Narrowing the Distance:
Bridging the Gap Between Teaching Online and Faculty Development

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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ...................................................................................... i
List of Tables and Figures ......................................................................... iii
Abstract ................................................................................................... 1
Acknowledgements ................................................................................. 3

Chapter 1 ................................................................................................ 4
  Introduction ........................................................................................... 4
  Purpose of the Study ............................................................................. 4
  Statement of the Problem ..................................................................... 4
  Educational Significance ..................................................................... 9
  Research Question .............................................................................. 11
  Theoretical Frameworks ....................................................................... 11
    Social Development Theory ............................................................... 12
    Connectivism .................................................................................... 14

Chapter 2: Literature Review .................................................................. 19
  Teaching Online .................................................................................. 19
    Growth in Online Education and Use of Adjunct Faculty ............... 19
      Motivation for Teaching Online ..................................................... 21
      Barriers .......................................................................................... 22
    Best Practices for Teaching Online ................................................. 23
    Lack of Support for Adjunct Faculty ................................................. 26
  Faculty Professional Development Models ........................................ 27
    History ............................................................................................. 27
    Models ............................................................................................. 28
    Adult Learning Model for Faculty Professional Development .......... 29
    Other Models: Phased, Community and Certificates ....................... 31
    Research on Faculty Development .................................................. 33
  Guiding Theories ................................................................................. 39
    Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) ............... 40
    Connectivism ................................................................................... 41
  Summary .............................................................................................. 43

Chapter 3: Research Design .................................................................... 45
  Research Question .............................................................................. 45
  Methodology ....................................................................................... 46
    Program Process Evaluation ............................................................. 47
    Site ................................................................................................... 49
    Description of Context of Training at CPS ....................................... 49
    Participants – Adjunct Faculty ......................................................... 50
    Participants – Administrators and Instructional Designers ............ 51
  Data Collection ................................................................................... 52
  Data Analysis ..................................................................................... 54
  Validity and Credibility ....................................................................... 60
    Researcher Bias .............................................................................. 62
    Credibility ......................................................................................... 62
    Transferability .................................................................................. 64
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependability &amp; Confirmability</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of Human Subjects</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Report of Research Findings</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Training</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Training</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; Pedagogy</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications and Conclusions</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual, discipline- or program-based meetings</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger Instruction Designer-Program Communication</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy: Opportunities to Learn and Discuss Online Pedagogy and Teaching</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers: Incentives, Time, Place, and Communication</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Future Research</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate the Role of the ID</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty as Reporters of Student Expectations</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivist Ideas</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions..............................................21

Table 2: Comparison of Seven Principles of Good Practice and Online Equivalent...............24

Figure 1: Stages of Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development........................................30

Figure 2: Faculty Learning Community....................................................................................33

Table 3: Categories of Distance Education Research Types ....................................................34

Table 4: Phases of Research ......................................................................................................54

Table 5: Frequency of Codes By Primary and Secondary Designation.................................57

Table 6: Timeline of Research ................................................................................................60

Table C1: Codes by Theme: Type of Training ..........................................................................124

Table C2: Codes by Theme: Communications .........................................................................125

Table C3: Codes by Theme: Pedagogy ......................................................................................126

Table C4: Codes by Theme: Barriers .........................................................................................127

Table D1: Sources for professional development for online adjuncts .....................................128

Table E1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Job and Instructional Level ....................130

Table F1: Distribution of Instructors by Online Teaching Experience and Institutions .........131
Abstract

Online education is a steadily growing industry, and financial pressure at institutions, combined with the rising demand for online education, have caused many universities and colleges to rely on adjunct faculty to staff their online courses. For instructors, the transition to teaching online can pose a variety of barriers not the least of which is the rapid advance of technology. Therefore, transitioning to online teaching requires, even for experienced online instructors, ongoing professional development. Issues of quality of online instruction and faculty preparedness are frequently raised when examining online education, so as the market grows and technology evolves, expectations rise, and professional development becomes more important. This study asks specifically, “What ongoing professional development may be needed to more comprehensively support online adjunct faculty beyond the initial training program at Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies?” This research is specific to Northeastern University, but the findings should provide insight for universal concerns within the industry related to faculty professional development for online instructors. Accordingly, a formative program evaluation of the current offerings for online adjunct faculty development at Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies was performed from the perspective of three sets of stakeholders: instructors, instructional designers, and administrators. Analyzing data from interviews and a focus group, the research resulted in three major findings: (a) the use of web-based formats (synchronous and asynchronous) should be more heavily utilized for all faculty professional development training, and they should include more advanced options and breadth than was available at the time of this research; (b) communication must be improved between all stakeholders; and (c) opportunities should be provided to learn and discuss online pedagogy and teaching practice with peers in and across programs. Because of the increased
attention on online education and the changing formats for teaching online, the implication in for
the institution as well as the industry is that faculty professional development is increasingly
important. It must be provided in the format that the online adjunct instructors can take
advantage of, and needs to address not only technology issues, but pedagogical approaches as
well.

Keywords: faculty, professional development, distance education, online, adjunct, Vygotsky,
Connectivism
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to research the gap between initial and continuing professional development for online adjunct faculty. This study was designed to answer the research question: “What ongoing professional development may be needed to more comprehensively support online adjunct faculty beyond the initial training program at Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies?”

This study used a qualitative program evaluation methodology to formatively evaluate the current professional development offerings and process of Northeastern University (NU) Online at the College of Professional Studies (CPS). The hope was to discover, describe and suggest possibilities for future expansion of online adjunct faculty development by gathering and analyzing data from three key stakeholder groups at CPS and NU Online: adjunct faculty, administrators, and instructional designers.

Statement of the Problem

Sloan-C reported in 2011 that online education is a steadily growing industry, with 31 percent (6.1 million) of university students enrolled in at least one online course (Allen, Seaman, & Sloan Consortium, 2011). This growth has necessitated that institutions rely on adjunct faculty to staff the growing number of online, hybrid and blended courses (Bedford, 2009; Carnevale, 2004; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). The transition to teaching online can pose a variety of barriers not only for new instructors but also for more experienced online instructors who may have evolving needs for support and professional development. (Bedford, 2009; A. Johnson et

\footnote{Also known as part-time, non-tenured, affiliate, contingent, lecturer, etc.}
al., 2009; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Generally, instructors encounter barriers that fall in three areas: (a) perceptions about online learning, (b) technical skills, and (c) their pedagogical role when shifting to teaching online and evolving their teaching in online, blended or hybrid courses (Jones, Lindner, Murphy, & Dooley, 2002; Panda & Mishra, 2007; Perreault, Waldman, & Alexander, 2002; Schifrer, 2000; Spring, 2008; Yang, 2005).

Often instructors do not realize that teaching online is more than just moving materials to the online environment, and to be sure, this is the first stage in online education (Salmon, 2005). Lack of experience can lead to negative perceptions about online learning that could influence the overall course experience (Fish & Gill, 2009; Panda & Mishra, 2007). Online education requires the instructor to make a pedagogical shift away from the notion of being the source of knowledge and towards the idea of being more of a facilitator, or mentor (Ally, 2009; Fish & Gill, 2009; Salmon, 2005). This change in teaching strategy may necessitate additional support for online faculty, particularly adjunct faculty, who often have less access to university faculty development programs (Bedford, 2009).

As the online market continues to grow, technology continues to change, and student expectations continue to rise, continuing professional development for online adjuncts will become more important (Craig, Goold, Coldwell, & Mustard, 2008; Ruth, Sammons, & Poulin, 2007). At NU’s CPS, the specific problem of practice is how to identify both missing and effective support opportunities related to teaching online or blended courses, both technical and instructional, for all online adjunct faculty after their initial certification training. This study attempts to provide greater insight into the problem of practice in order to better support online adjunct instructors. The research provides a possible framework by which administrators at NU and elsewhere may provide appropriate professional development opportunities for faculty and
ensure an engaging learning experience for students. It also identifies other areas for research. While much of the research about faculty development solicits the opinion or perceptions of instructors (Ali et al., 2005; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Knight, Carrese, & Wright, 2007; Pagliari, Batts, & McFadden, 2009; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Villar & Alegre, 2006), this research includes a number of stakeholders involved in providing faculty development, namely instructors, administrators and instructional designers.

NU Online is the department at Northeastern University that provides expertise in distance education including but not limited to the following: instructional design, course design, instructional technology, faculty training, technical support, video streaming, videography and related services, supporting multiple Learning Management Systems, hosting third-party courses, supporting national and international synchronous professional development programs, custom program design, market and program research, and consulting. CPS is one of the biggest clients for NU Online – 76% of CPS’ courses were delivered in an online or blended format (approximately 2,291 courses) in fiscal year 2010 (Currie, 2010). NU’s CPS delivers the largest percentage of online or blended courses at the university, and CPS has certified 1,358 faculty over the years (NUCPS, 2011). Of the 1,089 certified faculty (which includes full-time, part-time permanent, and adjunct), 924 are considered “active” or having taught in the past year, and that includes the approximately 550-650 active adjunct faculty at any given time. (NUCPS, 2011).

All of the instructors at CPS must be certified through the two-week, online asynchronous training program, created and facilitated by NU Online, before teaching online or blended courses. This training provides both technical training and orientation to the Learning Management System (LMS) Blackboard, enterprise-wide tools (Wimba Live Classroom, Wimba Asynchronous Voice Tools, Camtasia Relay, etc.) as well as best practices for teaching online and
blended courses. At the time of this research, NU Online had four instructional designers supervised by the Director of Instructional Technology dedicated to supporting CPS and other colleges. NU Online has a structure for development and support for CPS faculty that includes the following:

- initial two-week NU Online Certification Training for all online or blended instructors (online, asynchronous),
- term-by-term Best Practices outreach by instructional design team to 20% of instructors once per term, across 8 term start-ups per year,
- ongoing one-on-one instructional design support,
- occasional face-to-face workshops (recorded and distributed online),
- as needed program-specific outreach in the form of in-person or virtual workshops, and
- mid-term and end-of-term student evaluation surveys.

After the certification training, the major forms of instructional and technical support for all instructors is through their one-on-one relationship with their instructional designer, resources in the NU Online Instructor Center and a 24/7 help desk (which mostly supports usage of the LMS Blackboard). NU Online has provided traditional face-to-face faculty development workshops on campus and has recorded some of these for web distribution. NU Online also has participated in other professional development initiatives by the college and university, most of which follow a more traditional format. In addition, instructional designers may try to reach out to faculty groups within the academic areas they support to provide an introduction to new tools using web-conferencing software.

NU Online has provided a few traditional, half-day, multiple-session workshops for CPS faculty related to teaching online over the past few years and has participated in university-wide
educational technology conferences. However many of the workshops and technical support beyond the faculty certification training are ad-hoc and driven by a particular group’s needs or the organization’s needs, (e.g. large-scale LMS upgrade training) rather than by an articulated professional development agenda.

In practice, programs sought out support from their assigned instructional designer, who customized training or support based on that group’s needs, however support for programs or groups of disciplines was inconsistent for a variety of factors. For example, some programs had a director or Master Teacher that initiated this activity, while other programs, particularly CPS undergraduate programs, did not have anyone in a position to advocate for their adjunct instructors’ needs. Because of the large number of faculty that instructional designers supported each term, they were not be able to pro-actively reach out to other faculty groups.²

In researching this particular issue, it was discovered that Zawaki-Richter, Bäcker, & Vogt (2009) performed a meta-analysis of distance education research, the methods used, and publications and authorship patterns. They found that out of 695 articles published in five leading distance learning journals that there was at least 50% more research related to the “micro” level (teaching and learning in distance education) than either the “macro” (distance education systems or theories) or “meso” (management, organization, technology) levels

² For perspective, it is helpful to understand the volume of the CPS instructional designer’s course/instructor load at the time of this research, separate from any special initiatives, projects or course responsibilities. Since CPS follows a quarter system, the numbers break down as follows for each instructional designer:

- Course sections per term = ~200
- Instructors to support per term = ~70-80
- New instructors trained per term (total, not each instructional designer) = ~40
- Discipline areas = 15-26 (allows for equal sections per instructional designer).
(Zawaki-Richter, Bäcker, & Vogt, 2009, pp 24-25). They state that there is need for much more research at the meso level, which includes areas such as management and organization, cost and benefits, educational technology, innovation and change, professional development and faculty support, learner support services, and quality assurance (Zawaki-Richter et al., 2009). This includes looking at the issue of faculty professional development (FPD) models for adjuncts and full-time faculty and faculty support in general. Because of the lack of literature surrounding FPD, some research may not address FPD for distance education exclusively. This particular problem is addressed more thoroughly in the literature review section on FPD.

**Educational Significance**

Kim and Bonk (2006) say demand for online learning, the mass of technologies available, budget issues, and innovation possibilities have put online learning environments into a “perfect e-storm” of trying to link pedagogy, technology, and learner needs (Kim & Bonk, 2006). Many institutions wrestle with the issues of how to support faculty in this transition, how to identify the needs of the faculty in transition, and how to ensure quality in online education (Kanuka, Heller, & Jugdev, 2008). An instructor’s ability to transition to teaching online relates directly to student expectations of course quality and overall satisfaction, student completion, and possibly retention (Kim & Bonk, 2006). From an institutional standpoint, an instructor’s success at designing and delivering an online, hybrid or blended course is important because it may impact course quality and student experience. Online education relies heavily on part-time or adjunct faculty and there is some evidence that this has a negative impact on quality – specifically graduation rate (Ruth et al., 2007). Maintaining the perceived quality of the institution and retaining their institution’s position among the competition is particularly important to many high-level administrators (Skinner, 2008). While this research does recognize the importance of quality in online courses,
it does not specifically address the particular issues of quality beyond the concept that FPD may improve online teaching, which can impact overall course quality and student satisfaction.

There is not much discussion in the literature on supporting faculty or adjunct online faculty (Zawaki-Richter et al., 2009). But in the research that exists, some state that for professional development initiatives to be effective, the administration must be involved in or support those initiatives (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Much of the research on support for online faculty is from the perspective of instructional designers (or similar types of roles who provide training and support to faculty) (McQuiggan, 2007; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). Some institutions, like Lesley University in Cambridge, MA, have created unique mentoring models for their traditional adjunct faculty development (Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Ziegler and Reiff (2006) maintain that this change in dependence on adjuncts means that institutions have to provide a new type of support since, as they note, the use of adjuncts generally causes concerns about quality of instruction, pedagogy, and the impact on students. Similarly, Bedford (2009) suggests that the use of adjunct faculty is going to continue as institutions struggle to keep costs low. Others write that the controversy surrounding use of adjuncts, quality and student success will continue until higher education redefines the role of adjunct faculty and the support they receive (American Association of University Professors, 2009; Bedford, 2009; Ruth et al., 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). All of these factors impact this problem of practice: online adjunct instructors need appropriate ongoing professional development that goes beyond a basic transition to online teaching and addresses needs related to design, delivery, and facilitation.

Unlike issues of orientation and administration, which often are easily distributable to any

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3 Pedagogy is used throughout the paper to mean the process or act of teaching.
instructor (for example faculty handbooks or orientation materials), faculty professional
development requires planning and consideration of the audience (Lawler & King, 2000a;
Lawler, 2003; Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Since this problem of practice is
confined to the question of training that online adjunct faculty receive to help them transition and
continue to teach online, this paper is not concerned with professional development that relates
to orientation to the institution, such as specifics of doing business in that environment, policy,
mission, or human resource issues.

Research Question

The intent of this research was to identify specific ways to enhance the continuing faculty
professional development options for online adjuncts at CPS by asking key stakeholders
(instructional designers, adjunct faculty, and administrators) the following question: What
ongoing professional development may be needed to more comprehensively support online
adjunct faculty beyond the initial training program at Northeastern University’s College of
Professional Studies?

The desired end result of the research was to identify gaps, needs, and ownership or
coordination issues surrounding continuing FPD for online adjuncts at CPS.

Theoretical Framework

While there are a variety of theories related to teaching and learning, two theories rise to
the top when grappling with the problem of practice of FPD. They easily relate to both the
elements of faculty professional development as well as the process of providing that support.
The older social development theory and newer online learning theory both provide ideas
appropriate for examining the research surrounding FPD for online adjunct faculty. Learning
theories that account for networks, peer interaction, and collaboration were important to
consider.

In the context of supporting online faculty and addressing the pedagogical shift required for achieving best practices in online teaching, one theoretical framework seemed particularly relevant both to distance education and faculty development. Lev Vygotsky’s social development theory seems to inform both the practice of teaching online as well as possibilities for FPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The guiding concept that social interaction plays a fundamental role in learning, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and the ideas associated with that (scaffolding and guided participation), are evident in online education today. Likewise, exploration into online learning theory, and particularly George Siemen’s theory of connectivism, is relevant because of its direct connection to teaching online, FPD, and real-world expectations of students and employers (Siemens, 2005a). Siemen’s theory also helps lay out a general foundation for life-long learning (Siemens, 2005a). Research has found peer support and interaction is crucial for implementing technology into teaching, and the same may be true with respect to teaching online (Nicolle & Lou, 2008).

**Social development theory.** Social development theory asserts that interaction comes before development and that socialization and social behavior beget consciousness and cognition (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978), the student takes an active part in his or her own learning and the roles of the teacher and student are shifted. The teacher becomes a collaborator with the student and facilitates learning in a reciprocal environment. Three major ideas are elevated in Vygotsky’s *Mind in Society*:

1. Social interaction is key to cognitive development, and social learning comes before actual development;

2. The idea of the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) – someone who knows more or has
more skill than the learner; and

3. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) – the gap between what a learner can do by themselves and what they can do with the help of a MKO.

According to Vygotsky (1978), learning happens in the ZPD, and while the MKO is usually assumed to be a teacher, coach, or someone older than the “student” the MKO could be a peer, a younger person, or even computers (Miller, 2001; Social Development Theory (Vygotsky), 2010; Vygotsky, 1978).

The metaphor of the ZPD directly relates to the process an instructor goes through when working with an instructional designer (Kilfoye, Rochefort, & Ruda, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978; Welk, 2006). One could change Vygotsky’s definition of the ZPD by replacing “child” with “instructor,” with the new definition describing the difference between what an instructor can do prior to training or independently versus what an instructor can do with guidance and assistance. (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Miller (2001), Vygotsky actually had a broader definition of the ZPD than just the child-adult or child-skilled peer, so a workplace training scenario is not too far a leap, as evident in Welk’s article about applying the ZPD to training online facilitators (Welk, 2006). Within the context of instructor training and the instructional designer-faculty relationship, there is the element of scaffolding or guided participation that is commonly associated with Vygotsky and the ZPD (Stomp, 2003; Welk, 2006). In this scenario, the instructional designer, acting as the MKO, coaches and guides the instructor along a path of development to construct the understanding of both the technical tools as well as best practices in online delivery. This, however, is not sustainable with a large institution. Thought leaders like Mohammed Ally and Chris Dede agree that this idea is an important part of the constructivist approach in online learning (Ally, 2009; Dede, 2007).
Creating this type of guided relationship can be difficult because the online adjunct population is unique and in the case of CPS, large. Online faculty may not actually be physically close to each other, they may or may not be involved in regular meetings with peers in the department, and they are generally thought to have less of a relationship with the organization/institution (Bedford, 2009; Coussons-Read, 2010). According to Taylor and McQuiggen’s research (2008), institutions need to be particularly mindful of building FPD that is useful, convenient, and connected for online instructors. They must provide the opportunity for connecting faculty to their peers in the institution as well as to those in support roles like instructional designers. Such concerns are greatly supported by the connectivism theory as described in the next section.

**Connectivism.** Connectivism, developed by George Siemens (Siemens, 2005a), is learning through the process of creating connections and networks – knowing where to find something is as important as the what and how (Siemens, 2005a). This theory is also closely linked with the idea of networked learning, or the process of developing and maintaining connections with people and information, and communicating in such a way so as to support one another’s learning. Before delving into connectivism, it is important to describe how behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism play a prominent role in distance education and are historically relevant in the approach to online education.

Behaviorism theory states that external factors shape learning rather than the individual learner. Evidence of this theory in distance education can be seen in the ideas such as the key idea of mastering easy steps first before more complex and measurable and observable learning outcomes (Mager, 1997).

Cognitivists state that learning is an internal process that uses a different kind of memory.
This type of memory includes experience, reflection, abstraction, motivation, and metacognition (Ally, 2009; Dede, 2007). Cognitivism is focused on helping learners develop interrelated connections and symbols to form the basis of knowledge and skills (Ally, 2009; Dede, 2007).

Constructivist theory, on the other hand, puts the learner at the center with the instructor playing an advising and facilitating role (Ally, 2009). Distance education is generally thought to be student-focused, causing the instructor to fulfill a slightly different role than in the traditional classroom. This role is often likened to a facilitator, guide, coach, or mentor to the course material and discussion (Schiffer, 2000), which aligns nicely with constructivist ideas.

Constructivist learning utilizes one’s own knowledge in an environment of interactions with others, and actively constructing individual meaning from experiences or learning activities (Mayes, 2006). Ideally, the instructor creates a sense of social community and connection between himself or herself and the students early, so a learning community can develop.

Online learning theory is an amalgamation that encompasses much of the thought surrounding online education and learning in a networked age, however this thesis focuses primarily on connectivism. Generally, cognitivism, constructivism, and behaviorism are all parts of the foundation of online learning theory. However, many think that these ideas are not sufficient given the direction in which education is heading (particularly online education) and while there are a few theories advanced recently that relate to an internet-based world, some consider connectivism to be the guiding force for the future (Ally, 2009; Mayes, 2006; Siemens, 2005a). Ideas such as situated learning, multi-user game environments, immersive and geospecific technologies, social media in education and the possibility of a neo-millenial learning style contribute to the body of thought that constitutes online learning theory (Ally, 2009; Dede, 2007; Siemens, 2005a).
As mentioned above, connectivism theories deal with learning as it occurs through the process of creating connections and networks. Technology tools are changing how we shape our thinking, and because learning happens in both the individual and the organization there needs to be a theory that links these two ideas of individual and organizational learning; “know-where” (to find knowledge) is becoming equally important as know-how and know-what (Siemens, 2005a, p. 4).

Siemens (2005a) introduced eight principles of connectivism:

1. Learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions.
2. Learning is a process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources.
3. Learning may reside in non-human appliances.
4. Capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known.
5. Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning.
6. Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
7. Currency (accurate, up-to-date knowledge) is the intent of all connectivist learning activities.
8. Decision-making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality. While there is a right answer now, it may be wrong tomorrow due to alterations in the information climate affecting the decision. (Siemens, 2005a, p. 24)

Network learning is considered to be a part of connectivism particularly focused on the second principle of network forming. Designers and instructors can influence the creation of new nodes on the network, but the learner’s receptivity and the nature of the preexisting network in the learner determines the effectiveness (Siemens, 2005b).
In opposition to the theory of connectivism, Pløn Verhagen (2006) suggests it is not a learning theory, but a pedagogical viewpoint on education. Kop and Hill (2008) suggest that it is not even its own learning theory. Bonk questions whether connectivism is best seen as a learning theory in the traditional sense or belongs in a sociological, or anthropological, conception of learning (Siemens, 2008). Online social networks are quickly becoming ubiquitous in life and in education so connectivism may be most relevant to distance education and issues related to connected professional development.

Why is connectivism relevant to distance learning? The reason is that it places emphasis on networks and connections between people and even things and asserts that this is central to the learning process. Perspectives vary on the relevance of current theories of learning and online education. Some say they do not adequately address the idea of the internet, technology, or expansion and creation of knowledge, while others say that connectivism does not effectively show the true state of current theories like behaviorism, constructivism, and cognitivism or that the issues represent curriculum level questions and not how learning happens (Downes, 2006; Kerr, 2006; Siemens, 2005a; Verhagen, 2006). Bereiter (1985) discusses the idea of the learning paradox — that if learners construct knowledge, then how can they create a cognitive structure that is more complex than what they have at that moment? New connections open new worlds and allow the learner to create new knowledge (Bereiter, 1985). Connectivism emphasizes the connection and how and why networks are formed, rather than an initial connection to an individual or an idea. Other learning theories pull on research, concepts and ideas that were prominent in their particular time. Connectivism pulls on evidence from the areas of neuroscience, cognitive science, network theory, complex systems and connected disciplines (Siemens, 2009).
Looking at the idea of language can link connectivism and the ZPD or social development theory. Siemens (2006) says that a common language related to learning and knowledge, requires exploration of how cognition and emotions are influenced by models of communications (or linguistics), the channels of information and knowledge (technology) in relation to views of learning. Vygtosky (1978) said language was the precursor to thought, so there is the opportunity for aligning the ideas of Vygtosky and Siemen’s connectivism through the ideas of Bandura (1986; 2006; 1978). Bandura (1986) says tools like media and technology allow people the opportunity to externalize private thought. Siemens (2006) points out that this is important because many theories emphasize knowledge construction as primarily an internal process, but in the online class, frequently this is a collective process.

Online learning theory may serve as the foundation for the creation of relevant faculty training. It may also guide an approach for faculty to embrace when creating their online courses. Furthermore, online learning theory may assist instructors with pedagogical concepts which enhance their facilitation methods whether for online or face-to-face courses. In fact, many educators believe these theories provide the basis for effective distance education. (Ally, 2009; Mayes, 2006). As the impact of the research from scholar-practitioners becomes available, new possibilities for grappling with problems in distance education may become evident, including how an institution may best assist faculty who transition to online teaching and continue to evolve their online teaching. While behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism were conceived long before the idea of distance education, Mohammed Ally (2009) believes that connectivism will allow us to apply these ideas today and plan for the future.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

The literature review follows the large themes of teaching online, faculty development models, and the guiding theoretical frameworks of ZPD and connectivism. These streams of review allow for greater understanding of:

• the issues and concerns within the context of teaching online and best practices teaching online;
• existing models of faculty development;
• the guiding frameworks in general along with the role they may have within faculty professional development.

Teaching Online

Teaching online presents a variety of issues for educators and institutions. Growth in the amount of online programs and the use of adjunct faculty in general has increased substantially in the past decade across campuses in the United States (Bedford, 2009; Coussons-Read, 2010; “Digest of Education Statistics, 2009,” 2009; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2005, 2009; Shiffman, 2009; Tipple, 2010). Similarly, the research surrounding barriers and motivations for teaching online provide insight to those who choose to teach online. This research also provides a foundation for understanding the context of faculty development (Green, Alejandro, & Brown, 2009; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2005; Schifter, 2000; Yang, 2005). Research and practice has identified common best practices for teaching online and those are outlined in the section below (Puzziferro, 2004b; Ragan, 1999; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008).

Growth In Online Education And Use Of Adjunct Faculty

In 2011, the Sloan-C Report “Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011”
reported that online enrollments continued to grow at much higher rates (10%) than the higher education total enrollments (1%), but at a slower rate than it had in past years (Allen et al., 2011). During the 2010 school year, more than 6.1 million college students were taking at least one online course. In a 2009 report, experts said that this growth was a result of the poor economy and ongoing contingency plans related to H1N1 flu, according to the Sloan-C report, Learning On Demand” (Allen & Seaman, 2009). Sloan’s two most recent reports show steady and increasing growth, and since 2002, the percentage of institutions that consider online education as critical to their long-term strategy has steadily increased to over 65% at all types of institutions, but with public universities leading the trend.

In order to keep up with the demand for staffing these online courses, as well as to keep costs low in these programs, online education tends to rely heavily on adjunct faculty (Bedford, 2009; Carnevale, 2004; Tipple, 2010; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Table 1 shows the growth in the use of adjunct faculty over the past forty years. This data is for private and public institutions that are degree-granting, meaning that they grant associate’s or higher degrees and participate in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Statistics show that in 2007, use of part-time or adjunct faculty increased to almost 50 percent of total faculty compared to only 22% in 1970.
Table 1

*Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions by Employment Status (in thousands)*

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Part-time</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</table>


This demand for part-time faculty, in general, can be linked to several related factors: the need for instructors with real-world experience in specialized fields; non-traditional and adult students expecting faculty to have real-world experience; an increased flexibility in scheduling courses which allowed for last minute additions or cancellations; declining funds and demands to keep tuition low, and finally, increasing enrollments in online education (Bedford, 2009; Ruth et al., 2007; Shiffman, 2009; Tipple, 2010).

Use of adjunct faculty invariably leads to debates on whether or not part-time faculty members are sufficiently prepared to teach online, and whether because they often hold jobs outside of academia, they are able to allocate the time and resources (for professional development and training) to teach online (Bedford, 2009; Ruth et al., 2007). Opponents say that part-timers are less dedicated, but research shows that online adjunct faculty are generally highly motivated to succeed and are teaching online for the satisfaction and intrinsic reward of teaching, the opportunity for growth from teaching in a new modality, their own motivation to use technology and the flexibility of the work hours (Shiffman, 2009; Tipple, 2010).

**Motivation for teaching online.** As previously mentioned, the primary motivating factors for any instructor to teach online were intrinsic in nature and included things like: personal motivation to use the technology, the chance to develop new ideas, opportunity to
improve teaching, intellectual challenge, job satisfaction, opportunity to improve/diversify course offerings or provide flexibility to students (Schifter, 2000; Yang, 2005). Schifter (2000) found inhibiting factors included the culture shift to teaching in a more student-centered environment. Schifter also noted that most training and development centered on technology, not teaching at a distance. Doctoral preparation and the absence of pedagogy teaching practice may also be an underlying factor (Austin, 2002; Pearson, 1999; White & McBeth, 2005).

Assessing quality in online programs is an ongoing question. (Ruth et al., 2007; Skinner, 2008). The research of Leslie and Gappa (2002) found that most of the perceptions of part-time faculty as an unhappy group piecing together multiple jobs at several institutions are misconceptions and that, as a whole, they are more similar to full-time faculty in their interests, attitudes, motivations and satisfaction in teaching. The research indicates that generally adjuncts are stable professionals who enjoy teaching, but while experienced, they tend to stick with more traditional teaching methods, so their professional development needs to include preparation to teach (Leslie & Gappa, 2002).

**Barriers.** Instructors who transition to teaching online encounter barriers that may impact the transition and ongoing development of their online teaching craft. Investigation into the issue of barriers and preparedness in faculty who were transitioning to teaching online yielded a bounty of similar information (Fish & Gill, 2009; Schifter, 2000; Yang, 2005). Research shows that role change or culture shift for the instructor; technology inhibitions and support; lack of training-related pedagogy for teaching online; lack of prestige; lack of time or financial compensation, and issues of academic integrity were common barriers that faculty had when transitioning to teaching online. These barriers, may even have prevented skilled teachers from persisting or even attempting to teach online (Eduventures, Inc., 2007; Schifter, 2000; Yang,
Despite research that shows there is at worst no significant difference in student learning, and at best superior student learning in an online course versus a traditional one, the perception that online education is inferior or of lesser quality persists (Fish & Gill, 2009; Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Russell, n.d.; U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service, 2009). These suspicions generally relate to the quality of online programs, since online courses are offered by community colleges, schools of extended or continuing education, are taught by adjuncts, and are primarily money-making ventures (Jones et al., 2002; Ruth et al., 2007; Skinner, 2008; Yang, 2005; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Adjunct faculty can be de-motivated by things like isolation, salary disparity, perceived lower-class status, feelings of marginalization within the teaching profession and lack of input to the institution for which they work (Tipple, 2010).

Accordingly, another researcher, V. Dolan, recommended that online schools must improve adjuncts’ sense of affiliation and loyalty to the institution because it has a positive effect on student retention (Dolan, 2011). The biggest issues of concern were inadequate and infrequent communication, lack of recognition of their value to the institution, and lack of opportunities for skill development (Dolan, 2011). Dolan (2011) said the online adjuncts’ primary loyalty is to their students, and face-to-face meetings with peers can improve an online adjunct’s loyalty to the both the students and the institution.

**Best practices for teaching online.** There is no dearth of research done on the subject of strategies for teaching online, and Zawaki-Richter et al., (2009) provide an extensive list of this research that shows this. Generally, the instructor of an online class is expected to communicate, participate, set clear expectations, create opportunities for collaboration, build community among class members, help students construct knowledge, and build a student-centered learning
environment (Palloff & Pratt, 1999; Yang, 2005). Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education*, which are widely recognized as guidelines for best practice for teaching, have withstood the test of time and can be re-applied to distance education to offer a good framework for distance educators, as Graham, Cagiltay, Lim, Craner, and Duffy (2001) found in their evaluation of online courses. From a student perspective they found a lesson from each principle that applied to online learning, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Comparison of Seven Principles of Good Practice and Online Equivalent*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Principles*)</th>
<th>Lessons for Online Learning**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good practice encourages student-faculty contact.</td>
<td>Instructors should provide clear guidelines for interaction with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice encourages cooperation among students.</td>
<td>Well-designed discussion assignments facilitate meaningful cooperation among students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice encourages active learning.</td>
<td>Students should present course projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice gives prompt feedback.</td>
<td>Instructors need to provide two types of feedback: information feedback and acknowledgment feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice emphasizes time on task.</td>
<td>Online courses need deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice communicates high expectations.</td>
<td>Challenging tasks, sample cases, and praise for quality work communicate high expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good practice respects diverse talents and ways of learning.</td>
<td>Allowing students to choose project topics incorporates diverse views into online courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Chickering & Gamson, 1987** **Graham, Cagiltay, Lim, Craner, & Duffy, 2001*

One of the issues with distance education is that planning, design and delivery is as important as actual facilitation, since poorly organized and facilitated courses can discourage or confuse students and make for a poor learning experience (T. Anderson, 2008; Graham et al., 2001). Organization of materials and consistency in use of tools, content, and structure allow the
student to engage with the material. Since its convenience and flexibility make online education appealing to the continuing student market, it is important to consider that audience when developing the course. In addition, it is worthwhile to consider how adult learning theory might impact the design and development of the course (Allen & Seaman, 2009). Instructors need to clearly outline objectives and expectations and create activities and assessments that are tied to objectives and that leverage professional experience when possible. For learning to take place, facilitation of the course should include prompt and frequent feedback, consistent presence within the course, and the creation of a collaborative environment. Again, this requires a role shift for the instructor, away from a didactic sage on the stage model to more of a guide on the side or mentoring type of model. There is a need, therefore, for better understanding of how to help instructors shift roles (Kim & Bonk, 2006; Murphy, Mahoney, Chen, Mendoza-Diaz, & X. Yang, 2005; Schifter, 2000; Y. Yang, 2005).

Palloff and Pratt’s, The Excellent Online Instructor: Strategies for Professional Development, describes the key elements of excellence in online teaching (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). According to Palloff and Pratt (2011), the best online instructors are able to identify and implement the differences between traditional teaching and online, and they are able to incorporate those differences in the development and facilitation of the course. Additionally, Palloff and Pratt describe the ideal online instructor as someone who

- is committed to the online format and uses that to his or her advantage,
- establishes presence early in the course and encourages students to do this,
- is highly motivated,
- opens and leads by example in all aspects of the course,
- devotes time to building community early because of the importance of this for online
courses,

• uses discussion to promote interactivity between students with quality discussion questions,

• is active, engaged and provides timely feedback,

• incorporates collaborative work into the design and delivery of the course, and

• respects students as partners in the learning process.

This list may refer to either online or face-to-face teachers, but an online instructor accomplishes these tasks through the use of technology, and without the benefit of meeting their students in person (Palloff & Pratt, 2011) The ideas in this work are similar to the ideas of Chickering & Gamson (1987) and Graham (2001), and show that there are established ideas about what constitutes good online teaching within the field.

Lack of support for adjunct instructors. Many of the articles and research surrounding adjunct instructors comes from the community college perspective, since part-time instructors have grown in use faster in that segment of higher education (Christensen, 2008; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005). However, the lack of support for adjunct faculty in any type of institution seems to be consistent, as noted by several researchers (Christensen, 2008; Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Pagliari et al., 2009; Puzziferro, 2004a; Tipple, 2010). For example in Meixner, Kruck and Madden’s (2010) research of part-time faculty at a mid-sized, U.S., primarily undergraduate public university, they found that adjuncts reported lack of consistency in outreach and varying opportunities for mentoring. Half of respondents desired professional development to advance their teaching including technology training, opportunities for peer-review and sharing of teaching strategies, course planning, and tips for motivating students (Meixner, Kruck & Madden, 2010).
While Sloan-C’s 2011 report, “Going the Distance” reported that there are significantly more internally based training opportunities in institutions that offer courses and full programs online, it doesn’t designate how these opportunities are offered (online, face-to-face, blended) and if there are equivalent opportunities for adjunct faculty (Allen et al., 2011). For example, two educators blogged (Eblen-Zayas, 2012; Weimer, 2012) their perspective on the predominance and value of exchanging ideas about pedagogy and teaching by word of mouth, however, even these discussions were based on exchanges that happen in person, an avenue that’s generally inaccessible to the remote, adjunct, online instructor.

**Faculty Professional Development Models**

Historically while much of the literature about adjunct faculty development has focused on community colleges, there is some literature on faculty development at 4-year colleges and universities. As previously mentioned, the National Center for Education Statistics’ figures for 2012 put part-time faculty numbers at 50% of all instructors (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). In the literature, faculty development strategies were designed for tenured faculty. Most strategies were individual in nature, and there was not usually a large-scale effort to promote faculty development beyond things like sabbatical, conference attendance, or informal seminars at the institution, most of which were not available for adjunct instructors (Hurley, 2006; Olbinski, 1998).

**History.** Starting about the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was more of an attempt to provide professional development that tied to the overall mission of the institution, but it was usually only focused on full-time faculty (Hurley, 2006; Olbinski, 1998). FPD opportunities that were available included orientation, self-study, team teaching, publishing, use of technology, or methods for improving teaching skills. Generally any adjunct faculty were lumped in with full-
time faculty (Hurley, 2006; Leslie & Gappa, 2002). Because most of these endeavors were scheduled to meet the needs of full-time faculty, often the absence of adjunct faculty was seen as a lack of interest or motivation when frequently it was due to conflicting schedules (Hurley, 2006). According to Leslie and Gappa (2002), adjunct faculty should be treated as an asset, and investment in them will yield long-term benefits for an institution such as increased morale, teaching effectiveness and institution loyalty.

**Models.** According to Guskey (2000), existing models of professional development fall into seven areas:

1. training
2. observation/assessment
3. involvement in a development/improvement process
4. study groups
5. inquiry/action research
6. individually guided activities
7. mentoring

Traditional FPD within community colleges includes mentoring models, teaching workshops, (which may cover a host of teaching and administrative issues), student evaluations as the only means for staff-development, or comprehensive programming models directly targeted at full-time instructors. Within four-year institutions similar models are used, although the literature recommends aligning it with career stage (Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981; McGovern & Miller, 2008; Olbinski, 1998). Rogers et al., (2010) suggests that all institutions need to support their adjuncts using the cornerstones for effective mentorship programs. These cornerstones include professional development; effective communication, fostering balance, and
helping adjuncts form relationships. The size of the institution also dictates the method and synchronization of FPD. Larger universities may have a more centralized support system fostered by multiple initiatives, which create a web of support and development, often based on years of service. On the other hand, smaller institutions may approach the problem from different angles by adding support seminars for graduate students, workshops or through grant funding (Diaz et al., 2009). One online for-profit university practices extensive faculty evaluation and ties their professional development to their “remediation” for under-performing faculty (Weschke & Canipe, 2010, p. 56). Groups that provide professional development to faculty are under a variety of pressures from multiple constituencies. Such concerns include current trends in education and workplace training, needs of the students, instructors and administration; academic and financial concerns; and an individual’s professional needs (Lawler & King, 2003).

**Adult learning model for faculty development.** Within the literature, Patricia Lawler (2003) and Kathleen King (2000b) focused on presenting teachers as adult learners, using this perspective to develop a model for designing faculty development (Lawler & King, 2000b; Lawler, 2003). They suggest that applying the principles of adult learning are crucial before tackling teacher professional development. Adult learning principles include creating a climate of respect, encouraging active participation, building on experience, using collaborative inquiry, learning for action, and empowering the participants (Lawler, 2003). In this context, they point out that as adult learners, faculty are very interested in learning what they can use which makes this model particularly appropriate for faculty (Lawler & King, 2000a). Previous experiences with faculty development are also very significant for faculty and can impact the experience and need to be considered when developing FPD (Lawler, 2003; McQuiggan, 2007). Research has
not shown a single best way to deliver or design faculty development, but many agree with the idea of treating faculty as adult learners, which includes taking into account their preferences, experiences and attitude (Gallant, 2000; Kim, Hagedorn, Williamson, & Chapman, 2004; Lawler & King, 2000b; Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Researchers have found that ongoing sessions or ones that build on each other can be more successful than individual sessions. Such sessions were also found to provide the opportunity for community or collegial sharing. They also placed instructors in the same environment as would be experienced by their students which was important (Gallant, 2000).

In Lawler and King’s model for faculty development (Figure 1) they suggest a circular model that revolves around program planning principles on the inner ring, and adult learning principles on the outer ring.

![Figure 1. Stages of the Adult Learning Model for Faculty Development (Lawler & King, 2000b, p. 38)](image)

The four stages of development include pre-planning, planning, delivery and follow-up. Each of these pockets of development flow both ways and include multiple tasks under each
stage (Lawler & King, 2000b). The tasks under each stage (Preplanning, Planning, Delivery, and Follow-up) are analogous to the Analyze Design Develop Implement Evaluate (ADDIE) model used in instructional design, however it is specific to the world of faculty development and adult learning principles (Schlegel, 1995). Lawler and King’s tasks include steps such as examination and evaluation of the role of the faculty developer, promotion of the faculty development program, implementation of adult learning principles, and follow up to continue the learning (Lawler & King, 2000b). The tasks beneath each stage allow for the creation of faculty development for online adjunct faculty when one considers the audience and specific needs as would be done in the preplanning and planning stages. So while seemingly the most appropriate for the online adjunct population, this may be a model for designing discrete FPD opportunities within a larger, structured FPD approach.

However, within this larger setting of FPD, Lawler and King (2000a) also state that in order for adult education program planning (or professional development) to be effective and successful, it must take into account the social, political and organizational context, including the culture of the organization and power relationships. Institutional commitment to faculty development initiatives is key for long-term success (Lawler & King, 2000a; Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006).

**Other models: phased, community and certificates.** Palloff and Pratt have been considered leaders in the field of distance education since 1999, and their recent book, *The Excellent Online Instructor: Strategies for Professional Development*, highlights several relevant models for faculty professional development. (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Two of the most interesting development models mentioned in their book are the phased model and the learning community based model.
The phased model asserts that faculty move through several stages when transitioning to teaching online: visitor, novice, apprentice, insider, and finally, master (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). The visitor represents the instructor who has toyed with technology in a traditional course setting, and subsequent stages represent the instructor’s progress in moving through levels of experience and confidence. The master level represents the instructor who has designed several online courses and has mastered the technology (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Because of these stages, they believe that professional development must align with the instructor’s position in the development lifespan (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). They advance the idea of the phased, developmental model where the teacher moves from “Stage 1: Teacher as Learner” to “Stage 5: Teacher as Leader” (Palloff & Pratt, 2011, pp. 48–49).

Another model involves the learning community approach. Palloff & Pratt (2011) strongly encouraged the use of community-based approaches to online teaching, and because of the disorienting nature of teaching online, faculty seem more willing to share strategies for teaching in this medium. They suggest these learning communities could be established and that using a blended approach to develop learning communities starting with a formal face-to-face session may trigger ad hoc learning communities and that then can be sustained by online communication. The faculty learning community would incorporate people, purpose and process and allow for exploration and reflection to produce outcomes as shown in Figure 2. Though Palloff & Pratt do suggest that community-based approaches are a good way to include online adjuncts, they do not suggest a particular model just for online adjuncts.
Along with the phased and community-based models, the authors also mention the idea of certificates programs for online teaching offered by national organizations. Whatever the model, they suggest efficiency in faculty development and that there should be long-term faculty development planning and effort where the online instructor is viewed as part of an academic whole rather than a stand-alone effort (Allen et al., 2011; Green et al., 2009; Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Mentoring approaches also get significant mention, and the authors highlight one particularly effective program, called Generation YES (Youth & Educators Succeeding) where students mentor K-12 teachers with technology integration, providing significant benefits to both the teachers and students (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). Unfortunately there is no mention of an equally effective mentoring program for online educators in higher education.

**Research on faculty development.** Research surrounding faculty development models or faculty professional development (FPD) falls into the “meso” area of Zawaki-Richter et al’s,
(2009) meta analysis of distance education research. They found that approximately 50% of the literature relates to “micro” issues rather than “macro” or “meso” issues. Table 3 outlines the definition and breakdown of what constitutes research for each of these issues.

Table 3

*Categories of Distance Education Research Types*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro: Distance education systems and theories</th>
<th>Meso: Management, organization, and technology</th>
<th>Micro: Teaching and learning in distance education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access, equity, and ethics</td>
<td>Costs and benefits</td>
<td>Instructional design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globalization of education and cross-cultural aspects</td>
<td>Educational technology</td>
<td>Interaction and communication in learning communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance teaching systems and institutions</td>
<td>Innovation and change</td>
<td>Learning characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories and models</td>
<td>Professional development and faculty support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research methods in distance education and knowledge transfer</td>
<td>Learner support services</td>
<td>Quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality assurance</td>
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</table>

*Note:* Source: (Zawaki-Richter et al., 2009)

The established authors in the area of distance education mostly confine their publications or research to Zawaki-Richter et al’s., (2009) areas of micro or macro within the field. Lawler, King and Puzziferro are notable contributors to this area of study, however their work generally focuses on concepts, theories and best practices in the field of faculty development (King & Lawler, 2003; King, 2003; Lawler & King, 2003; Lawler, 2003; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009; Puzziferro, 2004b). McQuiggan (2007) found that most of the empirical research compared teaching online to teaching face-to-face, and the distance education literature focused on the changing role of the instructor, however there was some research centered on faculty development models by Hinson, King, and Ali (Ali et al., 2005; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; King,
The research more directly related to online educators’ FPD is scattered in breadth and depth. In looking specifically at peer-reviewed research—as opposed to position articles, presentations, or anecdotal evidence—the following topics are covered:

- Evaluation of individual, internal models for effectiveness
- Long-term impacts of professional development
- What online instructors want in training
- FPD opportunities and participation
- Faculty perceptions of their own skill in online teaching

Generally this research combines full- and part-time instructors, and traditional and online formats (Ali et al., 2005; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Knight et al., 2007; Pagliari et al., 2009; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Villar & Alegre, 2006). Ziegler & Reiff (2006) and Eib & Miller (2006a) both present descriptions of professional development models in use. Such models include an adjunct mentoring program at Lesley University and a Community of Inquiry (CoI) model for a social work faculty at a research institution in western Canada. Both are possible models for distance education. In Hinson & LaPrairie (2005) they looked closely at transitioning community college faculty from traditional teaching to web-based teaching, and the model did involve some element for future growth, but the bulk of the model focused on this initial transition and not really the ongoing growth of the online instructor. Many of these models are reminiscent of constructivist and social development theory ideas, and some may begin to embrace more connected approaches for providing faculty professional development. This focus on an individual piece of an institution’s faculty development, for example, the transition, or using one tool in a course, seems to be a consistent theme in the research rather than a full-
fledged program evaluation to identify future needs. This research did not use a specific program or process evaluation methodology per se, but instead used more informal approaches that generally used some kind of summative evaluation from participants. In almost all cases the researchers were evaluating one professional development module or program, not formatively assessing their whole program.

McQuiggan’s (2007) review of the literature of empirical studies on how faculty make changes when transitioning to teaching online -- and specifically their transformation in teaching assumptions or beliefs-- showed a variety of research methodology with the largest percentage relying on mixed-methods, or qualitative research methods. Subsequent research from Penn State’s Taylor & McQuiggan (2008) generated research questions particularly useful for understanding the professional development needs of online educators. Examples include:

- With which aspects of teaching online do faculty need assistance?
- What format do faculty prefer for professional development experiences?
- Do faculty prefer certain lengths of professional development experiences?
- What barriers inhibit faculty from participating in professional development experiences related to teaching online?
- What incentives do faculty wish to receive in return for participating in professional development experiences related to teaching online?

Question 1 yielded important data for the Penn State team. For example information was gathered on topics such as, selecting technology, converting course materials, effective assessments, and creating media. Information was also found on issues of course delivery such as facilitating techniques, enhancing online relationships and managing workload to name a few (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). In addition they found that self-paced materials were the most
requested, followed by informal face-to-face formats. The perception was also that one-on-one professional development with a mentor or colleague followed by one-on-one interactions with an instructional designer was considered the most effective learning mode (2008). Generally, instructors preferred shorter workshop lengths or standalone workshops for the professional development training, while limited time was the most frequently cited barrier. Incentives for participating in faculty development showed no clear favorite in this research (2008). In this case, incentives included things such as adjusted workload or release time, monetary, mentoring or grant opportunities, recognition towards promotion and tenure, notes of appreciation, parking privileges, grad assistant support, and technical/software upgrades. Since this research included all faculty, these results may not have reflected the online adjunct population’s perspective on these questions accurately.

Biro’s (2005) dissertation, *Adjunct Faculty Perceptions About Their Preparation, Support, and Value as Online Instructors*, looks at similar questions for online adjunct faculty. She states that to succeed, online adjunct faculty development should take into account technological and instructional needs of online adjuncts as well as their needs as part-time employees (2005). According to Biro (2005), institutions need to have clear goals about how distance learning relates to their mission, clear communication to adjuncts, instructional teams that involve faculty, and administrators, technologists and instructional designers to prepare faculty to teach online. In addition, professional development must reflect faculty as adult learners. Related to this

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4 Incentives from other research include similar things such as money, technology support, salary increases, merit pay, course releases, royalties and tenure considerations but these don’t necessarily divide adjunct and more full-time faculty. (Cook, Ley, Crawford, & Warner, 2009; Panda & Mishra, 2007; Schifter, 2000)
research, are some examples of program process evaluation, where a department tries to evaluate a particular professional development program using more formal evaluation methodology.

In a closely related departmental situation to CPS, Gothard & Gorham (2011) used the Targeted Evaluation Process framework to begin to create a comprehensive departmental evaluation system, starting with the evolution of an introductory course on Brevard Community College’s LMS. This training was not specifically targeted at online faculty, but did include adjunct faculty. Kirkpatrick’s (2006) four-level evaluation model is a common model and includes (a) reaction – to measure how participants reacted to the training; (b) learning – measures what participants have learned from the training; (c) behavior (or performance) – measures whether what was learned is being applied on the job, and (d) results – measures whether the application of the training is achieving results. But level four is difficult to evaluate and correlate with all types of training (Brill & Park, 2011; Gothard & Gorham, 2011). Brevard chose to use the Targeted Evaluation Process (Combs & Falletta, 2000) because of its applicability to training and non-training interventions and the ease of use because of the team’s lack of experience with evaluation design and implementation (Gothard & Gorham, 2011). The six steps of Targeted Evaluation Process include

1. partnering with stakeholders;
2. understanding the intervention and organizational context;
3. targeting evaluation questions and identifying evaluation dimension;
4. designing tools, technology and techniques;
5. gathering and analyzing data, and
6. reporting results (Combs & Falletta, 2000).

This is an early attempt at embedding an evaluation process into a training program for
Brevard Community College. The intent is to implement this same strategy in subsequent trainings and to evaluate the effectiveness of this training on performance on the job. These steps are applicable to many types of training evaluation, and CPS has done this with the initial Certification Program, as well as their LMS upgrade trainings. It also may be applicable to an overarching program evaluation, versus evaluating just one part of a professional development program.

Another analogous department described in Brill & Park’s (2011) research also used a program evaluation approach with qualitative and quantitative elements to assess effectiveness of e-tutorials from a particular vendor at a large university. This organization developed a conceptual framework from evaluation literature built off the ADDIE model that they then applied to their analysis of data surrounding their tutorial evaluation (Brill & Park, 2011; Gustafson & Branch, 2002; Schlegel, 1995). This research was designed to make summative, data-based judgments regarding the effectiveness of the e-tutorials, rather than a formative evaluation for the purposes of improving the larger training opportunities (Brill & Park, 2011; Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001). Through qualitative questions in Brill & Park’s survey, they were able to identify what users really liked and did not like about the e-tutorials, as well as generate recommendations for improvement or expansion of these resources. They also were able to make a business case for continued inclusion in the department’s repertoire (2011). This type of approach to understanding the different stakeholder’s ideas on FPD may be very useful in identifying positive and negative elements in NU Online’s FPD inventory, as well as in helping administrators recognize areas to develop more comprehensively.

**Guiding Theories**

Throughout the review of the literature, the goal was to find a relationship between the
theoretical frameworks and what already existed in the literature. Review of the literature was done through the lens of Vygotsky and the ideas of connectivism for relevance to both existing literature related to teaching online and faculty development models. The two guiding theories in this paper pull together the present and what may be the future of best practices for teaching online. While these theories both guided the review of the literature to some degree, they might provide a lens to gather and/or examine the results of the proposed research.

**Vygotsky and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).** In the arena of distance education, Vygotsky’s (1978) social development theory can be linked to learning in a variety of ways. Some social constructivists and educators believe distance education is inferior not only because of the lack of social interaction and the absence of a mentor, but also because there is no spatial and social proximity (Ketterer & Marsh II, 2005). Vygotsky’s ideas, however, are frequently linked with online education. One of the strongest examples may be the idea of the role shift for the instructor where he or she becomes more of a guide who facilitates student knowledge through scaffolding and the creation of a learning environment that fosters peer social interaction (Couros, 2010; Hughes, Ventura, & Dando, 2004; Ketterer & Marsh II, 2005; Murphy et al., 2005; Welk, 2006).

In an online course, the organized use of readings, videos, email or discussion boards, as well as other tools such as blogs, wikis and virtual worlds, are inherently filled with social context and can be used to construct knowledge without direct physical contact with an instructor (Ketterer & Marsh II, 2005). In some cases learners use new media within their own ZPD if they have the ability to do so, and teachers cannot take advantage of them unless they also know how to use them (Ketterer & Marsh II, 2005). Crucial to the Vygotskian approach to teaching is the notion of the instructor being able to role-shift with the student to learn tools while also being
able to recognize the opportunities for facilitating and guiding learning for students within their course (Wink & Putney, 2001).

Within the community of an online course, discussion and contact with the instructor and peers provide the opportunity for social connections and peer-to-peer collaboration (Ketterer & Marsh II, 2005; Murphy et al., 2005). Just as instructors must do this within their online classes, instructional designers and trainers must teach the teachers to develop this set of skills by modeling good online teaching practices. Utilizing an instructor’s ZPD can provide a way to mediate the relationship between trainer and instructor and promote Vygotskian ideals through the process (Welk, 2006). In addition to teaching faculty to teach in the online environment and utilize new tools, efforts must also be made to ensure that faculty feel comfortable with this role-shift.

The literature surrounding FPD presents several examples of mentoring programs as a method of professional development, and this directly aligns with the idea of role-shifting and Vygotsky’s MKO and the ZPD (Villar Angulo & Alegre De La Rosa, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). When considering the stakeholders involved with FPD at CPS and evaluating the program’s process, it will be important to understand more about how and when these opportunities develop for online adjunct faculty and in which communities these opportunities arise.

**Connectivism.** Connectivism was introduced as a way to reconcile the issues of a world in which technology figures largely in learning, as theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism and constructionism seemed inadequate (Siemens, 2005a). Siemens (2005a) believed that the limitations of these older theories are the idea that learning happens within a person. The theories do not leave room for the idea that learning also happens outside of people, particularly
learning that is stored and manipulated by technology. Furthermore, the theories offer no explanation of how learning happens within organizations (Siemens, 2005a). Technology has changed the way we communicate, live, and learn, and Siemens states that our learning theories should be reflective of underlying social environments and trends in learning, acknowledging, for example, concepts such as, informal learning, life-long learning, and learners having multiple careers.

Connectivism also addresses the idea of knowledge management activities within organizations. Knowledge that resides in a database needs to connect to the right people and in the right context in order to be thought of as learning (Siemens, 2005a). The flow of information within an organization is important for effectiveness, and the learning environment of an organization depends on developing the flow of information (Siemens, 2005a). Equally important within the idea of connectivism is the impact of social network analysis on learning models (2005a). It begins with the individual’s personal knowledge or learning network made up of a variety of nodes – these nodes could be people, websites, social media or even databases. This personal network then has the potential to feed into the organization or institution, while the organization may contribute information or nodes that goes back to the individual’s personal learning network which creates a cycle of personal information to network to organization and this allows the individual to stay current in their field through their connections (Siemens, 2005a).

Applying the Siemens’ perspective to the organization of a university, it is difficult to know if all of these faculty make up one giant node or many nodes within that organization. With distance and adjunct faculty, often the nodes might have a weaker connection to the organization, so the information may not flow as quickly to and from parts of the organization (Siemens,
As the instructor acts as a guide (or as Siemens would say, “curator”) to their students, so the instructional designer must be for the instructors (Siemens, 2008). With these new perspectives in education, Siemens (2008) explains there are several metaphors developed by several theorists of educator and learner roles within an era of technology. The metaphors include the educator as master artist, educator as network administrator, educator as concierge, and educator as curator (Siemens, 2008). Instructional designers, and therefore any training they might provide, should act as a guide through new technologies, pedagogies, and sources of open content for the subject matter expert – the faculty. The instructional designer is the educator to the educator (Siemens, 2008). In some cases, instructors may be the guide to newer instructors, too. These models of educators and instructional designers bear a resemblance to the MKO of Vygotsky’s ZPD and link these two frameworks for considering faculty professional development.

Summary

The literature search was guided by the question, “What ongoing professional development may be needed to more comprehensively support online adjunct faculty beyond the initial training program at Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies?” The literature streams examined many facets related to teaching online, including growth of online, motivation, barriers for instructors, teaching best practices, and the existing lack of support. Also, examination of existing approaches to or models of faculty development showed that while there may be models in use for professional development for adjuncts, they do not appear in the literature. Most approaches and models are targeted at the larger faculty population and may include part-time faculty, but may not address their needs specifically or may not be designed for that population specifically. Most evaluations of effectiveness of professional development focus
on one part of the program, usually the initial transition, and not ongoing or more advanced professional development for online faculty. The guiding theories are relevant to this body of literature because of their foundation in constructivism and the social constructivist nature of online teaching and learning. These concepts are important for developing a research strategy that complements the nature of the constantly changing and evolving field of distance learning. For this reason, a program evaluation approach is most appropriate for research about how to formatively assess the current offerings for and needs of faculty professional development for online adjuncts at CPS.
Chapter 3

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to identify key elements needed for ongoing online adjunct faculty professional development beyond the initial transition – a step that some institutions already have in place to varying degrees (Ali et al., 2005; Fish & Wickersham, 2009; C. McQuiggan, 2007; Schifter, 2000; Shapiro, 2006; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). Research is needed to decide exactly what pieces should be added to fill the gaps in professional development. While the literature is divided between qualitative and quantitative research, with perhaps a slight emphasis on qualitative research, most research examines the perspective of one population, or one element of a program and not necessarily all of the stakeholders related to faculty professional development or the whole picture (Ali et al., 2005; Biro, 2005; Fish & Gill, 2009; Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Schifter, 2000; Villar & Alegre, 2006). The growth of online courses and changes in technology suggests it is important that institutions invest in evolving support for online instructors. Ensuring that continuing student demands are met for quality online instruction requires the support of all areas of the institution. (Biro, 2005; Kim & Bonk, 2006; Ruth et al., 2007; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Most institutions, including CPS, have summative course evaluations in place that address issues of student satisfaction with content, instruction, and technology. Studies by Brill and Park (2011) and Gothard and Gorham (2011) have suggested that it would be difficult to directly tie student learning outcomes to faculty training. Most research by instructional technology or distance education departments does not solicit the perceptions of all the people responsible for providing, creating, and participating in FPD. For this reason, the goal was to gather information from adjunct instructors, administrators,
and instructional designers at CPS, since instructional designers and administrators develop and provide the majority of the professional development available to these instructors. By soliciting opinions from all three groups, it was possible to examine the different perspectives and similarities that emerged across the data and this provided a unique perspective on the problem of practice.

**Research Question**

The problem of practice is that online adjunct instructors need ongoing professional development that both transitions with them as they evolve as online educators and addresses their particular needs related to design, delivery and facilitation. This problem has driven the research question, *What ongoing professional development may be needed to more comprehensively support online adjunct faculty beyond the initial training program at Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies?*

**Methodology**

This study used a qualitative program evaluation approach to formatively evaluate NU Online’s current professional development offerings for CPS by gathering and analyzing data using a program evaluation methodology (Brill & Park, 2011; Gothard & Gorham, 2011; Weiss, 1998). Interviews and focus groups composed of key FPD stakeholders were used to develop a deep understanding of their perspectives on FPD and the reasoning behind decisions or processes related to FPD (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2004). This also allowed for the triangulation of the data by comparing the three groups’ perspectives for similarities and differences to provide a unique perspective on the problem of practice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, this process made it possible to discover, describe, and suggest possibilities for future expansion of online adjunct faculty development.
When considering the problem of practice, qualitative research seemed most effective for this particular issue for a variety of reasons. First, the participants or stakeholders in the research have multiple realities, and the intent is to understand those realities as part of a larger situation, or as Denzen and Lincoln would say, the qualitative researcher is a “bricoleur or maker of quilts” to create a pieced together set of representations of a complex situation (Denzen & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4). Second, in this scenario of FPD, it was important to understand the process the participants took in participating, creating, providing, or encouraging FPD in the overall evolution of the program (Maxwell, 2004). Finally, it was important to describe the context in which the stakeholders were acting and how that context influences their actions, perceptions, and opinions of their reality (Maxwell, 2004). As in the examples from Gothard and Gorham (2011) and Brill and Park (2011), this research was designed to use program evaluation methods to meet with stakeholders, gather data, and evaluate current interventions, and then to apply this information towards improving the larger picture of FPD.

**Program process evaluation.** Program evaluation, a qualitative methodology designed to assess the operations and often outcomes of programs, was originally used to assess effectiveness and program outcomes (Bermudez, 2010; Morris, 1997; Weiss, 1998). Now it is often used to examine a program and compare it with its goals while focusing on the intended processes of the program (Morris, 1997). One of the goals of NU Online most directly related to faculty professional development is to develop pro-active, self-reliant distance educators and ensure they are able to operate within the LMS and utilize best practices of distance learning. Also, NU Online wants to provide effective and scalable solutions and training for faculty related to distance education, educational technology, and technology-mediated teaching and learning (Kilfoye et al., 2009). Program evaluation allowed for formative evaluation of the current
professional development process and goals provided by NU Online to CPS online adjunct instructors. It also supplied insight to their effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses, and guidance for future FPD opportunities (Bermudez, 2010; Morris, 1997; Weiss, 1998).

Biro’s research identified the need for the organization to relate its mission to distance education and involve stakeholders in the FPD solution, but she did not include all stakeholders in her research (Biro, 2005). She focused on the perceptions of the instructors only. Gothard and Gorham (2011) and Brill and Park (2011) were more effective in leveraging the perceptions of most of the stakeholders. In one case they identified what were needed outcomes for a particular training. In another, they surveyed students, staff, and faculty for their impressions of a particular training tool. In both cases, the program evaluation was intended to improve either a particular training or tool, and indirectly, the effectiveness of the department’s offerings. Gothard and Gorham (2011) identified not only the effectiveness of their training and the need for continued evaluation, but also the need for resources to ensure that evaluation was incorporated more fully in the daily functions of the department. Brill and Park (2011) reported that, although not perfect, the e-tutorials were a useful compliment for their department’s offerings. They also identified the areas that users wanted more tutorials and resources. Both of these examples allowed for improvement of their larger programs.

Program process evaluation relates to both the guiding theories of this research; both the ZPD and connectivism imply a process that is evolving and changing-- for one, growth through a zone and for the other, growth through networks. Similarly, connectivism relates both to the connections of the individual, as well as the organization (Siemens, 2005a). Just like the instructors at CPS, the organization is learning, growing, and developing through a zone or a series of networks, nodes, and connections. By tapping into the knowledge and perceptions of
FPD stakeholders involved, this may improve the effectiveness of the FPD options at CPS. Looking at the whole picture of continuing FPD, beyond the initial certification training at CPS, will provide a more well-rounded approach to the research on FPD within the literature. Thus, the growing presence of the ideas of connectivism can provide a context to the larger picture of an institution’s approach to FPD.

**Site.** The researcher had the opportunity to work with Northeastern University’s College of Professional Studies (CPS), through her role as instructional designer at Northeastern Online, which serves CPS. As previously described CPS uses a large number of online adjunct faculty and better understanding of the needs for ongoing FPD will assist this institution, as well as possibly provide a model for evaluation at other universities.

Participants in this research came from three areas: faculty, administration and instructional design. This approach to understanding the needs of the organization and the different stakeholders gives the researcher a more holistic approach to addressing the perceptions and requirements for ongoing FPD that can be embraced and fully supported by CPS.

**Description of Context of Training at CPS.** In order to more effectively understand the context for training at CPS, it is important to outline what exists and what is common for this population. Opportunities for training and professional development come from several areas at Northeastern University, as outlined in Appendix D. Online instructor certification training and administrative “faculty onboarding” provide training in operational issues, but neither include an academic focus. The online certification trainings are regularly scheduled and are a requirement prior to being given a teaching assignment. Most communication about other CPS initiated development is done via email, which may or may not go to the instructor’s primary email. This background information on faculty development informs some of the responses given by
interview participants. Some interviewees cite the need for training in areas that would fall outside the responsibility of NU Online or may be provided by an alternate group at the university (such as training for software like MS Office). These more ‘mechanical’ training sessions are not easily accessible to online adjuncts either because frequently they are offered face-to-face, or because online resources are not presented to them.

Participants - adjunct faculty. Since the program evaluation approach was meant to discover how the participants were dealing with a particular issue, the research was focused on the CPS online adjunct population. They had been trained to transition to online teaching, but their involvement in ongoing professional development was mostly left to their own desire to reach out for assistance. This population has insight as to what would be the most helpful professional development approaches for instructors after they have transitioned to teaching online.

There were three selection criteria for possible online adjunct instructor participants: a) they must be adjuncts, b) they must be NU Online Certified Instructors, and c) they must have taught an online course for CPS at least twice. From those adjunct instructors meeting the above criteria, a purposeful sample was culled resulting in the selection of five participants from various disciplines and levels. What follows is a description of how the five adjunct instructors were selected.

Since faculty in different programs and levels (undergraduate or graduate) have very different experiences and access to FPD, it was important to get a diversity of perspectives.

CPS has approximately 550-650 certified, active adjunct faculty at any given time in a year (NUCPS, 2011). The researcher used input from program managers and deans who hire the instructors, instructional designers, course schedules, and course evaluations to create an initial
list of potential instructor participants. This yielded an initial group of 42 adjuncts that met the three stated criteria and would ideally represent a variety of disciplines and levels—both graduate and undergraduate. From this list of 42 possible candidates, a group of 11 randomly selected participants were sent e-mails to solicit their help. This group was contacted to see how many would positively respond in order to get an idea of how many more rounds of solicitation might be needed. From this group, five responded; three were able to participate and two were willing but unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts and/or responding after the interviews were performed. One instructor heard about the research and asked to be included, so he was added to the second round of e-mail to seven instructors, two of whom were able to participate (incidentally, not the one who had requested to be involved). In the end, a total of five consented to the agreement to participate, and they also offered to participate, if available, in the focus group.

Participants – administrators and instructional designers. Administrators and instructional designers both play a role in determining the type of FPD that is ultimately created, endorsed by the institution, and rolled out to faculty. In order to develop an effective model for supporting online adjunct faculty, administrators and instructional designers were interviewed for their perceptions. For the purposes of this research, administrators are defined as CPS deans or directors who either oversee particular academic programs or courses that are delivered online, hire online adjunct faculty, and/or have a specific role related to faculty professional development.

Five administrators were selected for a purposeful sample based on their responsibilities and their willingness to participate in the study. At the time of the research, the administrators were in a period of flux, with several leaving to positions at other institutions, however of the seven
deans invited, six agreed to participate. Of those, due to potential scheduling conflicts, one preferred to be a “back up” if any others fell through.

Instructional designers’ roles vary from institution to institution, but in the CPS context, instructional designers are instructional technologists and trainers for faculty as well as specialists that help instructors bridge the gap between technology and pedagogy to reach their desired learning outcomes. Since there were a limited number of instructional designers at CPS, five designers were chosen and asked to volunteer to respond to the same or similar interview questions as instructors and administrators. These participants may have had similar biases to the researcher. This is important information within the context of the institution, and, admittedly, the reliability of this information may be suspect in some eyes. However, by juxtaposing this perspective against the other stakeholders, the possibility was there to identify gaps or barriers between these groups and make suggestions for possible bridges between perspectives or approaches that could be helpful when developing ongoing FPD.

There were a total of 15 participants in the research study: ten male and five female. Two instructors taught at a graduate level and three at undergraduate, while four of the administrators oversaw graduate level programs and one oversaw undergraduate level programs. Instructional designers supported both undergraduate and graduate level programs simultaneously, and all also taught online, as did some of the administrators. Instructors had a variety of levels of experience teaching online but only one had taught online with another institution.

**Data collection.** In order to get rich information that gets to the heart of stakeholders’ perceptions about FPD, a qualitative approach was taken to the evaluation of the program process (Biro, 2005; Brill & Park, 2011; Gothard & Gorham, 2011; Morris, 1997). The interviewees answered a series of open-ended questions and some demographic data. By
examining this question from the perspective of the three populations (instructors, instructional designers and administrators) it allowed for a small, but rich collection of data with which to examine the problem of practice. There were several steps for the data collection process, which are outlined below.

- **Interviews, audio recordings, and transcripts:** This was the main source of data for this project. The researcher selected five instructor volunteers to interview, while simultaneously getting confirmation of participation from the five instructional designers and five administrators. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and each participant had the opportunity to review and return their transcript with any edits. The basic strategies for data reduction and interpretation involved some of those outlined by Weiss (1998). They include describing, counting, factoring, clustering, comparing, finding commonalities, examining deviant cases, ruling out rival explanations, modeling, and telling the story.

- **Memos:** Memos were used to keep track of the many themes, descriptions, and comparisons that emerged during this process and throughout the analysis of the research material. Memos reflected themes that appeared in the data which were analyzed later and this developed relationships within the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Analysis of interview data and memo data provided the foundation for developing recommendations for online adjunct faculty support within NU Online’s FPD program. (In addition, the memos show the evolution of my perspective as I interacted with the data throughout the research process.)

- **Existing Survey or Evaluative Materials:** NU Online conducts a survey at the end of each Faculty Certification training course that asks about the training as well as
possible areas for new programs. These data were used to gauge effectiveness of that part of the FPD program and verify some statements from interviews. Since the faculty certification training has been evaluated by outside consultants and received an award, these materials helped to inform the research process. The existing information also provided a data source that informed the interviews and focus group.

*Focus group:* Once the interview data had been analyzed for emergent themes, the findings were reviewed with a focus group of CPS interviewees. The CPS focus group was conducted virtually using web conferencing technology so participants could call in or log on and participate at their level of comfort.

**Data analysis.** The project generated a large amount of data in the form of transcripts, memos, documents or reports. This required a focused and organized approach to data collection and analysis. Part of the organization process was to use qualitative analysis software to manage, organize, and store data analysis. The research took place in three phases, each with its own steps for coding and analysis.

Table 4

*Phases of Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question creation</td>
<td>Conduct interviews</td>
<td>Organize/meet focus group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee selection</td>
<td>Data analysis/coding</td>
<td>Data analysis/coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memos (ongoing)</td>
<td>Memos (ongoing)</td>
<td>Memos (ongoing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Training Evaluation</td>
<td>Initial interpretations</td>
<td>Final version of model/recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Phase 1.** The researcher created interview questions based on those from previous research, as well as creating some new ones for this particular research (Biro, 2005; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). The first step was to customize them so they would target the three different groups. These questions had to be standardized to allow for continuity in data. These questions are included in Appendix B, and the researcher’s adviser and some other peers outside the research evaluated them. The researcher used existing survey data from the certification training to guide her interview questions and focus group questions to some degree, but questions were mostly based on the previous research. The researcher selected appropriately qualified stakeholders to participate in the research until the desired numbers of five for each category was reached. The researcher developed a short list of potential back up interviewees in case one of the participants had to drop out. After confirming all stakeholders’ participation, the next phase of the research began.

**Phase 2.** In the second round of data collection, the researcher conducted, transcribed and analyzed interviews using the qualitative coding methodology to take narrative information and categorize it to capture the essence of their meaning (Weiss, 1998). The researcher scheduled individual interviews with the participants either in person or via phone or web conference software (Wimba). Interviews ranged in length from between 8 minutes and 33 minutes. As previously mentioned, the interviewees were from three populations: instructors, administrators and instructional designers. They all have a different perspective and role in faculty professional development. These interviews included a series of open-ended questions, yet they were directed in an “unstructured interviewing” style which allowed for customizing the interview and maintaining the flow of the conversation (Weiss, 1998, p. 166). Prior to the start of each
interview, the participant received the consent statement and a list of the 11 questions used to guide each interview. (Please see Appendix A).

After each interview, the researcher’s questions and participants’ responses were transcribed directly from the recording and each transcript was shared with the individual participant to ensure accuracy of the information (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Maxwell, 2004). Transcripts were then loaded into HyperResearch software to allow for more accurate coding of text. From this round of analysis, the researcher began coding the interview data looking for patterns in the information. Coding is the process of systematically shaping material (particularly textual data) into chunks or segments before making sense of the information (Creswell, 2007; Saldana, 2009). In the final stage, the researcher searched for themes that may be related to the theoretical framework including the ideas of the ZPD and connectivism. This was done in the last part of the coding process so it would not prejudice the coding in earlier stages. When coding, Creswell recommended following a four-step pattern:

1. Go through the interviews and take notes asking “what is this about?” and write your thoughts; repeat this step for several participants,

2. Make a list of all topics, and cluster similar topics,

3. Abbreviate topics as codes, (some researchers recommend using numbers at this step) and assign these next to appropriate passages. See if organizing this way makes new themes emerge,

4. Create descriptive categories and see if there are ways to reduce the total list of categories by chunking related categories, creating diagrams to show relationships, finalizing abbreviations for each category and creating a preliminary analysis (Creswell, 2008, p. 186).
In this case, initial codes were then grouped into larger categories in order to analyze participant responses. Codes and categories were related to the research questions, the theoretical framework foundation, and the literature review. Using HyperResearch software and Excel, the researcher was able to identify the recurring codes and themes identified in Appendices C-F. Table 5 shows the distribution of the frequency of codes as they appeared in the individual interviews. These findings were compiled for presentation to the focus group.

Table 5
*Frequency of Codes By Primary and Secondary Designation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Category</th>
<th>Primary Code</th>
<th>Secondary Code</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Training</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrier</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Coaching</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Development</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Perception</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality (of training, students)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If some coded items actually referred to two different ideas or concepts, frequently that item was coded twice so it could be placed in two different categories. For example, the
following instructor interview excerpt was double coded: “I'd kind of like to see a more unified approach to study...this course leads to that course leads to this course and here's what we're learning in this one. You know if it was something that was actually mapped out. (Instructor 1, personal communication, August 8, 2011)”

In the above, the instructor is discussing the course map for the program. He is unsure if one exists for his program, but he’d like to get the larger picture of what’s going on and how his course relates to the others. This problem of faculty development is not specifically related to the training provided by the instructional design team, but it is a problem of communication, and it falls under the auspices of the administration of the program. Hence it was coded “Communication” and secondarily “Administration.” Double coding or simultaneous coding is useful when the data suggests multiple meanings, since frequently social interaction or experiences may not be categorized in neat buckets (Saldana, 2009).

**Phase 3.** The results of data analysis in Phase 2 were incorporated into a list of themes, and suggestions. A focus group comprised of CPS participants from each interview group was asked for feedback from the material presented to confirm interpretations to data.

The researcher compiled interview data within these codes into four categories to share with a final focus group. The categories were type of training, communication, pedagogy, and barriers. Though all participants indicated they would be interested in participating in the focus group, it was limited to five participants because availability at the proposed times for the focus group. This was the time that yielded the largest, most diverse group. The focus group consisted of two instructors (one undergraduate and one graduate), two instructional designers (one had recently joined the instructional design team but had also taught undergraduate courses for CPS), and one graduate program administrator. The focus group discussion took place via web
conference. Participants could call in on the phone, or participate by VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) using a headset and their computer. All participants were emailed the slides that were projected during the focus group with the research question and key themes. Before and at the start of the focus group, the participants were reminded that the focus group would be recorded for transcription purposes only. The purpose of this focus group was to present initial findings and garner responses and reactions to the data. During the meeting, the researcher gave an overview of the major themes and asked for perceptions and feedback based on themes that had emerged. For each theme, the researcher had specific snippets or examples from the interviews to share if the participants needed more information, but these were not shared immediately so the researcher would not lead the path of the focus group. While some offered more than others, all were given the opportunity to give their feedback and reactions to the presented data and discuss their perceptions with the group. This focus group meeting lasted approximately 60 minutes and was digitally recorded. Afterwards, the focus group recording was transcribed and reviewed. All transcribed data from the focus group was uploaded into the same HyperResearch software program to connect responses to the previously identified themes already in place, as well as to identify new categories. Additional analysis of the focus group data was done in reflective memos to explore themes and connections.

Table 6 shows the actual timeline of research. Since the participants commented on the findings and not directly on their own interview content, there was no fear of exposure or power recrimination during this focus group. A statement to help ensure that participants did not intimidate or feel intimidated was also included. A mixed group of stakeholders in the focus group allowed for a richer opportunity to gather a variety of perspectives at once, as well as to possibly allow one stakeholder’s point of view to stimulate comments from another stakeholder.
in a way that homogenous groups would not.

Table 6
*Timeline of Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRB Approval</td>
<td>July 22, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>July 28 – August 18, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis/coding interviews</td>
<td>July 28 – September, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>October 7, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During this process, memos were the main source of reflection, and they captured interpretations, themes and their significance, and connections among those themes. Qualitative research software allowed effective management of this process, and interpretations, and any connections that emerged was discussed with my peers.

**Validity and Credibility**

Since I worked as an instructional designer at CPS for almost four years, I had some level of relationship with all the participants. Any instructor may at least have known my name, and some may have known me very well if they were instructors that I trained, and supported over the years. In some cases, this instructional designer-instructor working relationship may have provided examples for instructors to cite when being interviewed, or, conversely, this same relationship may have inhibited participants. My relationship with the instructional designers may have allowed the group to speak freely about professional development possibilities or gaps. This group may also have had a potential bias since the individuals had a previous understanding of the my perspective on the subject and may have inadvertently tried to tailor their comments to align with mine. However, in the day-to-day administration of the instructional design group,
each has a different perspective, approach and understanding of the group’s goals. The
administrators involved in this research also know me, but ultimately, the data gathered from the
administrators may have been the most informative since I previously had little exposure to
their perceptions about faculty professional development. Because I have ongoing relationships
with most of the participants, protecting validity and credibility was important when embarking
on this research.

Validity is defined in many ways in quantitative research, with some asserting that it
essentially represents truth, while others state that research is valid if it accurately represents the
features of the phenomenon or topic that it is intended to describe or explain (Corbin & Strauss,
2007; Creswell, 2007). This depends on the accuracy of the perspectives of the participants and
the researcher, and the ability of the researcher to convince the reader that the perspective
presented is truthful and trustworthy (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Traditionally, establishing trustworthiness involves internal validity, external validity, reliability
and objectivity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) vary slightly from this traditional terminology and use
criteria they believe is more appropriate for a naturalistic approach. The four criteria they use
are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These are the criteria that were
used for establishing the quality and validity of the research. Several strategies were used to
strengthen the validity and the consistency of the project including identifying researcher bias,
purposeful sampling and selection of interviewees, triangulation of data, colleague and member
checks, and careful organization of material that reflects an audit trail. The categories below
relate to the validity threats to this research and the countermeasures used to address these
threats.
**Researcher bias.** My own perspective on the topic represented the most significant validity threat to this project. I was especially careful to portray the perspective of the participants rather than my own perspective as an instructional designer and provider of faculty professional development. As an instructional designer, my role is to work with faculty to transition and develop as online educators, bridge the gap between technology and pedagogy and develop professional development modules as needs arise. In identifying approaches for the future of online adjunct faculty professional development, I delved into the three perspectives to evaluate the program effectively. Many of the criteria for establishing creditability address issues of researcher bias.

**Credibility.** Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest various activities for increasing the probability that credible findings will be produced. They include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy and member checks. Prolonged engagement essentially means that long-term involvement or understanding of the context allows the researcher to clearly understand the context as well as identify distortions that may appear. This also prevents against what is often called reactivity, or how much the researcher’s own participation in the data collection process influences the responses of the participants (Maxwell, 2004). In this case, my long-term involvement with the participant groups and intensive approach to data collection through multiple stages, ought to have prevented any tendency to jump to conclusions. (Maxwell, 2004). According to Creswell (2008), prolonged exposure to the issues at hand gives the researcher an in depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied and can provide detail about the problem and the participants that lends credibility to the account presented. Taking notes and using the recording and transcription records to maintain accuracy of the interviewee’s perspective helped keep the
focus on what was actually said rather than what was assumed to have been said. Along with this, the idea of persistent observation provided depth to the material as I had the context and the observations to sort out what was important and what was not, while tentatively labeling ideas and themes during the process.

Triangulation of the data safeguarded credibility and combated researcher bias. By interviewing three groups, various perspectives would emerged across the data providing a unique perspective on the problem of practice (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This collection of rich data should have provided a check against my own perspective overtaking the data (Maxwell, 2004). Pulling information from multiple sources—in this case, three perspectives on the same questions, memos, ongoing review of the literature, existing survey data and day-to-day involvement with these issues—provided a triangulation of data that helped validate the research. Using peer debriefing, or discussing the findings and reflections with peers not involved in the research may also have helped to prevent the researcher’s perspective from entering the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By keeping raw data to refer back to, the criteria for referential adequacy was fulfilled, and using member checks on the interview transcripts allowed for Lincoln and Guba’s final element of credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All participants had the opportunity to review their interview transcripts and make edits to ensure accuracy.

To prevent my own perspective from emerging from the data, reflective memos were used to reflect on the differences between my perspective, the interviewee’s, and the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Another way my involvement may have impacted this research was if I had inadvertently directed or diverted attention to certain professional development initiatives and began to develop elements that emerged from interviews into modules for FPD. To guard against this threat, I tried to make sure that each interviewee answered from their own
perspective and based on what they knew within their role in the institution. Using direct transcription notes and codes when creating the final analysis prevented the possibility of imbuing the model or recommendations with any elements from my own focus. Also, by collecting the data as quickly as possible, the data then became based on a snapshot in time at the institution and not what came afterwards.

Finally, during the interview process, informal interviewing strategies were used that encouraged listening and empathizing with the interviewee’s perspective. In addition, an interview guide was used to assist in maintaining the integrity of the interviews (Weiss, 1998). Questions about challenges, hurdles and missing items helped to seek out information that was not immediately present in the current professional development system at CPS.

**Transferability.** Since statistical proof is unavailable in a qualitative model, transferability is different from the idea of external validity and reliability. In this case, the researcher can only provide a hypothesis along with description of the time and the context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The best way to ensure transferability or reliability which relates to whether or not the research can be replicated by other researchers is through thick description, a wide range of information in the description (Creswell, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to get thick description, purposeful sampling in the selection of instructors and administrators should have ensured a diversity of perspectives on the topic and contributed to the criteria of transferability resulting in a pool of participants who were well-prepared to answer the questions in this study, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985).

**Dependability & Confirmability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) one cannot have credibility without dependability so by demonstrating the first, it is sufficient to establish the latter. However, triangulation of data
from multiple sources provides a certain amount of overlap which impacts dependability. The most accurate ways to ensure dependability and confirmability is through the use of an inquiry audit, creation of an audit trail, and keeping of a reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Limitations**

One of the possible limitations of qualitative research could be oversimplification which might lead to incorrect conclusions (Merriam, 2002). Using rich description and maximizing variation in the sample addresses this issue. (Merriam, 2002). So while the sample is small, a diverse selection within the small sample should have helped. Interview and focus group participants were told that their perspective was being solicited solely for the purposes of this research and the potential benefit it could provide to the institution. They also were reassured that their perspective would have no impact on my view of the interviewee or working relationship with that person. During the focus groups the participants were asked about the findings presented and their perceptions of the findings. Since faculty professional development is typically an emotionally-charged or controversial issue, it did not appear to pose a problem to combine participants from all three areas namely instructors, instructional designers, and administrators.

Along with the possibility of my involvement influencing the research in unknown ways, the other limitation of this research was the small sample size. However, as previously mentioned, triangulation of data from multiple sources (in this case, three perspectives on the same questions, memos, ongoing review of the literature and day-to-day involvement with these issues) should have balanced the small sample size.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

Participation in this project did not present obvious risks to the participants. The project
documented opinions of the participants, which were then formulated into recommendations for faculty development. The greatest theoretical risk to all groups was the fear that the interview data would be disseminated throughout the university with a name attached. No names were used in the transcript data except during focus group discussions when participants identified themselves. Participant identity was protected by use of a key to code the interview and other data so it would remain anonymous. Minimizing the number of people who saw the raw data also enhanced security. No interview transcripts were disseminated, so there was no chance participants’ privacy was compromised through documentation.

In terms of conversations that were held in the focus group, it is true there could have been some risk. Instructors may have feared their perceptions would impact their working relationships with their instructional designer and/or their hiring manager. Administrators and instructional designers, too faced the concern that there might be repercussions should their comments become public. On the other hand, as faculty development is not considered a very risky or contentious subject, in reality there was not enough of a perceived problem to inhibit conversation.

If the ideas generated were to come to fruition, instructors had the greatest chance of benefiting from this project. Because of the opportunity to support training that leads to improved teaching and better-satisfied students, instructional designers and administrators should also benefit. Any potential risks were addressed with care to improve the chance the information gleaned through the research would help to create a better model for professional development for the institution.
Chapter 4: Report of Research Findings

Introduction

Major findings from this research affirmed that existing FPD programs at CPS are effective and provide a basic foundation to support online adjunct faculty, but that more virtual formats (both synchronous and asynchronous) are needed as well as more advanced training and specific tool or discipline-based options. Additional themes emerged in the research that impact FPD at CPS: communication and expectations, pedagogy, and barriers. To enhance understanding of the findings, this chapter has been organized into several sections. First, there is a description of the participant population. Second, the common findings from the interviews are summarized by theme: format and breadth of FPD, communication between stakeholder groups, opportunities to learn and discuss online pedagogy and teaching practice with peers, and barriers. Third, is a summary of the findings from the focus group. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of applicability of this research to FPD within the CPS and the higher education community.

Population

There were a total of 15 participants in the research study, ten male, and five female. Of the five instructors, two taught at a graduate level, and three taught at undergraduate. Of the administrators, four oversaw graduate level programs, and one oversaw adult undergraduate programs. Instructors’ experience teaching online ranged from one to 11 years; three instructors interviewed had taught at other institutions. While only one had taught online or blended courses at another institution, instructors were generally able to compare experiences with FPD to other
institutions. Several administrators had experience teaching online, as did all of the instructional designers. (See Appendices H and I.)

**Themes**

In analyzing the responses from interviews, four themes clearly emerged when discussing issues of online adjunct faculty development: (a) Type of Training (format and content), (b) Communication, (c) Pedagogy, and (d) Barriers. (Codes related to each theme from the interviews can be found in Appendices C-F.) The appearance of these across all three groups (instructors, administrators, and instructional designers) provides clues for next steps for professional development.

**Type of training.** This theme illuminated the concrete aspects of what exists, what does not, and what participants want to see. All groups consistently thought similarly about interaction with the instructional designers and the need for virtual meetings, webinars and more asynchronous learning modules. Additionally they agreed on the need for software help (not LMS/Blackboard help) because of both modality and context.

The help or training that is provided in the relationship between the instructor and instructional designer was most frequently cited as the most useful or valuable type of training by all three constituencies. Administrators recognized this type of one-on-one interaction is not scalable. Most groups stated the value of the existing certification training, but brought forth the need for asynchronous trainings, live (but virtual) trainings, recorded virtual training/workshops, and more advanced instructor training. Many instructors stated that while they would love to come to campus for some of the professional development opportunities on campus, it just was not possible, and there was no “live” remote way to participate. In addition, they noted that if
any recordings were posted, they frequently were posted too late to be of use or were of poor quality.

…I get notices in my Northeastern mailbox…about different things that are going on in the different centers around but they are all during the day…I said, ‘Well, is this being taped? Could I look at it?’ And the answer is no. So unless I can see the video I'm not going to participate because I can't do it. (Instructor 1, personal communication, August 4, 2011)

It wasn't that good I must tell you - the quality of the video - and the program itself. (Instructor 2, personal communication, August 5, 2011)

Instructional designers and administrators frequently cited the need for more advanced training, effective use of tools within online courses, greater understanding or use of social networks, and the importance of best practices. In the interviews, only some of the instructors recognized the value of the instructor resource center, something that may have changed had a larger sample been used. Similarly, not all instructors interviewed mentioned the need for more advanced training options.

All groups recognized the need for more webinar type formats – synchronous meetings and their recorded versions that cover specific training topics –whether advanced ideas beyond the certification training or in depth examples of how to use specific tools. Also all groups identified the need for stand-alone asynchronous modules that would be available when an instructor wants them. Faculty also elaborated that example courses with models of best practices within their discipline might be a good way to scaffold new faculty. Generally, participants in the study liked the idea of virtual webinars for both context specific and general topics. Examples of
context specific topics included those related to discipline, the teaching of international students, and writing among others. Examples of general topics included specific tools or approaches for online teaching.

The primary data divergence in the type of training theme emerged from the instructional designer respondents. While it was a requirement that instructors be proficient with the MS Office suite, e-mail and browsing the internet, it was not something that instructors were tested for or skills that NU Online supports.

Instructional designers frequently had to help instructors with processes that require basic computer skills such as adjusting settings on the computer, saving files, file management on the computer, installing software, navigating between two browser windows, browsing the web, or using software such as MS Word or PowerPoint. Using a tool suggested by the instructional designer (or using a basic tool effectively) required these skills before moving on to complete the actual task related to teaching the course or designing the delivery of their materials. The findings revealed that difficulty with these basic skills compromised the ability to use the tools chosen for instructors, and may have ultimately affected the quality of their instructional materials, as well as their proficiency teaching online. Instructional designers recognize that this falls outside the scope of the support they provide, but recognized the need for proficiency and the need to identify the instructor’s level of proficiency at the time of hire. Therefore the need for some form of, training in basic computer skills for faculty was raised exclusively in the instructional designer interviews.

Additionally, only one interviewee offered a different perspective on how to decide what to train faculty on.
…the development workshops have not been targeted at data driven needs. What we are doing is guessing at what [instructors] have, rather than using things like course feedback or more rigorous teacher/course evaluation to determine what areas of faculty development we need. (Administrator 4, personal communication, August 9, 2011)

This administrator suggests that CPS should be using the course evaluations as a source to glean what is needed and then provide that kind of FPD.

Communication. All groups recognized the need for more communication, and it was clearly a high priority for all respondents. This consensus among stakeholders on communication contained some variation based on the respondent’s role and responsibility in the organization, so the term is used broadly to cover all the different types of communication mentioned in interviews. In this case, the broad term communication includes:

- Opportunities to connect with other instructors to discuss pedagogy, strategy, or other;
- Opportunities or methods to give and receive information from different groups at NU (training, help, operations, professional development, student needs);
- Communication between groups inside NU about FPD opportunities;
- Communication about expectations from programs or instructional designers to instructors.

All stakeholder groups agreed that instructors needed more opportunities to connect with other instructors. Participants agreed that CPS should have had stronger program-to-instructor communication, however, faculty did not mention this as much as instructional designers and administrators. The focus group results exacerbated the need for effective communication suggesting that adjunct faculty with limited internal program communication did not realize what
they were missing until they heard about programs that incorporated strong communication strategies.

Some departments had strategies for providing a connection with other faculty, such as pairing new adjuncts with a more seasoned adjunct or full time instructor.

We buddy with our adjuncts so that they have a contact person within the program besides their instructional designer because they are out there by themselves. (Administrator 2, personal communication, August 3, 2011)

Other programs lacked any type of communication or connection with peers. Interview data show that some programs had faculty meetings, but they mostly existed to deal with operational issues, not specific goals such as pedagogy within the department. The administrators and the instructional designers highlighted the perceived need for contact among faculty and suggested these kinds of opportunities would help enhance teaching because of the opportunity to discuss teaching strategies from a program or discipline standpoint.

Faculty were more specific about the need for discipline-based faculty and staff meetings, while instructional designers and administrators mostly mentioned more communication with faculty in general. Instructional designers and administrators agreed on the idea of setting expectations for instructors and the need for stronger instructional designer-program communication. Only administrators specifically brought up the issue of creating community with faculty.

Instructional designers and administrators continually raised the issue of setting expectations for instructor-related professional development and teaching. Only one instructor mentioned this and discussed how having expectations was helpful for him,
First working with [named two instructional designers] and they're both pretty smart talking about their expectations; I think that's what got me off the ground best. I understand what they wanted to see and I tried to reach that.” (Instructor 3, personal communication, August 18, 2011)

Setting expectations related to teaching online and professional development was seen as a college responsibility by most, as the following excerpt illustrates:

CPS should have clear-cut paths for professional development for adjunct faculty. These paths can help to set expectations and retain faculty in return. (Instructional Designer 2, personal communication, August 8, 2011)

These expectations relate to how to evaluate instructors and provide direction for growth. Administrators also specified that these expectations and needs for professional development were directed from the institution to the department, from the top down.

Instructional designers and administrators identified the need for stronger communication between the program and the instructional design team for a variety of reasons. Reasons mentioned included the need to recognize professional development efforts so programs know faculty are taking steps towards professional development, or to collaborate to bring faculty together. One administrator noted that instructional designers needed to be even more connected to the programs because of their perspective on faculty. They suggested the instructional designer perspective combined with the administrator perspective on faculty may be important to capture for accurate evaluation of faculty.

But I also think the instructional designers need to almost be embedded into the individual programs because you really do have a different perspective of faculty. …You guys are looking at one data point. Our program manager or assistant
director might be looking at another data point, but we never come together to say, “Let's really assess this faculty from an online delivery or an on ground [perspective].” It's really hard to capture that kind of information because we are all working separately, in different silos; although we have very good working relationships. (Administrator 1, personal communication, August 1, 2011)

Good working relationships and communication between the instructional designers may allow CPS to be more proactive with respect to faculty professional development.

**Pedagogy.** Administrators and instructional designers brought up the larger, “macro” issues of pedagogy, or the need for concentration on pedagogy, while instructors only specifically mentioned “micro” pedagogical issues. The micro issues mentioned included creating community in their course, scaffolding students, and identifying strategies for supporting English-as-a-Second Language students. All groups consistently agreed on two needs:

1. The need for teaching the basic skills required to teach a course in any scenario regardless of format – online, traditional or hybrid)
2. The need to emphasize approaches -- both teaching approaches (awareness or understanding of different pedagogical approaches) and learner-centered approaches (either the importance of or the instructor’s evolution to this approach)

Although it figured most strongly with instructional designers, the idea of teaching basic pedagogy figured across all groups. According to instructional designers, instructors needed help with good assessments; facilitating learning positively based on clear learning goals, and creating lecture or instructor perspective of course materials.
I would like to see more fundamental aspects of teaching covered like how to do assessments, how to facilitate learning experiences in a positive and goal oriented way. (Instructional Designer 1, personal communication, July 28, 2011)

Instructional designers pointed out that many instructors, because they are professionals in their field and may want to teach, or even those who may have doctoral degrees, might not have had any instruction in how to teach or know much about pedagogical approaches.

It's a lot of instructors don't know how to teach, so they need [that], … but the number one thing I think they need is good pedagogical strategies and good models to follow, wherever they come from. (Instructional Designer 5, personal communication, August 18, 2011)

As one administrator mentioned, adding the aspect of the modality (online) to the art of teaching often compounds the issue for many instructors, whether or not they have had teaching experience.

Neutralizing the delivery method is that I think the pedagogy is that understanding how to go ahead and teach, because we tend to teach the way that we were taught, and not necessarily the best methods of how people learn. …So there definitely needs to be a basis or assessment of people's understanding of pedagogy but then there is also a technical requirement that I think people need to be fluent on. (Administrator 5, personal communication, August 15, 2011)

The interviews revealed that instructors would like the opportunity to discuss teaching, managing their courses, and strategies with their peers, as well as the chance to discuss what is going on in the industry.
I would like to see what the other faculty are doing and find what other kinds of things are out there. The last faculty development workshop we had online I participated in - that was terrific. I liked it a lot and I'd like to see more of that. Particularly faculty talking, people presenting what can be done, faculty talking about it. (Instructor 3, personal communication, August 18, 2011)

Instructional designers suggested that conversations might include the idea of “risk-taking” in teaching. Examples included ideas such as trying new methods or not relying on strategies used in traditional teaching or what they’ve used in previous versions of their online class, and the benefits of that kind of approach.

Administrators and instructional designers frequently brought up the ideas of collaborative learning and best practices while instructors more frequently mentioned scaffolding students and to a small degree, issues related to adult learners (administrators also mentioned this). Administrators seemed focused on the best practice of creating community within a course although all groups raised this issue. Administrators suggested the role of the instructor is to collaborate with the class, to create material, and leverage the network of the students.

Instead of relying on one person – the faculty member – to try to be aware of everything that is possibly out there, you expand your network if you open it up to the 30 or more students that are in your section and invite them to share or suggest content with you. (Administrator 3, personal communication, August 5, 2011)

Instructors voiced individual concerns in their day-to-day teaching such as a lack of visual contact, how to scaffold students, or about specific groups of students within a class as the following quote illustrates:
I can't see them – I can't get an immediate sense of what they are thinking and while the other discussion board and things are great, it's still not a great tool for students to express themselves, particularly in mathematics (Instructor 3, personal communication, August 18, 2011)

**Barriers.** Instructors who teach part time and work in their fields do not have a lot of time for faculty professional development. All groups stated that lack of contact with other faculty creates a barrier for online adjuncts with respect to FPD. All groups also understood that time, schedule, and place create a barrier for online adjunct instructors, however administrators and instructional designers mentioned this more. As the respondents pointed out, most college-wide FPD opportunities are based on local faculty who can attend daytime workshops physically.

While administrators and instructors mentioned incentives as a method to engage adjunct faculty in FPD, the instructors themselves did not. When the idea of incentive was brought up with instructors, it was addressed directly:

Why would I want to spend more time? I already have to spend hours finding online material, or putting material online or watching in real time other lectures or films or presentations, which is what I do to try to amplify that online coursework. So I feel like I’ve used up about all the time I have already. (Instructor 4, personal communication, August 18, 2011)

This implies the time and effort to put a course online and keep materials up-to-date and relevant in addition to a full time job is demanding. One administrator thought this could be related to a lack of understanding of the value of FPD. Overall, there was agreement that contact with other faculty is valuable, the lack of it constitutes a barrier, and not providing faculty opportunities to connect is a significant issue.
Accountability was a big issue for administrators, as they are responsible for the overall quality of teaching within their program. Instructional designers noted this as well. This also relates to the issue of communication, since those who provided the faculty professional development at CPS (in some cases) did not necessarily keep track of who attended or participated, and did not report that to the programs unless it was a major training initiative, for instance the certification training or upgrade training. As one instructional designer pointed out, “I feel like part of the problem is if I'm an adjunct in a program and I go to three workshops a year, no one from my program may ever know that I've gone to these.” (Instructional Designer 1, personal communication, July 28, 2011)

**Focus Group**

Upon completion of the interviews, the audio was transcribed, coded, and analyzed, and the four major themes were shared with the focus group. Two instructors (one graduate and one undergraduate), one administrator and two instructional designers participated. The focus group was intended to confirm or deny analysis of interview data, expand upon the themes that emerged, or suggest areas for further research. Below is a discussion of the findings from the focus group presented by theme.

**Type of training.** The focus group generally agreed with the findings that training currently offered is adequate and one-on-one with the instructional designer is most effective. Participants asked for more in-depth, but discrete examples of particular tools indicating a desire for more advanced training options. They weighed in on the type of training that should be offered and presented concrete examples such as more online synchronous (webinars) and online asynchronous modules; discipline-based examples of a “good course;” opportunities for discipline based conversations about what works (for example in a faculty meeting, although one
instructor was skeptical about coordination of an online meeting). The focus group instructors recognized the value of faculty meetings to discuss strategies for teaching within the discipline.

Focus group instructors questioned how well mentoring would work in the asynchronous online environment and also recognized the possible difficulty in organizing online mentoring). One instructor mentioned an article on coaching and suggested it might work in a traditional teaching setting but was unsure how it would work in a virtual setting.

I’m not sure how that coaching thing works in the virtual world - Looking at my [course materials] doesn't necessarily convey how I teach, because that is only a small portion of what happens about the interaction I have with the students over the course of a day or a week or a month. (Instructor 1, personal communication, August 4, 2011)

The other focus group instructor brought up the issue that adjunct instructors were generally working full time and with compressed formats (6 week courses). Therefore almost all their energy was thrown into the course making time for professional development difficult and less important than teaching and connecting with their class. The administrator in the focus group also raised the point that while it is easy to believe that one-on-one help is the most useful and desirable way to increase one’s skills and improve one’s course, it is not necessarily a scalable model.

**Communication and pedagogy.** Communication and discussion about pedagogy were heightened subjects in the focus group. The three most salient points made were as follows:

1. There must be more communication between faculty and the program, and with both groups and instructional designers;

2. There is a need for opportunities for faculty to communicate with each other;
3. There is a need for better communication from instructional designers and programs to the faculty about resources and opportunities.

As an example, an instructor in the focus group suggested a desire to communicate with programs and instructional designers about new formats for certain courses. He suggested mandatory synchronous online sessions or hybrid formats of some courses as needs change based on the discipline or goals of the course because, “the strictly asynchronous Blackboard format doesn't work for a lot of technical disciplines.” (Instructor 1, personal communication, August 4, 2011) The administrator participant further summarized,

We have a math instructor that will not teach online but would probably be delighted if to teach online if he could teach some synchronous classes as well so are we limited by what we currently do and what is the next phase for online teaching…? …do we make decisions based on the discipline or on the instructor or is it just what administrators hand us? (Administrator 2, personal communication, August 3, 2011)

All participants liked the communication idea of a newsletter with updates and examples of course strategies that was raised as a solution by an instructional designer participant in the focus group.

The concept of the instructional designer as technical rather than pedagogical support continued as a sub-theme in the focus group.

…instructors felt that the real value the instructional designer could provide was in his or her technical assistance. Whereas, the instructional designers felt that we
offered more than just technical assistance and more pedagogical consultation.

(Instructional Designer 1, personal communication, July 28, 2011)

The instructional designer then suggested that perhaps there should be better communication about how the designer can help an instructor.

… one way of doing that would be to try to expand how faculty members and instructors think of the role of the instructional designer so that they seem them not just as technical consultants but also as people who can address their specific problems in the classroom and give them some assistance … and think about technology-enhanced solutions for some of those problems. I think that sometimes we don't do a very good job of letting instructors know what our role is, and what kind of support we can provide. (Instructional Designer 1, personal communication, July 28, 2011)

At least one instructor confirmed this during the focus group saying that he did not know how an instructional designer could help with pedagogy and/or assist with the strategy for his online course.

I’m just not sure how to approach what [Instructional Designer 1] was talking about. How to get down to having the designers help us with [online] strategy.”

(Instructor 1, personal communication, August 4, 2011)

Finally, the interview data suggested that instructors thought of pedagogy in a micro or day-to-day perspective versus an all-encompassing macro way when discussing or planning their courses. The focus group data negated this. What did emerge is that instructors believed they must think about pedagogy since that frames their courses, and the idea of creating community within the course quickly, because of the compressed format of many CPS online courses,
figured significantly in their approach. The focus group instructors reinforced that their responsibility to the student was greater than the responsibility to seek out faculty development or contact with peers, which might change or influence their current approach. A focus group instructor noted that, “…it isn’t so much of that [we’re not] collaborating with other instructors as it is about really focusing on your course first.” (Instructor 4, personal communication, August 19, 2011) This caused the focus group administrator to note, “So to me that’s a huge weakness in our system because I think we service our students better if we have the support of our colleagues.” (Administrator 2, personal communication, August 3, 2011)

**Barriers.** The focus group reinforced specific barriers such as time to participate, contact with other faculty, format for participation, and incentive to participate.

Well honestly I work full time and I teach part time and I’ve been doing this for 8 or 9 years now, and I don’t think I’ve ever participated with my colleagues since I’ve started teaching. So that’s the life of a part-time adjunct … I’m not sure there is enough time and there certainly isn’t enough money to have us [participating in collaborative work with our colleagues] on top of these six or twelve week courses. (Instructor 4, personal communication, August 19, 2011)

**Summary**

The findings presented serve to provide a better understanding of FPD for online adjuncts and bring to light significant aspects of the FPD opportunities that were offered. The contextual analysis in the next chapter will highlight how these themes come together and provide implications for FPD development at CPS and the larger higher education community.
Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to perform a formative evaluation of the current offerings for online adjunct faculty professional development (FPD) at NU’s CPS from the perspective of three sets of stakeholders: instructors, instructional designers and administrators. This formative evaluation provides a snapshot of faculty development that can be used as a marker when considering future program changes internally at CPS. This baseline is extremely important because since these data were collected, the spotlight on online learning has increased, not just at NU and other similarly established universities with online programs, but because of the growth of companies such as EdX, Coursera, Udacity, and other Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or MOOC-like endeavors (Eaton, 2012; Rodriguez, 2012).

This research found that current FPD offerings for online adjuncts are important and effective, but only a starting point. Three key findings were illuminated in this study. First, effective training must be presented in more formats, and in greater breadth and depth. Second, communication between all stakeholders is critical for supporting online pedagogy. Finally, institutions must provide opportunities for instructors to learn and discuss online pedagogy and teaching practice with peers in and across programs. The implications are in some cases very direct. Other implications require more research for both CPS and the greater higher education community. Additionally, communication and issues of pedagogy have major implications for FPD.
This chapter first discusses the results of the research study according to the key findings that emerged from the data. Then it addresses implications for practice in faculty professional development for online adjuncts and offers suggestions for further research.

Discussion

Most current research about FPD is presented from one of three perspectives: (a) success or failure of a particular type of training (Hinson & LaPrairie, 2005; Villar Angulo & Alegre De La Rosa, 2006; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006), or (b) the perspective of “what do faculty want?” where results are a composite of all faculty types together (tenured, full-time, permanent part-time and adjunct) or (c) the format and/or success of a particular type of training source (Kang & Miller, 2000; McQuiggan, 2012; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). This research is significant because it reviews needs from the vantage of three stakeholder groups, and isolates the adjunct faculty from other faculty groups.

The findings support the conclusions that CPS needs more and varied virtual training opportunities, that communication can be improved across all groups interviewed and that online adjunct instructors want and need to have contact with other instructors to talk about teaching (Dolan, 2011; Eblen-Zayas, 2012; A. Johnson et al., 2009; McQuiggan, 2012). These findings are substantiated by the literature (McQuiggan, 2012; Puzziferro & Shelton, 2009; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008) and relate to the theoretical frameworks (Siemens, 2005b; Vygotsky, 1978).

Training. The findings reinforce the idea that the existing training materials were effective, particularly the NU Online certification training. However, all groups identified the 1-1 relationship with the instructional designer as the most beneficial of all FPD resources. This was previously identified in the literature (McQuiggan, 2012). The findings also show that there was a need for more advanced training, and more virtual formats.


Discussion. The data from this research confirms existing research about the best formats for modules and FPD for online adjunct faculty, but neither the literature nor this research suggest the best way to incentivize online adjunct faculty to take advantage of FPD. There is disagreement in the literature about primary motivating factors for faculty to teach online and/or take advantage of professional development. Some have suggested that adjunct faculty are not any more motivated by financial incentive than full-time faculty, but are motivated by improvement in their teaching, and/or an opportunity for professional or personal challenge (Bedford, 2009; Panda & Mishra, 2007; Parker, 2003). Other research says adjunct faculty are most motivated by financial incentive. Some present split results (Bedford, 2009; Green et al., 2009; Schroeder, 2008). There is strong evidence in the literature that building loyalty, communities, and networks with faculty groups or communities of practice support FPD and could facilitate a sense of connection with the institution, but the research also suggests institutions need to value this kind of participation in order for it to be successful (Dolan, 2011; Eib & Miller, 2006b; Green et al., 2009; Palloff & Pratt, 2011).

Communication. The data highlighted and the literature confirmed that more communication across multiple constituencies and multiple directions is needed. The type of communication needs identified included one-way communication from instructional designers/administrators to faculty related to resources and expectations, two-way communication between instructors and programs, and two-way communication between programs and instructional designers to support institutional messages and the process of faculty evaluation (Dolan, 2011; Green et al., 2009; McQuiggan, 2012). Supporting the findings is the theory of connectivism which relates to the flow of data within an organization and attempts to explain how learners and organizations learn (Siemens, 2005a). The theory reinforces why
information flow within the organization is important – in this case to capture information from instructors to the organization about students’ needs and the instructional designer’s information about best practices and evaluation of instructors.

**Virtual, discipline- or program-based meetings.** All groups recognized the lack of opportunity for communication with other faculty and for the program to present the goals of the program with faculty – in essence having the “big picture,” and understanding how their course fits within it. Dolan (2011) and McQuiggan (2012) reinforced this finding. They reported that creating more opportunities for all faculty-- and especially online adjunct faculty and administrators -- to connect within a program or discipline presents a greater chance for instructors to exchange ideas on teaching strategies, and learning goals related to programs and courses. These opportunities therefore, build loyalty and community among faculty.

Additionally, this allows the program to set expectations with faculty, something that all groups cited a need for, particularly instructional designers and administrators. The literature frequently mentioned how instructors should set expectations with their students in an online course, but research on how institutions should set expectations with their instructors has only just begun to appear (Clinefelter, 2012; Online Instructor Expectations, 2011).

Lack of communication between stakeholder groups (instructors, administrators and instructional designers) has implied consequences. Regular communication with other instructors and with the program, is in essence a form of FPD, and it also acts as a communication device and a retention strategy for online instructors – this element is missing for many online adjuncts (McQuiggan, 2012). Regular virtual meetings for a program or discipline could address many of the issues raised surrounding communication, particularly contact with other faculty, setting expectations for instructors, improved program-instructor communication, and community
among faculty to name a few. Also, there is some suggestion in the literature of virtual brown bag sessions as a way to improve online faculty’s competence with online pedagogy (Magna Publications, 2012).

As McQuiggan (2012) points out in her recent research, regular opportunities for connection provide a form of public reflection and allow the instructor to consider alternate perspectives or approaches. The interview and focus group data revealed some CPS programs do have discipline-based meetings, while others either do not or have, at best, limited connection with faculty. This shows a marked contrast in experiences at CPS. The contrast suggests that some programs are missing an opportunity to assist their faculty and possibly enhance learning outcomes within their programs by providing opportunities to connect. This kind of meeting reflects the connectivist idea of enhancing an individual’s personal knowledge network and feeding into an organization’s network (Siemens, 2005a). This connection of the individual to the organization allows the individual to stay current in their field through their connections (Siemens, 2005a).

**Stronger instructional designer-program communication.** The interviews with instructional designers and administrators suggest that stronger communication between instructional designers and the academic programs they serve is important, since both groups create or need information that relates to instructor evaluation. There is little to no literature that speaks specifically to communication between instructional designers and academic programs (Vasser, 2010). According to Siemens’s idea of connectivism, the flow of information within an organization is important for effectiveness, and the learning environment of an organization depends on developing the flow of information (Siemens, 2005a).
Discussion. The agreement between instructional designers and administrators in certain areas of this study may mean there is stronger, informal communication going on between these groups. On the other hand, it may mean these two groups are looking at the issues related to FPD from a similar viewpoint and arriving at the same conclusions independently. Either way, both groups seem to want a stronger communication channel to discuss faculty, development and other issues.

The data suggest that discipline and/or program-based meetings would provide the opportunity to allow faculty to connect and develop community among themselves and with the institution. This reinforces the Vygotskian idea of the ZPD and promotes the idea of developing one’s networks and connections to expand one’s own learning (McQuiggan, 2012; Siemens, 2005b; Vygotsky, 1978). Stronger communication between the instructional designers and the academic program can support efforts to both identify needed FPD and then coordinate its delivery. The group would be able to construct knowledge and make some decisions collectively rather than relying solely on an individual learning process (Bandura, 1986; Siemens, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978).

Pedagogy: opportunities to learn and discuss online pedagogy and teaching. As mentioned in the literature, to develop new ways of teaching and learning, faculty may need to re-examine previously unquestioned assumptions and beliefs about teaching (McQuiggan, 2012). According to McQuiggan (2012), these opportunities may need to be more reflective and supportive. The research from this study does not suggest these are the types of opportunities for which faculty specifically ask.

It appeared at first that faculty seemed to focus on specific, or in some ways micro issues of pedagogy. These concerns related to the concerns of someone in the field teaching – things
for instance, such as creating community in their courses and scaffolding students. The interviews suggested these problems may have influenced the overarching pedagogy of an instructor in a particular course. These comments, however, were not specifically related to how they planned to teach at the outset. They were, instead, related to problems that impeded their approach (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). The following quote provides an example of this influence:

…is harder to assess with an online class…is working with students for whom English is a second language…[they get by at first] then you get a five page paper and you find out that English really is their second language and it’s really [bad] – I try not to penalize too much – [and evaluate] what they’ve learned in terms of understanding the material, and they did have facts and information in the paper that was certainly well researched, but the expression of it was just terrible.

(Instructor 4, personal communication, 2011)

On the other hand, instructional designers and administrators were more concerned with pedagogy across the course and specifically issues of collaborative learning and best practices. Instructors did address pedagogy and online teaching but they did it from a different point of view than the instructional designers and the administrators – a dichotomy that exists in the literature in varying degrees (Allen & Seaman, 2012; Bartling, 2009; Conrad, 2004; Jones et al., 2002; Meyer & Barefield, 2010). A possible disconnect is that instructors were still trying to shift their traditional class online and not design for an online environment specifically. In the focus group, the instructors usually highlighted what they could not do when teaching online rather than what they could do, suggesting that instructors were still grappling with the idea that online can be delivered equivalently to a traditional course (Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Salmon, 2005).
Discussion. This research and the literature both suggest that giving faculty the opportunity to connect and discuss pedagogy is in essence a form of FPD (Dolan, 2011; Green et al., 2009; McQuiggan, 2012). Similarly, the literature suggests mentoring as a desirable means for supporting adjunct faculty (online and traditional) for issues of pedagogy and technology (Devos, 2007; McQuiggan, 2012; Puzziferro, 2004b; Rogers et al., 2010; Villar Angulo & Alegre De La Rosa, 2006; Wortmann, Cavanaugh, Kennedy, Beldarrain, & Zygouris-Coe, 2008; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). The findings of this research imply that an official mentoring program is most likely not feasible or realistic. Giving faculty regular contact with others may provide the opportunity for instructors to reach out to peers if he or she chooses would like to build those kinds of networks and create informal mentoring connections. Further research may provide more information on how providing connections with peers may influence the instances of informal mentoring.

Barriers: incentive, time, place, and communication. The data suggest that addressing barriers to FPD identified in the research will not be easy and requires time, money, resources, and more research. It also involves an awareness of a constantly changing target of what is required for online instructors – both technologically and pedagogically. Faculty mention time and scheduling as the biggest barriers, while instructional designers and administrators see incentives (such as recognition in the form of money, title, or other possibilities) as a larger issue.

Instructors may not know what possibilities exist for incentives or may believe that the current administration might not consider rewarding online adjunct faculty for participation in FPD. In addition, faculty may not see much value in attending these types of FPD opportunities even if they were more convenient. Without more communication from the academic program or
college about the importance of FPD and how it relates to the mission, incentives for participation may need to be more overt and tied to financial gain or job title (Biro, 2005; Dolan, 2011; Kelland & Kanuka, 2008).

**Discussion.** In general, faculty are paid less to teach online than traditional formats (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012), and according to research cited and confirmed by Green et al. (2009), part-time faculty are more motivated by monetary incentive primarily and then the chance to gain experience. This is somewhat contradicted in the literature though, with some suggesting that adjunct faculty are interested in improving their teaching craft and not necessarily motivated by money (Bedford, 2009; Panda & Mishra, 2007; Parker, 2003). These barriers and the gaps bring light to the emerging issues and implications for CPS and other institutions engaged in online course delivery.

**Implications**

This study focused on one college in one institution, and the ideas that emerged in the research are voiced within the context of CPS, but they are universal within higher education, or will be soon. This research suggests the need for more emphasis on teaching basics and pedagogical approaches for online adjuncts. These teaching basics are modality independent and include fundamentals such as: how to teach, facilitating discussion, what constitutes a good lecture, how to develop a lecture, developing a teaching style/approach, overview of pedagogy, creating assessments, teaching approaches in different modalities, and educational tools. While the instructors may not be asking for such training, instructional designers who work with instructors closely, and administrators who interact with instructors and students both see a need for this type of support or development (Austin, 2002; Pearson, 1999). Also, unique perspectives or concepts that only one person may have mentioned in this study may actually represent a shift
in the industry. That is to say, the purveyor may be an early adopter of the idea, not an outlier. Key ideas to consider include using evaluations to develop FPD, the implications of utilizing different formats for delivery of online courses, and the notion of faculty as first contact for students and receptors of feedback.

For example, the 2012 Horizon Report has identified learning analytics as a mid-term (2-3 years out) horizon or the time frame when higher education may see widespread adoption of this idea or practice (L. Johnson, Adams, & Cummins, 2012; Ravishanker, 2011). One administrator brought up the idea of student course evaluations as a starting point for developing faculty training regardless of the format of the course (online, hybrid or traditional).

While many institutions are beginning to actively collect data, this suggests there should be some thoughtful consideration of what data is relevant in the case of FPD. Data alone cannot be the driving point, so thoughtful combinations of data elements to compare and contrast can make new knowledge for the institution to leverage (Clinefelter, 2012; Ravishanker, 2011). This can pose a problem for many institutions since frequently evaluating data from course evaluations might require a collaborative effort across multiple administrative groups. At CPS, using evaluations to identify specific faculty professional development needs would probably require a significant collaborative initiative, since it would have to span multiple areas such as Academic and Faculty Affairs and possibly NU Online, Information Services and other groups. Essentially, it would require people to gather the data, put the data in a workable format, evaluate the data, and decide who should build it and how it should be delivered to faculty.

As mentioned above, higher education is seeing an impact in the delivery of online courses, particularly those presented as MOOCs or by organizations such as Coursera, Udacity, EdX, and several others (Eaton, 2012; Rodriguez, 2012). Globally, this represents a change in
format, based on sheer numbers of students accessing a course, as well as the methodology for delivering content, feedback, and designing interactions. Within an institution, administrators may need to ask various questions:

- How many variations of online and blended courses are needed and how fast do these formats need to evolve?
- What factors need to come into play when changing or modifying the formats offered to students at an institution?
- How do we prepare faculty for those changes?

Additionally, MOOC-type courses also represent a heightened example of the next issue: the significance of instructors as “first contact” for the student. In an online course at an institution like CPS, frequently the instructor is the first protracted contact a student has with the institution. Instructors are on the front line and are privy to perspectives of the students that may never make it to a course evaluation or to an administrator such as a passing comment, complaint or observation. Receiving these insights to students’ wants and needs may be a valuable resource that is being overlooked. Existing gaps in communication between the instructors and the program may have prevented this idea from surfacing. Dolan (2011) and McQuiggan (2012) highlighted the importance of communication from an institution to the instructor, and that was reinforced in this study. However, this research implies that perhaps the communication should be two-way. Department, program, or discipline-based meetings to allow for this important communication to happen, help the online instructor feel connected to the university and the larger mission and provide an element of FPD (Dolan, 2011; McQuiggan, 2012). According to Siemens (2005a), this aligns with the connectivist ideal of improving information flow within an organization to enhance organizational effectiveness and fosters the learning environment of an
organization. This idea is analogous to both the instructors’ information about the student experience and the instructional designers’ information about best practices and evaluation of instructors.

**Implications for future research.** External research could focus on how to address the frequently changing needs of online adjunct faculty as it relates to rapid technology changes. Online adjunct faculty make up 50% of the instructor population as of 2012. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012) Valuable insights may be gained from research that investigates how the change affects online adjunct faculty as compared to full-time or tenured faculty. Research could also investigate whether or not FPD has an impact on the online or traditional classroom with respect to student satisfaction, student outcomes, or teaching. Replicating this study on a larger scale or at similar institutions would also provide additional insight or corroboration of how multiple stakeholders react to or understand FPD for online adjuncts. All stakeholders mentioned the need for multiple levels and formats of virtual sessions for FPD that addresses the needs of the evolving instructor. The implication for higher education institutions in general is that FPD needs to cover technical skills as well as pedagogical issues as instructors mature. This suggests the idea of using FPD as a path to good teaching and not just for shifting instructors to the online environment or the tools needed for that modality.

Newly emerging online education providers such as EdX, Coursera, Udacity and others provide access and have gained notoriety, but their longer-term impact on online teaching has yet to be determined. Similarly, their influence, if there is any, on faculty professional development may not be immediately apparent, especially since some new models in distance education rely less on faculty intervention. This research provides a foundation for enhancing FPD as the field of teaching online evolves. As our reliance on online learning expands, our need to enhance our
FPD programs also increases. As new technology, tools, information and research are developed for online teaching, the need is greater for continuous and evolving online faculty professional development (Clinefelter, 2012).

Along with these areas for future research, there are some additional gaps in the information that also could be investigated. For example, FPD could be strengthened with more information about the role of the instructional designer, the use of faculty to report student expectations, and the flow of information within higher education institutions. Research on these areas could improve operations within educational organizations (Zawaki-Richter et al., 2009).

**Communicate the role of the instructional designer.** During the focus group, one instructional designer brought up the idea that instructors consistently think that instructional designers are primarily for Blackboard or technical support and they do not realize that is not their primary role. This possibly speaks to organizational misunderstanding of the role of the instructional designer or misunderstandings due to the variation of instructional designers’ roles from institution to institution. At a minimum, it speaks to the need for more overt communication about the instructional designers’ role to instructors. Research could examine the differences in the role across institutions, the perceived importance of the role with instructors, and the most effective working relationships between instructional designers and instructors or specific programs.

**Faculty as reporters of student expectations.** In an organization like CPS, some students never come to campus until they graduate. So, faculty and the online courses they teach are the first protracted interaction with the institution for many students. In this situation, faculty may have the best idea of what students want or prefer from course formats. Structured program-faculty communication about student expectations or preferences would give the university the
opportunity to do more in-depth research related to specific student trends. Institutions could research when to investigate common institutional questions related to expectations and needs, frequency of revisiting student expectations, or how increasing student sophistication surrounding online education delivery impacts what students want for their online education.

**Connectivist ideas.** Initially, the researcher was interested in whether or not there was some evidence of instructors using connectivist ideas (Couros, 2010; Downes, 2006; Siemens, 2008), perhaps even unknowingly, and developing networks with peers to improve their courses to enhance student learning or their own proficiency as educators. Due to the lack of access to FPD, the answers were of particular interest. In the end, this research does not support the idea that connectivist ideas were being used. Perhaps faculty really did not know enough about building their personal networks as a resource for teaching or to increase scaffolding. It is also possible they simply did not have time to pursue this path. Too, there could have been a deficiency in the question or the sample size of this research. George Siemens points out that networks thin classroom walls, and technology allows the student to interact directly with researchers and leaders in the field through social media (Siemens, 2008). This dilutes the previously uniform voice of the instructor. He suggests that teachers, as curators, act as experts in their domain and nurture learner exploration (Siemens, 2008). However, with the increasing focus on online education and changes in delivery formats in the industry, connectivism and all its connected pieces may be more important to consider when planning FPD (Veletsianos, 2012; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2012). Research in this area could provide enlightening information as online teaching develops and FPD evolves to support that teaching.
Conclusion

This research supports the FPD options at CPS. As deemed by the stakeholders the NU Online certification training is good, as are existing resources. Stakeholders would, however, like more advanced trainings, more specific training, and more formats both synchronous and asynchronous.

The research underscores what we still do not know. That gap includes the question of how regular virtual, discipline-based meetings might enhance faculty professional development and provide a venue for communication, enhancing skills and loyalty, as Dolan mentions (2011). While this program evaluation is specific to Northeastern’s College of Professional Studies, there are direct applications to the broader education arena in terms of how to utilize faculty professional development to increase the quality of online teaching. Distance education is a rapidly changing field, and it is important for an organization to be cognizant of the needs of constituents. But distance education also requires nimbleness to adapt as technology, methodology, and emerging research bring new tools, ideas, and access to education for all student types (J. Anderson, Boyles, & Rainie, 2012; Schaffhauser, 2012). Identification of gaps illuminated by this research can help CPS and other institutions continue to adapt, scale and sustain in order to maintain long-term effectiveness in teaching and learning for their online programs as they strive to remain competitive in higher education’s currently tumultuous environment.

Epilogue

At the start of this research, NU Online provided a solid foundation for training related to pedagogy and technology for CPS online instructors and their ongoing support. All of the instructors at CPS had to receive certification through the two-week, online asynchronous
training program, created and facilitated by NU Online, before teaching online or blended courses.

Since this research was conducted, there have been several changes in the NU Online organization concurrent with the researcher analyzing the data and writing the findings. First, NU Online has implemented a new, more user-friendly online instructor resource center (http://www.northeastern.edu/nuolrc/) to disseminate information, how-to guides, and recorded training modules, and teaching tips to faculty. Second, they have implemented regular online synchronous sessions on specific tools and are continuing to expand trainings in this area. Third, they have also worked to move important instructor evaluation data (best practice reports) into the Salesforce database, which makes it more accessible to administrators, improving the flow of information within the organization. Finally, the size of the instructional design group has expanded, and been divided into two groups: one continuing its support of the College of Professional Studies programs and the other to create a different model for developing online courses and programs for the wider use of Northeastern University.

These changes are consistent with both current exploration in the field and the findings from this thesis. Changing pedagogical approaches and delivery formats or models of online education mean that supporting faculty and evolving FPD for faculty is even more crucial. As previously mentioned, higher education, as of the completion of this thesis, is still grappling with the impact MOOCs will have on FPD and on teaching best practices in that model, since many of them rely more on the instructor less and peer-to-peer networks. This is exactly why we need to prepare faculty for different models appearing in the industry. Both the high visibility of online education and changing field require that FPD should be ongoing, as this thesis suggests, evolving and frequent to address an instructor's evolution.
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Appendix A
Statement of Consent

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies, School of Education
Investigator Name: Principal Investigator, Dr. Leslie Hitch,
Student Investigator: Beth Rochefort
Title of Project: Narrowing the Distance: Bridging the Gap Between Teaching Online and Faculty Development

Request to Participate in Research
We would like to invite you to take part in a research project. We are asking you to participate in this research because you are:

- an online adjunct instructor,
- an administrator with responsibility over online programs, online adjunct faculty and/or professional development; or
- an instructional designer responsible for creating online adjunct faculty professional development.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

Why is this research study being done? The purpose of this research is to identify which strategies for online adjunct faculty professional development beyond initial online certification training are effective, as well as to identify other opportunities for support for online adjunct faculty.

What will I be asked to do? If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in a one-on-one interview, and possibly participate in a follow-up focus group, which will consist of some of the participants from each of the three groups (instructors, administrators, instructional designers) and will be arranged to confirm the findings from the interviews. Both interviews and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. All interviewees will be able to review/correct the transcripts of their one-on-one interviews.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take? The interviews will be conducted in a manner that is most convenient for you: in person if local to Northeastern, on the phone, or via web conferencing technology. The interviews will take between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The focus group will be conducted so participants can either come in person, or call in or be included via web-conferencing technology and will take 1-2 hours.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me? There should be no risk or discomfort for participants. However, if you feel uncomfortable with the topics or questions, please let the researcher know and you can refuse to respond to that question or topic.

Will I benefit by being in this research? There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, the information learned from this study may help to develop more effective professional development for online adjunct instructors in higher education.

Who will see the information about me? Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers on this study will have access to the transcripts and audio files from your interview and focus group. During the focus group, the participants will be known to one another, but the discussion will not be about your particular responses in the interview. Focus group participants will only be reflecting on the researcher’s analysis of the data.
No reports or publications will use information that can identify you or any individual in any way. The researcher will keep a key to identify the interview subjects’ recordings and these electronic recordings will be stored in a password protected environment. All audio recordings will be destroyed after the transcription and analysis phase. Transcriptions will not have names affiliated with them and will be stored similarly, in a password protected environment that only the researchers. During the coding process, the interview subjects and focus group participants will be entered using the same “key” to maintain confidentiality.

Can I stop my participation in this study? Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any questions. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have as an instructor or staff member.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems? If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to call Beth Rochefort, b.rochefort@neu.edu or 857-719-8282, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Leslie Hitch (l.hitch@neu.edu), the Principal Investigator.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant? If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University Boston, MA 02115 tel. 617-373-4588, email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Will I be paid for my participation? No.

Will it cost me anything to participate? No. If you incur any expenses for meeting the researcher, e.g., parking, they will be paid for by the researcher.

Is there anything else I need to know? This research is being done as part of Beth Rochefort’s doctoral research.

You may keep this form for yourself.

Thank you.

Beth Rochefort
Appendix B:

Interview Questions

Demographic data:
How long have you been teaching online? What formats (online online, hybrid, f2f?)
What disciplines do you teach?
Do you teach at other institutions (online or not)?

1. How do you feel about the current faculty professional development opportunities at CPS for online adjunct faculty?
2. What kinds of experiences, (e.g., school professional, other) influenced your personal approaches to teaching, whether online or traditionally?
3. Has your concept of teaching and learning process changed as you have prepared to teach online and as you have continued to teach online? If so, in what way?
4. What resources (ex. faculty certification training, workshops, one-on-one work with ID, discipline meetings) have been most helpful to you (or do you feel are most helpful for the faculty) in this process of both transitioning and continuing to teach online?
5. As an instructor, in what aspects of teaching online do you feel least prepared, or with which aspects of teaching online do faculty need assistance or support? (For example, what would you like more information about, what resources do you wish you had access to, etc.)
6. How effective would peer mentoring or coaching be for providing ongoing FPD at CPS? What opportunities exist? What opportunities are needed?
7. Do your own personal, professional, and or academic networks impact your own teaching or learning? Or help your students in their learning process? Explain.
8. What type of professional development (both useful and convenient) would be most useful for instructors?
9. What factors would inhibit you (or would inhibit faculty) from participating in professional development experiences related to teaching online?
10. What other things would you like to add to this conversation about faculty professional development and support?
11. Are you willing to participate in a mixed (instructor/instructional designer/administrator) focus group after the interview data has been analyzed?

(Administrator/Instructional Designer Versions)

Demographic Questions:
What is your title/job? How long have you done that job at CPS?
Have you had similar roles/experiences with online programs/courses/online adjunct faculty at previous institutions?

1. How do you feel about the current faculty professional development opportunities at CPS for online adjunct faculty?
2. What kind of experiences do you see as most influential for teaching online?
3. How do you see instructors evolving as they begin and continue to teach online?
4. What resources (ex. faculty certification training, workshops, one-on-one work with ID, discipline meetings) have been most helpful to you (or do you feel are most helpful for the
faculty) in this process of both transitioning and continuing to teach online?
5. As an administrator or instructional designer, what areas do you think instructors need more assistance or support?
6. How effective would peer mentoring or coaching be for providing ongoing Faculty Professional Development (FPD) at CPS? What opportunities exist? What opportunities are needed?
7. How would you want(expect) an personal, professional, and or academic networks impact teaching or learning for faculty and/or students? Explain.
8. What type of professional development (both useful and convenient) would be most useful for instructors?
9. What factors would inhibit you (or would inhibit faculty) from participating in professional development experiences related to teaching online?
10. What other things would you like to add to this conversation about faculty professional development and support?
11. Are you willing to participate in a mixed (instructor/instructional designer/administrator) focus group after the interview data has been analyzed?
### Appendix C
Codes by Theme

#### Table C1

*Codes by Theme: Type of Training*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>ID*s</th>
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<th>Inst</th>
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<td>Asynch learning modules</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Effective use of tools</td>
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<td>Streamlined training-Bb</td>
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<td>Student issues-training</td>
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<td>All existing FPD resources</td>
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*Note: *Instructional Designer
Table C2

Codes by Theme: Communications

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<td>Program-instructor communication</td>
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<td>Creating community (among faculty)</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Stronger connection ID-Program + Program about instructors</td>
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<td>Discipline based meetings faculty and staff</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Instructor solicits help</td>
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<td>Decentralized</td>
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<td>Inconsistent FPD opportunities</td>
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<td>Intimidated by peer feedback</td>
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*Note: Instructional Designer*
Table C3

*Codes by Theme: Pedagogy*

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<td>Teaching approach</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating community (in class)</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Learner centered approach</td>
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<td>Best practices</td>
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<td>Scaffolding students</td>
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<td>Quality Check</td>
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<td>Create opportunity for student collaboration</td>
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*Note: *Instructional Designer
### Table C4

*Codes by Theme: Barriers*

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<td>Adjunct isolation</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>Barrier - Place and time specific</td>
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<td>Accountability for FPD</td>
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<td>Barrier-no contact with other faculty</td>
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<td>Change</td>
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<td>Inconsistent FPD opportunities</td>
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<td>Barrier-IS support for discipline software</td>
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<td>Basic computer skills</td>
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*Note: *Instructional Designer; Citation Missing
Appendix D:

Sources for Professional Development for Online Adjuncts

Table D1

*Sources for professional development for online adjuncts*

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<tr>
<th>University Organization</th>
<th>Populations served</th>
<th>Training options</th>
<th>Format</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NU Online</td>
<td>All online programs (primarily CPS)</td>
<td>Certification Training (covers basics of LMS and best practices for teaching online)</td>
<td>Asynchronous, online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NU Online instructor center website (includes how-to documents and videos, best practices, software, links, guides and recorded workshops)</td>
<td>Asynchronous, online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>One-on-one with ID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor-ID email</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS Discipline based initiatives</td>
<td>Various – may ask for ID support</td>
<td>NU Online workshop (design, delivery and educational technology tools focused)</td>
<td>F-2-f or online, various times, usually recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS (Academic and Faculty Affairs)</td>
<td>All NU</td>
<td>Professional Development workshops (ex. Writing Across the Curriculum, Supporting International Students, etc.)</td>
<td>Synchronous, face-to-face, on campus, sometimes recorded, weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Services</td>
<td>All NU</td>
<td>Blackboard Basics, Office, Supported software, email</td>
<td>Synchronous, on campus, weekdays F-2-f, on campus, weekday, 9am -5pm Links to online training resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EdTech</td>
<td>All NU</td>
<td>Individual consultation</td>
<td>F-2-f, on campus, weekday, 9am -5pm</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>primarily</td>
<td>Weekly workshops</td>
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<td>faculty</td>
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Appendix E:

Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Job and Instructional Level

Table E1

Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Job and Instructional Level

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<td>n</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
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<td>60.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note: Citation Missing
Appendix F

Distribution of Instructors by Online Teaching Experience and Institutions

Table F1

Distribution of Instructors by Online Teaching Experience and Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructors</th>
<th>Total Years Online</th>
<th>NU</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>3-4</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
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<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
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<td>x</td>
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</table>

*Note: Citation Missing*
Appendix G

Significant Quotes

Type of training

“Right now I think it's all based on who is local here in Boston and we say this every year that we are going to capture it, we are going to post it, we're going to do that, but that never happens, it never works, it never gets set up. So like I said that population of online people gets left out.” Administrator 1, personal communication. (2011, August 1). personal communication.

“I think it's just as easy for me to sit and watch a lecture by one of the Blackboard instructors on how to do something as it would be to, a lot easier than, to get to a class.” Instructor 4, personal communication. (2011, August 19). personal communication.

“So what do we do about those other people that never show up for these things? The few things that we do offer here - I know [name deleted] group are offering some stuff and you guys [NU Online] are offering some stuff - it seems like whatever we do here on ground never gets captured, so that online adjunct faculty pool of people, if you will, are never integrated in.” Administrator 1, personal communication. (2011, August 1). personal communication.

“…[I] get notices in my Northeastern mailbox all the time about different things that are going on in the different centers around but they are all during the day and you know I said, ‘Well, is this being taped? Could I look at it?’ And the answer is no. So you know unless I can see the video I'm not going to participate because I can't do it.” (Instructor 1)

“…Their IT support people [instructional designers] and they have been just an enormous help.” Instructor 1, personal communication. (2011, August 4). personal communication.

Communication

“We do have faculty meetings for each of the programs. But they are often devoted to operations or administration issues…We never quite get around to the pedagogical techniques.” Administrator 4, personal communication. (2011, August 9). personal communication.

“I hear all the time…how faculty are hungry for it here at Northeastern and CPS for more structured opportunities to talk about what is going on in their courses. … I think our faculty are really struggling with how to effectively manage discussion boards and how to make students feel connected in a virtual environment.” Administrator 3, personal communication. (2011, August 5). personal communication.

5 This comment is interesting not just because of the demand for virtual (or asynchronous) training, but also because the instructor refers to the “Blackboard instructors” when it appears she’s referencing the instructional designers. This is important because it also relates to communication and/or the lack of understanding of what an instructional designer does, rather than considering them only technical, or Blackboard support.
“But the one thing we've talked about and I think we've tried to do is to get instructors who are in similar disciplines working together.” Instructional Designer 4, personal communication. (2011, August 18). personal communication.

“I think it's incredibly important to create opportunities for faculty to talk with each other and share what they are doing with their courses with each other and get feedback because … you end up teaching in a silo...” Administrator 3, personal communication. (2011, August 5). personal communication.

Instructor: “…The discipline meetings haven't happened.
Researcher: They don't have any for the undergraduate faculty?
Instructor: No…That's because we are all adjuncts. Most of what I do is a friend of mine teaches hybrid courses at [another college]. He’s a math teacher and we talk a lot about on weekends about what we do.” Instructor 3, personal communication. (2011, August 18). personal communication.

Expectations (a sub category of communication)
“...I've never participated in any conversations with other people doing the same thing.” and “I don't talk to anyone else, I don't think, who teaches political science.” Instructor 4, personal communication. (2011, August 19). personal communication.

“And the expectation could be from the program management position, or from the assistant dean position that says ‘Hi, you've been teaching two or three terms, now it's time to get better’.” Administrator 4, personal communication. (2011, August 9). personal communication.

“In a perfect world, you would have an instructor who you could somehow evaluate and say 'these are the three areas that we really, together with the program, want to see you improve in’.” Instructional Designer 4, personal communication. (2011, August 18). personal communication.

“Within all of the settings I found it very dependent upon what was the one overall direction of the institution for the department.” Administrator 5, personal communication. (2011, August 15). personal communication.

“An understanding of the worth of them [faculty professional development opportunities]. Just flat out understanding and appreciating the worth.” Administrator 4, personal communication. (2011, August 9). personal communication.

“It's one thing to go into a meeting room and drive a little bit and use the technology but there's really no expectation that they ever develop anything. I think it has to be more of something - almost like we expect of our students. We are going to tell you what we are going to tell you. Then we are going to ask you to use it and manipulate it and then we are going to give you some feedback. We also have to treat our adjuncts and full time faculty in that manner in some way.” Administrator 1, personal communication. (2011, August 1). personal communication.
Pedagogy

“I really feel that they could probably stand [to benefit] from developing a network of online instructors and kind of learning from each other pedagogical approaches about how they go about teaching online courses.” Instructional Designer 2, personal communication. (2011, August 8). personal communication.

“But I think the academic programs are missing a big opportunity to positively impact their program. In general I don't think that most academic programs contribute anywhere near enough oversight, strategy, coaching and mentoring, that they need to.” Instructional Designer 5, personal communication. (2011, August 18). personal communication.

“Really understanding what a lecture is. I know that there is some kind of gray area which really defines what a lecture is, what a lecture should consist of. Not really just talking about multimedia, I'm talking about content.” Instructional Designer 2, personal communication. (2011, August 8). personal communication.

“Really knowing how to teach for some instructors, since quite a few of the instructors, adjunct instructors, may not have previous teaching experience, really having developmental opportunities for them which really kind of focuses on how to teach rather than teaching.” Instructional Designer 2, personal communication. (2011, August 8). personal communication.

“The pedagogy of teaching online is not something that most people have experience with or have figured out the way to use the tool.” Administrator 2, personal communication. (2011, August 3). personal communication.

“…They would welcome any opportunities to discuss that [managing discussions, creating community online] openly with their peers and with instructional design teams as well as to hear about what are other best practices out there - what are other institutions doing out there to overcome these challenges.” Administrator 3, personal communication. (2011, August 5). personal communication.

“Those who are rather intrepid, or willing to take risks, … they’re willing to try new things, they're willing to get their students voices into the course a lot more, even with the potential that it may not work out.” Instructional Designer 4, personal communication. (2011, August 18). personal communication.

“…Rather your job is to act sort of as a sheep dog to herd people along. To point out areas of overlap. To point out things that are being brought to the discussion that weren't part of the original questions.” Administrator 4, personal communication. (2011, August 9). personal communication.

“And I also wonder if that person doesn't do particularly well on a test, I wonder is it because I didn't teach it well enough or is it because they didn’t study hard enough, or is it because there is a language barrier. It's very hard to assess that online.” Instructor 5, personal communication. (2011, August 19). personal communication.
“…who are new to teaching haven't ever really sat down and thought about what they are trying
to do so therefore they can’t design instructional educational experiences that target those things.
So I think that's one major area where that could be enhanced.” Instructional Designer 1,

“If they’ve got a vast teaching experience it’s more of how do I do this face to face to the online
whereas some instructors you know get hired they have minimal teaching experience so then it’s
a matter of them trying to learn the craft of teaching and then translating that.” Administrator 5,

**Barriers**

“Well, I think if more are offered in webinar format, there really isn't much that should inhibit
them other than the fact that they are working professionals and time and so on could be a factor
which is why the webinar format could be great because you could at least access the archives.”
Instructional Designer 3, personal communication. (2011, August 8). personal communication.

“I’m hesitant to go out and jump and try something because someone may have already done it
and discovered it didn’t work. I don’t have time to make a whole lot of mistakes.” Instructor 3,

“Well, I think the first thing is time. You’ll definitely get some push back from faculty who are
going to say, ‘is is a great idea, but I’m just barely, I barely have enough time to teach my
course, and if you are asking me to do another 3-4 hours a week on these modules, it’s going to
be factor.”” Instructional Designer 4, personal communication. (2011, August 18). personal
communication.

“Lack of incentive. Again, I think if there is some sort of a reward at the end, people would be
more motivated to do it. That reward doesn't necessarily have to be monetary, but it could be
professional growth.” Instructional Designer 1, personal communication. (2011, July 28).
personal communication.

“If you are going to do it, it has to be a formal structure and you are probably going to have to
compensate people for doing it. And recognize them, and let them assume some different role
other than an adjunct faculty member.” Instructional Designer 5, personal communication.
(2011, August 18). personal communication.

“Also I think it comes down to financial and not necessarily for ‘what are you going to pay me to
do this’ but if they have the opportunity to do another job or such then the cost isn't necessarily
directly what is it I get paid, but what am I losing by not doing that.” Administrator 5, personal

“Oh I can’t think of anything I want less...I am a part-time adjunct with a full time job. I
understand my subject...I feel like I understand my subject pretty well, areas of strengths and
areas of weakness. But I don’t want to make more friends. So peer-to-peer mentoring to me sounds like another nightmarish time suck. Fine if you are in grad school and you are teaching undergrads because you are hanging around anyway. But if you want adults teaching - no. I just don’t have the time.” Instructor 4, personal communication. (2011, August 19). personal communication.

“No, and that was true if I teach in person or online or blended or whatever. I’ve never been audited in my entire career at teaching at four different universities.” Instructor 4, personal communication. (2011, August 19). personal communication.