencies across data. This process incorporated coding small words or phrases, then category construction, constant comparative method, and subdivision and combination of categories—this included a combination of Mezirow’s 10-part schema and schemes suggested by participants’ verbalizations. Email exchanges, field notes, and reflexive memos were analyzed using qualitative coding consisting of coding small words or phrases, category construction, constant comparative method, and

subdivision and combination of categories. Table 3 shows the data collection and analytical methods for Article 2.

**Table 3**

*Article 2 Data Generation and Analytical Methods*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Method</b>
How did online instructors think differently, if at all, about teaching after going through the Online Faculty Development Seminar?	semi-structured Interviews	inductive analysis
What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in thinking?	reflections developed during the seminar	inductive analysis
How did online instructors think differently about teaching, if at all, after teaching their newly developed online courses?	email exchanges & instructional design meeting notes	qualitative coding
What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in thinking?		

**Article 3**

The purpose of this article was to learn how changes in thinking about teaching influenced changes in practice *outside* of the online instructional experience. This article examined how transfer of learning occurred as instructors transitioned back and forth across modalities. The research questions were:

1. What impact(s), if any, did going through the seminar and teaching online have on instructor’s face-to-face course design?
2. What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in practice?
3. What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in practice?

**Data Generation**

A variety of data were generated over the course of summer 2020 and fall 2020 semesters. The primary data sources were two semi-structured interviews (Appendix A). Zoom-

recordings of the interviews were made and transcribed verbatim to prepare them for analysis. These interviews were augmented with email exchanges and notes from instructional design meetings. Artifacts from instructors such as course syllabi and course materials from their face-to-face courses were collected to observe any changes in practice mentioned throughout the interviews.

### **Data Analysis**

Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed methods data analysis computer application, was used to manage and analyze the data set. Data analysis began with inductive analysis using open coding processes to identify themes throughout interviews. This process incorporated coding small words or phrases, then category construction, constant comparative method, and subdivision and combination of categories. As themes were identified, qualitative coding was conducted of artifacts, meeting notes, and emails. Table 4 shows the data collection and analytical methods for Article 3.

**Table 4**

*Article 3 Data Generation and Analytical Methods*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Method</b>
What impact(s), if any, did going through the seminar and teaching online have on instructor’s face-to-face course design?	semi-structured interviews	inductive analysis
What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in practice?	artifacts (syllabus, course materials, reflections)	qualitative coding
What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in practice?	email exchanges and instructional design meeting notes	qualitative coding

### **Ensuring Internal Validity**

Internal validity relates to how well a study is designed to contribute to the trustworthiness of any findings. Specifically, when researchers make cause and effect claims

within a study, it is essential that efforts be made to validate those findings. Although no causal claims were made as a result of findings of this case study, internal validity is a concern any time a researcher makes inferences where a particular event is not directly observed, such as inferences made from interviews with participants or from collected artifacts (Yin, 2018). Though not causal, I used this case study to make inferences about elements of online faculty development that might help facilitate transformative learning in the case that transformative learning even occurs. When making inferences of this nature, it becomes essential to ensure that these inferences are defensible. This is of particular importance when the researcher is a participant observer where complete objectivity becomes a question, such as in this case study (see Appendix B for Researcher Positionality Statement). Yin (2018) suggests researchers consider rival explanations and whether the evidence is convergent. The following methods were taken to consider rival explanations: interview questions that asked participants to specify learning experiences that might have helped facilitate any transformative learning provided options that might have occurred outside of the online faculty development seminar—including other professional development, conferences, learning from colleagues, participation in other university learning opportunities, and reading pedagogical literature.

The following measures were taken to ensure convergence, which is collecting and analyzing multiple sources of evidence that contribute to the same findings (Yin, 2018):

1. Triangulation, which occurs through multiple sources of data and multiple methods to confirm the findings (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018)—these multiple sources of data included interviews, reflections, artifacts, and email exchanges.

2. Member checking, which occurs by taking data and tentative interpretations back to participants and asking if the results are plausible (Merriam, 1998); member checking occurred after each interview through email.
3. Peer examination, which occurs through eliciting feedback from fellow scholars who can comment on the findings (Merriam, 1998); peer examination was conducted through work with the dissertation committee and peer review that will occur as part of the publication process.
4. Gathering of data also occurred over time (Merriam, 1998). Interviews occurred two times over the course of 5 months (June through October), with other sources of data collected throughout.

### **Ensuring Reliability**

Research reliability refers to being able to produce consistent results, while minimizing errors and biases (Yin, 2018). In addition to generating data at multiple points in time, triangulation of multiple methods of data generation and collection and analysis also strengthen reliability (Merriam, 1998). These multiple sources of data included interviews, reflections, artifacts, and email exchanges. Analysis also included inductive analysis—working the data from the “ground up” (Yin, 2018) combined with qualitative coding—determining the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts (Merriam, 1998). To minimize bias, it is important to explain the investigator's position (Merriam, 1998) including assumptions and theory behind the study, the basis for selecting participants along with a description of them, and a rich description of the context from which the data will be collected. To ensure replicability and to prove the plausibility of findings, it is important to describe in detail how the data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (Merriam, 1998).



This was facilitated through memoing—recording reflective notes about what the researcher is learning from the data. This was also be facilitated through reflexive journaling—attending to how knowledge is being constructed through written reflection as it occurs at every step in the research process (Merriam, 1998).

### **Ensuring External Validity**

External validity refers to the generalizability of findings outside of the study. In case studies of this nature, statistical generalizability is not possible given the small number of participants and the absence of quantitative methods. However, Yin (2018) suggests researchers conceptualize generalizability in qualitative research by thinking of case study as “an opportunity to shed empirical light on some theoretical concepts or principles” (p. 38). This can help to form analytic generalizations which are built upon the theoretical propositions that guide the initial design of the study. These analytic generalizations can therefore act to reaffirm, modify, reject, or otherwise contribute to theoretical concepts included in the case study design (Yin, 2018). With this case study, I sought to shed empirical light on theoretical concepts regarding transformational learning within online faculty development. Specifically, my goal was to explore essential constructs—experience, critical dialogue, and critical reflection—as well as Mezirow’s (1991, 2000) phases of transformative learning. Additionally, Yin (2018) asserts that analytic generalizability can be strengthened by intentionally pointing out that the generalization is not statistical in nature, but rather an argument that requires specific attention to potential flaws in claims and in-depth discussion of the analytic generalizations rather than just stating them. Stake (1978) argues that the general can reside in the particular, and that the rich and full knowledge of the particular can allow others to find similarities in “new and foreign contexts” (p.

6). Therefore, I tried to provide as much rich, thick description as possible so that the readers can determine the extent to which my findings apply to their particular situations (Merriam, 1998).

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Participant information was de-identified. All participants were assigned a number, and the key to these number codes were kept (on paper, not electronically) in a locked drawer in my office. This record was destroyed upon conclusion of the study. Number identification remained attached to responses, but names were not. Pseudonyms were used instead of names in any reporting so participant identities will remain confidential. (See Appendix C for participant invitation to participate.)

### **Anticipated Contributions**

Regarding the first article, the literature review of transformational learning as it might occur in online faculty development could provide insight into faculty development features that facilitate growth regarding instructor assumptions about teaching and learning online and pedagogical practices. This is a possible benefit to the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education as well as to programs and practitioners responsible for developing faculty learning experiences. The themes outlined from this literature review of online faculty development could also help guide faculty developers in pinpointing effective practices or other considerations for the design of faculty learning experiences.

The two articles that focus on analysis of instructor learning through online course development and the experience of teaching online could contribute not only to the practice of individuals developing learning opportunities for faculty, but also provide insight into the benefits of such opportunities for enhancing teaching more broadly at the institutional level. Given the limited opportunities for faculty development of this nature in higher education, this

research could provide insight into ways institutions can leverage the teaching and learning that may occur in online faculty development to greater effect. Additionally, TLT research as it applies to online faculty development is still in its infancy. This study could contribute to theoretical foundations of adult learning within similar contexts, thus confirming, refuting, or expanding our understanding of TLT more broadly.

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## Appendix A

### Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

#### Interview Questions: Interview 1

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

1. Could you talk about one or two significant experiences that made you the teacher you are today?
2. How would you describe your role as a teacher before you began participating in the Online Faculty Development Seminar? What about after?
3. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the FDS that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
4. Have you noticed any changes in how you think about teaching since taking part in the FDS? What do you think sparked this change?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this change?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
6. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.

2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
5. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
7. How do you feel about this change in perspective?
8. How, if at all, did dialogue with colleagues affect any change in the way you think about teaching and/ or your teaching practice?
9. How, if at all, did seminar reflection exercises affect any changes in the way you think about teaching and/or in your teaching practice.
10. How, if at all, has taking part in the Online Faculty Development Seminar affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
11. How, if at all, has anything else outside of the Online Faculty Development Seminar, for instance remote teaching, affected your teaching?

**Interview Questions: Interview 2**

1. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect your current approach to teaching?
2. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the summer teaching online that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
3. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect how you currently characterize your role as an instructor?
4. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this experience?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.

2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
6. How, if at all, has teaching online this summer affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
7. How, if at all, has anything else outside of teaching online this summer affected your current approach to teaching?
8. Given the changes to face-to-face teaching practice you mentioned earlier, could I possibly come to observe how these are being implemented in your classes? (specify which might be observable or which might be covered by course artifacts)

**Interview Questions: Interview 3**

1. What, if anything, do you do differently in your face-to-face teaching after the FDS and teaching online this past summer?
  1. Did your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Has your teaching style changed? If so, how?

3. Have student learning activities changed? If so, how?
  4. Have your learning objectives for students changed? If so, how?
  5. What about other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
2. How do you feel about these changes?
  3. Given the changes to face-to-face teaching practice you mentioned earlier, could I possibly come to observe how these are being implemented in your classes? (specify which might be observable or which might be covered by course artifacts)

## **Appendix B**

### **Researcher Positionality**

I have been an educator since 2003, and in my various roles in K-12 and Higher Education, I have developed some key understandings about myself as an educator, which often bleed into my work as an educational researcher: 1. Learning relies on human connection; 2. Learning is situated and depends very much on context—historical, social, political, economic, cultural; 3. Learning is complex; 4 Teaching requires ongoing and merciless reflective practice ; 5 There is no “I” in teaching—which really just means that education should always be about the learner.

These truisms guide my research practice to a great extent as well, which is often very human-centric. I am drawn to case study methodology because it is so dependent upon rich complexity of particular contexts and the individuals’ experiences within those contexts. I believe that our reality(s) and any meaning we construct is determined through our experiences and our interactions with others. This means that I value experience to teach and as a way to understand how and what individuals are learning. It also means that I place emphasis on social interaction as an essential element in teaching and learning, and in my research, thus my leaning towards research methods such as interviews and observations. This also explains why I am drawn to Transformative Learning Theory where experience is an essential construct. Additionally, this kind of case study research allows me to reflect upon and guide my own educational practice; and even though I am facilitating the course that is my unit of analysis, I understand that the research really needs to be about the story that comes from my participants rather than my own narrative.

In my role as an instructional design manager, I am in the position of creating and facilitating the faculty development program that is also the focus of my research. This is beneficial for me as an instructional designer because it will help to guide my future practice in developing learning opportunities for faculty. I have been in this faculty support role now for two years. Due to the very personalized nature of the online faculty development program as well as my inclination towards human-centered design, I have established close working relationships with the instructors that participated in the FDS this year. I



empathize with them as they experience challenges and I celebrate when they have breakthroughs. I see myself as a leader, helping to guide them through this shift into a new modality; I also see myself as a co-educator, helping to design courses that will guide students through positive learning experiences online.

In this role of faculty developer, I redesigned the FDS this past year, so this is the first iteration of the new seminar. As an instructor, there are certain outcomes that I would like to see: 1. faculty critically reflecting upon their practice; 2. effective online courses design and facilitation; 3. instructors transferring the pedagogical practices they learn in the seminar to their face-to-face teaching in meaningful ways. Though these are outcomes I hope to see facilitated through this faculty development, what I really want to know through this research is how we can make these outcomes more likely in future iterations of faculty development.

I ask my instructors to reflect on their practice and this research allows me to reflect on my practice as a faculty educator. I ask instructors to meaningfully change practice based upon student feedback. This research allows me to generate rich and detailed data from which I can draw implications to change my practice. I ask my instructors to take risks, to experiment, and to value iteration of their courses. This research helps me to better understand the experience faculty members had this year in the FDS so that I can shape future iterations to foster the kind of critical reflection and transformative learning that may lead to transfer of good teaching practices across modalities.

To guard against confirmatory bias, interview questions will actively seek out alternative explanations for any changes to thinking and/ or practice that participants discuss. Interview summaries will also be sent to participants to member check any of my assumptions coming out of interviews with participants. Inductive coding through Dedoose will also help to guard against my imposing categories where they may not actually exist. Categories must be exhaustive- which means that all data must fit, thus guarding against picking only the data that fits into a particular schema. Additionally, sharing my findings with members of my dissertation committee will help to guard against myopia.

## Appendix C

### Invitation to Participate

Dear Colleague,

I am conducting a case study specifically examining how faculty development for online learning, as well as teaching an online course, may affect instructors' perceptions about teaching. I am also interested in how these experiences may shape instructors' practice more broadly. The goal of the study is multi-faceted: 1) examine how, if at all, transformative learning occurs in online teaching faculty development and what facilitates this kind of learning in this context 2) explore how, if at all, faculty development combined with transitioning to teaching online may help to shape how online instructors think differently about their teaching; 3) investigate the possible impact(s) of faculty development and teaching online on instructors' face-to-face course design. Your participation in this study would help us to understand how we can better support faculty learning to teach online. If you are willing to participate, the following are things I would ask of you:

- a. Three 60-minute interviews with me focused on your experiences going through the Online Faculty Development Seminar as well as teaching your newly designed online course for the first time. The first interview would be conducted before summer session begins and the second would be conducted after you teach your summer online course, likely taking place in early fall. The third interview would be a retrospective to occur mid-fall.
- b. Where applicable, allowing classroom observations by me and providing access to course artifacts such as syllabus, assignments, and activities that might shed light on and deepen our understanding of how these experiences contribute to, if at all, your face-to-face teaching practices.

Your identity and the location of the study will be kept confidential and I will use pseudonyms in the write-up of my research. Only I will have access to any of the data generated throughout the study. All data collected will be stored in a secure location, locked in a file cabinet in my office which only I have access to, and kept completely confidential.

Attached is a consent form, which requires your signature should you choose to participate. I do hope you choose to participate in the study! I am excited about providing faculty with the best possible professional learning experiences that we can offer. This research will help to guide not only professional learning opportunities here at William & Mary but could also contribute greatly to teaching and learning scholarship and practice more broadly.

Sincerely,

Katalin K. Wargo

DIRECTIONS: Please sign, scan, and return this form to [kwargo@wm.edu](mailto:kwargo@wm.edu)

I have read this form and understand that I may choose to participate or not to participate. I understand that I can opt out of participating at any point in the study, and there will be no consequence to my relationship with the Studio for Teaching and Learning Innovation

Please check one of the following items and sign below.

I have read this form and YES, I wish to participate.

I have read this form and NO; I do not wish to participate.

Signature:

## CHAPTER 2

### A LITERATURE REVIEW OF TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION ONLINE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT: FACULTY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

## **Abstract**

This review of the literature discusses what current research in the field of online faculty development reveals about transformative learning within higher education faculty development. Though a substantial body of literature supports transformative learning, little research has been published about online faculty development designed for college instructors. This article examines how the essential constructs of transformative learning are promoted in online faculty development and which elements of faculty development help to foster transformative learning. Drawing on the 13 studies that explore transformative learning within professional development of online college faculty, this article discusses how faculty development focused on four critical constructs of transformative learning theory—experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and empathy—shapes instructors’ perceptions and practice of teaching. Several professional development practices have been highlighted as instrumental in supporting transformative learning through online faculty development.

Over the last 30 years, online learning has grown in popularity, making an indelible mark on the landscape of higher education (Legon & Garrett, 2018; Osika et al., 2009). Additionally, the rapid and sweeping shift to remote teaching in March 2020 as a result of the spread of the novel coronavirus, has made online learning a necessity rather than a choice for many higher education institutions. This rapid shift to remote, hybrid, and online courses and programs has faculty developers and centers for teaching and learning across the nation racing to develop programs to support faculty in creating meaningful learning experiences across modalities. This offers new opportunities for faculty development and educational practice, yet the rate of change also presents challenges for educators as they struggle to keep up.

As more instructors across the nation shift to using digital modes of instruction, they are exposed to new pedagogies and technologies that may cause them to reconceptualize what it means to teach. Koehler and Mishra (2009) suggest that in order to transition to teaching online, instructors must understand the complex interplay between technology, content knowledge, and pedagogy. Recent research has begun to suggest that as instructors go through the process of learning online instructional strategies and subsequently teach online, they often reconceptualize their teaching (Terras, 2017). Many studies have shown that the move to online teaching often creates a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered instruction (Barker, 2003; Conceição, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Gallant, 2000; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005), including a focus on increased student participation, interaction, and self-directed learning (Barker, 2003; Gallant, 2000). Sometimes this shift can cause even experienced instructors to challenge their assumptions and beliefs about teaching, making them feel as uncertain as they did when they were novice instructors (Barker, 2003; King, 2002; Lawler et al., 2004).

To date, there is minimal research that has addressed how professional development opportunities for online learning can encourage faculty to examine their notions of effective teaching. To effectively transition to teaching online, instructors must reconsider their current teaching practice, thus presenting an opportunity to critically interrogate their assumptions and beliefs regarding teaching and learning. Professional development for online teaching is a potential opportunity to catalyze faculty to reflect upon and critically evaluate their current teaching practices as they learn to employ student-centered pedagogies involving dialogue and student collaboration and as their roles in the classroom shift (McQuiggan, 2012). Transitioning to online instruction can present a *disorienting dilemma* (Mezirow, 1991) as instructors navigate an entirely new teaching landscape, challenging their assumptions and beliefs about teaching. King (2001) suggests that faculty developers must strive to understand the transformation that faculty experience as they learn and incorporate new practices into their teaching. Faculty developers can benefit from examining the changes that instructors experience as they learn about online teaching and as they transition between modalities. They can then use this knowledge to create professional learning experiences that are deliberately designed to foster transformative learning. Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) is an adult learning theory that describes how disorienting experiences may cause one to reflect upon, critically examine, and revise perspectives.

This literature review is grounded in Mezirow's (1991) work on the transformative dimensions of adult learning, which has been cited 11,838 times, according to Google Scholar. Additionally, the most studied classroom context for transformative learning is higher education (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). In their review of 250 published reports, the authors highlighted the inherent transformative nature of higher education in that "ideally, higher education offers an

invitation to think, to be, and to act in new and enhanced ways....These learning environments sometimes challenge individuals to move beyond their comfort zone of the known, of self and others” (p. 389). Given the possibilities inherent in transformative learning to benefit higher education teaching and learning, it is essential to examine how transformative learning can be fostered within this context.

### **Purpose and Research Question**

Despite the prolific use of TLT in the corpus of adult learning literature, limited research has been conducted with faculty that explores which professional development activities focused on online teaching may facilitate transformative learning. In fact, few articles have been published on how faculty development providers can engage faculty in critically examining their assumptions and the resulting teaching practices in the online environment. The purpose of this review of the literature is to examine what the current research in the field of online faculty development reveals about facilitating transformative learning. The research questions are:

1. How does transformative learning occur in faculty development for online teaching?
2. What kinds of professional development practices facilitate transformative learning in this context?

I begin with an explanation of transformative learning and outline a scenario for how it may occur within the context of faculty development for online teaching. I then outline the methods used in reviewing the literature. Drawing on the studies that explore TLT, I discuss the findings regarding how faculty development focused on four critical constructs of TLT—experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse (Mezirow, 1991), and empathy (Taylor & Cranton, 2013)—shapes instructors’ perceptions and practice of teaching. I then discuss the professional



development practices that this research suggests as being instrumental in fostering transformative learning through online faculty development.

### **Transformative Learning Through Faculty Development in Online Learning**

Across the landscape of higher education, there are increasing numbers of faculty teaching online courses. Given the need to prepare faculty for the shift to teaching in a new modality, faculty development programs designed to prepare instructors to teach online have been implemented across the nation. These faculty development opportunities take various forms within different contexts:

- They might occur online, while others occur hybrid or face to face.
- They might be programmatic and occur over time, or they might be single-session experiences.
- They might offer instructional design support to instructors to help design and develop courses, or they may simply provide exemplars and resources.
- They might be geared towards novice online faculty, or they might provide opportunities for faculty to develop and grow no matter their level of experience teaching online.

No matter the format, these offerings position instructors as learners with the purpose of bolstering instructional practice.

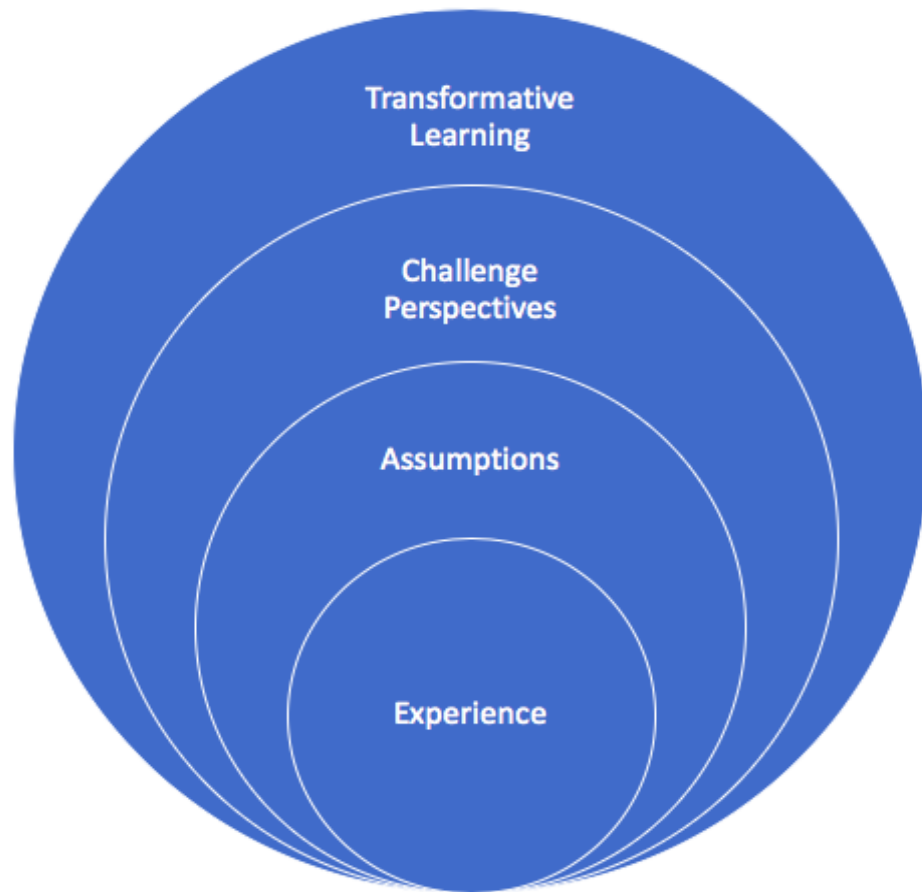
This kind of formalized faculty development support contrasts with the lack of formal training most faculty experience when teaching face-to-face for the first time (Groccia & Hunter, 2012). Educators in universities are hired as experts in their academic disciplines and rarely have any formal training in teaching unless they are professors of education, participate in teaching seminars, or conduct other work in the scholarship of teaching and learning (Cranton, 1996).

However, to improve one's teaching, instructors must question and think critically about their practice (Cranton, 1996). According to Mezirow (2000), transformational learning is facilitated by critical reflection of the source and context of our knowledge, values, and feelings that ultimately challenges the validity of our assumptions. When individuals critically reflect on their beliefs and assumptions, it can result in a shift in their thinking and have an impact upon their practice.

Nerstrom (2014) suggests breaking the transformative learning process into experience, assumptions, challenge perspectives, and transformative learning. I have outlined a model to show the relationship among experience, assumptions, challenge perspectives, and transformative learning in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Transformative Learning Model*



***Experience***

Perceptions of the world are determined by the experiences that individuals have. From experience emerge frames of reference, the ways in which individuals view the world and make meaning from life experiences. However, these frames are sometimes fragmented or skewed because of these experiences, and it is only through questioning the basis of assumptions that assumptions about the world change (Mezirow, 1991).

### ***Assumptions***

People see the world through these assumptions which in turn form values and beliefs. Mezirow (2000) outlines broad assumptions that filter these experiences which he refers to as habits of mind; these filters are varied and may include morality, social norms, philosophies, world views, and individual preferences. Transforming habits of mind requires questioning the validity of assumptions. These habits of mind are then expressed as point of view, which is made up of an array of meaning schemes—these are immediate beliefs, feelings, and attitudes that shape interpretations, *what* individuals perceive and *how* they perceive things (Mezirow, 2000).

### ***Challenging Perspectives***

New experiences that provide opportunities for critical reflection and reflective discourse may challenge our assumptions and cause us to question our current frames of reference. However, just because an individual questions something, does not mean that transformation will occur. For transformative learning to occur, the reflection that takes place must lead to a change in perspective (Cranton, 1996). Additionally, the amount of transformation and how significant the impact is felt by the person depends upon how critical the initial assumption is to their overall worldview (Robertson, 1999).

### ***Transformative Learning***

Transformative learning occurs when individuals broaden the lens through which they view the world, acting in new ways because of that change in perspective. According to Mezirow (2000), transformation often takes form through variations of the following phases of meaning making outlined in Table 1. It is important to note that the phases do not necessarily need to occur in order, and it is not required that they all occur for transformation to take place.

Table 1 outlines the phases of meaning making and how they might occur within the context of online faculty development.

**Table 1**

*Mezirow's Phases of Meaning Making Applied to Online Faculty Development*

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Application to Online Faculty Development</b>
Disorienting dilemma	A new instructor to online teaching feels disoriented and out of her element as she faces creating a course in a different modality.
Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame	She feels overwhelmed by the process or frustrated by being pushed to conceptualize her course differently than how she has taught it previously in a face-to-face classroom.
Critical assessment of assumptions	She begins to use what she learns from readings and instructional videos, as well as the prompted reflections and discussion activities to critically reflect upon her pedagogical assumptions. These reflections lead her toward the perspective that she should include more opportunities for establishing human presence in her course.
Recognition that discontent and the process of transformation are shared	She begins to understand that questioning her assumptions might lead to a better overall course design. She understands that feeling overwhelmed or frustrated by the process is a problem to be worked through and that this frustration could lead to finding solutions.
Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions	She tries to look at course design from the student perspective. She may seek other veteran instructors to ask for their perspectives.
Planning a course of action	She decides to implement some new, key strategies, such as discussion boards and online office hours in her online course to establish human presence in this new modality.
Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans	She seeks out instruction and advice on how to best implement these strategies online.
Provisional trying of new roles	She then teaches the course for the first time, integrating what she has learned and adapting along the way, implementing more student-centered strategies to reflect a facilitator kind of role.
Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	As she progresses throughout the 5 weeks of the course, she begins to feel confident facilitating the discussion board or eliciting student feedback during her online office hours to make positive changes during the course.
A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.	Through this process she starts to see her role as an instructor online differently than she initially perceived, more as a facilitator of learning. She even sees her perspective has changed regarding her role as an instructor in the face-to-face classroom. She applies what she learned throughout her experience teaching online to the next iteration of the course or even transfer some of that learning into the face-to-face classroom.

To facilitate transformative learning in online faculty development, faculty developers can leverage the critical components of TLT to help instructors progress through the various phases of meaning making.

### ***Online Faculty Development and the Critical Components of Transformative Learning***

Mezirow (1991) argues that transformative learning is, in fact, the goal of adult education. Full participation in critical reflection and reflective discourse is essential to this process. Faculty who teach online need to be provided with opportunities to reflect on, challenge, and revise their understanding of teaching and learning (King, 2001; Korstange et al., 2019; McQuiggan, 2012; Whitelaw et al., 2004). This means that faculty must have the opportunity to process new experiences and meaning by assessing the validity of their assumptions derived from prior learning experiences through critical self-reflection and reflective discourse with others.

Critical reflection is central to TLT. According to Mezirow (1991), critical reflection upon these various kinds of assumptions can involve *content reflection* (reflection on what individuals perceive, think, feel, or act upon); *process reflection* (examination of how individuals perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting); and *premise reflection* (why individuals perceive, think, feel, or act as they do; pp. 107-108). Of the three, premise reflection is the only one that leads to a change in perspective because it targets the root of assumptions.

In addition to critical reflection, reflective discourse can aid individuals in questioning, challenging, and revising faulty assumptions and beliefs. Mezirow (2000, p. 13) outlines what participants must have to fully participate in reflective discourse with others:

- Access to accurate and complete information
- Freedom from coercion and distortion of self-perception

- Openness and empathy towards to alternative perspectives
- Ability to consider evidence and examine arguments objectively
- Critical reflectiveness of assumptions and their consequences
- Equal opportunity to participate in reflective discourse: question, challenge, reflect, refute, and hear others' perspectives
- Ability to accept informed and objective consensus as a test of validity of assumptions

In addition to experience, critical reflection, and reflective discourse as essential constructs of transformational learning, Taylor and Cranton (2013) suggest an additional core component—empathy—which is defined as the ability to “subjectively experience and share in another psychological state or intrinsic feelings” (Morse et al., 1992, p. 274). This builds upon Mezirow’s (2003) notions of critical-dialectical discourse of “having an open mind, learning to listen empathetically, ‘bracketing’ prejudgment, and seeking common ground” (p. 60). Given the essential nature of these constructs in transformational learning, it is important to examine the themes emerging from faculty development experiences where the constructs have been considered, and how faculty developers are utilizing instructors’ experience and are engaging faculty in critical reflection, reflective discourse, and empathy.

### **Methods**

I began my search of the literature researching faculty development models that capture the experience of learning to teach online that included transformative learning as a theoretical framework. In an ERIC search, using the phrase “faculty development online teaching transformative learning” for peer-reviewed resources, the search hit upon 14,640 results. Using the terms “transformative learning” and “faculty development” as filters narrowed the search

down to 218 results. Using these articles as a starting point, I followed the citation trail to locate other articles that discuss transformative learning related to online faculty development.

I read the abstracts of all 218 results to determine if they were relevant to the research questions. This process yielded 42 sources. I then split them into two categories:

- study—studies that examine transformative learning within online faculty development in higher education, and
- context—texts that can provide context but that do not specifically examine transformative learning within online faculty development in higher education.

An example of a context source is an article that examined transformative learning during online faculty development for K–12 teachers. From those articles initially coded “study,” I followed the citation trail using the references section of each source to find more articles, using the same process of reading the abstract, determining relevance, and coding as study or context. I kept following the citation trail with each new relevant study I found. This process yielded only 13 studies that examine transformative learning within online faculty development in higher education. I coded these 13 studies using the four critical constructs of transformative learning: experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse (Mezirow, 2000), and empathy (Taylor & Cranton, 2013). I wanted to know how these constructs were addressed in these studies and how they may have been fostered through various faculty development approaches. In addition to the four critical constructs, I also coded for disorienting dilemmas, changing roles, and elements of faculty development. I wanted to examine the kinds of disorienting dilemmas that emerged, how faculty experienced the shifting of their teaching roles, and which elements of faculty development helped to foster transformative learning. Within each of these larger, preassigned categories, I used coding of words and phrases combined with category construction and



constant comparative analysis to establish themes within. I present the themes from this analysis in the following findings section.

### **Findings**

Several themes were identified from this review of studies that examine transformative learning within online faculty development in higher education. The first is that there is a complex interplay between the need for faculty development to draw upon and leverage faculty prior experiences from an adult learning perspective and the need to simultaneously push against these prior experiences. This is because prior experiences may contribute to inaccurate or incomplete assumptions regarding teaching and learning broadly, as well as regarding online instruction specifically. As such, critical self-reflection is being used widely to reflect on, challenge, and revise instructor understandings about teaching and learning within the online environment. Surprisingly, reflective discourse with others in comparison to self-reflection seems to be an underutilized mechanism for reflecting within online faculty development offerings. There is an untapped resource here for faculty developers to promote transformative learning by offering more opportunities for faculty to engage in reflective discourse with one another. Additionally, the literature suggests a need to focus simultaneously on helping instructors build empathy for the students they teach as well as on constructing faculty development experiences by empathizing with new online instructors. Through empathy faculty developers can assist instructors in negotiating the various challenges and disorienting dilemmas they face as they navigate digital teaching. Lastly, there is evidence to suggest that changes occur in pedagogical practice when faculty are prompted to critically examine their assumptions about teaching. Each of these themes is explored in the sections directly after Table 2, which outlines the 13 studies that examine transformative learning in online faculty development.

**Table 2***Studies That Examine Transformative Learning in Online Faculty Development*

<b>Source</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Ali, R., & Wright, J. (2017). Examination of the QM Process: Making a Case for Transformative Professional Development Model.	In this qualitative document analysis that was used to examine the Quality Matters reviews of 32 online courses, the authors argue for a stronger focus on professional development that incorporates intentional reflection on the design, development, and delivery processes to transform instructional practice.
Carter, C. S., Solberg, L. B., & Solberg, L. M. (2017). Applying theories of adult learning in developing online programs in gerontology.	This case study in two fully online programs at the University of Florida College of Medicine presents a model for online faculty development. The authors found that in addition to the need to create a community of inquiry, there is also a need to focus less on uniformity and more on what each faculty member has to offer with his or her skills and perspectives.
Graham, A. (2019). Benefits of online teaching for face-to-face teaching at historically black colleges and universities.	In this phenomenological study presenting the experiences of 12 higher education faculty members at an Historically Black College or University who transitioned from face-to-face teaching to online, findings suggest the following transfer of practices from online to face-to-face classes: weekly modules, clear and concise expectations, additional practice samples, and online discussions and web-conferencing. The study also found that participants reduced lecture-centric assignments and moved towards assessment models that leveraged peer-based learning techniques and assignments that foster independent thinking.
King, K. P. (2001). Professors' transforming perspectives of teaching and learning while learning technology.	In this phenomenological study of 17 professors from a graduate school of education, the author found that 71% of participants experienced a perspective transformation but that learning technology by itself does not seem to facilitate perspective transformation. Rather, classroom practice and reflection prompt professors to think about new ways of teaching and learning.
King, K. (2002). The tail of the comet: Helping faculty focus on their pathway of discovery in learning and using technology.	In this case study of a hybrid teacher education course at Fordham University including 17 participants, the author found professional development that includes reflection <i>on</i> and <i>in</i> practice, cultivation of lifelong learning skills, and the development of new resources promotes professional growth and facilitates effective teaching with technology.
Korstange, R., Rust, D. Z., & Brinthaup, T. (2019). Kickstarting FYE faculty development.	This mixed methods case study examined the First Year Experience (FYE) program at Middle Tennessee State University, which comprised 75 sections of the FYE course taught by three full-time instructors from the University Studies Department and 25-30 adjunct faculty. The authors found that providing faculty with asynchronous exposure to and room for experimentation with theory, technique, and technologies creates transformative reflective dialogue that builds faculty members' pedagogical content knowledge.
Lawler, P. A., King, K. P., & Wilhite, S. C. (2004). Living and Learning with Technology: Faculty as Reflective Practitioner in the Online Classroom.	This qualitative study examined the experiences of 11 online faculty. The authors found online faculty may be reflecting critically on their practice and use this reflection to either improve their online teaching or to abandon online teaching. New faculty development initiatives need to

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<p>McQuiggan, C. A. (2012). Faculty development for online teaching as a catalyst for change.</p>	<p>include strategies to facilitate critical reflection in a contextual environment.</p> <p>This action research study explored the change in face-to-face teaching practices of seven instructors as a result of faculty professional development for online teaching. The author found learning to teach online has the potential to transform faculty's assumptions and beliefs about teaching, changing their face-to-face teaching practices. There is a need to move from one-size-fits-all programs to a redesign within an adult learning framework that supports critical reflective practices and opportunities for change.</p>
<p>McVey, M. G. (2014). Perceived best practices for faculty training in distance education.</p>	<p>This qualitative pilot study of two online instructional designers found reflection on practice is key to overcoming faculty resistance to change. The more the institution encourages critical self-reflection on closely held assumptions and beliefs, the more faculty may experience transformative learning experience.</p>
<p>Solheim, C., Longo, B., Cohen, B. A., &amp; Dikker, A. G. (2010). Interdependent catalysts for transforming learning environments... and the faculty who teach in them.</p>	<p>This case study examining the Faculty Fellows Program at the University of Minnesota and 5 online faculty participants found that reflective practice is critical. The authors suggest considering new ways to offer professional development that are not a class or workshop on the newest technology tool, but rather opportunities to experiment with new approaches to teaching in an extended and supported community.</p>
<p>Torrise, G., &amp; Davis, G. (2000). Online learning as a catalyst for reshaping practice—the experiences of some academics developing online learning materials.</p>	<p>In this qualitative study of 10 college instructors with varying levels of online teaching experience, the authors found participants expected that content would be translated into, or simply presented differently in another medium. They argue for professional development programs to provide opportunities for ongoing reflection on current practice not simply opportunities for reflection at the initial stages of development.</p>
<p>Whitelaw, C., Sears, M., &amp; Campbell, K. (2004). Transformative learning in a faculty professional development context.</p>	<p>In this mixed methods case study examining the Partnership Program at the University of Alberta including 16 participants, the authors suggest the need for further research to distinguish between transformations in perspective and practice. In the case of teaching with technologies, practitioners not only need to know about them, but they also need to know what to do with them, both knowledge and skills.</p>

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### **Simultaneously Drawing Upon and Pushing Against Prior Experience**

Though experience is an essential factor in transformative learning, only 6 of the 13 studies I found mentioned experience, and in general the construct was approached superficially. Experience is typically discussed regarding the need to leverage instructor's prior experience from an adult learning perspective, whereby it is the foundation upon which new meaning emerges. Yet there is a complex relationship between prior experiences and the assumptions that result from them, which may need to be explored, challenged, and revised. One of the themes

that surfaced is that instructors often teach the way they were taught (Brookfield, 1990, 1995; Robertson, 1999). Operating from this perspective often leads to teacher-centered models, as instructors rely on their own graduate education experiences (Anderson, 2004). To compound the issue, many faculty members enter college level teaching with minimal training on how to effectively teach (Groccia & Hunter, 2012). This can further lead to instructors rejecting changes to their instructional practices where they have constructed learning experiences based on incomplete assumptions about teaching (Lawler & King, 2001; McQuiggan, 2012; Mezirow, 1991, 2000). Given that instructors often enter online instruction with assumptions that they can simply draw on or translate current teaching practices to the digital environment, this poses additional challenges for teaching and learning online where intentional instructional design and pedagogical decision making is paramount to ensure student satisfaction and success (Torrise & Davis, 2000). In their case study of two fully online programs at the University of Florida College of Medicine, Carter et al. (2017) argued that to combat these experiential factors, it is essential to identify the barriers keeping faculty from changing their habits of mind through professional development, specifically through reflective practice.

### **Critical Self-Reflection as a Catalyst for Transformation**

Faculty development is most successful when it approaches instructors as adult learners, providing avenues for them to reflect on practice (Brookfield, 1995; Lawler & King, 2001). Cranton (1996) posited that critical reflection is central to transformative learning and further argued that for educators to personally and professionally grow beyond knowledge acquisition, they need to actively question their existing assumptions, values, and perspectives. Furthermore, the transition to online teaching provides a potential trigger for this kind of critical reflection as

instructors experience complexities that may cause them to question their previously unchallenged assumptions about teaching (Kegan, 2000).

All the studies I reviewed discussed reflection to some degree, with reflective practice structured in various formats such as reflective writing, discussion with faculty developers and colleagues, and interviews (Graham, 2019; McQuiggan, 2012; Solheim et al., 2010). In their qualitative document analysis of 32 Quality Matters reviews of online courses, Ali and Wright (2017) examined the extent to which using this industry standard rubric might contribute to transformational learning. Although their findings suggested effective course design regarding the alignment between learning outcomes, assignments, and assessments, using the rubric alone was not sufficient to produce significant transformational changes in online teaching. Therefore, the authors suggested an intentional focus on professional development that encourages reflection on the design, development, and delivery of a course to transform instructional practice. Similarly, McQuiggan (2012) found in an action research study exploring the change in face-to-face teaching practices of seven instructors as a result of faculty professional development for online teaching that reflective writing helped faculty to become aware of the underlying assumptions of their teaching practice. When asked about their perspective transformation, more than half of the participants in the study cited reflection as the primary catalyst with the remaining participants citing the experience of teaching online. One participant shared after her initial reflection assignment that it had been the first opportunity she had to take the time to purposefully reflect on how her prior experiences influenced her instructional practice. This new understanding caused her to question her previous beliefs and revise them, resulting in her shift from very teacher-centered modes of teaching to a model that incorporated more student-centered co-construction of knowledge. King (2002) expands upon the notion of

reflection as a tool to guide instructional practice to suggest a new model of constructivist faculty development. Rather than being myopically focused on skills and competencies, this model recommends engaging faculty in active, critical reflection to help them to develop a sense of inquiry and discovery, thus cultivating a sense of possibility regarding teaching and learning with technology.

Given the power of reflective practice, the amount of time and engagement in professional development activities that focus on reflection may directly correlate to the amount of transformative learning that results (McQuiggan, 2012). However, lack of time is one of the greatest barriers that faculty encounter in seeking out and participating in professional development (Maguire, 2005; McQuiggan, 2012; McVey, 2014). McVey (2014) suggests that critical reflection where faculty are regularly given the time to self-reflect on assumptions and beliefs about teaching should be promoted institution wide as a best practice, therefore encouraging faculty to become more accepting of changes to their practice that may be required in teaching online. In their mixed methods case study examining the First Year Experience program at Middle Tennessee State University, Korstange et al. (2019) found that 94% of respondents agreed that developing and teaching an online course provided them an opportunity to reflect on how they teach in the classroom. Additionally, opportunities for reflective practice should be provided before and throughout the design, development, and delivery of an online course to allow for as much reflective practice as possible (Torrise & Davis, 2000). Not only is reflection time-dependent but it is also context-bound, requiring that faculty have the opportunity to reflect not only on their instructional practice but also on how it is situated within specific contexts (Graham, 2019; Lave, 1988).

Considering the various levels of discussion about critical reflective practice present throughout the sources I reviewed, there was little discussion of the delineation of how faculty developers are operationalizing reflection in these studies. For instance, there was little attention to when reflections were conducted and how often; what prompts were used to promote meaningful and rich reflection; what kinds of things participants were asked to reflect upon such as process or product; and if and how reflections were shared with others. This kind of information would be helpful to guide further intentional incorporation of critical reflection in online faculty development.

### **Reflective Discourse as an Underutilized Mechanism**

Though it is an essential construct of transformative learning, only 3 of the 13 studies I reviewed capitalize on and discuss the use of reflective discourse within faculty development for online learning. Engaging in reflective discourse during faculty development can help instructors delve more deeply into their own assumptions and into technology and its impact on their instructional practice (King, 2001). This kind of dialogue can be facilitated by providing opportunities for instructors at all experience levels to talk to one another and to consider alternative perspectives (McQuiggan, 2012). When asked about the importance of critical dialogue, participants in McQuiggan's (2012) study said that they valued sharing ideas with others, hearing other people's perspectives, and figuring out how all the pieces fit together. King (2001) found in a phenomenological study of 17 professors from a graduate school of education that as participants thought aloud during interviews, they engaged in reflective dialogue, and they considered aloud the relationship between technology and educational practice.

In their study, Korstange and colleagues (2019) engaged faculty in a more structured reflective dialogue process. They designed an activity that began with a conversation revolving

around instructors' assumptions about productive feedback and challenges they had experienced in providing students with feedback. Faculty developers presented the group with trends and examples from the feedback that instructors had submitted as part of their course development homework. The comments formed the basis for their discussion which was geared towards refining instructors' understanding of effective feedback. As a result of the trends and examples that faculty developers provided to instructors about the types of feedback they typically used, the group was able to quickly engage in active discussion about the lack of positive feedback throughout. This led to a conversation about the closed nature of assessment and resulted in suggestions related to how assessment questions could lead to continued conversation and work towards growth with students. Korstange et al. (2019) argued that this allowed faculty to approach the topic from a critical distance and gain a different perspective through the process. These kinds of discussions can also create an opportunity for faculty to share their understandings in a way that makes them feel safe to make mistakes.

It is interesting to note the consistent use of critical reflection compared to the lack of reflective discourse throughout studies. Additionally, in such cases when discourse is mentioned, contextual information about when these conversations occurred in the faculty development process, what they were about, and how the discussions were structured to achieve reflection and criticality is often missing. The apparent underutilization of reflective discourse within these settings suggests that there may be something inhibiting faculty developers from using it as a vehicle for transformation in online teaching. However, where studies do provide insight into how reflective discourse can be leveraged, such as in the Korstange et al. (2019) study, it is clear that there is a real opportunity to engage faculty members in meaningful and transformative



conversations with one another if faculty developers intentionally plan with reflective discourse as a goal of professional development.

### **Building Empathy Within and Toward Instructors**

In faculty development experiences, it is important to help instructors cultivate empathy for the students they are teaching online. Because traditional teaching culture in higher education places the instructor, rather than the student, at the center of the learning environment (Davies, 1998; Graham, 2019; King, 2001; Torrisi & Davis, 2000), empathetic reframing might need to occur before instructors are ready to consider new student-centered teaching strategies. McVey (2014) suggests a best practice to use when designing faculty development is to have instructors participate as a student in an online course so they can empathize with the student perspective when designing their courses. Additionally, while encouraging instructors to empathize with the student experience, it is essential that faculty developers empathize with faculty learning to teach online. This requires focusing less on uniformity in instructional design, eliciting and leveraging the skills and perspectives of individual faculty members in order to achieve instructor buy-in to the process (Carter et al., 2017). It also requires empathizing with the various barriers and disorienting dilemmas instructors may experience throughout the process of transitioning to teaching online. Torrisi and Davis (2000) argue professional development should incorporate not only the knowledge and skills instructors need to teach online courses but should also be grounded in an empathetic approach that recognizes instructor concerns and offers proactive encouragement and responsiveness. Therefore, it is essential that faculty developers have an awareness and understanding of the potential barriers and disorienting dilemmas instructors might experience so they can provide the necessary support to help instructors navigate those

challenges. Table 3 captures potential barriers and disorienting dilemmas noted throughout the studies I found.

**Table 3**

*Barriers and Potential Disorienting Dilemmas in Learning to Teach Online*

<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Barriers and Disorienting Dilemmas</b>
Carter, Solberg, & Solberg (2017)	shifting from instructor-centered learning to student-centered learning
Graham (2019)	engaging students online
King (2001)	connecting with individual students and meeting the time demands required to teach online
King (2002)	cultivating flexibility and exploring new formats for teaching
Torrisi & Davis (2000)	managing the stress of time frames, finding time to reflect, feeling alone, maintaining creativity, meeting the needs of students, changing perspective on teaching practices, feeling inadequate
Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, (2004)	finding the financial and personal resources to continue once development is completed due to lack of sufficient administrative, technical, and program infrastructures in place to maintain their use when the Partnership Program ended

Faculty developers can take a proactive approach to these challenges by designing experiences intentionally targeted towards listening to faculty, discussing barriers, providing resources and support, and encouraging reflection to achieve transformation.

**Pedagogical Transformations**

There is evidence to support that when instructors experience faculty development for online teaching and are prompted to question assumptions about teaching, changes occur in pedagogical practice in the digital space. For instance, instructors in an online faculty development program where an industry standard rubric was used to assess course design found, that their pedagogical transformation centered around the creation of measurable learning

objectives that framed the course (Ali & Wright, 2017). Most notable is the shift to student-centered rather than teacher-centered practices (Graham, 2019; King, 2001, 2002; McQuiggan, 2012; Torrisi & Davis, 2000). This incorporates shifting from traditional roles to more of a facilitative role and planning with a focus on learner's needs and goals (McQuiggan, 2012). As such, instructors put more effort into cultivating higher order thinking skills and in facilitating more discussion and interaction between students (King, 2002). King (2001) found participants shifted to a facilitator role as they realized the power of technology to help students to find, evaluate, and utilize information on their own. The participants noted that this shift was accompanied by the new desire to engage their students in active learning and discovery of knowledge. Similarly, in a phenomenological study presenting the experiences of 12 higher education faculty members at an Historically Black College or University who transitioned from face-to-face teaching to online, Graham (2019) also observed a paradigm shift in instructional practices, with participants noting that teaching online made them more cognizant of the need to actively engage students to help them grasp the content. Many of the participants described themselves as "facilitator, guide on the side, coach, cheerleader" (p. 146), indicating a shift to more student-centered instructional approaches that included facilitating and monitoring discussion, outlining netiquette, and using peer review.

The research reviewed here suggests a link between faculty development that encourages reflection on practice and the changes in pedagogical practices. What is not as evident is how these changes may affect teaching in the face-to-face classroom. McQuiggan (2012) indicates a strong link between changes instructors experience through online teaching and face-to-face teaching; however, more research is needed to delve into professional development practices that can effectively facilitate this transfer of skills and which practices transfer more readily between

the modalities. This research would help to guide faculty developers in leveraging the development offerings already provided to online instructors to improve practice more broadly. Given the evidence that instructors not only experience mindset changes but also pedagogical changes as they experience transformative learning, it is important to highlight the faculty development practices that can best support transformative learning within this context.

### **Practical Faculty Development Strategies to Promote Transformative Learning**

Strategies for promoting transformative learning that were explicitly delineated in the 13 studies examined have been captured in Table 4. They are organized into three categories:

- strategies to promote critical reflection,
- strategies to promote reflective discourse, and
- additional strategies that do not align with the aforementioned constructs.

It is interesting to note that while critical reflection was discussed in all the studies examined, there are few explicitly mentioned critical reflection strategies throughout the articles.

Conversely, although few studies discussed reflective discourse, many practical strategies addressing how to use reflective discourse in faculty development for online learning were offered throughout the articles. Additionally, only one strategy targeted empathy specifically, yet many of the other strategies seem to inherently suggest a need for empathy, such as engaging in small group discussions about difficulties instructors experience. There is certainly an opportunity here to develop strategies that would help to build upon empathy as a construct.

Finally, suggestions that do not closely align to any of the four constructs of transformational learning indicate a need to design faculty development experiences more holistically to provide the kinds of support mechanisms that faculty need to make this transition to teaching online smooth. Faculty development strategies to promote transformative learning are listed in Table 4.

**Table 4***Faculty Development Strategies to Promote Transformative Learning*

<b>Strategy Type</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Critical Reflection	King (2001)	Include faculty reflection on practice, reflection in practice, and the cultivation of lifelong learning skills.
	McVey (2014)	Create a faculty self-assessment tool where faculty can self-assess their readiness for teaching online.
	Torrise & Davis (2000)	Sustain reflection on practice from beginning to end.
Reflective Discourse	Lawler, King, & Wilhite (2004)	Create group and individual analysis of scenarios that present examples of content and online design for evaluation. Use small group mock-up design of an online class. Engage in small group discussion of online class scenarios that illustrate difficulties and develop possible solutions. Provide examples and encourage instructors to keep personally reflective teaching journals. Create online support groups through confidential email distribution lists or password protected web-based threaded discussions. Provide optional but available personal consultation sessions where faculty can meet with an online learning specialist to look at class design and interaction to ask questions, to identify and solve problems, or evaluate course design and dynamics
	King (2001)	Use teaching circles to build professional discussion groups where educators can discuss teaching and learning issues. Connect master teachers to novice teachers as a peer consultant in technology learning and issues to bridge technology with academic expertise. Create opportunities for faculty discussions on technology teaching and learning needs.
	Torrise & Davis (2000)	Foster a climate of professional development and professional networking opportunities through listserv discussion group, web-based bulletin boards, virtual communities, and collaborative exchanges.
Additional	King (2001)	Provide technology workshops devoted to educational technology applications within specific disciplines and content areas. Select and communicate reliable sources of information (i.e., The Chronicle of Higher Education, Syllabus, T.H.E.) delivered to email and office mailboxes to streamline the process of faculty being informed. Establish “walk-in” or help centers combined with more structured workshop formats.
	King (2002)	Incorporate flipped and online classroom pedagogies into professional development.
	Korstange et al. (2019)	Help instructors to conceptualize online materials development is a process based on a continuum of transformation of practice rather than translation of lecture content to another medium. Empathize with, and address concerns that arise from instructors’ attempts at innovation through technology.
	Torrise & Davis (2000)	Equip instructors with knowledge about the potential of the new technologies online within the context of the total curriculum rather than in isolation of the instructor’s curriculum needs. Provide opportunities for developing basic computer competencies necessary for developing confidence in using technology as a normal part of teaching activities.

## **Conclusion**

This article has provided a discussion of transformative learning that occurs in faculty development for online teaching in higher education. Though there is a substantial body of literature to support transformative learning in various contexts, the field of faculty development for college instructors has been minimally explored. A focus on leveraging the essential constructs of transformative learning—experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and empathy—has the potential to yield transformative learning within the context of higher education online faculty development. The studies explored in this review suggest there has been a larger focus on critical reflection in the faculty development process than the other constructs. Yet there is research to suggest that attending to all four of these constructs can help to yield transformative learning outcomes. These transformative learning outcomes not only affect teaching perspective but have the potential to change instructional practice in both online and face-to-face learning spaces. In conceptualizing and designing faculty development through a transformative learning lens, faculty developers can seek to extend the benefits of faculty development to instructional practice more broadly. Given that faculty do not often get a chance to participate in formal teacher training, this is an opportunity to meet the demands of an ever-changing educational landscape and also to provide much needed support to instructors as they navigate teaching and learning throughout their careers.

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## CHAPTER 3

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE LEARNING: CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICE

## **Abstract**

This case study emerged from a university faculty development seminar to prepare instructors to teach online courses taking place within the College of Arts & Sciences at a mid-sized liberal Arts and Sciences university in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine how, if at all, the Online Faculty Development Seminar changed five participants' perspectives of teaching. Through an analysis of interviews, this study found all instructors experienced moments that caused them to question and reflect on their teaching practice. These moments occurred both during the seminar and while instructors taught their online courses for the first time. The transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) instructors experienced were varied and further support the situated nature of transformative learning. Instructors' perceptions of teaching are determined by the experiences that they have and professional development for online teaching is an opportunity to reflect on and revise those perceptions. This study found written reflection activities throughout the seminar aided instructors in questioning their instructional decisions. This, combined with dialogue with colleagues, became an avenue for instructors to think deeply about teaching practice, specifically as they were able to benefit from the perspective of experienced online instructors. This study's findings suggest that having experienced instructors come in to tour their courses, discuss lessons learned, and answer questions about practice helped instructors to see alternative perspectives and contributed to perspective transformation.

In the past year, online learning has taken center stage as higher education institutions across the globe seek remote teaching and learning solutions in the wake of the novel Coronavirus. Even before the pandemic made its mark on the higher educational landscape, online learning had been growing steadily over the last 30 years (Legon & Garrett, 2018; Osika et al., 2009). As higher education institutions expand their online offerings, it is important to support instructors with quality faculty development opportunities focused on effective online, hybrid, and remote pedagogies to create meaningful, rich online learning experiences for students.

As adult learners, faculty bring with them an array of life experiences that shape their perspectives on teaching and learning (Lawler, 2003). It is only within the last few decades that faculty development has been considered adult learning (Cranton, 1994; King, 2002). Faculty developers that provide training for online instruction must approach instructors as adult learners, providing them with meaningful experiences where they can reflect on their thinking and instructional practice (Lawler & King, 2001). Without these opportunities, instructors learning to teach online are likely to rely heavily on their past classroom teaching experiences (Conrad, 2004; Diekelmann et al., 1998) which may be less effective than approaches to promote online learning. Given that instructors are rarely provided with formal pedagogical training, they tend to teach the way they were taught (Gallant, 2000; Layne et al., 2004). Instructors often learn from observing the professors who taught them, who also learned from their professors, resulting in little evolution in practice over the years. This “pedagogical ecology” (Jaffee, 2003, p. 228) where lecture is a predominant strategy and instructors often perceive themselves primarily as content experts (Conrad, 2004) does not often align well with what the field has learned about

effective online teaching methodologies which require more student agency in the learning process.

Instructors must have a variety of pedagogical and technological skills to successfully navigate teaching online (Koehler et al., 2007; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009). Additionally, instructors need to develop complex understandings about the intersections between content knowledge, technological knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge to make effective instructional decisions (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). The challenges of designing, developing, and delivering high quality online courses are often difficult for instructors to manage on their own (Koehler et al., 2007). This is, in part, because many higher educational faculty tend to draw on pedagogical approaches from their experiences in the in-person classroom to apply in the digital space (Baran et al., 2013; Duffy & Kirkley, 2004; McDonald & Reushle, 2002). Yet, as instructors become more familiar with teaching practices online, they often learn pedagogical and technological skills that benefit their teaching more broadly (Scagnoli et al., 2009; Stone & Perumean-Chaney, 2011).

Contrary to what most faculty experience when they enter the college or university face-to-face classroom teaching space, many online programs across the nation require instructors to engage in professional development or training that teaches them specific strategies for teaching online, such as how to design the digital environment in the learning management system, how to facilitate student interaction online, or how to measure student learning through varied assessment opportunities (Cobb, 2014). This process of learning to teach online through faculty development as well as the experience of teaching online may prompt instructors to rethink their teaching (Terras, 2017). Additionally, learning how to use educational technology can act as a catalyst for instructors to reflect on, question, and revise their instructional practices (King,



2002). Given this evolution of instructional practice, many instructors find themselves reconceptualizing the roles they assume when teaching online (Allen & Seaman, 2013). As instructors reconceptualize their teaching, they often shift from more lecture-dominated roles to those giving students more agency such as facilitator, mentor, and guide (Allen & Seaman, 2013; Conceição, 2006; Hinson & La Prairie, 2005; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Research in the field of online instruction indicates that online instruction can change the way faculty conceptualize their teaching (Lowes, 2008; McQuiggan, 2007; Shea et al., 2002), yet there is a need to further investigate how faculty development for online teaching can be designed to prompt instructors to critically reflect upon and revise assumptions about teaching and learning to influence practice.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Faculty development for online instructors has the capacity to influence how instructors conceptualize teaching and learning. Throughout the process of learning new strategies for online course design, development, and delivery, instructors may question their assumptions about teaching and learning. As they navigate this new digital teaching landscape, instructors may experience disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow, 1991) that cause them to critically reflect upon their assumptions and change how they think about and approach teaching. Though faculty development for online teaching does help guide instructors in their usage of instructional technology, King (2001) argues the faculty development learning *context* further provides an opportunity to understand the transformation that faculty undergo as they learn about and utilize new practices. This context of professional learning can be manipulated to promote transformative learning through activities such as critical reflection and critical dialogue. Faculty developers can use what they learn about these transformations that may occur as instructors transition between modalities to intentionally design faculty development experiences with

specific transformational learning outcomes in mind. Given the prevalence of studies conducted that delineate the changes faculty experience as they transition to teaching online—specifically changes in instructional roles and methods (Conceição, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw et al., 2004), it is surprising to note the paucity of research exploring which professional development activities facilitate transformative learning and how that learning may influence practice. Little research has been published about how faculty developers can engage faculty in critically examining their assumptions and their resulting teaching practices. This study is grounded in Mezirow's (1991) Transformational Learning Theory, an adult learning theory that can be used to understand how online instructors may reflect upon, critically examine, and revise their perspectives regarding teaching and learning.

### **Theoretical Framework**

TLT is grounded in Mezirow's (1991) writing on the transformative dimensions of adult learning. Rather than being an examination into *what* is known to be true, TLT encapsulates *how* individuals come to assume their own truths which are rooted in their experience. Mezirow (1991) defines transformative learning as follows:

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)

Clark (1993) suggests transformative learning “shapes people; they are different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize” (p. 47). According to Mezirow (2000), critical reflection of the assumptions that guide our meaning making process can lead to transformative

learning. As instructors reflect upon, critically examine, and revise perspectives, it can create a shift in their conceptual frames about teaching and thus have an impact on teaching practice (Cranton, 1996). Yet, transformative learning is not often a linear, straightforward process nor is it undemanding of individuals. Mezirow (2000) outlines a 10-part schema, which indicates a process wrought with internal conflict as individuals critically examine and confront their assumptions, sometimes shedding what is comfortable and familiar to be more inclusive and discerning. This schema is represented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

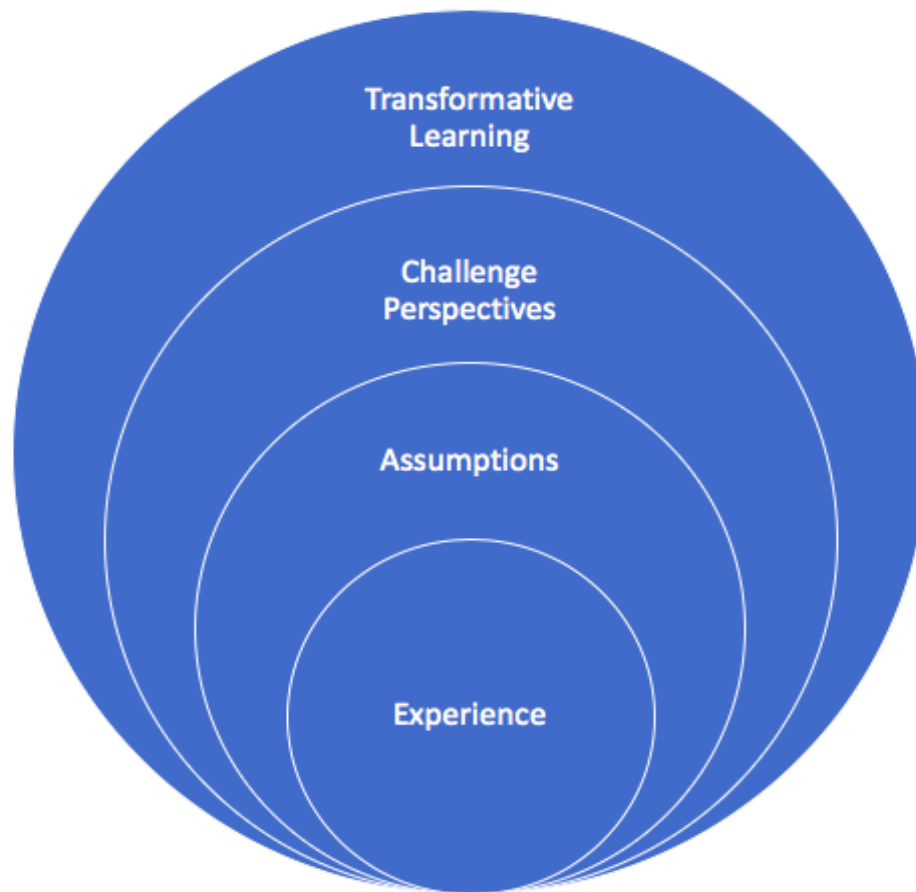
*Mezirow's 10-Part Schema of Transformative Learning*



Nerstrom's (2014) conceptual framework illustrates how transformative learning may occur in practice, incorporating four main constructs: experience, assumptions, challenging perspectives, and transformative learning. Figure 2 shows the relationships between experience, assumptions, challenge perspectives, and transformative learning.

**Figure 2**

*Transformative Learning Model*



***Experience***

Mezirow (2000) argued that the need to understand and order the meaning of experiences is fundamental to the human condition. He further explained that when people are unable to understand, they fall back on tradition, make rationalizations, and seek explanations from others to create meaning. These oftentimes contested meanings are in continual negotiation because circumstances are always shifting. What people know, value, and believe about the world is deeply rooted in context—social, cultural, and historical. The experiences individuals have then shape their perceptions of the world. This experience becomes the frames

of reference through which individuals perceive and make meaning. Langer (1997) discusses mindful learning as the continuous creation of new categories, an acceptance of new information, and an understanding of multiple perspectives. Mezirow (2000) explains that transformative learning occurs when individuals make these frames of reference more inclusive, able to change, and reflective in order to create beliefs that are more “true” (p. 8). By interrogating the basis of our assumptions, people gain more control over their own lives and can think more clearly and make more informed decisions. Cranton (1996) argues that becoming a better teacher requires this act of interrogation and critically reflecting upon one’s assumptions about instructional practice.

### *Assumptions*

Assumptions that are rooted in our experience become our lens through which individuals see the world, thus determining values and belief systems. These broad assumptions that shape how individuals make meaning of experiences are called habits of mind which are reflected in morality, social norms, philosophies, world views, and individual preferences. Habits of mind then filter down to a variety of meaning schemes which are expressed as point of view, which is composed of beliefs, feelings, and attitudes that shape an individual’s interpretations (Mezirow, 2000).

In faculty development for online learning, values and beliefs about teaching and learning, online instruction, and the role of the instructor are important to critically reflect upon (Cranton, 1996). Instructors must ask themselves what values and beliefs guide their practice to avoid bringing faulty assumptions from the face-to-face classroom into the digital space. For instance, new online instructors may assume online learning is inferior because it does not have the same affordances of the face-to-face classroom such as intimate discussion. This kind of

assumption might stem from prior experiences where the instructor was able to facilitate rich, meaningful conversation through her physical presence in the in-person space. She might be unable to conceptualize how the same kind of conversation might happen when students are not physically together. However, this assumption, although not entirely inaccurate in some cases, is incomplete. The instructor does not yet have the perspective or tools to be able to envision how to create a new kind of experience online that students can potentially engage as meaningfully in digital spaces as in the classroom. Her point of view—online discussion is inherently inferior—must shift so that she can envision herself more as a facilitator of engaged, active, thoughtful discussion online—a new habit of mind. This can be facilitated by challenging her perspective.

### ***Challenging Perspectives***

Critical reflection and reflective discourse can be used to challenge assumptions and question our frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000). However, it is important to understand that this act of questioning alone does not guarantee transformational learning. Rather, criticality and reflexivity can be conduits to perspective transformation, the hallmark of transformative learning (Cranton, 1996). Critical reflection is a central construct in Transformational Learning Theory. Mezirow (1991) outlined three types of reflection:

- content—reflecting upon *what* individuals perceive, think, feel, or act upon
- process—reflecting upon *how* individuals perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting
- premise—reflecting upon *why* individuals perceive, think, feel, or act as they do

Mezirow (2000) notes that premise reflection is the only type of reflection that can lead to a shift in perspective because it is the only one that causes individuals to reflect upon the cause of

assumptions underlying their thinking. Brookfield (1995) argues instructors must take part in reflection to grow. Similarly, Kegan and Lahey (2009) highlight the importance of criticality in instructional practice to promote “growth in our way[s] of knowing” (p. 53). Schön’s (1987) writing on the reflective practitioner suggests that instructors must interrogate how new learning interacts with already developed meaning schemes. In this way they take part in reflection-*in*-action through reflection-*on*-action. In addition to individual critical reflection, reflective discourse with others facilitates questioning, challenging, and revising assumptions. Mezirow (2000) highlights factors that aid in individuals’ ability to fully participate in reflective discourse:

- accurate and complete information
- freedom from coercion and distortion of self-perception
- openness and empathy towards to alternative perspectives
- ability to consider evidence and examine arguments objectively
- critical reflectiveness of assumptions and their consequences
- equal opportunity to participate in reflective discourse: question, challenge, reflect, refute, and hear others’ perspectives
- ability to accept informed and objective consensus as a test of validity of assumptions

Taylor and Cranton (2013) argued that empathy can also act to challenge perspectives, which aligns well with Mezirow’s (2003) concept of critical-dialectical discourse of “having an open mind, learning to listen empathetically, ‘bracketing’ prejudgment, and seeking common ground” (p. 60). Individuals with empathy can “subjectively experience and share in another psychological state or intrinsic feelings” (Morse et al., 1992, p. 274). Empathy within the context

of faculty development might look like instructors learning through online modules and reflecting upon the student experience to empathize with their own students as online learners. Leveraging critical reflection, reflective discourse, and empathy within faculty development for online instruction has the potential to lead to transformative learning and new approaches to teaching.

### ***Transformative Learning***

Transformational learning has occurred when instructors critically evaluate their assumptions, values, and beliefs as they learn. As a result of this reflective process, they experience a fundamental shift and their frames of reference or perspectives (Cranton, 1996; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; E.W.Taylor, 1997). This theory encapsulates the dynamic, multi-faceted, complex nature of learning to teach online as instructors confront new challenges, are often compelled to reflect on teaching practice, and make connections and construct new meaning through the experience.

### **Overview of the Research Design**

This case study emerged from a university faculty development seminar for online instructors taking place within the College of Arts & Sciences at a mid-sized liberal Arts and Sciences institution in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine how, if at all, the Online Faculty Development Seminar changed five participants' perspectives of teaching as they engaged in this professional learning. The purpose of this research was not simply to understand transformational learning as a phenomenon, but also to attempt to understand what about the context of online faculty development may contribute to individuals experiencing that phenomenon. The data for this study were generated over the course of one year, from the start of the seminar in fall 2019 to fall 2020 after summer online courses had been



taught. A case study helps to develop a rich understanding of how elements of the Online Faculty Development Seminar and subsequent experience of teaching online may contribute to transformational learning. Case study is particularly well suited to the purpose of understanding how a phenomenon may occur (Yin, 2018).

As an instructional design manager, I redesigned the Online Faculty Development Seminar in spring 2018, with support from various members of the eLearning team at our university. As a result of my direct influence on the design, development, and delivery of the Online Faculty Development Seminar, I recognized there would be a certain level of inherent bias that I would need to guard against throughout the course of the study. I approach faculty development through a human-centered lens, which means I intentionally work to understand individual learning needs and establish meaningful working relationships with the instructors who participated in the seminar. However, it is important as a researcher to remove myself as much as possible to privilege the narrative of the participants, which is why I tried to focus on what participants said through interviews, reflections, and communications with me. To guard against confirmatory bias, I incorporated interview questions to actively seek out alternative explanations for any changes to thinking and/ or practice that participants discussed. I also attempted to ensure categories were exhaustive, guarding against picking only the data that fits into a particular schema.

### **Participants**

All five participants who took part in the fall 2019 Online Faculty Development Seminar (FDS) were invited and agreed to participate in the study. Bounding the case in this way ensured that all participants experienced the same faculty development offering in the same timeframe. They all took the 10-week seminar in fall 2019 and then taught their respective newly developed

courses in summer session 2020. Of the five participants from the fall 2019 cohort, two had already taught online at different institutions prior to the FDS and three were completely new to online teaching. Of the two participants who had previously taught online, one worked closely with instructional designers at her previous institution to co-design her online course and the other provided content to instructional designers to design the course for her. Three of the participants created their online courses based upon face-to-face versions of the course they had taught in previous years; two participants created entirely new courses. All five participants teach in different disciplines, including Chemistry, Film and Media Studies, Public Policy, History, and Psychology. It is important to note that during this study, all participants had to shift swiftly to remote teaching in spring 2020 because of COVID-19, which caused the university to cancel all in-person classes. Table 1 summarizes this range of participant experiences.

**Table 1**

*Study Participants*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Previous Teaching Experience</b>	
		<b>Online</b>	<b>Face-to-Face</b>
Connor	Chemistry	No	Yes
Sophie	History	No	No
John	Government	No	Yes
Emily	Psychology	Yes	Yes
Amelia	Film & Media Studies	Yes	No

## Context

All newly developed online courses within the College of Arts & Sciences must be developed through the FDS. The seminar is a 10-week faculty development program that guides instructors through the design and development of an online or hybrid course. Additional support for the delivery of the course once it has been developed is available as a continuation of services offered outside of the seminar as part of the online/hybrid program. Participants in the seminar take part in face-to-face and online activities geared towards cultivating online teaching skills while simultaneously designing and developing an online/hybrid course in the *Blackboard* learning management system (LMS). The online components of this hybrid approach to faculty development is used to provide instructors with the experience of being an online learner. The seminar is structured using cycles of *learn, do, reflect, and extend* to develop instructors' four domains of knowledge within the online instructional development ecosystem: personal, pedagogy, content, and technology (Palloff & Pratt, 2011).

The seminar is structured in two discrete segments, each lasting 5 weeks. The first 5 weeks consist of five synchronous modules, including both online and face-to-face activities which guide instructors in mapping out course and module learning objectives, personalizing the course shell in the LMS, crafting all module entry pages, and entirely authoring the first module of the course within *Blackboard*. This module receives feedback from other participants in the seminar as well as the instructional designer. The feedback instructors receive throughout this process is essential to creating a module that can be used as a base for the remaining modules of the course.

The second 5 weeks of the seminar occur asynchronously and are used to develop the remaining modules for the course, including all course assessments and learning activities. This

course development is completed by the instructor with the support of the instructional designer through weekly check-in meetings as well as with support from the production team in creating instructional media. At the end of the 10 weeks, the instructional designer assesses the course's readiness for launch using the *Quality Matters* rubric, an industry standard for online courses. Courses that meet or exceed the 85% threshold using Quality Matters are considered ready to teach.

The seminar is grounded in the need to cultivate dynamic faculty-student and student-student relationships in digital spaces. Thusly, the Community of Inquiry framework helps instructors navigate cultivating connections online (Garrison et al., 2000). The Community of Inquiry framework consists of three equal and overlapping means to connection: cognitive presence, social presence, and instructor presence. These notions of presence refer to how students connect to the content, to their fellow classmates, and to the instructor. This focus on human connection may push instructors to reflect on their instruction, in some cases challenging their assumptions about teaching in general.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine any changes in thinking about teaching that might occur through faculty development for online teaching and as instructors taught their courses online for the first time. The research questions were:

1. How did online instructors think differently, if at all, about teaching after going through the Online FDS? What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in thinking?

2. How did online instructors think differently about teaching, if at all, after teaching their newly developed online courses? What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in thinking?

## **Methods**

### **Data Generation**

To provide reliable results, case studies should include a variety of data sources (Yin, 2018). A variety of data were generated over the course of summer 2020 and fall 2020. The primary data source was two semi-structured interviews with individual participants (Appendix A). Each interview was recorded through Zoom and transcribed verbatim to prepare them for analysis—once after completion of the seminar in spring 2020 and once after participants taught their summer online courses in fall 2020. These interviews were augmented with reflections that participants completed in fall 2019 during the seminar—one for each of the first four modules completed. Additionally, email exchanges and notes from instructional design meetings were used as part of the data collection. Table 2 shows the data collection and analytical methods for this study.

**Table 2***Data Generation and Analytical Methods*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Method</b>
How did online instructors think differently, if at all, about teaching after going through the Online Faculty Development Seminar?	semi-structured Interviews	inductive analysis
What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in thinking?	reflections developed during the seminar	inductive analysis
How did online instructors think differently about teaching, if at all, after teaching their newly developed online courses?	email exchanges & instructional design meeting notes	qualitative coding
What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in thinking?		

**Data Analysis**

I used *Dedoose*, a qualitative and mixed methods data analysis computer application, to manage and analyze my data set. The purpose of my analysis was to understand how instructors conceptualized teaching after the FDS as well as after having taught their courses online for the first time. Specifically, I wanted to know if they had experienced disorienting dilemmas and if their experiences had changed their notions of the roles they played as instructors. I began my analysis by coding the transcripts of the first and second rounds of interviews as well as the reflections from the seminar. TLT provides words that could be used as general codes such as the essential constructs—experience, reflection, dialogue, and empathy—and words from Mezirow’s (1991) schema—disorienting dilemma and roles. In addition to these general codes, I used constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to reveal similarities and differences between participants’ experiences. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the constant-comparative method requires the researcher to code emerging patterns and themes. Once the data have been coded and grouped into initial categories, the analysis continues until all categories are

exhaustive. In addition to the interviews and reflections, I analyzed email exchanges and instructional design meeting memos using qualitative coding which consisted of a similar approach to category construction, constant comparative method, and subdivision and combination of categories.

I began my analysis using the following analytical categories: experience, reflection, dialogue, empathy, disorienting dilemma, and roles. I also coded for my overarching research question where participants had clearly verbalized a shift in thinking: changes in thinking. Specifically, I was interested in the following as I coded:

- how instructors thought about the experiences that had shaped them as teachers,
- how those experiences might have affected the way instructors initially conceptualized teaching, and
- how the seminar and teaching online may have challenged these initial assumptions and affected their conceptualizations of their roles as instructors.

Two additional general codes that surfaced from this first round of coding were changes in practice and context. Changes in teaching practice were important to note as evidence of changes in thinking. Additionally, context was an essential category to discern change that occurred in relation to the seminar and teaching online versus other catalysts for change, such as the rapid shift to remote instruction in Spring 2020 or other professional development opportunities participants had experienced. The first and second iterations of coding were mainly descriptive of the instructor experience. In the second iteration I expanded my initial codes to capture the specificity provided by the participants. From this second iteration of codes, I extracted broad themes which was a recursive process. Table B1 delineates the three analytical iterations (see Appendix B).

## Findings

In this section, I present five individual case studies of each of the participants in the study: Connor, Sophie, John, Emily, and Amelia (names are pseudonyms). I begin with each individual and then expand to examine the context that might have influenced their learning. Each of these cases includes discussion of the disorienting experiences participants had as well as any perspective transformation that may have occurred related to participating in the seminar and teaching online. After discussing each of the cases, I discuss broad themes that can inform practices for faculty development of online instructors.

### **The case of Connor: “I felt like I didn’t know how to grow.”**

Connor was a novice online instructor when he began the seminar. He participated in the seminar to develop an online version of an Organic Chemistry class that he had already taught for 5 years in the face-to-face classroom. He described the course as a “drawn subject”; many organic chemistry structures and reactions are better understood by creating illustrations. He believed this course would be well-suited to online because he would be able to capture the “art form” of the subject through video. As a graduate student in Chemistry, Connor had never really considered college teaching and always assumed he would go into industry. However, right after completing his PhD, he found himself in an instructional postdoc position as a result of his advisor encouraging him to try teaching. From the start, Connor loved being in front of a classroom. He described the first class session he taught as a pivotal turning point in his career:

I was just like buzzing. It was so much fun. I just had such a blast doing it...it was like one time in front of the classroom. I was just totally hooked and convinced that this is exactly what I should be doing. I could have easily ended up doing something else, but



just having the chance to do it once had had such an impact on me that I find myself where I do today.

Even though he found himself teaching college students, Connor admitted to never really considering himself a “teacher.” Although he had relative success with teaching, he had never had any “formal training.” There is rarely ever any pedagogical training associated with being a professor of Chemistry. He contrasted this to his experience in the seminar, suggesting “there's before seminar and there's after seminar.” Before the seminar, he had not formally considered course objectives; he knew the topics he wanted to cover but had never intentionally mapped out a course. Connor explained that because course design and delivery had come naturally to him, he had never been compelled to really evaluate his teaching:

I never really had been forced to evaluate what am I doing that worked well, what am I doing that's not working well, and what even are the best practices for some of these things. I've never been forced to consider it...having been through the seminar, those are things that were actually kind of nice because I felt like I didn't know how to grow.

The seminar made him start to reflect on his teaching, specifically interrogating which practices might be best to use in specific contexts. However, when asked if he had moments that were disorienting or made him question his teaching practice, he responded that there was nothing really “jarring” that had occurred during the seminar. He explained that the experience, rather than making him question his teaching, reinforced what he already knew, giving him a “formal language” that allowed him to better articulate his instructional decision-making. When I asked him to elaborate on this formal language, he brought up the process of articulating learning objectives in ways that help students to understand what they should learn throughout a course and within specific modules. Connor's nesting of course objectives, module objectives, and

individual lecture learning objectives can be seen in the following outlined objectives in Figure

3.

### Figure 3

#### *Organic Chemistry Learning Objectives*

**Overall Course Objectives – At the completion of this course, students should be able to:**

- 1) *Recall* and recognize general chemistry topics as they apply to organic molecules
- 2) *Apply* molecular representations to describe the structure and nature of organic molecules
- 3) *Evaluate* and predict acid/base reactions in the context of organic chemistry
- 4) *Analyze* the various shapes (conformations) that organic molecules can adopt
- 5) *Recognize* how symmetry affects molecular structure and identify the various relationships between molecules
- 6) *Apply* thermodynamic and kinetic concepts to predict the behavior of chemical reactions
- 7) *Explain* why organic reactions occur and evaluate various reaction conditions to predict the results
- 8) *Propose* mechanistic pathways that explain the outcome of organic reactions
- 9) *Elucidate* organic structure based on the fundamentals of organic spectroscopy

**Week 1 Learning Objectives - The information in parenthesis tell us how each individual learning goal fits into the overall course goals listed in the syllabus.**

- 1) *Recall* the correct way to draw Lewis structures including bonds, lone pairs, and formal charges (CO1,CO2)
- 2) *Apply* fundamental concepts of bonding to hybridization theory (CO1)
- 3) *Use* hybridization theory to predict the properties of molecules including shape, polarity, and intermolecular forces (CO1)
- 4) *Draw and interpret* drawings of molecules using line structures (CO2)
- 5) *Understand* resonance, *identify* resonance structures, and *evaluate* the nature of molecules within the context of electron delocalization (CO1,CO2)
- 6) *Draw* proton transfer reactions using curved arrows (CO3)
- 7) *Use*  $pK_a$  values to predict acidity, basicity, and the position of acid-base equilibria (CO3,CO6)
- 8) *Assess* the stability of conjugate bases to qualitatively predict the acidity of protons (CO3,CO6)

**Lecture 1 Learning Objectives**

- 1) *Describe* the historical development of organic chemistry
- 2) *Clarify* the importance of molecular structure
- 3) *Recall* the fundamentals of electronic structure
- 4) *Draw* Lewis atoms and Lewis structures
- 5) *Calculate* formal charges
- 6) *Predict* bond polarity using electronegativity
- 7) *Predict* molecular shape using VSEPR theory
- 8) *Identify* dipole moments
- 9) *Recall* intermolecular forces and predict how they affect molecular properties

In a subject as content-driven as Organic Chemistry, this very specific and descriptive delineation of learning objectives helps to assure that students know exactly what they are supposed to know and do by the end of each lecture, module, and subsequently by the end of the course. Though Connor did not perceive any great shift in his thinking, this transition from not perceiving himself as “teacher” and then acquiring the language of teaching to articulate the curriculum suggests a transformation in perspective from one of *not teacher* to *teacher*.

When asked to discuss the role of reflection throughout the seminar in relation to his current teaching perspective, Connor suggested that reflecting on his own teaching allowed him to grasp this formal language and “wrap [his] mind around [his] own teaching, which is probably a necessary thing before you start trying new things.” This suggests that in reflecting on his own practice, he was able to better understand the reasoning behind his instructional decisions which helped him to appropriately integrate new strategies as he learned them. Hearing other instructors discuss their course design was also something Connor enjoyed throughout the seminar as it introduced the notion of social engagement to his teaching. Yet, critical dialogue with others did not seem to have any influence in change in practice which Connor suggests is because the disciplines represented by his colleagues were so vastly different from his, which is not a discussion-based subject. He appreciated the pedagogical approaches of his peers and valued hearing about their course design process but did not feel he could apply much of what he heard from his colleagues to his own course.

Connor mentioned that the most important thing he learned in the seminar was “how important clear communication is with students in that format where you're not actually in person.” This notion of clarity is something he reiterated often in our work together. He discussed how it is much easier for him to communicate to students in-person because of the

synchronous nature of in-person classes. In contrast, he pointed out that it is easy to “lose” students if instruction online is not completely clear.

Especially in a class where 10% of the class is 40 people...It's a ridiculous amount of people that aren't totally sure what's going on. So that's the big thing that's always in the back of my mind. Now I'm trying to make sure that I'm achieving as high of clarity as I can possibly have. And right now, I'm teaching a remote course and I just designed my Blackboard page and in a way that I had never done before. Just so there was just no confusion whatsoever. Any question that I could possibly think they would have for me is answered already in place, they can find it.

As a result of COVID-19 and the subsequent shut down of in-person classes in spring 2020, Connor taught his traditionally in-person classes remotely for 8 weeks before he taught his summer online class. Having taken part in the seminar made him feel more confident that he could pivot effectively to remote teaching. Teaching remotely then made him feel more comfortable teaching his online course for the first time because he realized that, in general, the strategies he used worked. He recognized that the first time around is always going to be “rough around the edges” but that the design elements were effective even the first time through. However, one dilemma that Connor experienced during the summer as he taught was that the experience of teaching online did not feel as “humanized” as he would have liked:

It felt like I was just speaking off into the ether and they were clearly paying attention and doing well, but the level of engagement that I'm used to wasn't there...in this sort of content rich course, you know, maybe that's fine because they need to be focused on the content probably more than talking to me. It's made me think a little bit about what this fall is going to be like because it's going to be very similar. I think as far as the class

format goes, I haven't come up with a ton of solutions, [because] I don't know necessarily how much of a problem it actually is. I don't know if this is just kind of okay, if this is just how it will be.

Although he did provide opportunities to interact with him via daily Zoom office hours, few students took advantage of the opportunity to meet with him. However, many students did use an online discussion tool, Piazza, to ask content questions of one another as he monitored the discussions to ensure that the students' suggestions to one another were accurate. Connor commented that this lack of engagement with him might have been a result of the intuitive navigation of the course where he attempted to make everything "crystal clear" from the beginning of the course so there would be limited barriers to learning. Given his comfort level with what he calls "the foundation" of online learning, he is considering ways to make his online teaching more engaging to bring his "personality across" which he feels he already does relatively well. He wants to better communicate the energy and enthusiasm he has for the subject, so students feel as excited as he is by it.

### **The case of Sophie: "Why am I even here?"**

Sophie began the seminar with the intention of developing a 5-week hybrid course on the History of Washington, DC. The course was meant to originally take place online for 4 weeks and then in-person with intensely immersive experiences for 1 week in Washington, DC. As a result of COVID-19, the in-person experience was not possible, and the course ended up fully online for all 5 weeks of the summer session. Not having had the experience of teaching online before, Sophie was eager to learn new strategies. Like many novice online instructors, I have encountered, she was hesitant about being on camera but was willing to try new things.

Sophie credited much of who she was as an instructor to her time as a graduate teaching assistant, and the mentoring experiences she had that shaped her teaching. As a historian, she saw her role as helping students to “discover things for themselves by exposing them to primary sources.” This meant that she would use primary sources to encourage students to imagine different narratives. For instance, she might prompt students to think about how a young farmer during the Civil War would have responded to the call to fight for the Confederacy. This immersion into the history was also made possible through music that Sophie incorporated into class. For example, one student brought in a song by Leon Bridges and was able to pull in ideas about the rural South and connected it to how the South transformed over the course of the 20th century. In these ways, Sophie saw herself as a bridge between the history content and students, where she was responsible for delivering content but primarily saw her responsibility to students as pushing them “to think.”

Sophie encountered a disorienting dilemma right at the beginning of the seminar, when we worked to construct specific, measurable, and actionable learning objectives in mapping out the course and any related modules. Although she had been constructing learning objectives for the past 15 years of her teaching career, she initially resisted this approach.

You were very specific about what we needed to include...like we couldn't just say to “learn history” but something more tangible. So, at first I kind of resisted it because I felt like History is different from the other disciplines. We're not teaching someone a particular focused skill in the same way a Math course or Chemistry would. But then I said, “well actually we are.” I just never was encouraged to think about it like that. So that was challenging for me, but I think it actually was very helpful, not only for this

class. I even revised what I did in my Southern Cultures class this semester because of the way that you trained us on discussing the learning outcomes.

This process of constructing learning outcomes shifted how Sophie conceptualized teaching History content. For her, this became a process of thinking very intentionally about what students should be able to know and do by the end of her course. Consequently, she found herself being more intentional in aligning course assessments and learning activities to the objectives she had outlined. Figure 4 shows the course objectives that Sophie constructed through this experience.

#### **Figure 4**

##### *History Learning Objectives*

**Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, you will know how to:

1. *Critically examine* the history of Washington, D.C. in order to recognize some of the limits and problems of American democracy
2. *Conduct historical analysis* by applying the tools of primary historical research to Washington's past
3. *Read secondary sources* critically in order to *evaluate and engage* scholars' interpretations in your own writing
4. *Discuss and write* critically about the history of Washington, D.C., a city where you will potentially live and work
5. *Engage* in scholarly debates about Washington, D.C.
6. *Reflect* on the relevance of the coursework for understanding your own time and place

These specific, actionable, and measurable objectives clearly communicate what students should be able to know and do by the end of the course. Throughout this process of constructing learning objectives, her thinking shifted from a focus on content to what students should be able to *do* with the content.

Intentionality was also something Sophie took away with her from her experiences in the seminar in combination with another training she had on course design through our institution.

She said she is now thinking more deliberately about how learning activities contribute to the overall learning goals.

I guess I'm thinking more deeply about what I want them to get out of them, because I don't want to make it sound like I was just flying by the seat of my pants. I wasn't. I just don't think I planned every detail the same way that I'm starting to since this training.

Sophie discussed how this newfound intentionality also benefited her in-person teaching. Specifically, she mentioned the importance of transparency as an instructional strategy. This was something she highlighted from one of our guest speakers who came to share his own approaches to online teaching. She said that experience

Really pushed me in terms of taking the questions that I would normally ask students just in a regular class and make those more transparent to the students...I don't think that I ever learned that it would help to tell students what you want them to know. I know that sounds crazy, but I never, ever told students. I might say focus on a certain chapter, but I would leave it to them to figure out what they were supposed to take from it and not really guide them toward what I wanted them to know.

She reflected that it was a combination of my suggestion to be transparent about what she wanted students to learn, being able to explore her colleague's course, and having him walk through his reasoning for why he provides students with guiding questions that helped her to understand how this would help students to learn. Questions Sophie constructed throughout individual modules of the online course to guide her students towards meeting the learning objectives included:

1. Why did slavery last in Washington, DC, for so long? What impact did the presence of slavery and the slave trade in Washington have on American democracy?



2. Why did Congress exert so much influence over local affairs in Washington? Why did the nation's capital adopt the antidemocratic practices characteristic of the Jim Crow South? Was Washington, DC, part of the Jim Crow South?
3. Why did Washington, DC, grow so rapidly from the 1930s through the 1950s? What impact did the presence of newcomers have on social life?
4. What was the relationship between the fight for home rule in DC and the fight for civil rights?

In this way, Sophie was able to build on that notion of connecting students to the content by helping guide them through the learning activities with specific questions in mind.

This intentionality helped Sophie to make the pivot to remote teaching in the spring, halfway through her courses. In shifting modalities, she recognized the need to change the course moving forward. When students met her remotely for the first time, she joked she told them, “welcome to class, 2.0.” She reorganized *Blackboard* to make the course more intuitively navigable, created modules, and changed the nature of synchronous meetings which became optional rather than required. She said her students appreciated that she did not just keep moving ahead with the same syllabus and that she changed the course to meet the demands of learning remotely. One of the things she attributed to being able to make this shift so smoothly was having examples to draw from like the asynchronous online activities in the seminar itself and the course exemplars that were provided throughout the seminar.

Even though she was unable to give students the immersive in-person week in Washington, DC, Sophie still felt her online course was very successful. She attributed much of that to how the course was designed to be so easily navigable and to the fact that she was able to pull in guest speakers from all over the nation, rather than being limited to people who could

only make it to DC. Although this was a highlight of teaching the course for her, she discussed how having so many prominent guest speakers from the field became a disorienting dilemma.

There were some times where I felt like, “Well, why am I even here.” I didn't feel like I was teaching because so much time was given over to the guests. But then again, I realized that maybe the students hearing me pose questions to the guest and that kind of thing is a different form of teaching. I had to reorient the way that I think of teaching...So that was the one thing where I kind of questioned myself. I've never had that feeling before. Like, am I really earning my money?

When asked to elaborate on how that made her feel, Sophie responded that she felt positively about it in the end. She reflected that she shifted her thinking from the idea that she was “just making appointments with people” to seeing her role as contributing to this whole learning experience that she had carefully constructed to weave all the course elements together. In choosing the right people to come speak and facilitating those meaningful conversations with her students, she was adding immense “value.” This signifies a shift in her perception of her role as the instructor from more of a content deliverer to a facilitator of learning experiences.

### **The case of John: “Instructor mode to mentor mode”**

When asked about significant experiences that had shaped him as an instructor, John spoke at length about his time teaching Sunday School Bible Study for 2 years at the church he attended. The experience of having to keep high schoolers awake at 6:30 a.m. while teaching Religion to students who might or might not want to be there gave him a great appreciation for student engagement that he has maintained in his college teaching. John was also a teaching assistant in graduate school, where he was able to learn how to combine the governmental policy practitioner mindset with teaching. As opposed to someone in a tenured track position in the

Government department whose role might be to teach more the theoretical underpinnings of the field, John sees his role as a “bridge to the policy community” where he works to translate theoretical applications of national and international security to provide practical skills that will readily transfer to fields students may want to pursue. He described it as “peeling back the curtain” to bring people from the broader policy world into students’ experiences so students can then envision themselves in that world.

John came into the seminar not having taught online before, to design a hybrid—4 weeks online, 1 week in-person—Policy course that he had taught before in a semester-long, in-person format. As a result of the move to remote teaching in summer 2020, this hybrid course had to be converted to a fully online course. John described a moment on the first day of the seminar that caused him to shift his frame of reference. My colleague had taken a moment at the start of the seminar to address a common misconception, explaining that creating an online course from a course that has already been taught in-person is not just a matter of simply putting everything online.

I think that was an aha moment for me. He said many of you came in here thinking that you would be able to take your existing syllabus and put it online. He said that you will fail if you do that. You need to break down your class to the gears, the basics, and then rebuild it. And that, for me, was shifting my frame quite a bit. And I think the other bit that solidified that was trying to build that first module and thinking about how someone would engage with it on their own and having to walk through it and just realizing how little structure I had to my class. The structure was in my head, right, but translating that made me realize just how many gaps there were. So that was disorienting certainly.

When I asked John to elaborate on these gaps, he discussed the need for clarity in an online course where things must be read, understood, and acted upon without the instructor verbally translating the instructions. As a result of this need for clarity, John worked hard to provide structure and consistency throughout his course that students could intuitively navigate. For instance, at the start of each module, John provided an introductory video that set forth the topic for the week as well as an agenda that highlighted the activities students would be required to complete throughout the week. Figure 5 shows an example script from Module 1 of his course, which walks students through the week of activities:

## Figure 5

### Policy Week 1 Script

Welcome to Week 1! Each of our online weeks will be modeled in a similar fashion, so it is imperative to ask clarifying questions this week to make sure you are set-up on a successful trajectory.

As a reminder, each online week we will have:

- Two modules that will be done individually (including an overview, videos, readings). *I recommend spacing them out to do no more than 1 per day.* Some of the modules have podcasts - plan accordingly if you'd like to match them to another activity (workout, cooking dinner, etc).
- Two real-time seminars with the full class led by the professor and 2 to 3 guest lectures per week: Wednesday and Thursday, from 6 to 9pm est.
- Real-time simulation that will be done with your team and mentor for one hour between Friday-Saturday.

These activities will be accompanied by a series of weekly assignments.

**Overview:** What are national interests, and how are decisions made to pursue those interests? **Learning objectives:**

1. Articulate commonly accepted National Security interests
2. Define Ends, Ways, and Means
3. Map the structure and decision making process of the National Security Council
4. Identify factors that can influence the decision making process of the National Security Council

#### **Due Dates:**

**By Monday:** Complete onboarding materials, introduce yourself in the discussion board, and take syllabus quiz.

**By Tuesday:** Complete 2 modules (including overview, readings, videos), and respond to the discussion board prompt. Consider breaking apart the modules, to complete over several days. It will be a significant lift to complete all the modules well in a single day.

**Wednesday:** 1) Engage in discussion group. 2) Join your peers and me in a live conversation. Speaker bios can be found in the resource tab.

- 600 to 715pm
  - We will answer questions from the reading, draw on the latest news to integrate the class into the world, and have a Kahoot Quiz about the material (including featuring some of your classmates - read their introduction in the Discussion Board prior to class). The quiz will not be graded but will have prizes for the top winners at the end of the course. We will also review the major class assignments:
    - policy memo
    - policy briefing
    - discussion board
    - guest lecture reflections,
    - simulations and team readouts.
- 715-730pm: We will take a 15-minute break. Grab a bite to eat, stretch your legs!
- 730-830pm (Guest Lecture)
- 830-900pm: Wrap-up

**Thursday:** 1) Engage in discussion group. 2) Join your peers and me in a live conversation.

- 615 to 715pm (Guest Lecture)
- 715-730pm: We will take a 15 minute break. Grab a bite to eat, stretch your legs!
- 730-830pm (Guest Lecture)
- 830-900pm: Wrap-up

#### **By Sunday:**

- Submit your "memo context" section.
- Submit your speaker reflection
- Meet as a simulation team to respond to prompt/submit your simulation readout (if your assigned week).

The amount of detail that John included in these weekly outlines helped him to fill the gap between what he might explain to students were he to see them in-person twice a week and the instructions needed for his online students to progress through the week without that face-to-face interaction with him.

John also talked about the “mental switching” required for the activities he would do in class with his students such as simulations, briefings, presentations, and policy memos which he realized could benefit from thematically tying them all together so they would act to reinforce one another more. This thread between activities was also evident through the class discussion groups which were the same as the simulation groups to create “solid touch points” throughout the course.

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

These instructional decisions were focused on two design features, the alignment between learning activities and scaffolding of learning activities. As he wove together and provided more “touch points,” he noticed a benefit to students’ understanding of the content because there were fewer “gaps” or areas for students to get lost in the material as everything was connected. When asked if this experience in the seminar would have any effect on his teaching style, John responded that it would not change his style but rather it helped to “facilitate” and “augment” that function of bridging content to the policy world at large.

John communicated how excited he was about teaching this course online, which he thought would be “one of the best classes of its kind in the country.” He suggested that this

would be a product of the “amazing cast of individuals” he had invited to speak to the students as well as the level of feedback that he had planned for students to receive on policy assignments.

He shared:

For diplomacy week, they'll have the former Acting Secretary of State talk about diplomacy. For intelligence, a three-star general will talk about intelligence gathering. When we talk about national interest and national security, we will have the person who wrote the national security strategy from the Obama administration talk with them. And then there is their own simulation. And as part of the simulation, I have a mentor from the policy world who will be embedded with them for the whole 5 weeks to give instantaneous feedback. So someone from the Secret Service, someone from Homeland Security, someone from the CIA—and they're going to be embedded in the group to give them feedback and that person will also help train them and give them feedback on their practice policy briefing.

He described this entire experience he planned for his students as “a great feast” which he really hoped would work well online.

John pointed to the opportunities in seminar where we had instructors who taught in our online program come in to provide a tour through their courses and discuss their own design process as instrumental in helping him to conceptualize how to design his course. Specifically, one of the model instructors went into detail regarding how he designed discussion groups, pointing out where he would break students into smaller groups, how often he would break them into groups, how he facilitated the discussion groups, and how he wove feedback into the process to encourage meaningful and rich discussion. Conversely, John found discussions with his peers in the seminar to be enjoyable but not as beneficial to his design process, primarily because he

felt they were all “in the same boat” of not having much online experience to draw upon. The exception to this was another instructor in the seminar who had previously taught online who was able to give some feedback in peer review that helped provide an alternative perspective on his design. When I asked him about reflection activities, John’s response was that he was certain they must have made him think deeply about his instruction but that he remembered more the instructional design conversations we had where basic ideas like course organization or numbering tips were “like flipping a switch,” making him think differently about how to organize his course. John also mentioned the rapid shift to remote teaching in spring 2020 as a “great practice run.” It reassured him that his pre-recorded lectures would work as well as his in-person lectures and gave him confidence to bring in guest speakers through Zoom. This confidence only grew once he was able to teach the online course.

I can imagine teaching in person. But then one of the class periods people are just on the computers in their dorms, or in the library in a Zoom meeting, and having someone really great come from San Francisco or New York. We just had a wider variety of guest speakers than if we were in DC. Even in DC, there's a geographical limit, but here we have people calling from everywhere.

Overall, John felt that the experience of doing 150-200 hours of pre-recording and editing lecture content allowed him to focus more of his time during the course on individual students. As a result of the lectures being done before the launch of the course, he was able to use the time he would normally devote to creating lectures to provide feedback to students.

There's a tremendous amount in terms of facilitating groups and melding the synchronous with asynchronous and trying to pull it off... I was able to really focus on trying to bring in the best person to align with the class, having more office hours, and giving feedback.



For the written feedback, in 2 weeks I wrote 2–3 times as much as they wrote to me. I was able to give them the feedback and make it a lot more personal, which is nice. John commented that he really enjoyed being able to transition from the “lecture mode to the mentor mode.” However, he conceded that this was only possible because of the considerable time he had been able to devote to the design and development of his online course before summer session—the byproduct of a course release, a luxury that he would not likely have again in planning future courses. John suggested here that this transformation to a mentor role was only possible because of the unique situation. This indicates that the roles instructors may adopt can vary from one instructional context to another, meaning that any transformation in roles might only be applicable within certain teaching contexts.

**The case of Emily: “That’s not learning. That’s just doing.”**

Emily came into the seminar to create an online version of an Adult Development course that she had taught numerous times in the Psychology Department. It was unsurprising, given her discipline, that when I asked about experiences that had shaped her as an instructor she discussed her students. Specifically, she highlighted the importance of inclusivity. Throughout her career she has been reframing her thinking about the reasons high achieving students may not succeed academically. She has become much more aware throughout the past 10 years working at this institution of issues students may face such as solo status, lack of social capital, and housing insecurity among others. Understanding how these various factors may impact a student made her conclude that students may struggle to succeed not because of “lack of ability” but rather because they are facing other challenges in their lives.

Emily contrasted this very intensive seminar experience to a previous course design experience she had taught online at another institution, where she gave the content to designers

and they created a course for her. There was no value judgement in this when she described the two experiences; they were simply different. When I asked Emily to address how she perceived her role as an instructor before this seminar, she described it as more instructor-centered.

I kind of thought about it as, I'm the person in front of the room. Right? Not that you have to stand there at attention and listen to me. But that I was the one guiding the discussion, telling [students] what to think. I was in charge of the learning and came in with that mindset of you stand, you lecture, or lead discussion....Now, I think I'm the facilitator, but I'm not necessarily the one directing. I think I've gotten a little more comfortable. Like, let's see where it goes.

Her description here suggests a transformation from an instructor-centered to student-centered teaching role as a result of her feeling more confident in being a facilitator of learning activities.

When I asked Emily if she had any moments in the seminar where she questioned her teaching practice, she discussed a negative experience she had in the seminar that resulted from a peer review of the first module of her course. In this peer review, a colleague in the seminar was assigned to walk through the module to provide feedback on the student experience. Emily thought the feedback was incredibly negative and not delivered well which made her feel frustrated.

First of all, how the criticism was delivered it was unhelpful...That person's mindset that you had to do it her way or that online learning had to be really interactive and innovative and I'm like, look lady, I want to do this well and I know myself well enough to know I can't suddenly put in all these bells and whistles and do it well. I still have to be me, and I was frustrated with that experience...like we all have our own style. We all have what

we're good with...I had to still do what I was comfortable with and not try to do more than I was going to do well.

Emily highlighted here how she was being pushed out of her comfort zone. She was willing to try new strategies but realized that she needed to do this at a pace that would allow her to do it well. What could have resulted in a transformative moment ended up being a negative experience that made Emily feel criticized rather than supported. We had a couple of conversations after this where I tried to reassure Emily that her course was well-designed and that it was totally acceptable for her to try new strategies and tools at her own pace as she developed more confidence with online instruction. Emily was able to move forward from this negative experience. She attributed this in part to a colleague who came in to speak with our group who pointed out the iterative nature of teaching online which helped to bolster Emily's confidence.

She was saying, "Yeah, you can go in and fix it. And you can re-record a lecture if students tell you during the course this isn't working. You can fix things." It's not like when I did it previously, it was done...I'm trying new things...I'm making my students this summer guinea pigs. [The fact] that I can go in and fix things took a little pressure off of me. I'm a perfectionist and just knowing...I can go in and modify and I can also fix it this summer or for next summer, that it's not "done," and I'm not stuck with it, that was really helpful.

Emily's experience indicates a need not to assume anything about where instructors may be along the online teaching continuum and to allow individuals to explore new things at their own pace. It also suggests a certain level of intentionality and care that must occur with critical

dialogue and peer review where everyone has different notions of how to provide constructive feedback.

Emily noticed she is thinking differently now about “how to facilitate an activity in class, not just give an activity.” The reasoning behind class activities is not always intuitive for students and online instructors need to explain more because they are not right there with students. Emily suggested that part of this is the nature of online teaching but also indicated that students really do need much more explicit direction and transparency than they seemed to when she began teaching. She spends considerably more time now preparing a course up front, so students have everything they need before the class even begins.

So from Day 1, the assignment guides are up, all the grading guides are up, all the expectations are there...My guides are written differently, now I bullet-point. I kind of make a checklist. Here are the requirements, check, check, check. And here's the skills, check, check, check...then I put in a frequently asked questions section that I might add to, if I'm getting the same question...I work on transparency a lot more with students and I try to remind them I am trying to be transparent, so the chances of the answer to your question being there are pretty good.

Additionally, Emily worked hard to interject fun into her course to make it more engaging, especially considering students' worlds completely being upturned during spring 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that she found it a bit odd that students enjoyed activities like creating a meme related to the content. However, as a result of the fun they have, she suggested that perhaps students actually retain what they learn more because of the positive experience associated with it. She said, “If they're engaging, it's far better than for me to say write me five sentences about why this topic mattered versus show me something about how you're thinking

about it.” It also has the added benefit of personalizing the experience so she can learn about individual students which she values immensely.

This focus on engagement coincided with a shift that occurred in how she approaches assessment. She thought a great deal about how to assess students without using the typical multiple choice testing strategies that she saw so many of her colleagues using. Partly she wanted to foster more student engagement and partly she wanted to engage students more in critical thinking which she was not able to achieve through multiple choice.

They were just boring. Like they weren't really tapping into understanding...and that's not learning, that's just doing. And that's not really what I want from that class or any class I teach. So, I kind of realized that like when I say watch this clip from Gilmore Girls and see how it relates to theory, that's challenging them and multiple choice [tests] weren't really challenging them.

This notion of learning versus doing indicates how she is conceptualizing teaching students differently. Now she wants students to apply their theoretical understandings in some meaningful way. This spilled into her conversations with colleagues as well. Now that many instructors are teaching remotely there is increased concern over academic integrity and how to assess students without having to use proctoring solutions which some students and instructors perceive as intrusive.

I keep telling people...why don't you make your test applied instead of concept driven so that open book cheating would be hard to do because [students] can't just Google the definition? So, I think a lot of people have been forced to say, maybe my tests have always been lousy, you know, which is kind of a scary thing. Like maybe I've just always

given very basic tests that regurgitate information, and now you can keep doing that and they can cheat, or you could ask them to understand the material.

It is important to note that though these changes did occur during the seminar and teaching her online course for the first time, this all happened in conjunction with the rapid shift to remote instruction and her own professional development which included discussions with colleagues outside our program and reading teaching and learning texts such as *Small Teaching Online*. All these experiences combined seem to have had a cumulative effect on shifts in her instructional thinking and practice.

**The case of Amelia: “I always feel disoriented.”**

Amelia came into the seminar to design a new course about social media and global rhetoric for the summer hybrid program. Of the five instructors who participated in the seminar, Amelia had the most experience teaching online, and her research centered around digital media. She described her involvement in a radical feminist digital learning collective as being one of the most influential in her career. She mentioned it was “transformative” just being a part of this group of scholars who were on the cutting edge of digital culture and media in the early 2000s. Given the wealth of these experiences where she was able to explore teaching in different contexts with various key players in the field, Amelia discussed how each gave her new ways to reflect on her teaching.

Your ability to reflect on teaching experiences is always going to be both clarified and distorted by the lenses that you're looking at it through whether you're decompressing at the end of the day with a glass of wine and talking to your spouse about this crazy experimental class that totally failed or totally succeeded. Or you know you're then looking at it through the kind of apparatus and scholarly citation where you're writing

something for an academic audience where you know the framework and with which you understand it is going to be informed by the kinds of theoretical touchstones that are going to be meaningful to your audience. I think the thing that was crazy about doing this reflection process though is each venue was different.

Amelia also suggested the need to temper her own reflective practices with feedback from students “because sometimes...I have a tendency actually to be harder on myself than the students are. So, I think it's important to not over-correct when you're sensing that classroom interaction didn't go quite as well as you might've hoped.”

When I asked Amelia if she had any moments during the seminar where she had questioned her teaching practice or had experienced disorienting dilemmas, she responded, “I always feel disoriented, and I always question my teaching practice. When you watch people teach who are overly confident, they're often terrible teachers. They think that they are great but do not have actual learning happening.” She suggested that any instructor who is concerned with teaching well is going to be continually reflecting on what works or needs improvement in their instructional practice. Part of her continued dilemma was experiencing “imposter syndrome” which is something tied to her self-consciousness about being “terrible on camera.” As a result of this, Amelia spent countless hours filming and editing her own videos to make them as meaningful and engaging as possible for her students.

Given the interpersonal connection that she felt as part of the digital learning collective and having worked closely with an instructional designer at a prior institution who she carpooled with, she found the human connection with her colleagues during the seminar to be missing something. Specifically, she mentioned a moment where she was in peer review with Emily and felt as though she was put in an uncomfortable position of having to provide critical

feedback to a colleague that she thought should have already been provided by the instructional designer.

It was just screencasts of her regular lectures [with] no consideration of the online audience and everything was just like a 20-minute lecture with just PowerPoint slides with text on them. And so, you know, sitting down for a couple of hours looking at these lectures...I thought it was really terrible.

Amelia said she felt like Emily had been put in an “unfair situation,” not having been prepared for this kind of feedback by the individuals on our team helping her to design her course.

Like I didn’t want this woman to be roasted on her teaching evaluations, because I know she depended on them, so I kind of had to tell her this wasn’t going to work...[students] will not only give you bad evaluations, but they’ll use social media. They use Rate My Professor and they can really trash someone’s reputation.

Amelia communicated that she did not want to be overly critical, but she was trying to protect Emily from negative student responses to a course she thought would be unengaging given her own prior experiences in digital teaching and learning.

Amelia also struggled with the very structured instructional design approach of the seminar. She conceded that it was helpful to focus on learning objectives the way that we did so that students would have as part of their “mental language” what they should be able to know and do because of the course. Yet, she argued that there is a difference between formal learning communities mediated by learning management systems such as Blackboard and informal ones, which is what she had hoped to construct as part of her course design.

The power of informal learning online and truly distributed learning online really is considerably weaker in online experiences that are structured by course management



systems and that often don't allow for the kinds of emergent phenomena taking place among online communities.

Additionally, it is difficult to design a course months before it launches and then to remember everything you are meant to cover week to week, “I felt like you kind of lose that fresh engagement when you're laying out the whole course...It's actually not a kind of teaching I'm eager to do a lot.” Amelia missed the informal nature of lesson planning that might happen as she went for a walk or took a shower, where she would just scribble ideas down on post-its. She admitted that she felt like “a bad subject” because her way of instructional planning was much opposed to this very structured approach throughout the seminar, “if I were to run one of these seminars, how do you help people get to that, like the little notes that you do after the shower or the run?” What she gets at here is this balance between constructing an intuitively navigable course and allowing for emergent phenomena to occur that may take the course in varying directions. However, her approach to course design may be more developmentally appropriate for someone who has had online teaching experience than for a novice.

### **Professional Development Sparking Transformation**

In the following section I discuss themes from the larger case of the seminar. I begin by discussing how dialogue with experienced colleagues guided perspective transformation. Then I discuss how providing opportunities for instructors to reflect on instructional practice as they learned new instructional approaches provided avenues towards perspective transformation. I conclude the section by outlining how empathy humanized the digital space and by highlighting the situated nature of transformative learning.

## **Dialogue with Experienced Colleagues Guides Perspective Transformation**

For the most part, dialogue with colleagues had an influence on instructors' perspectives about teaching when that discussion engaged instructors who had previous online experience to draw upon. Throughout the seminar, dialogue with colleagues took on two forms. The first was when experienced online instructors that came in to speak with the group about how they had designed their own courses and about the lessons they learned from teaching their courses online. The second was peer review opportunities where participants provided feedback on other participants' course design.

### ***Discussion with Experienced Online Instructors***

Discussion with experienced online instructors and modelling of their courses influenced how participants conceptualized their own teaching. Throughout the seminar, four guest speakers came in to do course tours where they walked through their courses, discussed lessons learned, and took questions from the group delving more deeply into specific instructional practices. In these sessions, I asked the guest speakers to specifically reflect on what had worked well over the years and what they had learned through trial and error. Participants were also added to these model courses as "students" so they could explore and borrow ideas from their colleagues. Throughout this process, participants were encouraged to reach out to guest speakers to continue conversations about practice as they had specific questions regarding instructional decisions.

John discussed how one of the "primary drivers" of changes to his thinking was exemplars he saw from other experienced online instructors. Because John was grappling with how he could possibly create meaningful discussion online, a colleague who discussed how he navigated facilitating online asynchronous discussion was particularly instructive for him because he helped John to understand how he could be successful "engaging with the medium."

Similarly, Emily felt that seeing how instructors learned from their courses and revised them each year to make them more effective helped her to feel more comfortable trying new things because she didn't feel like it had to be perfect right from the start. This allowed her to have more of a growth mindset when it came to course design. Sophie discussed how being able to "mimic" the proven instructional practices of her colleagues was helpful in being able to design her course. For Sophie, having her colleague explain to her the importance of guiding questions in leading students towards the learning objectives was transformative because she realized she needed to be more transparent about what she wants students to be able to know and do throughout learning activities to achieve the learning objectives. However, for Connor, engaging with experienced online instructors in this way was not transformative. He recognized the "really cool things" that he saw instructors doing in their courses but was not able to apply many of those conventions to his course. He explained this was because his course is very content rich, and not framed around discussion like many of the courses taught by our guest speakers. Similarly, even though her course is framed around discussion, Amelia also did not feel "connected" because the subject matter of the courses being highlighted was so different from her own. Connor's and Amelia's experiences suggests a need to diversify the guests that come in to speak about their experiences teaching to represent an even wider variety of disciplines and teaching styles.

### ***Peer Review***

Throughout the five synchronous sessions during the seminar, we conducted three peer review activities. The first was focused on revising participants' drafted learning objectives to be more specific, actionable, and measurable. The second was geared towards finding evidence of alignment between module assessments and module learning objectives. The third asked

participants to walk through the first module of a peer's course from the student perspective. All peer review activities were facilitated through peer review guides that walked participants how to focus their comments from an instructional design standpoint. This process was meant to foster a greater sense of community as well as to strengthen participants' understandings of online course design.

Peer review activities throughout the seminar did not have any discernible influence on perspective transformation. For the most part, participants in the seminar were coming from the perspective of a novice to this course design process. John suggested these peer review activities were beneficial but limited in that participants were "in the same boat." He did find that when Amelia, who had the most online experience of the group, shared ideas in peer review he was able to glean ideas through her experience. Conversely, Emily had a very negative experience in peer review with Amelia where she was "frustrated" by what she felt was ill-framed and unhelpful feedback. Amelia really valued the ideas Sophie gave her in peer review although none influenced any transformative thinking. For Sophie, having John review her learning objectives and suggest ways she might revise them was informative. She also suggested that seeing Connor designing an online Chemistry course gave her confidence that she could teach History online if he could teach Chemistry online. Consequently, though peer review seemed to help some individuals generate ideas or revise elements of their courses, this activity alone had no real influence on the transformations they experienced. This is not to say that peer review does not have the power to influence perspective transformation. In hindsight, these peer review activities could have been more focused on assumptions about practice and how those may be evident in design to promote changes in thinking.

## **Reflecting is Connecting**

Providing opportunities for instructors to think about their current instructional practice compared to new instructional approaches allowed participants to connect with what they were learning, thus giving them avenues towards perspective transformation. Throughout each of the five asynchronous modules that we covered in the seminar, there was a reflection component. For instance, I asked participants to reflect on how the notions of online presence that we covered in the modules aligned or misaligned with their current practices and how they envisioned implementing cognitive, social, or instructional presence in their online courses.

Connor saw reflection as a mechanism to “connect what he was already doing” to this “formal language” that he was developing throughout the seminar to describe his instructional practices. Reflection activities gave him an opportunity to think about his current practices and how he might want to transform them given new strategies he was learning through the seminar. Similarly, Emily felt reflection allowed her to think about reinventing her course and how to implement new strategies because “professors fall in this trap of, *it's just the way I've always done it*. That's not good enough for me.” She admitted to getting stuck in the same ways of teaching a course once she has taught it several times. This process of actively reflecting helped to inspire her to think about possible different approaches. For Amelia, reflection of this nature was already well ingrained in her teaching process. She suggested reflection is both “clarified and distorted by the lens” through which a person approaches it, hers being digital culture, a “living entity” where students participate in a digital community and “critically reflect on how we have these effective ties to people that are mediated by technology and [how] algorithms and interfaces and all these other things play a role in our social and intellectual lives.” Reflection for her is both a tool for her own individual growth and a mechanism to help students connect with a

discipline that is almost ephemeral. For John, the reflective writing activities were not as transformative for him as the weekly instructional design meetings. In these meetings he was able to reflect upon design possibilities and engage critically with me as part of his instructional decision-making process.

### **Empathy Humanizing the Digital Space**

The participants in this study are unique in that they not only had to negotiate teaching and learning in a new modality, but they had to do this during a time when both they and their students were living through a pandemic. These instructors spent considerable time trying to navigate students' lives being disrupted by COVID-19. Understandably, students were suffering from anxiety and stress which impacted how instructors approached teaching their online courses. During this time, it was essential that instructors find ways to humanize this digital space to give students the connection that they were sorely lacking because of the social distancing measures and the closure of campus.

Amelia described a student whose family had moved back to the Philippines who was really counting on being able to live on campus. This student essentially found herself being homeless right in the middle of summer session. Though she was ordinarily high achieving, she struggled with these new circumstances. Amelia found herself developing fun break-out discussion activities to give students more agency during a time when they had so little control over anything else.

And they hadn't had agency under COVID right? A lot of them are our LGBT students who were stuck at home with conservative Christian families and they're having a really lousy senior year...almost all my students were seniors. So they were really depressed. But this gave them agency. They got to choose where they would go and what they

would talk about and that was incredibly powerful. And when I drop-in on the Zoom rooms, people were just chatting up a storm and they were very, very lively.

Though Amelia had no control over student homelessness or judgmental families, she was able to create an inclusive and supportive digital community for students to find reprieve.

John noticed anxiety related to the ultra-polarized political climate seeping in for the first time since he has taught the Policy course and, as a result, students were hyper-sensitive. Consequently, he worked to understand the student experience as they negotiated the course, implementing Zoom polls that helped him to gauge how students were feeling. So, if they were feeling overwhelmed, he would address that very transparently in class discussion to help students through it. He noticed students became more comfortable as the weeks progressed.

Emily has noticed that students are now “less resilient” and “less prepared to handle stress” now than they were when she began teaching. For her, she wants to encourage learning, so changes she developed in her assessment practices such as moving away from high stakes multiple choice to more open-book critical thinking she hopes will “reduce some strain and pressure on students.” Emily pointed to the need for developing a strong sense of community with her students during this time. This included teaching students to empathize with her as well so they could all operate with “compassion and grace.”

They would get a little angry at me and I'm like, wow, this is hard for me too. You know, I hear you're stressed, and you worry and hey, I'm there...I hope it's for the greater good of a little more class connection, a little more community, a little bit more like, hey, I know she's going to be there for me.

Similarly, Sophie mentioned anxiety and stress as factors that played out in her summer course. She recognized that students were “very nervous about what's going to happen” but admitted that she still struggles with how to mitigate these issues.

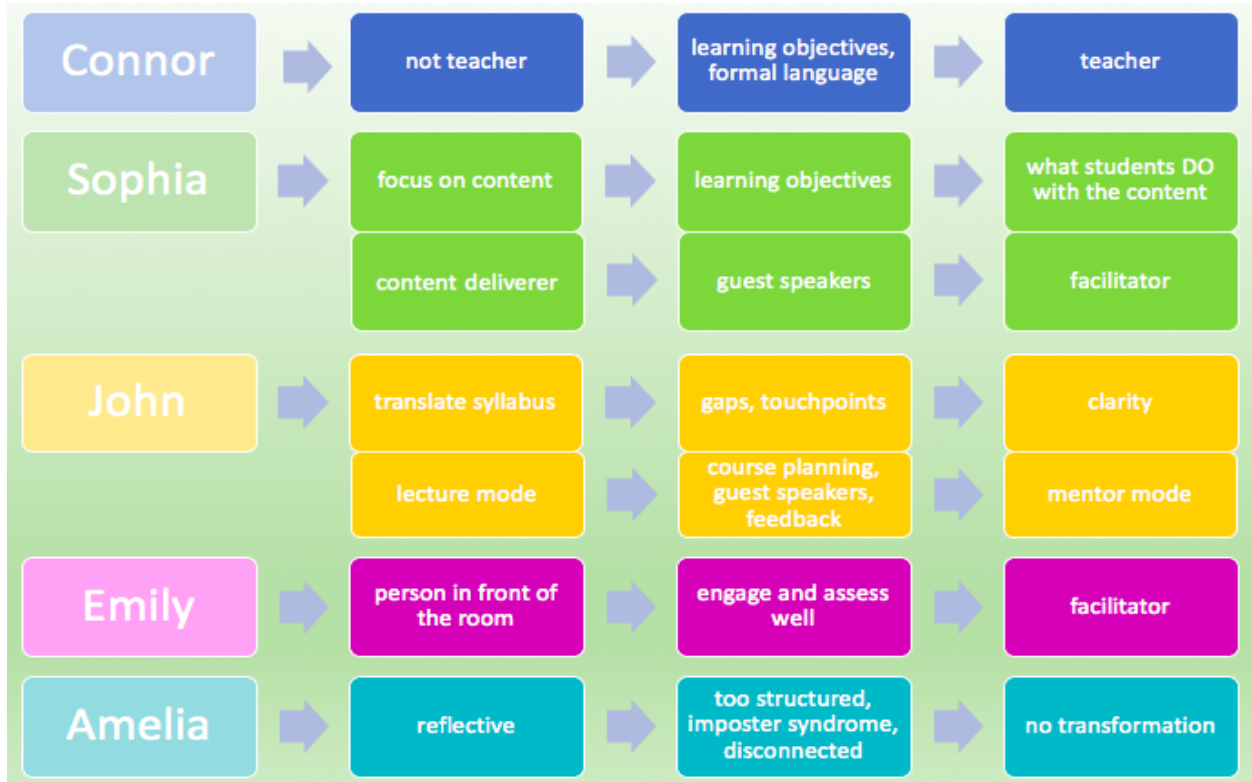
### **Perspective Transformation is Situated**

All instructors experienced moments that caused them to question and reflect on their teaching practice. These moments occurred both during the seminar and while instructors taught their online courses for the first time. The transformative moments instructors experienced were varied and further support the situated nature of transformation. Perspective transformation ranged from profound shifting of roles to simply supporting already established teaching styles. These transformations occurred in singular moments as well as fluidly over time. Figure 6 captures initial perspectives, moments where instructors questioned their practice, and perspective transformation.



**Figure 6**

*Participants' Perspective Transformations*



It is interesting to note that of the five participants, the three novice online instructors experienced perspective transformation that was somehow grounded in course design framed through course objectives. Through this process of developing course objectives, Connor appropriated the “formal language” of teachers that allowed him to better understand and communicate what he wanted students to be able to know and do. Similarly, Sophie re-envisioned course objectives as focusing less on discrete content and more on what students should be able to do with the content. John used course objectives as part of the course language that helped him to establish clarity and reduce “gaps” in understanding. This suggests that this development focus on course design that was grounded in the construction of specific,

measurable, and actionable learning objectives helped instructors to think more intentionally about their design.

There was also a general shift from more instructor-centered teaching roles to student-centered ones. Both Sophie and Emily described feeling more comfortable in the facilitator role. For Emily, this was in stark contrast to feeling initially like she was supposed to be the “person in front of the room.” Sophie’s experience of facilitating many guest speakers throughout her course made her reconceptualize the “value” she could contribute to the course by creating these very rich experiences for students to engage meaningfully with prominent people in the field. Similarly, John felt as though the combination of guest speakers and providing so much feedback to students allowed him to be more of a “mentor” to his students. These transformations really solidified through the experience of teaching online as instructors actively navigated their relationships with content and with students.

All but one of the participants, Amelia, had a discernible perspective transformation that had an influence on their teaching. This is not to say that reflective moments had no impact on Amelia’s teaching; clearly, she was reflective and used that process to guide her practice. Rather, these moments where she questioned her teaching practice did not lead to perspective transformation as indicated through my conversations with her or within the timeframe of the study.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Instructors’ perceptions of teaching are determined by the experiences that they have and professional development for online teaching is an opportunity to reflect on and revise those perceptions (King, 2001). It became clear in my discussions with participants regarding the most influential experiences that had shaped them as instructors that the predominant teacher training

they had were informal experiences such as teaching assistantships or being mentored by a graduate advisor. These collective instructional training experiences work to further support the claim that college teaching is often a product of the ways professors were taught rather than a product of more formal kinds of pedagogical training (Gallant, 2000; Layne et al., 2004). As such, participants began the seminar aligned within more instructor-centered roles, relying on their own graduate education experiences to shape instructional practice.

Overall, throughout the seminar and the subsequent teaching online, four instructors experienced perspective transformation. This study's findings support Cranton's (1996) assertion that critical reflection is central to that transformative learning. According to Mezirow (2000), transformational learning is facilitated by critical reflection regarding our assumptions that guide our thinking. When individuals critically reflect on these assumptions, it can result in a shift in their thinking and have an impact upon their practice. Written reflection activities throughout the seminar aided participants in questioning their instructional decisions. This was evident as Connor used reflection to "wrap [his] mind around" his own teaching so he could figure out ways to "grow" as an instructor. Much in line with Kegan (2000), this study's findings suggest that faculty development for online teaching can act as a trigger for critical reflection that causes instructors to question previously unchallenged assumptions about teaching. Reflection allowed Sophie to overcome her resistance to a different approach to constructing learning objectives, which then led to perspective change regarding how she perceived History as a discipline. McVey (2014) also found that reflection on practice is essential to overcoming faculty resistance to change. The more faculty development can encourage critical self-reflection on beliefs about practice, the more instructors may experience perspective transformation.

One area for growth in this regard might be to provide opportunities for ongoing reflection throughout the design, development, and delivery of online courses as suggested by Torrasi and Davis (2000). It was interesting to note that Amelia, having had much experience in digital culture, found that a structured approach to online teaching was not a modality that she really wanted to continue to teach within. This highlights a duality that exists where instructors may reflect critically on their practice and use that reflection to either improve their online teaching or to abandon the modality altogether (Lawler et al., 2004). Additionally, although Amelia regarded herself as highly reflective, this did not lead to perspective transformation. Brookfield (2000) points out that reflection is not, by definition, always critical, arguing that practitioners can oftentimes reflect on the “nuts and bolts” of classroom practice without uncovering paradigmatic assumptions. Building upon these self-reflection opportunities, critical dialogue also helped to influence perspective transformation.

Dialogue with colleagues became an avenue for instructors to think deeply about teaching practice, specifically as they were able to benefit from the perspective of experienced online instructors. Research in the social sciences has described learning as a collaborative, social process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This study’s findings suggest that having experienced instructors come in to tour their courses, discuss lessons learned, and answer questions about practice helped instructors to see alternative perspectives. This is reflective of McQuiggan (2012) who also found online instructors valued discussing ideas with others, hearing other people’s perspectives, and figuring out how all the pieces fit together. Engaging in reflective discourse with colleagues can help instructors to unearth their own assumptions. This was evident as Emily learned about the iterative nature of course design from discussion with her more experienced colleague. Rather than taking a fixed approach to course design, she realized

she would be able to make changes in real-time as she discovered new things about using the technology, teaching in the modality, and engaging with her students. This finding coincides with King (2001) which found that as online instructors engage in reflective discourse during faculty development, they delve more deeply into their assumptions about teaching with technology. The relationship between these experienced online instructors and novice instructors reflects the notion of critical mirrors, individuals who can provide “reports from the front” of their own critical journeys and lessons learned throughout their online teaching experiences (Brookfield, 1994). This aligns with Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory, which outlines the zone of proximal development and the importance of a more knowledgeable individual to help guide learning within that zone. The relationship between novice and experienced online instructors also supports the practice of higher education faculty learning and working in community. Cox (2004) indicated that faculty learning communities can foster connection, making instructors feel less isolated and supported in exploring pedagogical problems of practice.

One major finding of this study is that throughout summer 2020, participants were very aware of student anxiety and stress and acted to further humanize their online courses as a result. Taylor and Cranton (2013) suggest that empathy is a core construct of transformative learning. It is unclear if learning about the importance of humanizing the digital space through the seminar or the circumstances surrounding the pandemic contributed more to how instructors were so attuned to the student experience but nevertheless, they were. Perhaps experiencing this pandemic alongside students contributed to instructors “having an open mind, learning to listen empathetically, ‘bracketing’ prejudgment, and seeking common ground” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 60). This kind of muddled finding that empathy was present, but we are not quite sure why is a

perfect example of the interdependent relationship between the affective nature of learning and critical reflection, which Taylor (2000) argues does not get enough attention in the research on Transformative learning.

This study's findings ultimately build upon the individual and situated nature of transformative learning. Cranton (2000) highlights the individual differences in transformative learning, pointing out that individuals "assimilate and reconstruct frames of reference in distinct ways" (p. 181). This is because our frames of reference are complex and consist of myriad values, beliefs, and assumptions that act as a lens through which individuals view the world. People learn in different ways and, therefore, transformative learning is "intensely personal" (Dirkx, 1997, p. 81). Although there were some similarities, each of the participants experienced transformation differently. This was evident as both Sophie and Emily experienced paradigm shifts towards more of a facilitator role, but their processes of transformation were completely different. What *facilitator* meant to Sophie, sharing the stage with other experts, meant something completely different to Emily, engaging students in fun, critical thought. It was also evident as constructing learning objectives became a trigger for transformation that took shape in various forms among participants.

With this study, I sought to understand if faculty development for online teaching could contribute to perspective transformation and if so, how. Findings indicate that perspective transformations did occur and that critical reflection opportunities, dialogue with colleagues, and the act of teaching online influenced perspective transformation. We can learn from this study that instructors might benefit from written reflection opportunities that occur during the design and development of courses and that focus specifically on how instructional decisions are being made. I suggest pushing instructors further to ask what assumptions are guiding those decisions

rather than simply how new approaches compare to old. Additionally, using experienced instructors to share their lessons learned and to model their courses helped novice instructors to see different perspectives of online teaching. This helps to address misconceptions about the modality as well as to aid novice instructors in envisioning how teaching in the online modality differs from their in-person experiences. In future research, I suggest building upon this relationship between experienced and novice instructors by having them workshop and peer review together to foster more critical dialogue regarding instructional decisions. Additionally, I would ensure that there is a wider variety of courses included to represent various disciplines and teaching styles.

There is much potential in faculty development for online instructors to influence thinking and therefore teaching practices, which has the possibility to extend beyond the digital classroom. This kind of formal faculty development has the potential to not only shape *what* instructors know about online teaching but *how* they know, which presents many possibilities for teaching across modalities.

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## Appendix A

### Semi- Structured Interview Protocol

#### Interview Questions: Interview 1

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

1. Could you talk about one or two significant experiences that made you the teacher you are today?
2. How would you describe your role as a teacher before you began participating in the Online Faculty Development Seminar? What about after?
3. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the FDS that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
4. Have you noticed any changes in how you think about teaching since taking part in the FDS? What do you think sparked this change?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this change?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
6. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.

2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
5. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
7. How do you feel about this change in perspective?
8. How, if at all, did dialogue with colleagues affect any change in the way you think about teaching and/ or your teaching practice?
9. How, if at all, did seminar reflection exercises affect any changes in the way you think about teaching and/or in your teaching practice.
10. How, if at all, has taking part in the Online Faculty Development Seminar affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
11. How, if at all, has anything else outside of the Online Faculty Development Seminar, for instance remote teaching, affected your teaching?

**Interview Questions: Interview 2**

1. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect your current approach to teaching?
2. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the summer teaching online that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
3. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect how you currently characterize your role as an instructor?
4. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this experience?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.

2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
6. How, if at all, has teaching online this summer affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
7. How, if at all, has anything else outside of teaching online this summer affected your current approach to teaching?
8. Given the changes to face-to-face teaching practice you mentioned earlier, could I possibly come to observe how these are being implemented in your classes? (specify which might be observable or which might be covered by course artifacts)

## Appendix B

**Table B1**

*Analytical Iterations*

Iteration 1 Codes	Iteration 2 Codes	Iteration 3 Themes
Experience	Experience	
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentorship</li> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Work with colleagues</li> </ul>	Instructors teach the way they were taught
Dialogue		
Empathy	Empathy	
Disorienting Dilemma Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student feedback</li> <li>• Disrupted lives</li> <li>• Anxiety and stress</li> <li>• Trust</li> </ul>	Dialogue with experienced colleagues guides perspective transformation
Disorienting Dilemma Online		
Roles	Disorienting Dilemma Seminar	
Changes in thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-consciousness</li> <li>• Course design</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Peer feedback</li> </ul>	Reflecting is connecting
Changes in practice	Disorienting Dilemma Online	
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Lack of student engagement</li> <li>• Inhibiting structure</li> <li>• Stress</li> </ul>	Empathy humanizing the digital space
	Roles	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial role               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bridge</li> <li>○ Entertainer</li> <li>○ Content expert</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Changing role               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guide</li> <li>○ Facilitator</li> <li>○ Sharing the stage</li> <li>○ mentor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Perspective transformation is situated
	Changes in thinking	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Confidence</li> </ul>	
	Change in practice	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarity</li> <li>○ Connection</li> <li>○ Engaging students</li> <li>○ Intentionality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Face-to-face               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bringing in the digital</li> <li>○ Clarity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work with colleagues</li> </ul>	
	Context	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote teaching</li> <li>• Other development</li> </ul>	

## CHAPTER 4

### FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE TEACHING: TRANSFORMING PRACTICE ACROSS MODALITIES

## **Abstract**

This case study explored a university faculty development seminar that prepared instructors to design and teach online courses taking place at a mid-sized liberal Arts & Sciences university in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine how faculty development for online teaching may influence changes in thinking about teaching and how that might proliferate throughout instructors' teaching practice more broadly. Specifically, the study examined whether instructional practices introduced in the seminar would transfer to instructors' in-person teaching and how faculty development and the experience of teaching online may have facilitated that transfer. Through an analysis of interviews and teaching artifacts, I found that participants experienced perspective transformations that affected how they perceived their role as instructors, and they transferred some online course design and instructional practices to their in-person teaching. These practices included incorporating more digital tools such as Zoom and Blackboard in instructors' in-person courses, communicating clearly and transparently with students, designing courses with more intentionality, and paying forward the lessons they learned to assist colleagues transitioning to teaching remotely in Spring 2020. Findings suggest that a structured course design process, self-reflection activities, opportunities to dialogue with colleagues, and course tours from colleagues aided in transfer of practices across modalities.

Online learning has been growing in popularity over the past 30 years as higher education institutions sought to bolster student enrollment and to offer students more flexible learning opportunities. During 2020 educational institutions across the nation found online learning an absolute necessity as the novel Coronavirus swept the world and shut down in-person learning at many universities. This rapid shift to online forms of instruction has only heightened the need to provide quality faculty development offerings to support instructors in teaching online.

Throughout the research in online learning, the need for support for faculty development in online learning is frequently discussed (Green et al., 2009; Koehler et al., 2007; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009). To teach successfully online, instructors must have a wide range of pedagogical and technological skills in addition to their content knowledge (Koehler et al., 2007; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009). The process of learning to teach online is often difficult for instructors to navigate on their own (Koehler et al., 2007). To ensure meaningful and rich online learning opportunities for students, instructors must be trained to effectively design, develop, and deliver online learning experiences (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008).

Faculty at colleges and universities are often hired for their content expertise and their research portfolio. Typically, higher education faculty often come to teaching with little formal pedagogical training and, as a result, they often teach the way they were taught (Gallant, 2000; Layne et al., 2004). Jaffee (2003) refers to the traditional context of learning in higher education as a “pedagogical ecology” in which formal lecture has been institutionalized as a common instructional strategy. This ecology of learning has a profound effect on how instructors perceive their roles as teachers, where they oftentimes regard themselves as content experts above all else (Conrad, 2004).

Without professional development, faculty draw heavily upon their past classroom teaching experiences when transitioning to teaching online (Conrad, 2004; Diekelmann et al., 1998). However, unlike in the traditional face-to-face space, faculty teaching in online programs are often required to participate in some form of professional development that teaches them how to design, develop, and deliver online instruction (Cobb, 2014). In these professional development offerings, instructors may learn how to use learning management systems, facilitate interaction online, or assess students online, among other instructional strategies. Though the format, duration, and content of faculty development for online learning varies among different institutions, most faculty development programs for online instructors lead faculty through a step-by-step training process (Diekelmann et al., 1998; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; King, 2002).

Transitioning to online teaching is oftentimes a challenging process for instructors, as instructional practices that may have worked for them in their traditional classes may no longer work for them online. Instructors in faculty development for online learning are often challenged to rethink their teaching practices as they are unable to rely on the practices that have become familiar to them (Diekelmann et al., 1998). However, this challenge is also an opportunity to develop comfort and expertise with new pedagogies and to evolve traditional instructional roles (Jaffee, 2003; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Faculty development for online learning and the experience of teaching online may cause instructors to reconceptualize their teaching (Terras, 2017), catalyzing them to reflect on, question, and revise their current instructional practices (King, 2002). Lawler and King (2001) suggest that faculty development should approach instructors as adult learners, providing them with opportunities to continually reflect on practice. However, there exists a paucity of research with a specific focus on how faculty development for



online teaching can be designed to prompt instructors to critically reflect upon and revise assumptions about teaching and learning to influence practice.

A growing body of research suggests that teaching online may cause instructors to change the way they conceptualize their teaching (Lowes, 2008; McQuiggan, 2007; Shea et al., 2002). Additionally, as they evolve instructional practices, instructors may even re-conceptualize their roles as instructors (Allen & Seaman, 2016). Online instructors are often encouraged to create teaching and learning roles with a less hierarchical structure than they may be used to (Jaffee, 2003). This can precipitate a move away from instructor-centric roles (Conrad, 2004; Pedersen & Liu, 2003). As faculty try to leverage opportunities for student participation online (Jaffee, 2003) and discover alternatives to lecture, they may shift their instructional roles to give students more agency over their learning (Barker, 2003; Gallant, 2000). These reconceptualized roles oftentimes reflect those such as facilitator, mentor, and guide (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Conceição, 2006; Hinson & La Prairie, 2005; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Ali et al. (2005) found that faculty who participated in online teaching professional development ranked redesigning and reconceptualizing roles as the highest priority focus in faculty development for online instructors. When faculty transition from in-person teaching to online teaching they may become acutely aware of shifting roles (Ali et al., 2005; Barker, 2003; Jaffee, 2003) or even feel as though roles have been reawakened (Diekelmann et al., 1998).

Not only do roles shift throughout this process, but pedagogical practices may change as well. Higher education instructors who began their teaching in the traditional classroom will likely need to adapt their pedagogical approaches in the online classroom (Baran et al., 2013; Duffy & Kirkley, 2004; McDonald & Reushle, 2002). As they apply new pedagogies in their online teaching practice they may consider how similar methods used in the online space may be

used in the face-to-face classroom (Scagnoli et al., 2009; Stone & Perumean-Chaney, 2011).

Teaching online may even change instructors' perspectives and practices as they transition back to the in-person space (Stone & Perumean-Chaney, 2011).

Although there is great potential here, few studies have examined how instructors transfer what they learn from faculty development for online teaching to the face-to-face classroom and what about faculty development or the experience of teaching online may facilitate that transfer.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore how faculty development for online teaching might benefit teaching and learning within online programs as well as throughout instructors' teaching practice more broadly. Specifically, I sought to ascertain how changes in thinking about teaching may have influenced changes in practice *outside* of the online instructional experience. Given the limited pedagogical training that most faculty receive, it is essential that emphasis be paid to how colleges and universities may leverage the training opportunities provided to online instructors to affect teaching and learning across modalities. As instructors learn about online course design, development, and delivery which often varies from traditional face-to-face instruction, they may begin to call into question their assumptions and beliefs about teaching. Navigating entirely new teaching landscapes can present a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1991) that triggers critical self-reflection of instructional practices. Many studies have explored the changes regarding instructional roles and methods that instructors experience as they learn to teach online (Conceição, 2006; Conrad, 2004; Shafer, 2000; Torrisi & Davis, 2000; Whitelaw et al., 2004). However, little attention has been paid to the specific professional development activities that facilitate those changes and how this learning may transition to instructors' face-to-face teaching. Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) is an adult learning theory that

encapsulates the kinds of disorienting experiences that cause one to reflect upon, critically examine, and revise perspectives which then influences future action.

### **Theoretical Framework**

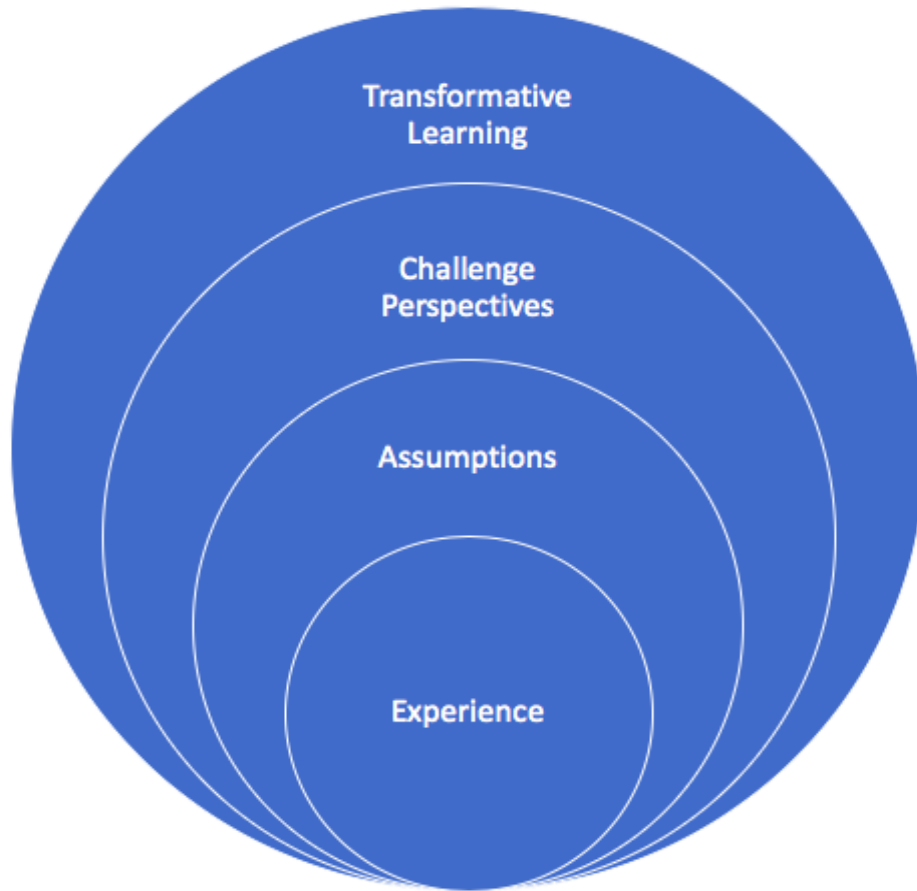
TLT is grounded in Mezirow's (1991) writing on the transformative dimensions of adult learning. According to Mezirow (2000), transformative learning can result from critical self-reflection of the assumptions that guide how individuals view the world. As instructors critically reflect upon and potentially reconsider perspectives, it may change their conceptual frames regarding teaching and impact instructional practice (Cranton, 1996). Mezirow (1991) defines transformative learning as follows:

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)

Nerstrom's (2014) conceptual framework outlines four constructs that can help to illustrate how transformative learning may occur in practice: experience, assumptions, challenging perspectives, and transformative learning. I have outlined the following model in Figure 1 to show the relationships among experience, assumptions, challenging perspectives, and transformative learning.

**Figure 1**

*Transformative Learning Model*



Experience is the bedrock upon which our understandings lie, shaping our perceptions of the world. Our frames of reference originate from individual experiences and become the lens through which individuals perceive and make meaning. Mezirow (2000) highlights the fundamental human need to understand and make meaning of experiences. He explains that when individuals do not understand something, they resort to other means to understand such as rationalizations and relying on others' perceptions. Langer (1997) describes mindful learning as the continuous negotiation of new information, category creation, and perspective gathering. Mezirow (2000) points out that transformative learning occurs through this continuous

negotiation where frames of reference become more inclusive and adaptable, resulting in more “true” beliefs (p. 8). This occurs through interrogating the basis of assumptions, a process through which Cranton (1996) argues may lead to better teaching.

Through experience individuals develop assumptions that form the basis of values and belief systems. These assumptions shape how individuals make meaning of experience and form habits of mind which are reflected in individual preferences, morality, and world views. These habits of mind are then refined into different meaning schemes which are expressed as point of view, composed of the beliefs, feelings, and attitudes that influence interpretations of the world (Mezirow, 2000).

Questioning, challenging, and revising assumptions or frames of reference can be achieved through critical reflection and reflective discourse (Mezirow, 2000), though questioning does not necessarily guarantee transformation. However, criticality and reflexivity can be used as tools to foster perspective transformation (Cranton, 1996). Mezirow (1991) outlines three types of reflection:

- content—reflecting upon *what* individuals perceive, think, feel, or act upon
- process—reflecting upon *how* individuals perform these functions of perceiving, thinking, feeling, or acting
- premise—reflecting upon *why* individuals perceive, think, feel, or act as they do

Only premise reflection can lead to a shift in perspective because it is the only one of the three that causes individuals to reflect upon the cause of assumptions underlying their thinking. To meaningfully grow, instructors must take part in this kind of reflection (Brookfield, 1995). This is reflective of Schön’s (1987) notion of the reflective practitioner, which indicates a need for instructors to interrogate how new learning may intersect or diverge from already ingrained

meaning schemes. This is a process of reflection-*in*-action through reflection-*on*-action which is particularly important as instructors negotiate transitioning to online teaching which may require engaging in potentially foreign instructional practices.

Transformational learning occurs when individuals question their assumptions, and because of this reflective process they experience a fundamental transformation in perspective which leads to changes in behavior (Cranton, 1996; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; E. W. Taylor, 1997). This theory encapsulates the complexity in learning to teach online as instructors experience disorienting dilemmas that may cause them to question assumptions, revise perspectives, and change instructional practice as a result.

### **Overview of the Research Design**

This case study emerged from a university faculty development seminar for online instructors taking place at a mid-sized liberal Arts and Sciences university in the Southeastern United States. The purpose of this study was to examine how, if at all, transfer of instructional practices may have occurred as instructors transitioned back and forth across modalities. Additionally, I sought not only to understand how practices transferred across modalities, but also what about the context of faculty development or teaching online might have contributed to that transfer. The data for this study were generated over the course of 1 year, from the start of the seminar in fall 2019 to fall 2020 after summer online courses had been taught. Case study is ideal for developing a rich understanding of the contextual elements within faculty development and the experience of teaching online that may have contributed to instructors' learning and specifically how a phenomenon like transformative learning may occur (Yin, 2018).

I redesigned the FDS in spring 2018 in my role as the instructional design manager in the eLearning office at our university. Because of my direct impact on the design, development, and

delivery of the FDS, I intentionally tried to guard against any inherent bias throughout the course of the study. Consequently, I attempted to privilege participants' voices over my own, focusing specifically on the language they used to describe their experiences through interviews and communications with me. I also sought to guard against confirmatory bias by seeking out alternative explanations to any changes in practice and by ensuring categories were exhaustive.

### **Participants**

All five participants who took part in the fall 2019 FDS agreed to participate in the study. This ensured bounding of the case in that all five participants experienced the same 10-week seminar in fall 2019 and then taught their respective newly developed courses in summer session 2020. Table 1 indicates each participant (pseudonyms provided), the course they taught, if that course had been offered in a previous face-to-face version, and any online teaching experience participants had prior to the seminar.

**Table 1**

*Study Participants*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Previous Teaching Experience</b>	
		<b>Online</b>	<b>Face-to-Face</b>
Connor	Chemistry	No	Yes
Sophie	History	No	No
John	Government	No	Yes
Emily	Psychology	Yes	Yes
Amelia	Film & Media Studies	Yes	No

It is important to note that during this study, the university cancelled all in-person courses in March 2020 because of the spread of COVID-19 and all participants had to shift to remote teaching of their traditional face-to-face courses. This experience of teaching remotely before instructors taught their summer online courses certainly had some impact on the way they conceptualized and taught their online courses.

## Context

The FDS is required for any instructor in the College of Arts and Sciences who wants to develop an online course. This seminar consists of 10-weeks of faculty development structured to guide instructors through the design and development of an online or hybrid course. The seminar weaves together face-to-face and online activities geared towards instructors developing online teaching skills while simultaneously designing an online/hybrid course in the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) with the support of an instructional designer and a media consultant. The online modules are structured using cycles of *learn, do, reflect, and extend*.

The seminar is broken into two discrete 5-week segments. The first segment occurs synchronously, as participants navigate five online modules and five in-person whole-group meetings. These 5 weeks guide instructors through course mapping, personalizing the course shell in the LMS, designing all module entry pages, and fully developing the first module of the course within Blackboard. As this first module is meant to provide a model from which to build out the rest of the course, participants receive peer feedback as well as feedback from the instructional designer before continuing to develop the remainder of the modules of their course throughout the second segment of the seminar.

The second segment of the seminar occurs asynchronously over the following five weeks and is used to develop the remaining modules for the course with support of the instructional designer through weekly check-in meetings as well as with support from the production team in creating instructional media. At the end of the 10 weeks, the course is assessed using the *Quality Matters* rubric, an industry standard for online courses. A course is considered ready to teach if it meets or exceeds the 85% threshold using *Quality Matters*. Participants must meet the following requirements to complete the seminar:



- Blackboard self-assessment
- Teaching online readiness pre self-assessment
- Course map with aligned course objectives and module objectives
- Course objectives integrated on course overview page in Blackboard and corresponding module objectives integrated on each individual module start page
- Map of Module 1 assessments
- Map of Module 1 online presence
- All course materials, activities, and assessments present in Blackboard course with authoring that explains the relationships between
- Teaching online readiness post self-assessment
- *Quality Matters* review of course complete with a score of 85% or higher

In Table 2, I outline the module descriptions and learning activities that occur during the first 5 weeks of the seminar.

**Table 2***FDS Learning Activities*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description &amp; Rationale</b>	<b>Learning Activities</b>
0	Pre-assessment	We ask participants to attend an intake interview alongside completing two self-assessments before the seminar begins so we know of potential areas for growth.	<i>Blackboard</i> self-assessment
1	Course Organization	Participants view instructional videos on how to organize a course in <i>Blackboard</i> to make it user friendly and intuitive for students to navigate. Easy course navigation is a critical component of highly effective online courses. When we intentionally reduce the amount of scrolling, clicking, and searching, it allows students to spend more time learning the content and less time confused by important details like assignment requirements and due dates, which leads to a better online experience overall.	Online readiness self-assessment Create the skeleton of the course in <i>Blackboard</i> .
	Introducing Community of Inquiry (CoI)	Participants engage in an introduction to the CoI framework video, which provides an overview of the CoI framework. CoI conceptualizes how we can leverage instructional strategies to develop connection in our courses. Each subsequent section consists of an introductory video delving more deeply into 1 of the 3 components of the CoI Framework, as well as brief instructional videos that outline specific instructional strategies related to social presence, instructor presence, and cognitive presence. Some topics covered are online discussion, group work, peer review, formative assessment techniques, and feedback strategies.	Reflect upon the notion of "presence" as explained in the CoI introduction.
2	Learning Objectives	Participants explore instructional videos on writing learning objectives for an online course. Well-defined and articulated learning objectives are essential because they provide students with clear direction for their learning efforts and they guide instructional decision making throughout the design of the course.	Create a course map with aligned course and module level learning objectives.
	Instructor Presence	This module also delves more deeply into the CoI Framework as we explore the notion of instructor presence. Frequent and timely student-faculty contact is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement, particularly in a digital learning environment. Evidence of faculty concern encourages students to persevere and achieve at higher levels.	Reflect upon the notion of "instructor presence" & add strategies for instructor presence to module 1 course map  Guest online instructor "tour" through course and discuss lessons learned
3	Assessment	Participants watch instructional videos on the importance of creating online assessments that align to learning objectives and learning activities. Both students and instructors benefit when assessments are aligned to instruction. As a result of instruction being focused and students being assessed on what they were taught, students are more likely to achieve. Additionally, alignment between assessment and instruction results in instructors being able to focus efforts and make the most of a condensed time frame. Assessment geared towards meaningful learning is therefore	Guest online instructor "tour" through course and discuss lessons learned  Peer review learning objectives

		embedded throughout daily instruction and course learning activities rather than stand alone.	and revise learning objectives
			Add module 1 assessments to course map and create these assessments in <i>Blackboard</i>
	Cognitive Presence	We explore the notion of cognitive presence. Cognitive presence is central to successful student learning and revolves around two key concepts: practical inquiry and critical thinking. The instructional decisions we make to engage learners in critical thinking, and to create learning environments where they develop their own thinking to engage in practical inquiry, all build cognitive presence in the online classroom.	Reflect upon the notion of "cognitive presence"& add cognitive presence strategies to module 1 map
4	Instructional Activities	Participants review instructional videos outlining the process of choosing and designing instructional activities that align with the learning objectives and assessments participants have created for their courses.	Guest online instructor "tour" through course and discuss lessons learned
			Peer review alignment between learning objectives and assessment in module 1. Revise if needed.
			Map out and create module 1 instructional activities
	Social Presence	We delve more deeply into the Community of Inquiry Framework as we explore the notion of "social presence". For both online and hybrid courses, social presence is key to creating an environment that fosters learning. We can think of social presence as the inclusion of <i>intentional</i> activities and elements of the digital environment that ask students to communicate and interact with the instructor and/ or their peers.	Reflect upon the notion of "social presence"& add strategies for social presence to module 1 map
	Accessibility	We explore accessibility issues and how to make courses more accessible and usable through captions, alt text, and readable PDF's	Incorporate accessibility best practices throughout module 1
5	Authoring	Module 5 discusses the importance of what we term "authoring" which simply means clearly communicating course expectations. To this point participants have created a repository of learning activities, resources, and assessments. This may work well in a face-to-face course, where for the most part instructors are able to verbally instruct students how to navigate through the course, highlight what they need to pay close attention to, and clarify where important course materials live as you go. However, in an online or hybrid course, students work through course activities asynchronously and they can easily become lost in	Author module 1 of the course
			Peer review of module 1
			Use feedback from peer review and instructional designer to revise module 1. Use

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*Blackboard* without intentional and explicit instructions on how to navigate their way through the course for optimum learning.

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module 1 as a model to develop the remaining modules of the course over the next 5 weeks.

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## **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how faculty development for online teaching may influence changes in thinking about teaching and how that might extend to instructors' teaching practice more broadly. The research questions are as follows:

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

## **Methods**

### **Data Generation**

Yin (2018) argues that case studies should include a variety of data sources to provide reliable results. A variety of data were generated over the course of summer 2020 and fall 2020 semesters. The primary data source was two semi-structured interviews (Appendix A). Interviews were recorded through Zoom and transcribed verbatim to prepare them for analysis—the first interview occurred after completion of the seminar and the second occurred after teaching summer online. Transcriptions were completed by a paid transcriber I hired through the company Fiverr. These interviews were augmented with email exchanges and notes from instructional design meetings. As changes to face-to-face practice were noted through interviews, artifacts were collected from instructors such as course syllabi and course materials from their face-to-face courses. Originally, classroom observations were planned to elaborate upon themes

from the second interview, which focused on changes to practice outside of instructors' online teaching that occurred post summer online. However, given the pandemic, none of the instructors taught face-to-face in the fall. Participants indicated many changes to face-to-face practice that occurred in the fall and early spring semesters before they began teaching their summer online courses, and these instances provided opportunities to collect artifacts for analysis. Table 2 shows the data collection and analytical methods for this study.

**Table 3**

*Article 3 Data Generation and Analytical Methods*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Method</b>
What impact(s), if any, did going through the seminar and teaching online have on instructor's face-to-face course design?	semi-structured interviews	inductive analysis
What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in practice?	artifacts (syllabus, course materials, reflections)	qualitative coding
What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in practice?	email exchanges and instructional design meeting notes	qualitative coding

**Data Analysis**

To manage and analyze my data set, I used Dedoose, a qualitative and mixed methods data analysis computer application. The purpose of my analysis was to understand how instructors' practice may have changed across modalities and then to pinpoint elements of the seminar or of teaching online that may have contributed to any changes in practice. Specifically, I wanted to explore how instructors shifted their conceptions of teaching roles and which specific strategies they transferred from online to their face-to-face teaching. I began my analysis by coding the transcripts of the first and second rounds of interviews. Data analysis began with inductive analysis using open coding processes to identify themes throughout interviews. This

process incorporated coding small words or phrases, category construction, constant comparative method, and subdivision and combination of categories. TLT indicates that roles typically shift as individuals experience transformation, so I coded for any mention of roles in addition to this open coding process. I then used constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to unearth any similarities or differences between participants' experiences. The constant-comparative method requires the researcher to code emerging patterns and themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Once the data has been coded and grouped into initial categories identified from these themes and patterns, the analysis continues until all categories are exhaustive. As I developed themes, I conducted qualitative coding of artifacts, meeting notes, and emails to triangulate findings.

I began coding interview transcripts for my overarching research question where participants had clearly verbalized changes in roles and in practice. Specifically, I was interested in the following as I coded:

- how instructors experienced shifts in their roles as instructors,
- how they thought they might transfer any instructional practices to their face-to-face teaching, and
- how the seminar and teaching online may have contributed to these changes in instructional practices.

In the first iteration of coding, I coded for role shifts and began sorting changes in instructional practice into two categories—*online practice* and *face-to-face practice*. Regarding roles, there were 19 instances where participants specified a shift in teaching role. As I coded these, I noted four categories: *sharing the stage*, *facilitator*, *guide*, and *mentor*. The first iteration of coding for changes in practice yielded 99 instances of changes in practice with 75 coded *online* and 24

coded *face-to-face*. The second iteration of coding required an additional step of going back through the excerpts coded *online* to explore if they also applied to general teaching practice across modalities, which many did. I then coded using words that participants had verbalized. For instance, participants often used words like *clarity* and *intentionality* to describe their changes in practice. In addition to these, I identified two codes as participants discussed changes that related to *bringing digital elements* into their face-to-face teaching and their *work with colleagues*. From these, I extracted the themes reflected in the findings section. Regarding the elements of the seminar or the experience of teaching online that may have influenced these changes in practice, it required a recursive process of going back to the points in the transcripts where participants mentioned changes in practice to look for any discussion of the seminar or of the experience of teaching online that they indicated may have been tied to that change. It is important to note that there may have been other catalysts for change, such as the rapid shift to remote instruction in Spring 2020 or other professional development opportunities participants had experienced, so I made sure to code for these as well. Table B1 delineates the three analytical iterations and can be found in Appendix B.

## **Findings**

In this section, I present five themes from this case study. The first is that, in general, participants reported conceptualizing their roles differently as they shifted thinking of themselves as content deliverers towards thinking of themselves as craftsmen and guides through learning experiences. Second, participants felt they would incorporate more digital tools in their in-person teaching practice as a result of the FDS and teaching online. Third, participants indicated they planned to use strategies they learned in the FDS for communicating clearly and transparently with students about the purpose of learning activities and how to succeed in completing learning

activities. Fourth, participants communicated they are now thinking more intentionally about why they are making instructional decisions and as a result are designing with intentionality across their teaching practice in multiple modalities. Lastly, a significant change in practice was that participants shared much of what they learned from their experiences in the seminar and through teaching online with their colleagues as they transitioned to teaching remotely in Spring 2020.

### **Shifting Roles to Craft and Guide Students Through Learning Experiences**

There was a general shift in teaching perspectives that had instructors conceptualizing their roles more as craftsmen and guides through learning experiences rather than as content delivery experts. This was expressed as participants discussed how they were more aware of and comfortable in the roles of facilitator and mentor. Emily discussed how she views herself more as a facilitator of learning rather than the person directing the class, “I think a little bit differently now about how to facilitate an activity in class, not just give an activity.” This indicates a shift towards providing more direct support to students as they engage in learning activities. She described her teaching as more “centered” on her students. Part of this shift came from her feeling more comfortable not being “in front” of the class as she taught asynchronously over the summer. She said that now she thinks differently about how to engage students and ensure their learning. Similarly, Sophie felt a shift towards more of a facilitator role. Partly, she realized the need to be more communicative with her students about what she wanted them to learn from specific learning activities to facilitate their learning and the mastery of the content. She indicated that this realization grew from activities we engaged in throughout the seminar focused on outlining learning objectives in combination with a guest online instructor that we had in the seminar who discussed the power of being very up front with students about what he wanted



them to learn. This transparency manifested itself in the form of clearly outlined learning objectives and in guiding questions that she now uses to prime students for readings. In the second interview, she shared,

This experience made me be a better teacher in terms of telling, like giving [students] a little bit more help with what it is that they're supposed to be doing with all of this information. Seems to help them, particularly the people who aren't History majors.

This shift towards a facilitator role also stemmed from her experience incorporating guest speakers in her summer online course. As a design requirement of the summer program within which Sophie taught, she needed to leverage expert guest speakers from the field for one week of the 5-week summer session. At first, Sophie really questioned her teaching, “There were some times where I felt like, ‘Well, why am I even here?’ I didn't feel like I was teaching because so much time was given over to the guests.” However, as she began to think more about it, she reconceptualized what it meant to teach.

I realized that maybe the students hearing me pose questions to the guest and that kind of thing is a different form of teaching. I had to reorient the way that I think of teaching...I came to see my role as I wasn't just like making appointments with people, but that I had actually contributed to this as a learning experience, the way that everything was put together so it just didn't feel the same as standing in front of a class lecturing for 50 minutes or the kinds of ways that I have been accustomed to teaching...it just required a bit of a shift in the value I thought I was bringing to the students.

Sophie said she would like to continue to incorporate guest speakers in her in-person classes where Zoom would allow her to bring people in from all over the country. Similarly, John also felt that guest speakers allowed him to bridge policy content with the policy world at large,

which the students appreciated. This experience made him “more open” to bringing in guest lecturers in his face-to-face courses as well. John not only incorporated guest speakers but also included experts from the policy world to act as mentors to his students as they wrote policy memos for class.

They'd be that mentor and give them feedback and engagement and students loved it.

They thought it was so productive, so helpful and valuable. And I could imagine doing that even outside of the online structure. Cause you could imagine if you're doing an in-person course you could still, as part of their assignments, have this online Zoom discussion group with external groups.

Along with having policy expert mentors assigned to students, John felt as though the structure of his course design allowed him to act as more of a mentor to his students. As a result of having done so much of the course planning ahead of time and the scaffolding of the major assignments throughout the course, he was able to use the time he had during the summer to really focus on giving meaningful feedback to students, which he felt positioned him in more of a mentor role. The seminar focused on chunking assessment to leverage meaningful feedback opportunities that would allow students to learn from, grow, and master content throughout a course. John did point out that he was unsure if the pressures of in-person teaching during a traditional semester would allow for him to play as much of a mentor role, but he would like to as much as possible because it was so rewarding for both him and his students.

### **Bringing in the Digital**

As a result of participating in the FDS and given the exposure to and newfound familiarity with digital tools, it is unsurprising that participants indicated they would incorporate more digital tools in their in-person courses. There was a great deal of interest in using the Zoom

web video conferencing platform in more traditional classes. John envisioned teaching in-person classes but then incorporating remote days where students could *Zoom* in and they would have a guest speaker. He realized the benefit this summer was that guest speakers were not limited to geographic areas, which means guests can join the class virtually, from anywhere. We exposed participants to *Zoom* during the seminar as a possible synchronous meeting tool, however John pointed out that his comfort level with using the tool really came from being forced through the pandemic to use it more than he had initially planned.

Likewise, Emily is using *Zoom* to connect more with students one-on-one during online office hours: “I’m hoping that it might create some freedom for students to talk to me, where they’re hesitant to email me for an appointment. And I’ve never really thought about that before...it’s a status thing.” Additionally, she has found it useful that, because of the pandemic and the rapid move to remote teaching in spring 2020, instructors are now using *Zoom* as the norm. Now she feels as though she can ask colleagues to share lectures they have created, and she can bring more of that content into her courses, exposing her students to more perspectives than she had been able to even a year ago because people weren’t as familiar with the technology.

All of my colleagues have done it and have access to it. I just never really thought to do it before, which is a shame. You know, I thought to invite people in on *Zoom* in the classrooms, but that was always very like with that tiny little camera on a little tripod and the classroom and it didn’t work so great. Now I could just say, “Come to class, or maybe you just hit that record button,” or I have a conversation with someone and I record it and I share with the class. I’ve just never thought about that before.

Additionally, participants appreciated the ability to record a lecture through Zoom and post it to the Blackboard LMS. Sophie mentioned how she would like to use Zoom and Panopto (the university's video storage platform) to create recorded lectures for her in-person classes.

I'll do more of those pre-recorded lectures in my regular classes...I like to have more of a conversation-based atmosphere in class, but there's always content that you want to make sure that you underscore with the students. I think that using that would allow me to make better use of our class time for discussion especially. And I have a class that I teach that's 3 days a week for 50-minutes and we always run out of time in that class. I think if I did short introductory videos or something...And the students, they all told me they liked the videos which shocked me...They were like, "no, we love the videos," so I think I'll do more of that.

Similarly, Connor said that he was already fairly satisfied with his experiences in the lecture hall but that he would be interested in incorporating flipped content in his in-person courses to give students more access to the content. Another tool he noted using differently in his in-person courses was Blackboard. He pointed out, "I already lean heavily on technology as it is. So being able to make sure that [the course] is designed in a way that is easily [parsed] for students is a big improvement." John also mentioned using Blackboard more robustly in his in-person courses, which allows him to create an "infrastructure" for his courses. Likewise, Sophie discovered the power of Blackboard to help foster community in her courses.

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

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

I think students would probably have more time to prepare when you do an in class activity. There's a lot of noise, a lot of distraction. I think everyone's always looking at the clock, myself included, like, "Is class done yet?"...When I said, "Hey, meet for 15 minutes on Zoom," recordings were usually 20–25 minutes long. [Students] went above and beyond. I think it gave them a little bit more freedom to not watch the clock so much and to talk a little more freely when there wasn't as much distraction around.

For Emily, the discussion board would help her to alleviate the time constraints of in-person class sessions and to engage students even when they are not physically together. In addition to the benefits of digital tools to facilitate learning management and student engagement, participants communicated that a benefit of using these tools in their in-person classes was being able to communicate more clearly with students than they had been in their previous teaching.

### **Communicating Clearly and Transparently with Students**

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

Normally there's a written prompt. I'll write out the instructions. Sometimes I suspect students don't read the prompts very carefully. And sometimes I think that the examples, the visual component, enhances what they get out of the prompt. So, I think that will be something that I'll take back into my face-to-face teaching because students really found that helpful—to have a walkthrough, here's some examples of successful student work in the past, and here are possible ways you can approach this topic....here are the tools you're going to be using and some screencasts or screenshots to sort of explain what the experience in doing this is going to be like.

Throughout the seminar, we encouraged instructors to create videos introducing students to assignments, discussing purpose, and providing models to help students understand the success criteria for assignments. Emily also found that being transparent with students about why they were doing an activity to prime the pump before students engaged in learning activities was useful as an instructional approach across the board: “When I'm in person, [students] are often like, ‘Wait, why are we doing this?’ So, I've started assigning things like this ahead of time so they're not like deer in headlights in class.” Similarly, Sophie thought the introductory videos she had created for each module where she was transparent about what she wanted students to learn from the readings and throughout the learning activities was something she would like to continue in her teaching across modalities.

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

Specifically, Sophie discovered that using guiding questions to prepare her students for the learning was an effective strategy. This was a strategy that one of our guest instructors highlighted in the seminar as key to his students' success.

The presentation by [the guest instructor] really pushed me in terms of taking the questions that I would normally ask students just in a regular class and making those more transparent to the students. Like I might say them in class, but it's a different thing for you to tell them right up front before they even start reading, "This is what I want you to pull out from this." I don't think that I ever learned that it would help to tell students what you want them to know. I know that sounds crazy, but I never, ever told students. I might say focus on a certain chapter, but I would leave it to them to figure out what they were supposed to take from it and not really you know guide them toward what I wanted them to know.

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

You were very specific about what we needed to include in [learning objectives] and there had to be something tangible, like we couldn't just say to "learn history"...At first, I kind of resisted it because I felt like, "History is different from the other disciplines. We're not teaching someone a particular focused skill in the same way that a Math course or Chemistry course would." But then I said, "Well actually we are." I just never was

encouraged to think about it like that. So that was challenging for me, but I think it actually was very helpful, not only for this DC class.

Similarly, Amelia found value in using learning objectives to clarify to students exactly what they should be learning throughout the course. She said it was important to “be really clear about what you want students to do, know, and have as part of their mental language.” Furthermore, in her prior experience designing courses, she said instructors “often get a pass on writing course objectives” but that the attention we paid to the topic was helpful to her course design in general. Connor felt the experience of constructing course objectives gave him a “formal language” that he didn’t have before the seminar. This formal language helped him to better articulate his instructional decision-making and to communicate to his students exactly what they should be able to know and do with the content. Connor even found that he was able to direct his department to use clear learning objectives in the design of a new program, which he felt was much more clearly articulated than it would have been without them.

For many participants clarity stemmed from how the seminar encouraged them to organize their courses in an intuitively navigable way, whether it was through consistency week after week or signaling to students in multiple ways what it is they need to do. John discussed the fact that it seems as though students in an in-person class may seem “more confident” about what they’re supposed to do right when they leave class but then they forget. He really liked the “regimented documentation” that the online format required and said he was likely to incorporate more structure into his in-person Blackboard courses.

Framing and the organization has been designed to help students be able to navigate the course with minimal questions and give them much more of the background material to



do so, whether it's the examples or the templates, whether it's a specific by the date, or here's the link to submit, to, you know, lower the transaction cost.

Emily noted that being very clear with students about what they needed to do helped to make class activities run more smoothly. However, she suggested that it might be difficult to bring as much of the structure that she had online into the in-person environment.

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

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

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

Conversely, Amelia found that this very regimented style of course organization online did not mesh well with either her online or her in-person teaching style, "I felt like you kind of lose that

fresh engagement when you're laying out the whole course...It's actually not a kind of teaching I'm eager to do a lot.” Amelia really enjoyed the organic nature of lesson planning and, though she valued clarity and transparency immensely, she did not take to the very structured approach to course design that we incorporated throughout the seminar.

### **Designing with Intentionality**

In addition to being more transparent with students about the purpose of learning activities and how to successfully complete learning activities, participants also talked about how they are thinking more intentionally about why they make the instructional decisions they are making. This related to lesson planning and to aligning course activities and assessments to clearly constructed learning objectives. Sophie noted that online teaching required that she be more “deliberate” in the design process so students could navigate her course more intuitively. As a result of the very structured design process in the seminar she is doing more “thinking through” her instructional decisions in general.

The online training helped me to think through what I'm doing. I realized that I was relying on stuff that will pop in my head in the moment, so it's more spontaneous. The way that I've typically taught, which is I have a general lesson plan, but I wasn't as intentional...I think that the online teaching really helped me bring things I've always been doing together. But to think them through and more of a step-by-step way. Furthermore, this intentionality revolves around how the instructional decisions she makes align with her overall goals for the course.

I keep saying the word intentional, but it's just thinking much more deliberately about how this activity will contribute to your overall goal, rather than just trying to fill the time. You know sometimes we get so busy that it's like, “okay, I just need to figure out

something for them to do because, you know, this isn't working.” I'm doing much more actual planning...I guess I'm thinking more deeply about what I want them to get out of it. Likewise, Emily finds herself being much more intentional about aligning her learning activities to the goals for her courses.

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

Emily discovered the way she thinks about assessment now has evolved throughout this experience and because of teaching throughout a pandemic. This has resulted in a much tighter alignment of her assessments to learning objectives and to a backwards design approach to course design.

Assessment has to change. So many worries about cheating left and right, not so much for me but I see the worry elsewhere. It makes me want to say, “Hey, then maybe the problem is, other than ridiculous stress for students, that our tests are ones that can lead to easy access cheating.” So, time to rethink what our learning goals are and work backward.

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

I didn't have to keep hitting the same point in the same way I hit it through my lecture. I hit it through readings. Then we hit it through discussion. Then we had a guest lecture

and then a simulation. So, in one week they had five different avenues to get the same material and they had to apply it.

John said he would like to continue to plan his courses with a focus on recreating that synergy between learning activities.

Connor found that being more intentional about outlining course objectives helped him in his overall planning of a course. Not only did it allow him to clearly communicate to students what they should know and be able to do by the end of a course, but it also helped him to very intentionally align his learning activities and assessments to the goals of the course. Similarly, Sophie found value in the purposeful creation of course objectives from which she can construct learning activities. John also uses course objectives in order to specifically communicate what he wants students to learn in order to avoid “gaps” in understanding. This suggests that seminar activities that were grounded in the creation of specific, measurable, and actionable learning objectives helped instructors to think more intentionally about their design.

### **Paying it Forward to Colleagues**

An unexpected change to practice because of the FDS was that three of the five participants discussed how they were able to help out colleagues by using what they learned throughout the seminar. The scope of this collegial work ranged from entire departments to individual instructors. Connor was able to immediately incorporate his learning as he took part in redesigning an Organic Chemistry Lab course with his department in spring 2020.

Our organic chemistry lab has anywhere between 400 to 430 students a year. We have gotten some pressure departmentally to not be taking up space for pre-lab discussions because they only happen once a week...We knew for a while going into this that we wanted to basically turn this into some sort of hybrid—online/in person format...The

department had done this a couple of years back, and I didn't have much of a role in it.

And it kind of got mixed reviews. Having been through the seminar, I was able to head into this with just the clearest vision of how to do it.

Most notably, however, was the confidence with which participants approached assisting their colleagues to design remote instruction when COVID-19 forced a complete shift to remote instruction in spring 2020. Emily found her department looking to her for advice on how to design effective online learning experiences for their students.

It was very nice to feel like I knew what I was doing when we went online so that I could help my colleagues who were in Psychology. People were willing to do it but they wanted to do it really well. And I was like, okay, I can help you. I think everyone was like, we don't want to just phone it in. We don't want to just post our slides and make some generic recordings. We want to do this. Wow. And I was able to show them how to use Panopto or how to make a video. So, I think it really helped me and helped my department as well.

Furthermore, Emily said that she was really pleased to be able to not only share her expertise but to also exchange resources among colleagues.

I think there's more of a sense of , we're all in this together. I've seen people say, "Hey, do you need a video lecture on this? I've just made one. You can have it."...People can now more easily share their expertise, or they've already got it recorded...I'm hoping to really tap into that and encourage that mindset, even within the department, like here's my library. I think that's cool...Yeah, no more canceled class.

Similarly, Sophie found herself helping colleagues with their remote teaching as well. She humbly described the experience as "the blind leading the blind." She continued, "I'm supposed

to talk to one of them later. And she asked me, like, what are some things I should put on my syllabus...I've been talking to the department and sharing a lot of ideas with them.”

Given the unprecedented nature of spring 2020 at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic, it is difficult to ascertain specific elements of the seminar that may have contributed to this willingness to share professional learning with colleagues. However, the seminar was designed to be collegial with multiple opportunities for peer review and course tours from experienced online instructors who paid forward their lessons learned to these participants. Perhaps that may have had some influence on participants' willingness to, in turn, share what they had learned with others.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Instructors' pedagogical practice across modalities is informed by professional development for online teaching as well as by the experiences instructors have teaching in the online space. Most notably, this study's findings suggest that when instructors learn to teach online, they experience transformation in the roles they perceive themselves to take as teachers. This was most evident as Emily and Sophie transformed towards facilitator roles and John found himself acting as more of a mentor to his students. In general, participants sought to craft learning experiences where they could actively guide their students through the learning. These findings build upon literature that suggests that as instructors learn new online pedagogies and evolve as practitioners, they may transform instructional roles to those such as facilitator, mentor, and guide (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Conceição, 2006; Hinson & La Prairie, 2005; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006).

The transformation of roles was facilitated by several factors throughout the seminar working in tandem such as critical reflection, dialogue with colleagues, and the experience of

teaching online. These perspective transformations that participants experienced support Cranton's (1996) assertion that critical reflection is central to transformative learning. Mezirow (2000) argues critical reflection facilitates questioning of the assumptions that guide our thinking. Reflection on practice was a bedrock of the seminar where participants were encouraged to continually question their instructional decisions in both writing and in discussion with colleagues. Connor said that reflection allowed him to "wrap [his] mind around" his own teaching so he could figure out ways to "grow" as an instructor. Sophie showed how she continued this reflective thinking in practice as she questioned her teaching during this summer, asking "why am I even here?" as she began to re-conceptualize her role to that of a facilitator of learning. This supports Kegan's (2000) findings which suggest that faculty development for online learning can catalyze the kind of critical reflection that causes instructors to question their assumptions about teaching. McVey (2014) also suggests that the more faculty development for online learning can encourage critical reflection, the more likely it is that faculty may experience perspective transformation such as shifting of instructional roles. To continue this reflective process more intentionally into instructor's practice in the classroom, Torrisi and Davis (2000) suggest providing consistent opportunities for ongoing reflection throughout the design, development, and delivery of an online course. In addition to self-reflection opportunities, critical dialogue also helped to facilitate these role shifts.

It was evident from my conversations with participants that dialogue with colleagues gave participants varying perspectives about teaching and learning that encouraged professional growth. This dialogue with colleagues occurred during the course tours where experienced online instructors came in to discuss their lessons learned and answered questions participants had about online instructional practice. Research in the social sciences has framed learning as a

collaborative, social process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This aligns with McQuiggan (2012) who similarly found online instructors valued discussing ideas with colleagues enabling them to envision how others put online instructional strategies into practice. This was evident as Sophie learned about the value of asking guiding questions during one of the guest instructor's course tours, a pivotal moment that pushed her to reconsider the value of being transparent with students about what they should be learning. Likewise, John found he valued being able to learn from others' experiences and through their course examples. Barker (2003) recommended that new online instructors be added to an online course as an observer to become acclimated to how online teaching and learning works. Additionally, discussion with experienced colleagues encouraged participants to examine their assumptions about teaching, reflective of King (2001) who also found that as online instructors engage in reflexive discourse it may cause them to question their teaching. This is also in line with Brookfield's (1994) notion of critical mirrors, individuals who can provide "reports from the front" of their lessons learned through critical reflection of their own instructional practice. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which outlines the zone of proximal development and the importance of a more knowledgeable individual to help guide learning within that zone. The relationship between novice and experienced online instructors also highlights the importance of communities of learning in faculty development. Cox (2004) indicated that faculty learning communities can foster connection, making instructors feel less isolated and supported in exploring pedagogical problems of practice.

As participants then moved to these metaphorical front lines themselves, teaching their summer courses online, they were able to start cultivating their own lessons learned. Mezirow (1991) outlines experience as an essential component of transformative learning. Our



experiences shape our assumptions about the world. Through continuous experience not being “in front” of her students, Emily became more comfortable not always being the center of attention. Sophie found that the experience of engaging so many guest speakers in her course caused her to shift her thinking about what “value” she can bring to a course if she isn’t always the one providing direct instruction. Through his experience incorporating so many experts from the field in his course, John found he was able to become more of a mentor to his students. These findings support research in online teaching that suggests the shift to teaching online can cause even experienced instructors to challenge their assumptions and beliefs about teaching (Barker, 2003; King, 2002; Lawler et al., 2004).

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

(Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Participants also indicated they were able to gain more experience using these tools in practice because of the rapid shift to remote teaching in spring 2020, which may explain why Zoom, in particular, was such a favorite among participants.

This study's findings also suggest the emphasis on clear communication and transparency in course design throughout the seminar contributed to participants valuing communicating clearly and transparently with students across modalities. This was evidenced as instructors transferred online strategies such as providing specific instructions, including assignment models, explaining purpose, using guiding questions, and outlining course objectives to their in-person instructional practice. This emphasis on clear communication was facilitated throughout seminar learning activities in instructional videos and models and reinforced through the course tours where experienced online instructors showed participants how they facilitated clear communication and transparency. Similarly, this study's findings suggest that professional development for online learning may contribute to instructors more intentionally designing instruction across modalities. This was evident through instructors' lesson planning as well as in their alignment of course activities and assessments to clearly constructed learning objectives. Both findings speak to the power of a structured instructional design process used as a framework for faculty professional development. This builds on Ali and Wright (2017) who suggest that, in addition to using a structured design process that aligns with industry standards such as those outlined in the *Quality Matters* rubric, there should be a stronger focus on professional development that requires systematic reflection on the design, development, and delivery processes to transform instructional practice. Additionally, this study's findings suggest that participants in faculty development for online learning may be willing to share their

newfound knowledge and expertise with colleagues, thus dispersing the effects of professional development across the broader teaching community.

With this study, I sought to understand how transfer of instructional practices may have occurred as instructors transitioned back and forth across modalities. I sought not only to understand how practices transferred across modalities, but also what about the context of faculty development or teaching online may have contributed to that transfer. Findings indicate that instructors experienced perspective transformations and instructional practices did transfer from online to in-person instruction. We can learn from this study that instructors might benefit from regular opportunities to critically reflect on their instructional practices throughout the design, development, and delivery of a course. Additionally, providing opportunities for participants to engage in critical dialogue with experienced instructors and to learn from their experience is not only beneficial to online course design but to in-person course design as well. To encourage this transfer more intentionally, I suggest using critical reflection as an opportunity for further reflection how these lessons learned might apply to participants' in-person teaching as well. I would also be more intentional about ensuring a wide variety of disciplines and teaching styles be represented to provide more perspective. Additionally, providing a clear framework and process for participants to design a course may be beneficial in promoting clarity, transparency, and intentionality in course design. This must be tempered with individual teaching style, as was evident in Amelia's preference for a less structured approach that allowed for organic and emergent phenomena to occur.

It is evident that there is great potential in professional development for online teaching to transform instructional practices beyond the online classroom. As instructors are encouraged to question their teaching assumptions and potentially shift their teaching roles they are ripe for

considering how new strategies could benefit their teaching more broadly. As faculty developers, we must take advantage of the opportunity to not only provide the tools and techniques of the trade but to help instructors to question their instructional decisions as a means towards professional growth. This has the potential to reap rewards not only in online programs but across the university community as well.

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## Appendix A

### Semi- Structured Interview Protocol

#### Interview Questions: Interview 1

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

1. Could you talk about one or two significant experiences that made you the teacher you are today?
2. How would you describe your role as a teacher before you began participating in the Online Faculty Development Seminar? What about after?
3. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the FDS that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
4. Have you noticed any changes in how you think about teaching since taking part in the FDS? What do you think sparked this change?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this change?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
6. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.

2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
5. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
7. How do you feel about this change in perspective?
8. How, if at all, did dialogue with colleagues affect any change in the way you think about teaching and/ or your teaching practice?
9. How, if at all, did seminar reflection exercises affect any changes in the way you think about teaching and/or in your teaching practice.
10. How, if at all, has taking part in the Online Faculty Development Seminar affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
11. How, if at all, has anything else outside of the Online Faculty Development Seminar, for instance remote teaching, affected your teaching?

**Interview Questions: Interview 2**

1. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect your current approach to teaching?
2. Could you describe any moments, if any, throughout the summer teaching online that felt disorienting to you, where you questioned your teaching practice?
3. How, if at all, did anything you experienced while teaching online this summer affect how you currently characterize your role as an instructor?
4. What, if anything, will you do differently in your online teaching because of this experience?
  1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.

2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your online teaching?
5. What, if anything, will you do differently in your face-to-face teaching because of this change?
1. Will your class preparation change? Please describe.
  2. Will your teaching style change? If so, how?
  3. Will student learning activities change? If so, how?
  4. Will your learning objectives for students change? If so, how?
  5. How might this change affect other aspects of your face-to-face teaching?
6. How, if at all, has teaching online this summer affected the way you plan with the student experience in mind?
7. How, if at all, has anything else outside of teaching online this summer affected your current approach to teaching?
8. Given the changes to face-to-face teaching practice you mentioned earlier, could I possibly come to observe how these are being implemented in your classes? (specify which might be observable or which might be covered by course artifacts)

## Appendix B

**Table B1**

*Analytical Iterations*

<b>Iteration 1 Codes</b>	<b>Iteration 2 Codes</b>	<b>Iteration 3 Themes</b>
Roles	Roles	Shifting Roles to Craft and Guide Students Through Learning Experiences
Changes in online practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial role               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bridge</li> <li>○ Entertainer</li> <li>○ Content expert</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Bringing in the digital
Changes in face-to-face practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing role               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guide</li> <li>○ Facilitator</li> <li>○ Sharing the stage</li> <li>○ mentor</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Communicating Clearly and Transparently with Students
Context	Change in practice	Designing with Intentionality
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clarity</li> <li>○ Connection</li> <li>○ Engaging students</li> <li>○ Intentionality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Face-to-face               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bringing in the digital</li> <li>○ Clarity</li> <li>○ Intentionality</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work with colleagues</li> </ul>	Paying it Forward to Colleagues
	Context	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote teaching</li> <li>• Other development</li> </ul>	



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings from across the three articles that I wrote. First, I discuss the major findings from each of the articles. Second, I present a discussion of the findings where overlap occurred across the three papers. I then discuss implications for policy and practice where I outline three recommendations:

1. Higher education institutions should look to faculty development for online teaching as a potential opportunity to enhance teaching and learning more broadly across the institution.
2. Higher education institutions could support teaching and learning more broadly if they shifted the frame of reference surrounding online teaching.
3. Faculty developers approaching the design of faculty development through a transformative lens may help to extend the benefits of faculty development.

I conclude this chapter with recommendations for future research and a summary to the chapter.

#### **Summary of Major Findings**

##### ***Article #1: Reviewing the Literature***

This article drew upon 13 studies that explore transformative learning within professional development of college faculty for online teaching. The purpose of the article was to examine how faculty development focused on four critical constructs of TLT—experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and empathy—shapes instructors’ perceptions and practice of teaching. The research question that guided the review of the literature was as follows:

1. How, if at all, does transformative learning occur in a faculty development program for online teaching and what facilitates this kind of learning in this context?

Several findings came from this review of studies that examine transformative learning within faculty development for online teaching in higher education. The first is that faculty development for online instructors should draw upon and leverage participants' prior experiences while simultaneously pushing against assumptions that may stem from these prior experiences. Given that prior experience may contribute to inaccurate or incomplete assumptions about teaching and learning, it is essential that instructors reflect upon how these prior experiences affect their instructional decision-making. As such, critical self-reflection is widely used to reflect on, challenge, and revise instructor understandings about teaching and learning within online teaching. The second finding is that faculty development offerings leveraged reflective discourse activities less often than self-reflection activities which sheds light on an opportunity to further enhance faculty development offerings through reflective discourse. This is an area where faculty developers may promote transformative learning by offering more opportunities for faculty to engage in reflective discourse with one another. The third finding is that the literature suggests a need to focus faculty development efforts on instructors empathizing with online students while also designing learning opportunities for faculty that reflect empathy towards new online instructors. This empathetic approach to faculty development may help online instructors navigate the various challenges and disorienting dilemmas they encounter as they learn to teach online. Finally, a major finding of this study is that encouraging faculty to critically examine their assumptions about teaching often has an influence on changes to their instructional practice.

## *Article #2: Exploring Faculty Development and Changes in Thinking*

The purpose of this case study was to examine any changes in thinking about teaching that might occur through faculty development for online teaching and as instructors taught their courses online for the first time. The research questions were as follows:

1. How did online instructors think differently, if at all, about teaching after going through the Online Faculty Development Seminar? What elements of this experience in the seminar influenced any changes in thinking?
2. How did online instructors think differently about teaching, if at all, after teaching their newly developed online courses? What elements of this experience teaching online influenced any changes in thinking?

An analysis of two interviews per participant combined with participant reflections, course artifacts, and email exchanges resulted in several findings related to participants' changes in thinking about teaching. Firstly, this study found that all instructors experienced moments that caused them to question, reflect on, and sometimes revise their perspectives. These moments occurred as instructors participated in the seminar as well as while they taught their online courses for the first time. The second finding is that the transformative learning experienced by participants varied by individual, which supports the situated nature of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). The third finding is that written reflection activities during the seminar helped instructors to critically reflect upon their instructional decisions. The fourth finding is that dialogue with colleagues helped instructors to think intentionally about instructional practice, especially when that colleague was a more experienced online instructor. Specifically, this study's findings suggest that drawing upon experienced instructors to provide tours of their

courses, share lessons learned, and field questions about online instructional practice helped instructors consider alternative perspectives and contributed to perspective transformation.

### ***Article #3: Examining Faculty Development and Changes in Practice***

The purpose of this study was to examine how faculty development for online teaching may influence changes in thinking about teaching online and how that might extend to instructors' teaching practice more broadly. The research questions are as follows:

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

Through an analysis of interviews and teaching artifacts, this study found that participants experienced perspective transformations and transferred some online course design and instructional practices to their in-person teaching. The first finding is that, in general, participants reported shifts in their thinking regarding their instructional roles, from roles such as content deliverers towards roles such as craftsmen and guides through learning experiences. Second, participants reported that they would utilize digital tools more in their in-person teaching practice because of participating in the FDS and teaching online. Third, participants indicated they would now use strategies they learned in the FDS for communicating clearly and transparently with students online and in-person. Fourth, participants reported that they are now thinking more intentionally about instructional decision-making across teaching practice in multiple modalities because of the FDS. Lastly, participants reported a significant impact on their practice was that they shared what they learned in the seminar with their colleagues as they transitioned to teaching remotely in Spring 2020. This study's findings suggest that a structured course design

process, self-reflection activities, opportunities to engage in dialogue with colleagues, and course tours from more experienced colleagues aided in transfer of practices across modalities.

### **Discussion of Findings**

It is evident from the summaries of findings across these three articles that there is significant overlap. The first major finding across all three articles is that faculty development for online teaching can lead to perspective transformation and can affect how instructors perceive their role in the classroom. The second is that providing opportunities for critical self-reflection can aid in perspective transformation related to teaching. The third is that critical dialogue with colleagues, specifically those with more online experience, can help to facilitate perspective transformation. The fourth, and perhaps most compelling finding, is that perspective transformations that occur in faculty development for online teaching can result in pedagogical transformations across modalities.

### ***Perspective Transformations***

The research in faculty development for online teaching suggests that when instructors shift to teaching online it can cause them to challenge their assumptions and beliefs about teaching (Barker, 2003; King, 2002; Lawler et al., 2004). All participants in the FDS had moments that caused them to question and reflect on their instructional practice across modalities. These moments occurred at different times for different people. The perspective transformations they experienced were also varied in nature. They ranged from viewing their teaching practice in a different light given new knowledge to completely shifting the vision of their roles as teachers. Connor learned the “formal language” of teachers which helped him to better frame and discuss what he already considered good practice. Comparatively, Sophie found that the experience of engaging so many guest speakers in her course caused her to reframe her

own thinking about what “value” she can bring to a course if she is not always the one providing direct instruction. This caused her to re-conceptualize her role as more of a facilitator of learning. Similarly, Emily communicated that she felt more comfortable being a facilitator of class activities as she more critically examined the relationship between “just doing” the work and “learning.” The findings across these three articles suggest that faculty development for online teaching can have a profound effect on how instructors perceive their roles in the classroom. These findings build upon literature that suggests that as instructors learn how to teach online, they re-conceptualize their roles from traditional lecture-oriented roles to become more of a facilitator, mentor, and guide (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Conceição, 2006; Hinson & La Prairie, 2005; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006).

### ***Critical Reflection***

Across all three articles, critical reflection was instrumental in facilitating perspective transformation. These findings support Cranton’s (1996) assertion that critical reflection is central to transformative learning. Specifically, throughout these case studies of the FDS, written reflection activities aided participants in questioning their instructional decisions. Mezirow (2000) indicated critical reflection facilitates the process of questioning the assumptions that guide our thinking, which can spark a shift in thinking and therefore have an impact on practice. Faculty development for online teaching can act as a kind of trigger for critical reflection (Kegan, 2000) that causes instructors to question any previously unchallenged assumptions that guide instructional decision-making. Connor suggested that reflective writing assignments during the FDS helped him to better “wrap [his] mind around” his own teaching. In Sophie’s case, reflection broke down some of her resistance to change which then influenced how she perceived History as a discipline. This finding contributes to research that also suggests that reflection on

instructional practice can help to overcome faculty resistance to change (McVey, 2014). Findings from the literature review article suggest ways to further enhance this critical reflective process in faculty development for online teaching. McVey (2014) suggests that faculty might benefit from starting their reflective journey through a pre-assessment tool where they can self-assess their readiness for teaching online. Torrisi and Davis (2000) suggested providing consistent opportunities for ongoing reflection throughout the design, development, and delivery of an online course to facilitate continued questioning of assumptions guiding instructional practice. This is similar to King's (2001) assertion that faculty would benefit from reflection *on* practice and reflection *in* practice as they transition to teaching online. In addition to critical reflection, critical dialogue was key to perspective transformation.

### ***Dialogue with Colleagues***

Although the literature review on transformative learning in faculty development for online teaching yielded few studies that discussed reflective discourse in detail, in the FDS case study I did find that dialogue with colleagues was a critical avenue for instructors to think deeply about teaching practice. Social sciences research has framed the nature of learning as a collaborative, social process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Most notably, the findings suggest that a key mechanism for perspective transformation was having experienced instructors come in to tour their courses, discuss lessons learned, and answer questions about practice. McQuiggan (2012) also found online instructors valued dialogue with colleagues because they could learn from other people's perspectives. This reflective discourse with colleagues can help instructors to reflect on the assumptions guiding their own practice, which was evident as Emily learned from a more experienced colleague that online course design was not a fixed process but more iterative in nature. King (2001) also found that engaging in reflective discourse with colleagues

helped instructors to unearth the assumptions they had about teaching with technology. In the FDS, Sophie learned from a more experienced online instructor about the value of asking guiding questions, which caused her to reconsider the value of being transparent with students about what they should be learning. This highlights the importance of the relationship between novice online instructors and their more experienced colleagues who can act as critical mirrors; these are individuals who can share “reports from the front” of their own critical journeys and lessons learned (Brookfield, 1994). Barker (2003) suggested that new online instructors be able to tour online courses to become familiar with the digital teaching and learning space. This kind of learning relationship is supported by Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory, which outlines the zone of proximal development and the importance of a more knowledgeable individual to help guide learning within that zone. The relationship between novice and experienced online instructors also highlights the importance of communities of learning in faculty development. Cox (2004) indicated that faculty learning communities can foster connection, making instructors feel less isolated and supported in exploring pedagogical problems of practice. The literature review of transformative learning in faculty development for online instructors revealed some additional strategies for engaging critical dialogue in faculty development. Lawler et. al. (2004) suggested the following ideas to spur critical dialogue:

- Create group and individual analysis of scenarios that present examples of content and online design for evaluation,
- Use small group mock-up design of an online class,
- Engage in small group discussion of online class scenarios that illustrate difficulties and develop possible solutions,



- Provide examples and encourage instructors to keep personally reflective teaching journals.

Likewise, King (2001) advocated for using teaching circles to build professional discussion groups and connecting master teachers with novice teachers as peer consultants who could offer technological and pedagogical expertise. The power of using critical reflection and reflective dialogue in faculty development for online teaching is in how perspective transformations can result in pedagogical transformation across modalities.

### ***Pedagogical Transformation***

Findings across all three articles suggest that when instructors experience faculty development for online teaching and are prompted to question assumptions about teaching, changes occur in pedagogical practice across modalities. The FDS case study findings suggest that participants in faculty development for online teaching incorporated more digital tools in their in-person courses. This resulted from an integrated approach to training that focused on pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge in tandem. This is supported by the TPACK framework which highlights the importance of developing technological knowledge in conjunction with pedagogical knowledge to facilitate effective teaching with technology (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Instructors also focused more attention on providing clear communication and being transparent in course design. Specifically, participants transferred online strategies such as providing specific instructions, including assignment models, explaining purpose, using guiding questions, and outlining course objectives to their in-person instructional practice. Similarly, findings suggest that professional development for online learning might encourage instructors to be more intentional about their instructional decision-making across modalities. Ali and Wright (2017) recommended this intentionality be fostered through professional development that

requires systematic reflection on the design, development, and delivery processes to transform instructional practice. Additionally, findings suggest that participants in faculty development for online teaching might be willing to “pay forward” their experience by sharing lessons learned with colleagues which indicates the broader impact of faculty development for online teaching across the university.

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

### ***Recommendation 1***

The first recommendation that derives from this research is that higher education institutions should leverage faculty development for online teaching as a potential opportunity to enhance teaching and learning more broadly across the institution. Given the limited formal pedagogical instruction that new faculty typically receive, professional development for online teaching is an opportunity to encourage faculty to reflect upon and question their instructional practice (McQuiggan, 2012). As instructors are exposed to new strategies, pedagogies, and technologies and are encouraged to critically reflect upon and possibly re-conceptualize teaching, this has the potential to have a profound effect on instructors’ in-person instruction (Lowes, 2008; Terras, 2017). This, combined with the growing number of online offerings in the last 30 years and the rapid shift to remote instruction in the wake of the novel coronavirus in 2020, presents what Fullan (2001) would refer to as a window of opportunity. This window of opportunity refers to not only being able to scale online offerings but to being able to influence instructional practice across the institution. Higher education institutions would be wise to leverage this rapid shift in the teaching and learning landscape to develop robust faculty development for online teaching that is designed to facilitate transformative learning that transfers to in-person instructional practice. Hoy and Tarter (2010) recommended quickly

building capacity in these kinds of scenarios of rapid change and potential opportunity. Kotter (2014) suggested that while these kinds of big opportunities can drive change, organizations often struggle to keep up with the pace of change. This struggle was certainly evident in 2020 as institutions had to implement rapid shifts to remote instruction over the course of weeks. Educational leaders might perceive that because so many instructors have now had remote teaching experience that there is less need for faculty development to support the transition to online teaching. However, now is not the time to withdraw funding and support for faculty development for online teaching. Kotter (2014) asserted that given these kinds of big opportunities it is important to keep forward thinking. Now is the time to provide more support to instructors through intentionally designed faculty development offerings for online teaching. As online programs grow, which they are likely to do given the recent wave of online instruction across the nation, so will the number of instructors who might benefit from faculty development for online teaching. This could have a cascading impact on teaching and learning across modalities.

### ***Recommendation 2***

The second recommendation grounded in this research is that higher education institutions could support teaching and learning more broadly if they shifted the “frame of reference” surrounding online teaching (Morgan, 1997, p. 201). The current thinking around online teaching is that it is different from traditional in-person instruction. Although it is true that online instruction is a different modality than in-person instruction and does require some different approaches, there are many best practices that can be leveraged across modalities that would benefit teaching and learning in general. For instance, the importance of learning objectives, alignment of course assessments and activities, and designing with clarity is not

unique to online learning. Likewise, faculty development strategies such as critical reflection and dialogue with colleagues have proven beneficial outside of online teaching. The notion that teaching online is unilaterally different than in-person teaching does a disservice to faculty and students and requires a more nuanced approach. This frame of reference that online teaching is categorically different has created instructional silos and, as a result, professional development silos. Weick (1976) highlighted the siloing effects of a loosely coupled educational system that can be seen in higher education. Granted, this loosely coupled system does allow for certain innovations to occur because they can happen independently without support from the rest of the system. This loose coupling is reflected in many online programs where much of the design, development, and delivery of courses occurs isolated from other programs or offices at the university. Admittedly, a certain degree of soling is necessary for online programs to remain agile in ever changing times. However, this must be tempered with ways to find the common ground and transparent communication about the junctures where online and in-person teaching meet. Universities can then leverage those junctures in the faculty development offerings that they are able to provide. For instance, transfer of pedagogical practice from faculty development for online teaching should occur intentionally rather than incidentally. By acknowledging the commonalities that occur between the two modalities, faculty developers can intentionally increase the scope of their influence in professional development geared toward either modality.

### ***Recommendation 3***

The third recommendation that emerges from this research is that faculty developers for online teaching should design faculty development through a transformative learning lens. By doing so, faculty developers can extend the benefits of instructors learning to teach online to

instructional practice more broadly. Given that faculty do not often get a chance to participate in formal teacher training, this is an opportunity to establish critical reflection and dialogue with colleagues as regular practice to inform their instruction. These practices will not only aid faculty in learning to teach online but help them to navigate teaching and learning throughout their careers in an ever-changing educational landscape. This transformative learning can be facilitated by providing instructors regular opportunities to critically reflect on their instructional practices throughout the design, development, and delivery of a course. Considering the FDS specifically, I would reframe the reflections to target assumptions guiding instructional decisions. Transformative learning can also be facilitated by providing opportunities for participants to engage in reflective dialogue with experienced instructors as they share their lessons learned. This reflective dialogue could be enhanced in the FDS by bringing instructors together to examine instructional artifacts from previous courses taught to identify trends in practice that may need to be revised. To encourage the transfer of applicable practices more intentionally from online to in-person teaching, I suggest using critical reflection as a mechanism to explore how the pedagogical approaches explored in faculty development may apply to teaching across modalities. This could be accomplished in the FDS by reframing reflection questions to prompt instructors to think about how what they are learning about pedagogy might transfer across their teaching. To ensure that lessons learned are relevant to all participants, I also suggest representing a wide variety of disciplines and teaching styles to provide more perspective. In addition to transformational learning approaches, providing a clear framework and process for participants to design a course may be beneficial in fostering intentionality and clarity in course design.

Additionally, using TLT as a design lens to construct other kinds of faculty development in higher education may also be beneficial. Critically reflecting upon prior experiences and how those shape assumptions about teaching and learning can help to unearth assumptions that may be inaccurate or incomplete. Giving instructors the opportunities and the strategies to engage in this kind of reflective thinking is essential. Ensuring opportunities for individual instructors to come together in community to explore pedagogy and to reflectively dialogue about instructional decision-making and practice may help to foster collaboration and intentional pedagogical practice. Cox (2004) suggested these communities might be organized by cohort or topic and should provide frequent opportunities for professional learning, scholarship of teaching and learning, and community building.

Although TLT is a useful framework for designing faculty development that may encourage instructors to critical reflect upon the assumptions that guide their practice, it is important to note that not all instructional assumptions may need to be transformed. Higher education faculty come to teaching with a variety of social, cultural, and historical experiences that frame their thinking about teaching. Just as some experiences can create faulty assumptions, other experiences can create well-grounded assumptions to guide instructional practice. It is important that faculty developers not approach faculty development with the mindset that instructors need remediation. Rather, faculty developers can use proven strategies such as critical reflection and reflective dialogue to promote reflective practice which supports intentional instructional decision-making.

### ***Recommendations for Future Research***

Given the substantial body of literature there is to support transformative learning in various contexts, it is surprising how limited the research is on faculty development for online

teaching. Attention has been paid to how teaching online can change the way faculty conceptualize their teaching, however the questions related to how faculty developers can encourage instructors to critically examine their instructional decision-making or how participants can transfer what they learn to their face-to-face instruction have been minimally explored.

As a result of COVID-19 and the absence of in-person teaching this fall, I did not observe changes to face-to-face instructional practice after instructors taught their online courses. This is an area that warrants further exploration. It is important to understand how the practices learned in faculty development and then implemented online actually transfer to the in-person context through observation. This study also drew upon a small sample of participants over the course of only one year. To contribute to the field of TLT more meaningfully, drawing from larger samples of participants in longitudinal studies that explore transformations over time would be beneficial. Additionally, I would be interested in more deeply examining specific reflective practices or dialogue strategies that promote transformative learning within the context of faculty development for online learning. Furthermore, the question of how faculty developers for online teaching can intentionally target empathy as a design feature of faculty development has yet to be explored and has the potential to yield insights into the affective nature of transformative learning.

### ***Summary***

Findings from this dissertation suggest that there is much potential for faculty development for online teaching to facilitate perspective transformations and changes in pedagogical practice across modalities. As instructors are encouraged to reflect on, question, and potentially revise their assumptions about teaching and learning online, their instructional

practice benefits more broadly. Faculty developers for online teaching could take advantage of this opportunity to help instructors question the foundations of their instructional decision-making and transfer what they learn across modalities to maximize this limited resource of faculty development in higher education.



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