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Best Practices in Faculty Training for Online Course Design: Implications for St. Catherine University

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Best Practices in Faculty Training for Online Course Design:
Implications for St. Catherine University

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An Action Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

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Abstract

In fall 2012, St. Catherine University changed the name of its Weekend and Evening College (WEC) to the Evening/Weekend/Online (E/W/O) Program. The change was to better reflect the flexibility and convenience the blending of face-to-face with online instruction afforded students. In spring 2015, registered nurses were invited to apply to St. Catherine University's first fully online Bachelor's degree in the RN-BS Degree Completion Program. These changes increased the demand to adapt courses previously taught face-to-face or hybrid to a fully online format. Given that all E/W/O Program courses must be hybrid, and many RN-BS students require fully online courses, it is imperative that St. Catherine University provides faculty with the tools, training, and support systems to both effectively teach online and adequately address adult learners' expectations. To address these needs, the University's Academic Technology team developed a multitude of training and professional development opportunities. However, there are currently no requirements for faculty to participate. This action research project examined research in best practices for online course design, and studied the resources in place at St. Catherine University that support faculty developing an online course. Through self-participation in a faculty training course in online course design, and conducting interviews with three exemplary online instructors at St. Catherine University, the current strengths and weaknesses of the university's training program were assessed. In addition, recommendations were identified that can further support faculty in providing high-quality hybrid and online teaching and learning.

Introduction

I've always joked to friends and family that my dream job is to be a professional student. With a love of the classroom environment as both a teacher and a student, and a continued curiosity to learn something new, working in an educational environment at both the K-12 and collegiate level seemed inevitable. When I began supporting the Center for Second Language Teaching and Learning at Hamline University in 2008, I was utterly fascinated by students having the opportunity to complete a Master's degree completely online. To better field questions from new and prospective students about the online learning experience, I enrolled in my first online class in the spring of 2008. Since then, I have taken four additional online classes through Hamline University and Kansas State University, along with a plethora of face-to-face and hybrid classes on varying subjects at both Hamline University and St. Catherine University.

Given the online opportunities I witnessed at Hamline, I was surprised by the limited number of online opportunities available in 2010 when I began working at St. Catherine University in the Office of the Registrar. As I reviewed student progress toward graduation as the Assistant Registrar, I had countless conversations with students transferring in coursework from other institutions because they were offered online. Now, as the Associate Registrar in charge of maintaining the St. Paul campus course schedule, I continue to see the interest in, and demand for, online courses.

Purpose of Research

In fall 2012, St. Catherine University changed the name of its Weekend and Evening College (WEC) to the Evening/Weekend/Online (E/W/O) Program (G. Steenson, personal communication, March 27, 2015). The change was to better reflect the flexibility and convenience the blending of face-to-face with online instruction

afforded students. Designed for adult students, the E/W/O Program combines opportunities to apply prior credit and life experience toward degree requirements with face-to-face learning on weekday evenings and weekends, and online instruction in between on campus sessions (St. Catherine University, 2015b). Beginning in spring 2015, registered nurses were invited to apply to St. Catherine University's first fully online Bachelor's degree in the RN-BS Degree Completion Program (G. Steenson, personal communication, March 27, 2015). This option, appealing to many nurses who work overnight and weekend shifts, resulted in an increased demand to adapt liberal arts and sciences and nursing courses previously taught face-to-face or hybrid to a fully online format. Students in the E/W/O Program, while not promised online courses, continue to request them because of their increased flexibility and convenience over hybrid classes.

Thus, to meet student and university needs, more and more faculty members at St. Catherine University are being asked to teach courses online. Such requests are met in a variety of ways. Some faculty members are willing and eager to explore teaching online. Some may agree to teach an online course, but do so with reservations. Others refuse to teach online. Given that all E/W/O Program courses must be hybrid, and many RN-BS students require fully online courses, it is imperative that St. Catherine University provides faculty with tools, training, and support systems to both effectively teach online and adequately address adult learners' expectations. Understanding these needs, the University's Academic Technology team developed a multitude of training and professional development opportunities, yet there are currently no requirements for faculty to participate. Therefore, the purpose of my research was both to examine

research in best practices for online course design, and to study the resources in place at St. Catherine University that support faculty developing an online course.

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Analysis of Conceptual Context

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Definitions of Key Terms

Traditional students are defined as recent high school graduates between 18 and 22 years old who attend a post-secondary institution full-time and complete their degree in four to five years (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], n.d.). The E/W/O and RN-BS Degree Completion Programs are mainly comprised of adult learners, who are also commonly known as non-traditional students. St. Catherine University defines adult learners as students who are returning to formal education after a prolonged absence. Adult learners live off campus and juggle various roles in their lives, and therefore desire evening, weekend, and online course options. These students may be active members or veterans of the United State military, and may also have earned a GED or other equivalent to the high school diploma. Additionally, adult learners typically differ from traditional students in four distinct ways: they are financially independent, employed full-time, have dependents, and enroll part-time (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011; St. Catherine University, 2015a).

Designed with the adult learner in mind, the E/W/O and RN-BS Degree Completion Programs now offer a multitude of hybrid and online courses. The university defines an online course as one where no face-to-face classroom presence is required. Online courses can be synchronous or asynchronous. A course with synchronous components indicates that the course has scheduled online class meetings. An asynchronous course is one without scheduled class meetings; coursework can be done at

any time. Hybrid courses, also known as blended courses, incorporate a combination of face-to-face and online instruction, with 50 to 75 percent of instruction occurring online in a synchronous or asynchronous format (St. Catherine University, 2015c).

Trends in Online Education

It is estimated that one-fourth to one-third of post-secondary faculty are involved in some form of online teaching. However, this number of faculty is disproportionally smaller than the demand for online education (Lloyd, Byrne, & McCoy, 2012). It is also estimated that over five million, or 25.8 percent, of undergraduate students are enrolled in an online course (NCES, 2014). Online learning is especially appealing to adult students. They are drawn to the convenience and flexibility of fitting classes around their myriad work and family obligations (Cercone, 2008). As online programs are developed to increase enrollments and meet budget projections, a majority of faculty will be asked to consider teaching a hybrid or fully online course (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012).

Speck (2000) noted that, for many, this revolution in higher education completely disregarded faculty's pedagogical expertise. Lloyd et al. (2012) found that faculty with less experience in online teaching perceived greater intrinsic and extrinsic barriers compared to those with more experience. Furthermore, Worley and Tesdell (2009) determined that the creation and management of an online course increases a faculty's workload by at least 20 percent. In spite of these factors, because of this increased demand for online courses, Moskal, Dziuban, Upchurch, Hartman, and Truman (2006) state:

> The question is no longer whether online education is as good as face-to-face
>
> instruction, but rather how to prepare and support faculty in the online

environment and ensure that students achieve important learning outcomes
whether they study in online or face-to-face settings or both. (p. 26)

Best Practices in Faculty Training for Online Course Design

A challenge with the increased demand for online courses is whether or not the
institution is properly equipped to provide the training necessary to effectively teach
online. As Reder (2007) asserted, "An institution [that] values excellence in teaching
does not necessarily mean that the structures are in place to provide support for learning
effective pedagogical practices" (as cited in Marek, 2009, p. 277). Numerous studies on
the best practices for preparing faculty to teach online indicate that faculty want training
and assistance with the online course development process (as cited in Marek, 2009).
Through this research, a series of components of effective training in online course
design have emerged.

Structured learning.

A structured learning experience for training in online course design provides
participants with both a simulated online learning experience and an opportunity to
experiment with technology (Lloyd et al., 2012). As part of structured learning, it is
recommended to deliver the training in small modules, as doing so serves two purposes.
First, research by Lareki, Martinez de Morentin, and Amenabar (2010) found that
technology training, when taught in modules, helps meet faculty's diverse experience
with teaching online. Also, it simulates the best practice of developing modules within
an online course (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012). Secondly, it is recommended that faculty
first integrate technology into existing face-to-face courses before attempting to teach a
course fully online (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012). As part of the structured learning

process, faculty members have opportunities to experiment with online technologies and develop online materials based on previously created face-to-face content (Lloyd et al., 2012; Keengwe & Georgina, 2012).

For some faculty preparing to teach online, university leadership does not provide support structures. These faculty members are forced to "forge ahead…to their greatest capabilities," independently gaining the skills necessary to effectively teach online (Marek, 2009, p. 286). However, extensive evaluation of research in best practices done by Marek (2009) indicated that "structured learning" (p. 278) using a "clearly articulated, systemic approach" (p. 286) is crucial for faculty success. Carlson and Arbogost (2008) argued that faculty with the potential for innovative online instruction may "simply give up" without the proper institutional support (n.p.).

Training content.

A limitation that has emerged in information technology-based training in higher education is that it "focuses primarily on the technical or point and click aspects of learning management system (LMS) platforms and pedagogy-enhancing software without concern for the content of the courses" (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012, p. 366). Initiatives like the Digital Course Training Workshop (DCTW) advocate for centering training around faculty content, resulting in the creation of digital learning objects. Also, this training model emphasizes university-wide LMS interfacing and teaching software (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012).

In addition to acquiring technology proficiency and confidence, effective online faculty training should include best practices for online student learning. One study of eight community colleges in North Carolina by Batts, Pagliari, Mallett, and McFadden

(2010) determined that the top five online teaching best practices covered in training were: supplying detailed syllabus/module information, incorporating online assessment, providing timely feedback, facilitating interactions through the use of discussion boards, and establishing guidelines to foster a friendly online environment. Ragan (2007) also stressed including procedures for monitoring online discussions and assignments, as well as developing patterns for the course's online activities (as cited in Batts et al., 2010, p. 29).

Moreover, training should incorporate applications of adult learning theory (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012). Perhaps the most well-known adult learning theory is Knowles's concept of andragogy. First introduced in 1973, andragogy is defined as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (as cited in Cercone, 2008, p. 137). The theory states that adults learn quite differently compared to children. The theory has several assumptions at its core:

1. *Adult learners are self-directed.* They assert autonomy, independence, and self-reliance to achieve goals. Self-direction is fostered in a learning environment through structure and scaffolding.

2. *Adult learners value experience.* They seek to connect their prior knowledge to new concepts, and appreciate instructors who acknowledge their previous experiences during the learning process.

3. *Adult learners seek applicability.* They are goal-oriented, seek relevancy in their learning, and want to apply their new knowledge in their professional and personal lives.

4. *Adult learners are intrinsically motivated.* They are motivated to learn because of education's potential benefit to their life, their careers, and their self-esteem. Self-reflection in a learning environment helps adult learners identify personal growth and competency (as cited in Cercone, 2008, p. 143-145; as cited in Keengwe & Georgina, 2012, p. 368-369; as cited in Kenner & Weinerman, 2011, p. 88-89).

When teaching in an online environment, Liu et al. (2005) determined that an instructor becomes "a facilitator, teacher, organizer, assessor, mentor, role model, counselor, coach, supervisor, problem solver, and liaison" (as cited in Keengwe & Georgina, 2012, p. 367). This directly relates to adult learning theory, and is a critical difference between learning for children, as adults have a significant amount of responsibility for their own learning (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012).

Peer mentorship.

"Inspiration and peer support" (Marek, 2009, p. 278) from experienced online faculty is also frequently identified as a best practice for online faculty training. These mentors can increase faculty engagement by providing opportunities for resistant faculty to experiment with online instruction, and by having candid conversations surrounding the issues in teaching online (Lloyd et al., 2012). Approaches like DCTW attempt to build a community for faculty to "exchang[e] ideas, concepts, and practices in online development" through mini-discussions during the workshop week followed by brown-bag luncheons for all participants after workshops have concluded (Keengwe & Georgina, 2012, p. 369). Mentorship programs, developed by higher education

administrators amongst multiple institutions, can also provide support and knowledge sharing between a larger pool of online faculty (Batts et al., 2010).

Evolution of Training at St. Catherine University

With the change from WEC to E/W/O in fall 2012, faculty teaching in this program needed to adapt their courses to a new academic calendar in the hybrid format. To assist with the transition, the Academic Technology Department gathered funds to provide faculty the opportunity to complete a blended learning series through the Sloan Learning Consortium (Sloan-C). The series was comprised of three workshops, each spanning three weeks. When the organization increased the cost of the training, and reduced the online interaction from three weeks to one week, the Director of Academic Technology developed *Foundations of Course Design for Online Environments* (*Foundations*). This course was first launched in May 2013 (N. Hendrickson, personal communication, November 4, 2015).

Sloan-C's increased cost and reduced training length provided an opportunity for the Director of Academic Technology to customize the online training opportunities at St. Catherine University. Sloan-C's training was created specifically for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, but was also provided to organizations worldwide. The enhancements included developing a common language for online teaching and learning at St. Catherine University, teaching and modeling best practices for online instruction, prescriptively creating a community of practice and inquiry, guiding course development through the use of quality standards, and promoting awareness of accessibility needs in the online environment (N. Hendrickson, personal communication, November 4, 2015).

Research Question

Armed with this background knowledge, this research project sought to answer the question: How does the current training in online course design for faculty at St. Catherine University compare to best practices?

Methodology

Given the increased demand for online course offerings at St. Catherine University, the purpose of my research was to thoroughly examine the current training for faculty new to designing an online course. To do this, I participated in the seven-week *Foundations* training course to simulate the experience of a faculty member. Observational research was identified as an ideal method because it allowed me to "gather evidence rather than generate it" (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012, p. 67). Furthermore, Vogt et al. (2012) indicated that "observation can distinguish between causal relationships and other kinds of interactions among variables" (p. 73). Understanding these relationships had the potential to influence practices and policies surrounding faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine University (Vogt et al., 2012).

After obtaining permission to complete the training course for research purposes (see Appendices C and D), I analyzed the training in two different ways. First, I created a rubric that included components identified in the above literature review as elements necessary for effective training in online course design (see Appendix A). As I completed the training course, I used the rubric as a guide to compare the training to best practices. In higher education research, Schwartz (2013) determined that rubrics are frequently utilized when "assessing program-level artifacts and activities" (p. 182).

Drafting analytic memos was the second method I used to explore the current faculty training program. Throughout the training course, I kept a journal to capture my reflections on the experience, including my perceived preparedness to develop a fully online course, areas where additional instruction was necessary, and potential gaps in training compared to best practices. This journal helped "facilitate reflection and analytic insight" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 20).

In addition to self-participation in a faculty training course for online course design, I also conducted interviews of faculty identified by the Director of Academic Technology as exemplary online instructors. The Director of Academic Technology defined exemplary online instructors at St. Catherine University as faculty who are curious and thoughtful participants in the online course design training opportunities provided by the Academic Technology Department. As a result of teaching online, they demonstrate an invigorated interest in their pedagogy, which ultimately influences their face-to-face instruction as well (N. Hendrickson, personal communication, August 4, 2015). Nine prospective interview candidates were identified, and email invitations with a request for an interview were sent to three (see Appendix F). The three candidates, who were invited to participate based on working in different departments with varied amounts of online course offerings, all accepted the invitation to interview.

Conducting interviews was an ideal method for gathering data for this action research project because I identified a target population from whom I sought information. Interviews provided me with more in-depth responses from my interviewees. Likewise, the interview setting provided them with the opportunity to "reflect and seek clarification before answering" questions about their training experience (Vogt et al., 2012, p. 36).

Prior to the interview, I sent the three interview candidates a brief online survey to gather information regarding their teaching and learning background. During the interview, I asked about their experience in the training for online course design at St. Catherine University, posing questions to both understand their training experience and compare it to best practices research. I also asked about additional resources and training they had utilized to enhance their online course design. Finally, interviewees had an opportunity to evaluate their training experience (see Appendix B). Interviews were recorded and transcribed with interviewee consent. To analyze the interview data, I looked for similarities and differences in the participants' responses, grouping them into organizational categories. In addition, during the transcription process, I looked for potential connections between interviewees' responses and the observational data I collected during the faculty training in order to verify my findings (Vogt et al., 2012).

During both the training participation and the interviews, I maintained confidentiality. My training rubric, analytic memos, and typed interview notes were encrypted and stored on my password protected computer. The electronic device used to record interviews was password protected and utilized encryption software. In addition to electronic documents and devices, handwritten interview notes and additional documentation were kept in a locked drawer in my home accessible only to me. Any direct quotes obtained during the interviews used in this paper are shared under a pseudonym. Finally, all confidential information related to this project will be destroyed approximately six months after completion (June 2016).

Validity

As an adult student who has both benefitted from and enjoyed online coursework, I recognized that my personal experiences could have impacted my intended research. In

order to ensure my research was credible, I made sure to address the potential validity threats of researcher bias and reactivity.

As a staff member at St. Catherine University, I recognized that I had the potential to unintentionally respond verbally or through body language my opinions of St. Catherine University's progress toward developing online courses. To mitigate this display of researcher bias during my participation in the faculty training course for online course design, I tested the validity of the experience by comparing my experiences and observations in the training to the best practice research I conducted. The use of the rubric kept my comparison study focused. During the faculty interviews, recording them to obtain verbatim transcripts ensured I had a "full and revealing picture of what [was] going on" with respect to faculty training at St. Catherine University (Maxwell, 2013, p. 126). Through interview transcription, I obtained the rich data necessary to test any conclusions drawn from my own experience in the online training program. Being open to discrepant evidence and negative cases heightened my awareness and analysis of data that challenged my conclusions (Maxwell, 2013).

Furthermore, because of my role as Associate Registrar, it was highly likely that the individuals conducting the online training, and the faculty members I interviewed, were individuals I interacted with in some capacity. In my role, I regularly discuss our current online course offerings with a variety of faculty and staff members. Though I was unsure if or how these prior professional conversations would influence how I asked questions, and how interviewees responded, I acknowledged their potential impact on this research. To lessen the impact of reactivity during my training experience, I, to the extent possible, disassociated myself from my staff role at St. Catherine University by

examining and engaging in the training course through the lens of a new online instructor. To address this threat during my interviews, I refrained from sharing personal experiences in online learning, the training in online course design, and any university politics surrounding online learning. In addition, I avoided discussing work-related topics by committing to my predetermined interview questions.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Analysis of *Foundations* Course

During my completion of the seven-week *Foundations* course, I utilized a combination of my rubric (see Appendix A) and analytic memos to determine which best practices were incorporated in the training. I assessed whether the course incorporated definitions of key online terminology, introduced and modeled adult learning theory, demonstrated effective online teaching strategies, integrated faculty's prior course content, and provided opportunities for peer mentorship.

First, I examined whether or not the training included defining the key terms of adult learner, synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid. Though the training differentiated between hybrid and online instruction, and modeled examples of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, it did not explicitly define those terms. The three instructional method terms are, however, defined on the Academic Technology Department's website. Unfortunately, the adult learner was not defined in the training. Of the three faculty interviewed, two of them did not recall any incorporation of aspects of adult learning theory.

While best practices suggest that all faculty moving to hybrid or online instruction first incorporate technology into existing face-to-face courses, not all faculty who

participated in the summer 2015 training had such experience. This was due to being a new member of the St. Catherine University faculty. All participants of the training were given opportunities to experiment with a variety of online technologies, and were encouraged to share the experiments within the training course shell. All participants had the opportunity to create a digital artifact of face-to-face course content to use in a future hybrid or online course.

Despite not defining the adult learner, the training successfully modeled the important aspects of adult learning theory within the training. The structure of the course, particularly the inclusion of weekly checklists, promoted self-direction. Faculty participants' prior knowledge and experience was gathered at the start of the training and influenced discussions and follow-up from the instructors. Faculty continuously applied the content within the training to both their personal and professional lives through reflective discussion board posts and the creation of content for their upcoming online and hybrid courses. Self-reflection occurred weekly, and was supported through posting our challenges in a "muddiest points" discussion thread and in our standards prioritization, timeline, and two module design assignments.

One of the training's greatest strengths was its modeling of effective online course structure. The training, like a quality online course, was divided into seven small modules. These modules effectively simulated the experience of an online learner. Faculty content was the center of the training. Each participant had a course syllabus and content that was used to complete the assignments throughout the seven-week training.

The training facilitators were exemplary in their modeling of best practices for online student learning. Many participants remarked that the predictable pattern of

completing a weekly checklist of assignments was incredibly helpful. During the first week of the training, community building was discussed and modeled, creating a safe space for technology exploration and dialogue surrounding challenges and frustrations. Deadlines for discussion board posts, responses, and assignments were clearly noted in the syllabus and within the weekly checklists. Responses to discussion board posts and assignment submissions were provided within 48 hours of submission. The facilitators were actively engaged in the weekly discussions, providing encouragement and additional resources when appropriate. Their course syllabus and weekly modules were clear and detailed. In addition, the training stressed frequent, low-stakes assessment and modeled such assessment throughout the course.

Finally, peer mentorship within the training was evaluated. Though the facilitators did include a few examples from experienced online faculty within the course, the faculty members themselves were not present within the training. It was unclear whether these faculty members were open to being resources for training participants. As a form of indirect mentorship, training participants were also able to see full examples of online courses taught through the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Using a rubric, participants explored and assessed examples of high-quality online courses that embodied the course design practices highlighted in the seven-week training.

Once the course was complete, I received no follow-up communication from the Academic Technology Department regarding additional training, conversations, or other opportunities to connect with peers. The only invitation I received was embedded within the final module, and was an invitation to consider completing the level one certification.

Analysis of Faculty Interviews

Three faculty members identified as exemplary online instructors were interviewed for this action research project. Victor, a professor in the Henrietta Schmoll School of Health, completed the *Foundations* course two years ago. Natalie, a professor in the School of Humanities, Arts and Sciences, completed the Sloan-C training three years ago. Julia, also a professor in the Henrietta Schmoll School of Health, completed the *Foundations* course one year ago. Participant quotes referenced in this paper were taken directly from these three individual interviews.

Similar to my experience in the course, Victor and Julia had positive experiences completing that training, confirming in their interviews that it modeled the best practices I analyzed through my rubric and analytic memos. "That class did such a good job of making me comfortable with the tools we have, with the idea of online teaching, and how you create community…the class gave me confidence that I could do something like that," Victor stated. Natalie's experience in the Sloan-C training was less than stellar. The Sloan-C workshops were "poor examples of what good online teaching should look like." This response affirms the Director of Academic Technology's decision, when faced with increasing costs of the Sloan-C training, to create a customized training for St. Catherine faculty that intentionally modeled characteristics of quality online teaching.

The most consistent positive feedback faculty provided in their interviews was that they valued the knowledge and support provided by the Academic Technology Department. They remarked that the staff members were open, welcoming, and willing to help with specific technology tools. Julia noted that they "are current in their knowledge and are willing to be help you learn – and how to use – new tools." They also appreciated the staff's willingness to troubleshoot issues with the learning management

system. Natalie admitted, "I'm guessing there are a lot of [faculty members] like me who float in a sea of unsureness with technology. I feel like they are very amenable to help."

Through these interviews, I learned that faculty are not consistently connecting with others or participating in additional training opportunities. Natalie admitted being aware of other opportunities, but not completing them. Victor noted he preferred informal training opportunities. In addition to one-on-one assistance from the Academic Technology Department, he converses with colleagues in his department to discuss whether or not new ideas will work in their department's online and hybrid courses. Julia, who works in a department whose coursework can all be completed online, was the only one of the three who had taken additional training to master technology used in her courses. She also has a solid support system of departmental colleagues who have introduced her to various technology tools, and helped familiarize her with the functionality of the learning management system.

Analysis of Follow-Up Questions

Through these interviews, it was encouraging to discover that those who participated in the *Foundations* course observed and experienced the same best practices I identified through my own training participation. Though I had addressed my initial research question, I noticed some recurring themes within the open-ended questions that made me consider what St. Catherine University could do to *improve* the support and preparation for faculty to teach online. Because these themes had the potential to provide richer feedback to the University, I chose to ask four follow-up questions via email approximately three weeks after the initial face-to-face interviews (see Appendix B).

Lack of additional follow-up training.

The three exemplary faculty members were first asked what would encourage them to attend follow-up trainings provided by the Academic Technology Department. For all three, time was a factor. Victor commented that he would like "short [and] lively" sessions on relevant topics. "It would be nice if we were given teaching load to plan an online course, which would open up time to attend training," Natalie recommended. Julia, too, had ideas, suggesting that providing the additional training online and offering continuing education credits would entice her to complete follow-up trainings.

While St. Catherine University faculty members know there are resources out there to assist them, interview data indicated that they do not always realize that what they are asking for already exists. For example, Julia's suggestions are in place at the University. Additional trainings to earn the St. Catherine University Online and Hybrid Teaching certification are provided online. Many of their additional academic technology resources are offered on demand, with the staff coming directly to the faculty requesting them (St. Catherine University, 2015d).

Lack of collaboration across disciplines.

The faculty interviewed come from departments that vary both in the number of faculty teaching online and the amount of collaboration within the department. Julia, whose program requires that all courses be taught online, engages in frequent collaboration with her colleagues. Together, they help one another develop course content and share ideas for incorporating new technology. Victor, who primarily teaches in a face-to-face program, volunteered to teach online. With his colleagues, they regularly brainstorm possibilities of adapting more courses in their program to an online

format. Natalie, who was asked to teach online because her area of expertise met the needs of E/W/O and RN-BS students requiring hybrid and online liberal arts course options, worked independently to develop her courses. Because the number of online course offerings at St. Catherine University varies from one department to another, I asked how the university can effectively connect faculty across disciplines in order to share innovative ideas for teaching online. "Find a common thread that we all care about," Victor recommended. "Connect individuals. Let them dialogue." Julia suggested offering online teaching sessions during Opening Workshop in early fall and Teaching Learning Network in January, which could easily align with Victor's recommendations. Natalie advocated for mentorship opportunities, stating, "I wish there was a way we could see each other teach online – see a really successful lecture, syllabus, or assignment." Given that Natalie completed the Sloan-C training, she missed the valuable opportunity in the *Foundations* course to explore and assess examples of high-quality online courses.

Lack of consensus around stakeholder needs.

Next, the exemplary faculty members were asked to share their opinions regarding which wants and needs of four stakeholders in online learning should take precedent: administrators, faculty, students, or future employers. Administration leads the strategic vision of the university, while the faculty is responsible for teaching the content. Students drive university enrollment, while future employers look for specific knowledge and skills from recent graduates. The responses to this question were mixed. Victor felt the students should be prioritized. "We can have what we think is a perfect system, the best system," he said, "but if it isn't relevant and directed at the students, they

won't latch on." Natalie felt faculty wants and needs should be the university's primary focus. "It's a big thing to ask us to redesign our curriculum," she stressed. "It sometimes feels like the message is, 'you must teach online, there are only limited resources to support you, so figure it out.' There would be more support from the faculty if the message shifted to providing abundant resources." Julia felt the shift in the perceptions of online learning at St. Catherine University must come from the administration and faculty. "I think there are many traditional faculty that still think that online and flipped classrooms do not provide students with equivalent learning."

Lack of a philosophy of online education.

Given the varied experiences of the faculty interviewed for this action research project, my final question asked whether or not they felt St. Catherine University has a philosophy regarding online education. Here, they were in agreement. "We don't have a guiding philosophy as far as I can tell," Victor admitted. "I think this is because online learning has not been made a priority." Natalie concurred, stating, "The move to online has been so quick; it doesn't really seem like there has been time to consider any philosophical or pedagogical issues associated with it." When asked what should be included in the university's philosophy, student-centered responses were given. "We need to have a robust, creative, and engaging online curriculum," Victor emphasized. Julia added, "I think the philosophy is to connect with students where they are…using the methodology that works best for them."

Summary and Recommendations

In analyzing my research, it is obvious that St. Catherine University is doing a lot of high-quality work to prepare faculty to teach online. Despite these efforts, the

feedback from the three exemplary online instructors suggests there are three missing components that will further support the faculty's transition to hybrid and online teaching. The University should consider developing a philosophy of online education, creating a Center for Teaching and Learning with mentorship opportunities, and providing incentives to increase both training participation and the pool of online instructors. These recommendations, in addition to the current established faculty training in online course design, are components of an effective model for online faculty development (Marek, 2009).

Develop a university philosophy of online education.

Based on the feedback from the three exemplary online instructors, St. Catherine University should develop and disseminate its philosophy of online education. Part of this philosophy must center on articulating a culture of online learning. According to Baran and Correia (2014), "organizational culture has frequently been identified as a critical success factor for educational renewal with technology and technology integration" (p. 100). In addition, it "profoundly influences its people, processes, and business practices" (as cited in Bean, Lucas, & Hyers, 2014, p. 58). To foster this culture, the philosophy should communicate goals for online teaching and learning, articulate a commitment to adult learners, and demonstrate an understanding of the work involved in effective online instruction.

Communicate university goals for online teaching and learning.

In the 2020 Strategic Vision for St. Catherine University, several strategic action priorities for 2013-2017 center around hybrid and online course delivery. Key

implementation strategies cited in the strategic plan (St. Catherine University, 2015g) include:

- Develop capacity for contemporary curriculum delivery options, focusing on faculty development in instructional design to improve face-to-face instruction, hybrid, and online delivery of curriculum. (p. 7-1)

- Grow and expand repositioned adult (formerly Weekend College) program offerings. This presumes development and implementation of more flexible offerings including programs of study offered fully in 7.5 week format, increase in liberal arts online courses, new programs of study (e.g. Psychology and Public Health) and expansion of existing programs of study (e.g. Accounting and Sales). (p. 7-2)

- Rebuild adult market through flexible evening, weekend and online offerings. (p. 7-4)

- Optimize technology to improve administrative productivity and meet enrollment goals by…increasing institutional capacity for digital forms of instructional design and delivery. (p. 7-4)

Furthermore, a handful of 2013-2017 strategic action metrics (St. Catherine University, 2015f) also reference online teaching and learning:

- Structure, technology, and instructional support and training for expanded delivery options developed and implemented by fall 2014. (p. 8-1)

- By 2017, all faculty teaching online or hybrid courses have participated in faculty development sessions for online delivery. (p. 8-1)

These documents publicly acknowledge that St. Catherine University is working to build the structure, capacity, and training for online teaching and learning. While I understood the goals, and the methods by which the University would assess its progress, I was curious about how upper administration communicates the details of the work plan outlined to achieve these initiatives. Following the website's recommendation, I contacted the Office of the President and requested to view the work plan and critical tasks. Initially, I was denied the request, and was told that the information was "proprietary in nature, speculative and always changing and morphing" (Office of the President, personal communication, October 23, 2015). Later, I was invited to meet with the Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer. During that meeting, I learned that communicating the progress of the work plan should be disseminated from the top down. However, not all University leaders articulate that information in the same way, which could explain the varied opinions of online teaching and learning amongst faculty (B. Bruess, personal communication, November 12, 2015). Faculty recognize that enhanced hybrid and online teaching is an integral part of the 2020 Strategic Vision, but do not have clear and consistent direction regarding *how* to get there.

Barone (2001) declared that internal oversight is critical for a major transition, and that "how a given campus and its leaders choose to acknowledge and guide the transition will largely determine the future viability of the institution" (p. 43). To develop the University's philosophy of online education that supports such oversight, it may be beneficial for upper administration to take a step back and ask the following questions posed by Masi and Winer (2005, p. 150):

1. Why are we using technology to support teaching and learning?

2. How can it be used effectively and efficiently to enhance teaching and
    learning?

3. What are the technical requirements and resource implications for a successful
    implementation?

Asking these questions addresses many of the faculty concerns cited in the 2014
Faculty Development Needs Assessment. Several respondents in that survey reported
seeing online teaching and learning as an unknown, and want more discussion and
evidence that examines the benefits and drawbacks of the instructional method (St.
Catherine University, 2014). By examining these questions in depth, the faculty and staff
of St. Catherine University will have time to thoughtfully assess the value of technology
at the institution, and reexamine the University's goals and priorities related to online
teaching and learning (Masi & Winer, 2005).

Articulate commitment to adult learners.

In fall 2015, St. Catherine University's Board of Trustees approved restructuring
E/W/O into the College of Applied and Continuing Learning in order to "reclaim our
historic role as leaders in adult education" and "create seamless and integrated learning
pathways for adult students" (C. Hegranes, personal communication, October 20, 2015).
Upper administration also expressed a commitment to "designing initiatives that will
work for the good of our students" (C. Hegranes, personal communication, October 20,
2015). As E/W/O is reimagined, it is critical that the needs of our current and prospective
adult student population – especially those related to online teaching and learning – are
examined.

The University previously invested in helping faculty better understand the adult learner through hiring a Director of Adult Learning. Among other initiatives, the director led the development of a university definition of the adult learner, which bolstered faculty's understanding of the difference between the traditional day student and the non-traditional E/W/O student. Although the director left the position at St. Catherine University, a new person has not been hired. Future investment in a Director of Adult Learning to provide training and education regarding the adult learner, and to help identify how online education will factor into the reimagined E/W/O Program, will help faculty embrace their role in educating this student population.

Understand the work involved in effectively teaching online.

Transitioning to online teaching is not simply transferring the course content from one medium to another. Face-to-face content must be transformed, and supporting the creation of online content "is another critical factor in promoting successful online teaching practices" (Baran & Correia, 2014, p. 98). Knowing this, the University's philosophy of online education should acknowledge the additional time and support required of quality online instruction. Baran and Correia (2014) recommended universities "offer the appropriate support that faculty members need to successfully move into an online teaching and learning environment" (p. 97). Therefore, the University's philosophy should include the importance of, and required participation in, faculty development. This connects to the 2020 Strategic Vision (St. Catherine University, 2015f, p. 8-1).

Create a Center for Teaching and Learning with mentorship opportunities.

A second recommendation for St. Catherine University is to create a Center for Teaching and Learning. Recent research in best practices in online course delivery has identified an increasing number of faculty development centers at colleges and universities worldwide (Marek 2009; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). This proposed center could house the multitude of resources available for faculty in a centralized location, including the instructional technology resources provided by the University's current Academic Technology Department (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). Uniting the efforts across campus into one center has the potential to foster "collaborative, community work within and beyond the institution" and can provide support for a "culture of mentoring" that is vital for success (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013, p. 95; Bean et al., 2014, p. 62).

Support for a center was affirmed in the 2014 Faculty Development Needs Assessment. When faculty members were asked to share any additional thoughts about faculty development not previously addressed in the survey, four separate faculty members requested a center that serves as a "first contact for teaching and learning matter and issues" (St. Catherine University, 2014, p. 56). They recommended having staff "dedicated to the promotion of faculty development, coordination of events, and mentoring of faculty," including "well-regarded faculty…across campus with a proven record for instructional excellence in a variety of contexts and with a variety of student populations" (St. Catherine University, 2014, p. 53-54). To capitalize on students' knowledge as digital natives, employing student workers in the center will provide faculty with valuable technological and pedagogical support (Marek, 2009). Creating this center at St. Catherine University will demonstrate the administration's support for faculty development by making it more visible on campus (Bean et al., 2014).

As part of this proposed center, it strongly recommended that it include a mentorship component (Marek, 2009; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). Currently, there are mentorship programs at St. Catherine University, but they are limited in their scope and focus. A new faculty mentor program, organized by the Office of Academic Affairs, pairs new full-time faculty with more experienced faculty using an algorithm that matches participants cross-departmentally based on areas of interest and expertise. The program is not prescriptive, and is volunteer-based. Survey feedback regarding this program has been very positive, and many mentor-mentee pairs remain friendly and collegial after their one year in the program is complete (B. LaDuca, personal communication, October 20, 2015). More specific to online teaching and learning, the Academic Technology Department embeds a peer course review component in Level I of the Online and Hybrid Teaching certification process. Faculty pursuing this certification work with faculty peers or Academic Technology staff to both review course design and receive encouragement and formative evaluation while teaching the course (St. Catherine University, 2015e).

In both the exemplary faculty interviews and in the 2014 Faculty Development Needs Assessment, there is considerable interest in pursuing one-on-one and small group professional development opportunities with both professional staff and experienced faculty. The creation of an expanded mentorship program "could generate widespread cultural change," and may significantly benefit online teaching initiatives (Bean et al., 2014, p. 58; Marek, 2009). One mentor unlikely has the time, skills, and expertise to address all of the needs of a faculty member seeking support. A mentorship network with a "more flexible, reciprocal, and non-hierarchical structure" can address both the learning

preferences and needs of diverse faculty, as well as the rapid changes in higher education (Beane-Katner, 2014, p. 93; Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Bean et al., 2014). Moreover, a mentorship network has the potential to foster a sense of community on campus. Collaboration across varying functions and disciplines within the University has the potential to engage faculty and staff in shared learning (Barone, 2001). Finally, a mentorship network may have the ability to act on recent research indicating that diverse mentorship opportunities help faculty "adapt better to the online teaching environment" (Baran & Correia, 2014, p. 99).

When developing a mentorship network, both formal and informal mentorship opportunities should be considered. In formal mentorship, each faculty member is paired with at least one mentor based on mutual interests. Feedback from the 2014 Faculty Development Needs Assessment suggests that many St. Catherine University faculty may gravitate toward formal mentorship because of its familiar, prescribed structure (Law et al., 2014). For faculty like Natalie, formal mentorship opportunities could pair a novice online instructor with an experienced online instructor to directly observe effective online teaching in practice.

Victor expressed interest in informal mentorship opportunities. The strength of informal mentorship is that it draws faculty together who have shared interests, creating a more "spontaneous and organic" relationship (Law et al., 2014, p. 3). Informal opportunities sponsored by the proposed Center for Teaching and Learning, such as a brown-bag discussion on a newly acquired piece of technology, may allow faculty to share, reflect, build community, and coach on targeted needs (Baran & Correia, 2014;

Beane-Katner, 2014). Organized and improvised mentorship opportunities will address the recommendations of both Victor and Natalie.

Finally, an emerging component in mentorship networks is reverse mentoring. Reverse mentoring provides opportunities for next-generation faculty to share their expertise with mid- and late-career faculty. With the increase in online teaching and learning, it is more likely that new faculty have taken and/or taught online and hybrid courses. Through reverse mentoring, these experiences can foster training and mentorship opportunities for their senior colleagues (Beane-Katner, 2014). Since limited research has been done on professional development for mid- and late-career faculty, especially with respect to online teaching and learning, including such opportunities in a proposed mentorship network at St. Catherine University will put the University on the cutting edge of innovation (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013).

Provide incentives to increase both training participation and the pool of online instructors.

When St. Catherine University begins to formulize its philosophy and goals surrounding online education, Harman (2008) cautions against depending on the enthusiastic innovation of select faculty members. Doing so puts the University in a position for inconsistent progress, results, and implementation (as cited in Marek, 2009, p. 278). Therefore, a third recommendation is to provide incentives to reward faculty beyond the salary and benefits received for fulfilling their contractual obligations (Herman, 2013). Research indicates that using incentives for teaching online acknowledges limited prior experience, the additional work necessary to develop an online course, and the negative perceptions surrounding online teaching and learning (as cited in Herman, 2013, p. 407). Fink (2003) also emphasized that faculty should be

rewarded for continuous efforts to improve. This suggests that faculty should receive incentives for participating in the Academic Technology Department's professional development opportunities.

In the 2014 Faculty Development Needs Assessment, St. Catherine University faculty members were asked about the incentives that would encourage their participation in professional development opportunities. Of the survey participants, 54.8 percent ranked receiving release time to develop or deliver courses as a meaningful incentive (St. Catherine University, 2014). Release time can include an exemption from teaching a course, serving on a committee, or performing other service obligations (Herman, 2013). In fact, all three exemplary online instructors completed their professional development training during the summer when they had reduced teaching loads. The alignment of the experiences of the study participants with the assessment results makes a strong case for considering release time as an incentive for both online training and course development.

Financial incentives, such as stipends, were requested by 51.7 percent of faculty who completed the 2014 Faculty Development Needs Assessment (St. Catherine University, 2014). Herman (2013), in a survey of 191 nonprofit higher education institutions, found that 69.7 percent of faculty surveyed received additional money for designing an online course, while 45.1 percent were additionally compensated for teaching an online course. Furthermore, 57.6 percent of faculty respondents were financially rewarded for participating in faculty development programs of at least eight hours. Herman's (2013) survey results indicate that there is a growing trend in higher education to provide additional compensation for preparing for, designing, and teaching online courses.

To date, St. Catherine University has offered stipends to specific departments to develop online programs. In addition, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs regularly provides opportunities for faculty to apply for stipends that support online teaching initiatives (N. Hendrickson, personal communication, November 12, 2015). Despite these efforts, the trends identified in Herman's (2013) survey results, combined with the University's assessment results, support additional exploration to further develop and equally distribute financial incentives for those who contribute to the University's expansion of online course offerings.

The third most requested incentive noted in the 2014 Faculty Development Needs Assessment, at 40.2 percent, was the recognition of professional development participation in the promotion and tenure process (St. Catherine University, 2014). Fink (2003) recommended that institutions align their faculty evaluation structure with the institutional priorities. Therefore, colleges and universities that intend to grow their online teaching presence should reward faculty who participate in faculty training for online course design and improve online course quality. Mentorship through the proposed Center for Teaching and Learning should also be considered a valued part of service to the institution in the promotion and tenure process (Bean et al., 2014). These three incentives have the potential to boost both participation in faculty development and the willingness to and interest in teaching online. "If faculty members know that their organization's culture respects and rewards online teaching, and makes it accessible and flexible, their motivation to teach online increases" (Baran & Correia, 2014, p. 100).

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this research is its small sample pool: only three exemplary online faculty members were interviewed for this study. Interviewing all St. Catherine

University who have taught online may provide additional valuable feedback. Deeper exploration of the faculty's successes and struggles with online teaching, and which resources currently in place best support the transition, will provide additional input for University decision makers.

An additional research opportunity for St. Catherine University could examine how other institutions created Centers for Teaching and Learning. Through this investigation, the University could explore various center structures, determine resources currently in place that can become part of this structure, and identify potential cultural shifts that may be necessary to enhance faculty development initiatives around quality online teaching. Furthermore, while previous research acknowledges that financial support is critical for successful online course delivery, little is discussed on how to secure such funding. Examining how other institutions have acquired the capital necessary to provide course releases and stipends, develop additional training, and potentially hire additional faculty and staff should also be considered. Researching the cultural, structural, and financial requirements needed to enhance faculty development initiatives will lay the foundation necessary for St. Catherine University to consider these recommendations.

Conclusion

The New Media Consortium (2014), in their recent examination of the impact of emerging technologies in higher education, noted that "there is an increasing expectation that universities and colleges be leaders in online learning, and thus equip their faculty and staff with the tools and training needed to create top quality resources" (p. 19). If St. Catherine University is committed to meeting its obligation to provide online programs and quality learning experiences for students, then it is critical that the institution ensures

that faculty and staff are equipped to provide high-quality online teaching. To do this, the university should consider mandating and/or incentivizing participation in the training opportunities currently offered by the Academic Technology Department. Furthermore, to address and adjust to the ever-evolving complexities of higher education (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013), St. Catherine University should consider articulating a clear philosophy of online education, creating and Center for Teaching and Learning the emphasizes mentorship opportunities for faculty, and identifying appropriate incentives that support and promote participation in the online education initiatives outlined in the strategic plan. Finally, through training and supporting faculty for online teaching, the spirit of innovation at St. Catherine University's core will help achieve the 2020 Strategic Vision of moving from a "strong but quiet" to a nationally "vibrant and well known" institution (St. Catherine University, 2015g, p. 7-3).

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Appendix A
Assessment Rubric for St. Catherine University's Foundations of Course Design for Online Environments Professional Development Course

Key Terms				
Defines the adult learner	2 "Adult learner" is defined.	1 "Adult learner" is mentioned, but not defined.	0 "Adult learner" is not mentioned or defined.	
Defines the terms synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid	3 All 3 terms are defined.	2 Some, but not all, of the terms are defined.	1 Some, but not all, of the terms are mentioned.	0 None of the terms are mentioned or defined.

Faculty Preparedness			
Requires faculty participants to have previous experience incorporating technology into face-to-face courses	2 All trainees have incorporated technology into face-to-face courses.	1 Some trainees have incorporated technology into face-to-face courses.	0 No trainees have incorporated technology into face-to-face courses.
Provides faculty with opportunities to experiment with online technologies	2 Trainees have ample opportunities to experiment with online technologies.	1 Trainees have limited opportunities to experiment with online technologies.	0 Trainees have no opportunities to experiment with online technologies.
Provides faculty with opportunities to develop online materials based on previously created face-to-face content	2 All trainees bring previously created face-to-face content to training.	1 Some trainees bring previously created face-to-face content to training.	0 No trainees bring previously created face-to-face content to training.

Adult Learning Theory & Online Course Design			
Promotes self-direction	2	1	0
	Self-direction is explicitly addressed in training.	Self-direction is indirectly addressed in training.	Self-direction is not addressed in training.
Promotes acknowledging students' prior knowledge and experience	2	1	0
	Students' prior knowledge and experience are explicitly addressed in training.	Students' prior knowledge and experience are indirectly addressed in training.	Students' prior knowledge and experience are not addressed in training.
Promotes applying course content to personal and professional lives	2	1	0
	Applicability is explicitly addressed in training.	Applicability is indirectly addressed in training.	Applicability is not addressed in training.
Promotes self-reflection	2	1	0
	Self-reflection is explicitly addressed in training.	Self-reflection is indirectly addressed in training.	Self-reflection is not addressed in training.

Training Structure			
Training is delivered in small modules	1	0	
	Training topics are divided into modules.	Training is not divided into modules.	
Training simulates modules within an online course	2	1	0
	Training almost always simulates the online learning experience.	Training, at times, simulates the online experience.	Training does not simulate the online learning experience.
Training is centered around faculty content	2	1	0
	Faculty content guides the training.	Faculty content is mentioned, but not emphasized, in the training.	Faculty content is not incorporated into the training.

Training Structure, continued			
Faculty create digital learning objects	2 Trainees leave the training with digital learning objects to use in their future online course.	1 Trainees leave with partially constructed digital learning objects to use in their future online course.	0 Trainees do not develop any digital learning objects.

Best Practices for Online Student Learning			
Emphasizes providing timely feedback	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.
Emphasizes facilitating interactions through discussion boards	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.
Emphasizes supplying detailed syllabus/module information	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.
Emphasizes incorporating online assessment	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.
Emphasizes establishing guidelines to foster a friendly online environment	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.

Best Practices for Online Student Learning, continued			
Establishes procedures for monitoring online discussions and assignments	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.
Emphasizes developing patterns for the course's online activities	2 Best practice is explicitly covered in training.	1 Best practice is briefly, or tangentially, covered in training.	0 Best practice is not covered in training.

Peer Mentorship			
Provides inspiration and peer support from experienced online faculty	2 Experienced faculty is present at training, and is willing to serve as resources for trainees.	1 Experienced faculty is not present at training, but is identified as resources for trainees.	0 No experienced faculty is identified.
Identifies conversations, brown-bag lunches, and/or mentorship programs amongst other institutions	2 Trainers identify further resources.	1 Trainers identify further resources only when asked by trainees.	0 No post-training resources are identified.

Appendix B
Interview Questions for Exemplary Online Faculty at St. Catherine University

Background Information *(to be completed in an online survey prior to the interview)*

How long have you been a college/university professor?

How long have you been teaching online courses?

How did you come to teach online?

Have all of the courses you've taught online been courses you first taught face-to-face?

Have you ever taken an online course yourself? If yes, how many?

Training Experience

When did you complete the online course design training at St. Catherine University?

Tell me how the training helped you experiment with online technologies.

Did your training include aspects of adult learning theory? What did you learn about adult learners through the training?

Describe the structure of the training. Did it simulate the experience of an online course in any way? If so, how?

What digital learning objects did you create as a result of your training? *(Digital learning objects are defined as reusable instructional components used in online course delivery, such as a tutorial video followed by a quiz to assess comprehension.)*

Through research, the following have been identified as best practices in training for online course design. Which concepts were covered in the training?

Best Practice	Covered in Training? (Yes/No)
Provide timely feedback	
Facilitate interactions through discussion board	
Supply detailed syllabus/module information	
Incorporate online assessment	

Best Practice	Covered in Training? (Yes/No)
Establish guidelines to foster a friendly online environment	
Establish procedures for monitoring online discussions and assignments	
Develop patterns for the course's online activities	

Additional Training Experience

How have experienced online faculty at St. Catherine University helped you become a better online instructor?

What additional training opportunities have you taken advantage of through the Academic Technology Department?

What other resources – either at St. Catherine University or elsewhere – have you utilized to become a better online instructor?

Reflections on Training Experience

How did you learn about the online course design training at St. Catherine University?

What are the strengths of the training in online course design at St. Catherine University?

What improvements should be made to the training in online course design at St. Catherine University?

What final words do you have regarding faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine University?

Follow-Up Questions Developed after Initial Interviews

What would encourage you to attend follow-up trainings provided by the Academic Technology Department?

In your opinion, how can St. Catherine University effectively connect faculty across disciplines to share innovative ideas for teaching online?

In your opinion, the wants and need of which stakeholders in online learning should take precedent – the administration (those leading the strategic vision of the university), the faculty (those who teach the content), the students (those who drive university

enrollment), or future employers (those looking for specific knowledge/skills from our graduates)? Why?

In your opinion, do you think St. Catherine University has a philosophy regarding online education? If yes, what is it? If not, why do you think that is? What should it be?

Appendix C
Email Request to Participate in Foundations Course

Dear _____,

I am sending you this email as a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership program. As part of my degree requirements, I am completing an action research project that examines the faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine University.

As part of my research study, I would like to better understand the current training program at the university by completing the *Foundations of Course Design for Online Environments* course as if I was a new online instructor. I will be comparing the course to the research in best practices using a rubric I have created. In addition, I will keep a journal of analytic memos to document my experiences during the training. The purpose of participating in the training is to examine the course's content; I will not be assessing or evaluating your role as the trainer. In addition, you will not be referenced or identified in my final paper and presentation to be completed by December 2015.

Please read the attached consent form and ask questions before you grant me permission to participate in your training course.

Thanks, in advance, for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Rachel Hultman
651-592-8496
rlhultman@stkate.edu

Appendix D
Foundations Course Participation Consent Form

Consent to Participate in Research
Faculty Training for Online Course Design

Introduction and Purpose
My name is Rachel Hultman; I am a graduate student studying organizational leadership at St. Catherine University under the supervision of Kimberly A. Johnson, the Director of Faculty and Instructional Development for the Minnesota State College and University System. I would like your consent to participate in the faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine University. Please read this form and ask questions before you grant me permission to participate in the training course.

Procedures
By giving permission for me to participate in the *Foundations of Course Design for Online Environments* course, I will complete the training scheduled in summer 2015. I will participate in the training as if I was a new online instructor. While doing so, I will compare the training to the research in best practices using a rubric I have created. In addition, I will keep a journal of analytic memos to document my experiences during the training. The purpose of participating in the training is to examine the content of the course; I will not be assessing or evaluating your role as the trainer. If, for any reason, you prefer to terminate my training participation, you can do so at any time.

Follow-ups to training content may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by email with my request for additional information or clarification.

Risks and Benefits
The study has minimal risks. Due to the nature of the study, you may feel uncomfortable with my presence as a researcher during the course.

There is no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study; you will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality
As I am studying the content of the training course, you will not be referenced or identified in my final paper and presentation to be completed by December 2015. At the conclusion of this project, I will destroy my rubric, journal, and any additional notes taken during the course.

Rights
Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you.

Questions
If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 651-592-8496 or at rlhultman@stkate.edu.

If you have any questions now or in the future for my faculty advisor, she will be happy to answer them via email at kaj0724@gmail.com.

If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at 651-690-7739 or at jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

CONSENT
You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to give consent to allow me to participate in the faculty training for online course design, please sign and date below.

_____
Participant's Name *(please print)*

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix E
Email Solicitation for Interview Subjects

Dear Nancy,

I am sending you this email as a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Organizational
Leadership program. As part of my degree requirements, I am completing an action
research project that examines the faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine
University. As part of my research study, I will be conducting interviews with three
exemplary online faculty members. As the Director of Academic Technology, I would
like your help in identifying at least five exemplary online instructors that I may invite to
interview. For the purposes of this research, I am relying on your expertise to help me
define an exemplary online instructor.

As I hope to complete the interviews this summer, please email me the criteria you use to
define an exemplary online instructor at St. Catherine University, and a list of five or
more online instructors who meet the your criteria, by Wednesday, July 1.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks, in advance, for your help!

Sincerely,

Rachel Hultman
651-592-8496
rlhultman@stkate.edu

Appendix F
Email Invitation to Interview

Dear _____,

I am sending you this email as a graduate student in the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership program. As part of my degree requirements, I am completing an action research project that examines the faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine University. Nancy Hendrickson, the Director of Academic Technology, identified you as an exemplary online instructor. Therefore, I would like to invite you to take part in my research study.

If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and location that is mutually agreeable by you and me. Prior to the interview, I will send you a brief online survey to gather information regarding your teaching and learning background. The interview will involve a series of questions related to your training experience. It should last approximately 60 minutes. Because you will be sharing proprietary information about your employer, I will maintain your confidentiality in my final paper and presentation to be completed by December 2015.

Please read the attached consent form and ask questions before you agree to be in the study.

Thanks, in advance, for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Rachel Hultman
651-592-8496
rlhultman@stkate.edu

Appendix G
Interview Consent Form

Consent to Participate in Research
Faculty Training for Online Course Design

Introduction and Purpose
My name is Rachel Hultman; I am a graduate student studying organizational leadership at St. Catherine University under the supervision of Kimberly A. Johnson, the Director of Faculty and Instructional Development for the Minnesota State College and University System. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study, which examines the faculty training in online course design at St. Catherine University.

You were selected as a possible participant in this research because the Director of Academic Technology identified you as an exemplary online instructor. Please read this form and ask questions before you agree to be in the study.

Procedures
If you agree to participate in my research, I will conduct an interview with you at a time and location that is mutually agreeable by you and me. Prior to the interview, I will send you a brief online survey to gather information regarding your teaching and learning background. The interview will involve a series of questions related to your training experience. It should last approximately 60 minutes. With your permission, I will record the interview and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately document the information you provide, and will be used for transcription purposes only. The recording and notes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. If you choose not to be recorded, I will take notes instead. If you initially agree to being recorded but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Additionally, if you prefer not to continue the interview at all, you can stop the interview at any time.

I expect to conduct only one interview; however, follow-ups may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by email with my request for additional information or clarification to interview responses.

Risks and Benefits
The study has minimal risks. Due to the nature of the study, you will be asked to share proprietary information about your employer.

There is no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study; you will not be paid for taking part in this study. However, subjects have the opportunity to benefit St. Catherine University's training program by providing feedback that will improve training and better prepare faculty for the increased demand to offer online courses.

Confidentiality

Your study data will be confidential. Only I will know your identity and any identifiable information. If results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will store all interview transcripts and notes on a secured computer accessible only by me. All identifying data will be coded, with only me knowing the true identify of each respondent.

At the conclusion of this project, I will destroy the recording and notes.

Rights

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You are free to decline to take part in the project. You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, there will be no penalty to you.

Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 651-592-8496 or at rlhultman@stkate.edu.

If you have any questions now or in the future for my faculty advisor, she will be happy to answer them via email at kaj0724@gmail.com.

If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at 651-690-7739 or at jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

_____

Participant's Name *(please print)*

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date